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Natural resources co-management, green transition and divided societies - Zones of agreement in the Cyprus case using a conjoint survey experiment

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LSE THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

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THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Natural resources co-management, green transition and divided societies - Zones of agreement in the Cyprus case using a conjoint survey experiment

Final Project Report

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Natural resources co-management, green transition and divided societies - Zones of agreement in the Cyprus case using a conjoint survey experiment

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Abstract

The paper presents key findings from a public opinion survey and conjoint experiment with a representative sample of 800 Greek Cypriots, examining public attitudes toward natural resources co-management in the Eastern Mediterranean and the green transition in the context of the Cyprus Problem. It examines views on climate change, joint energy projects, political arrangements, and possible confidence building measures (CBMs) that could build trust between the two communities. The major finding of this research is that it identified potential peace packages accepted by a majority of the Greek Cypriot voters that include Cyprus-Turkey co-operation as part of a comprehensive settlement and wider regional co-operation on energy in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Keywords: Cyprus, Cyprus Issue, Energy Cooperation, Eastern Mediterranean, Conjoint Experiment, Bizonal Bicommunal Federation

1.Introduction

The ongoing geopolitical instability in the Middle East and beyond, including the Israel-Palestine conflict and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, underscores the urgent need for stability in the Eastern Mediterranean. The recent rapprochement between Greece and Turkey and the positive agenda is a positive development in stabilising the region, however, emerging tensions over imminent seabed surveys for the power cable near Karpathos Greece, for the Great Sea Interconnector threaten to destabilise both the fragile dynamic of rapprochement and add further conflict to the region. Nevertheless, the possibility of energy co-operation in the Eastern Mediterranean could not only lead to more sustainable energy solutions for countries of the Eastern Mediterranean but could also act as a catalyst to a solution of the long standing Cyprus problem leading to closer cooperation between Greece, Turkey, Israel and a reunited Cyprus on the basis of Bizonal Bicommunal Federation.

The Middle East region faces significant challenges stemming from territorial disputes and resource competition, exemplified by conflicts in Libya and Syria that disrupt energy supply chains, destabilize economies, and exacerbate humanitarian crises. Climate change further compounds these issues, with rising temperatures, water scarcity, and environmental degradation posing significant threats. A unified regional approach that emphasizes both renewable energy and cleaner natural gas co-operative resource management compared to existing options could alleviate these challenges by reducing dependency on fossil fuels, promoting economic stability, addressing ecological vulnerabilities and secure energy systems (IRENA, 2024). Initiatives such as regional agreements on emissions reductions and joint renewable energy projects could serve as critical steps toward mutual prosperity and peace.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Israel-Palestine conflict further illustrate how unresolved political divisions and territorial disputes can perpetuate instability. Europe's reliance on Russian gas during the Ukraine crisis has highlighted the risks of fossil fuel dependency, an urgency for transitioning to renewable energy and diversifying energy supplies. Similarly, the Israel-Palestine conflict, marked by long standing territorial disputes and political conflicts, mirrors the deep-rooted divisions also seen in Cyprus and other contested regions. The Eastern Mediterranean, with its natural gas reserves and potential for renewable energy projects, presents opportunities to strengthen regional energy security and foster collaboration among historically divided contexts. Escalating conflict in the Middle East and Russia's continued war in Ukraine have global attention focused on some of the world's most important energy-producing regions" (IEA, 2024, p. 3), highlighting the ongoing geopolitical tensions that impact energy markets.

Cyprus suffers from energy isolation and about 85% of its electricity production is dependent on oil. This situation according to Electricity Authority of Cyprus (EAC) data, during the period 2017 – 10/2022 led to a total amount of € 569,581,932 spent for the purchase of Greenhouse Gas emission allowances, which was rolled down to consumers[1]. By investing in green transition frameworks, such as photovoltaics parks or electricity interconnectors, not only individual consumers will benefit financially but also the region can create positive interdependencies that reduce conflict risks while addressing global energy and climate challenges. As global volatility grows, Cyprus, like other divided regions, must navigate external influences to achieve sustainable peace and development. Essentially, what Cyprus needs to do is to leverage its assets (proven and/or estimated energy assets) as well as location at the heart of the Eastern Mediterranean region to promote its reunification as the ultimate objective in achieving lasting peace in the country and through greater regional energy co-operation achieve stabilisation of the Eastern Mediterranean.

Support from the public in Cyprus in renewable energy projects, the proposed regional co-operation and the solution of the Cyprus issue is key given the current understanding that any possible future peace agreement will be legitimised by separate referendums in the two communities of Cyprus. Recent political science work in Cyprus (Loizides et al., 2020) identified in both communities an increasing support for BBF from the public in the post-Crans Montana period[2]. With the use of a conjoint experiment, we also identified peace packages as variations of the Guterres framework that could be accepted by a majority of the public in both communities.

This research contributes to a line of studies in peace and conflict studies and international relations in that it seeks to understand public opinion about conflict related issues better and integrate citizens perspectives into different stages of peace processes (Haass et al 2022). Existing research on peace processes and settlements has focused primarily on elite perspectives on these processes (see for example Walter, 1997, 2002 and Mattes and Savun, 2009). However, the success of peace processes can be more closely linked to elections and to referendums than typically assumed. Public opinion about the acceptability of compromises that elites make in coming to a peace agreement may impact their view of the legitimacy of such agreements influencing referendum results and elections where elites ask the public for confirmation of their choices. As the experience of Cyprus and Colombia has shown when the

[1] See 2023 special report by Auditor. Available at https://www.audit.gov.cy/audit/audit.nsf/All/F0AB5E5BC7ECD7AEC22589C1001F1B66/$file/%CE%A0%CE%95_02_2023%20EN.pdf?OpenElement

[2] For an infographic that charts the trends of acceptance of BBF in the Greek Cypriot community in the period 2010-2025 see here https://infogram.com/greek-cypriots-view-of-bbf-2010-2020-1h7g6k3gmr3o2oy?live

public do not find the peace settlement designs acceptable the whole peace process can be thrown off course. In future settlements, for instance of the Russian/Ukraine, Isreal/Palestine conflicts the resolution of Transnistria dispute in Moldova or prospective peace settlement between Azerbaijan and Armenia these peace processes are likely to involve some kind of public electoral consultation. Hence it is vital to understand how peace settlement designs generate or not public support. Given the vital and common problem of moving towards an effective green energy transition this study contributes to this effort by understanding how peace settlement designs that incorporate measures to address the green energy transition do or do not attract support across divided communities.

From a social psychological perspective, it also important to understand the social psychological mechanisms that can build confidence and trust between the two communities in Cyprus given that BBF is a power sharing arrangement between the two communities. One of the most prominent mechanisms in the literature is intergroup contact which has been extensively examined in the Cyprus context (e.g Psaltis, 2012; Yucel & Psaltis, 2020 a,b) and has proven positive effects that can produce broad and meaningful changes in cognition and behavior. The tertiary transfer effect, which has been explored in intergroup contact research (e.g., Meleady et al., 2019), describes how interactions between groups not only improve perceptions of a specific outgroup but also extend beyond intergroup dynamics to influence wider cognitive and social processes. According to Meleady et al. (2019), engaging with outgroup members can enhance cognitive flexibility, helping individuals become more open-minded and less biased across different social contexts. Boin et al. (2021) further elaborate on this by distinguishing between different levels of transfer effects: while primary transfer effects improve attitudes toward the directly encountered group and secondary transfer effects extend this positivity to other, non-contacted groups, the tertiary transfer effect goes even further by enhancing general cognitive abilities, such as problem-solving and creativity. Understanding this broader impact of intergroup interactions is essential in promoting inclusive societies and fostering cognitive adaptability to issues over and above the context of conflict like the environment in the broader region of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The current project therefore has a dual aim. First, it aims to investigate the adoptability of various regional co-operation energy project in liaison with the prospect of a solution to the Cyprus problem and second to offer CBM proposals that could further facilitate regional co-operation. This research examines the perceptions of Greek Cypriots regarding co-management strategies with Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot community, as well as Greece, Israel and Cyprus specifically focusing on the natural gas reservoirs south of Cyprus. Through an innovative conjoint survey experiment, the study aims to explore acceptance levels for various energy co-

operation projects, as part of variations of several peace packages around the basic idea of UNSG Guterres and his proposed framework back in 2017 at Crans Montana.

The project's inception is grounded in a paradigm shift within peace and conflict studies, where natural resources are increasingly seen not only as triggers for conflict but also as instruments for peacebuilding. The cooperative management of resources that span historically contested regions can foster dialogue, build trust, and create shared responsibilities (Le Billon, 2001; Ide et al.2021). For instance, in Cyprus while public media (e.g Philenews, 2023) influence Greek Cypriots public opinion to lean toward projects like the EastMed pipeline linking Israel, Cyprus, and Greece, Turkish Cypriots advocate for a more inclusive framework that integrates Turkey into the management process. These divergent preferences show the importance of designing resource management strategies that address historical grievances, foster equitable economic benefits, and build confidence between the communities.

This research also underscores the socio-economic and cultural significance of natural resources. Beyond their economic value, these resources are interwoven into the cultural and historical identities of local communities. As Green (2015) notes, involving former adversaries in resource management can instil a sense of ownership and participation, which is crucial for healing societal divisions. Cyprus offers a pertinent case study, where unresolved historical injustices and trust deficits persist. To address these challenges, the study emphasizes the need for perceived neutrality and fairness in management structures, alongside clear communication of tangible economic benefits that could mitigate reservations and foster co-operation.

One of the study's central objectives is to assess whether sustainable resource management, particularly in the realm of renewable energy, can complement traditional hydrocarbon projects. The research explores innovative scenarios, such as a joint solar/photovoltaics park in the UN Buffer Zone. This park, envisioned as a 30-50 MW facility with storage capabilities, represents a symbolic and practical step toward reconciliation and sustainability that has just been agreed between the leaders of the two communities in the recent informal Geneva meeting of April 2025. The hypothesis driving this initiative is that Greek Cypriots may exhibit greater acceptance for cooperative projects like the photovoltaics if they are economically profitable, environmentally friendly, and contribute to resolving the Cyprus problem. Such projects could serve as catalysts for mutual trust and long-term collaboration.

The project's methodology is designed to capture the complexity of these dynamics through a robust online survey experiment targeting 800 Greek Cypriots. The survey employs a conjoint experiment, a recent innovative application to conflict transformation studies (Morgan-Jones, et al., 2020) to examine public opinion on preferred content of a peace package (variations of the Guterres framework) accompanied by a specific regional co-operation energy

project. This research's interdisciplinary approach, bridging social psychology, political science, and environmental studies, positions it as a significant contribution to the literature on divided societies and green transition. By addressing the interplay of socio-economic, environmental, and political factors, the study provides insights into how natural resources can be leveraged to rebuild trust and promote sustainable peace. The findings will not only inform policy formulation in Cyprus but also offer broader lessons for other post-conflict settings worldwide.

To adopt a more comprehensive and mixed methods and participatory approach to the green transition, the authors of this report, in collaboration with UNDP in Cyprus, the Cyprus Peace and Dialogue Centre (CPDC) and Sapienta Economics, organized two citizens' assemblies within the Greek Cypriot community (one in rural and one in urban area) in December 2024 to explore perspectives on environmental sustainability and understand the lay people concerns about Green transition policies more generally .The inclusion of these data allows us to understanding in a more contextual way how citizens reason and discuss the green transition. Therefore, provides important context supplementing the public opinion data.

This report will first outline the methodology and present the results of a conjoint experiment analysis. Following that, findings from the citizens' assemblies will be discussed. Finally, the report will integrate insights from both analyses to provide a holistic understanding of public attitudes toward the green transition and the prospects of a solution of the Cyprus problem and regional co-operation around energy projects in the Eastern Mediterranean.

2. Method

Conjoint analysis, as used in the context of peace settlements (Morgan-Jones et al., 2020; Loizides et al., 2022), is a survey experiment that helps policymakers identify which aspects of a potential peace agreement are most important to citizens and which configurations of settlement provisions and trade offs would be most acceptable to different groups. It is a method for obtaining reliable measures of multidimensional preferences and estimating the causal effects of multiple attributes on hypothetical choices or evaluations. In the current survey report a conjoint experiment has been used in order to understand how various energy regional co-operation projects could influence the whole package of peace agreement in the Cyprus context.

We fielded an online survey experiment in the Qualtrics Conjoint Analysis Module with 800 Greek Cypriots[3]. Fieldwork was completed in the period 19/11/2024-19/01/2025 in the Greek Cypriot community (by the University Centre for Field Studies participant's panel-N=314 and Facebook Ads, N=486). The margin of error was 3,4% with a confidence level of 95%. Post stratification weights were applied by urbanisation (urban vs rural), gender and age group to reflect the exact demographic structure of the GC community communities according to the latest 2022 census in the Republic of Cyprus.

Respondents were presented with pairs of hypothetical peace agreement packages and asked to choose one. Each agreement had 6 attributes mirroring the key dimensions of the future peace package arrangements to be agreed upon including an extra energy type attribute:

1. Federal executive
2. Territorial readjustments
3. Compensations for users and owners of properties
4. Implementation monitoring mechanism
5. Supreme Court composition
6. Type of energy program

Each attribute had between four and five values (levels), proposing alternative solutions.

Table 1 reports the list of the six attributes and their corresponding values (levels). Attributes describe the arrangements relating to the federal executive (4 values), territorial arrangements (5 values), Property compensations for IDPs (5 values), Implementation and Security Guarantees (4 values), Supreme Court Composition (4 values) and type of Energy Co-operation project to accompany the rest of the attributes describing the peace package (5 values). In total there were 27 values embedded in 6 Attributes.

[3] According to power analysis for the design of our study a sample size of 400 was enough to have enough power to detect significant effects.

Table 1. ***Attributes and values of the conjoint experiment***

Attributes

Attribute	The federal executive must be formed by	On territory to return 50 villages as in the Annan Plan and Varosha	Most TC users will keep current properties. Owners negatively affected will get	The Implementation monitoring mechanism will be led by the	The Supreme Court that will deal with deadlocks and guarantee human rights will be appointed	Type of Energy Programme
	Federal Executive	Territory	Properties	Implementation	Supreme Court	Energy Co-operation

Values (Levels)

Values	
by rotating presidency, with cross-voting and veto power for co-chairs (presidential system)	Federal Executive (Level 1)
by political parties according to their electoral support, and at least a quarter of the MPs from each community must approve the legislation (parliamentary system).	Federal Executive (Level 2)
by political parties that have the support of a simple majority (parliamentary system).	Federal Executive (Level 3)
by presidents to be elected separately by each community, with veto power (presidential system).	Federal Executive (Level 4)
but Morphou to stay in TC administration	Territory (Level 1)
plus Morphou	Territory (Level 2)
plus Morphou, Rizokarpaso and Yialousa	Territory (Level 3)
plus old part Morphou, Rizokarpaso and Yialousa	Territory (Level 4)
Morphou and North Karpasia will become Federal Areas	Territory (Level 5)
50,000 Euros (on average) depending on a fair UN-expert estimate of loss	Property (Level 1)
150,000 Euros (on average) depending on a fair UN-expert estimate of loss	Property (Level 2)

200,000 Euros (on average) depending on a fair UN-expert estimate of loss	Property (Level 3)
300,000 Euros (on average) depending on a fair UN-expert estimate of loss	Property (Level 4)
300,000 Euros (on average) plus guaranteed housing anywhere in Cyprus	Property (Level 5)
UN with the three former guarantors Greece, Turkey and the United Kingdom	Implementation (Level 1)
UN with third party such as NATO	Implementation (Level 2)
UN with EU countries such as Ireland, France and Germany	Implementation (Level 3)
UN with third countries such as Japan, Australia and Canada	Implementation (Level 4)
with equal number of GCs & TCs with rotating chair	Supreme Court (Level 1)
with equal number of GCs & TCs with a minority of judges appointed by the ECHR	Supreme Court (Level 2)
with a majority of judges appointed by the ECHR	Supreme Court (Level 3)
by a special international UN tribunal with headquarters in Cyprus	Supreme Court (Level 4)
Natural Gas Pipeline from Cyprus to Turkey	Energy Co-operation (Level 1)
Interconnection of electricity from Israel via Cyprus to Greece	Energy Co-operation (Level 2)
Joint solar park in the dead zone with the Turkish Cypriot community	Energy Co-operation (Level 3)

Natural Gas Pipeline from Israel via Cyprus to Greece (East Med)	Energy Co-operation (Level 4)
Natural gas liquefaction station in cooperation with Israel in Vasiliko	Energy Co-operation (Level 5)

Overall, respondents saw 5 combinations selected by the Qualtrics Conjoint Analysis module in pairs of package proposals side by side in separate boxes and were asked to make a choice between the two options in each pair, for a total of 5 potential comparisons of two peace packages evaluated by each individual each time. The primary outcome of interest is the binary variable "peace package preferred." This takes the value of 1 when respondents select the settlement and 0 otherwise.

Some of the constructs measured beyond the conjoint module were scales comprised by various Likert scale items (Protecting environment vs economic growth, Collective action to protect the environment, Quantity of Intergroup Contact, Symbolic and Realistic Threats). This was done in order to obtain internally reliable scales to work with, thus giving us more trust in our findings with regard to the measurement of our constructs. Therefore, in a first preliminary analysis we proceeded with data reduction by factor analysis of items purported to measure the same construct and then computed the corresponding scale. We also used some single item measures to explore the adoptability of various CBMs.

The scales used were the following:

Protecting environment vs economic growth was a scale comprised by 3 items ranging on a 1-11 Likert scale ("absolutely disagree" =1 to "absolutely agree"=11) . The items can be found in Appendix 1. Exploratory Factor Analysis using direct oblimin rotation returned a single factor. The Cronbach's α was 0.71.

Collective action to protect the environment was a scale comprised by 3 items ranging on a 1-5 Likert scale ("absolutely disagree" =1 to "absolutely agree"=5) . Exploratory Factor Analysis using direct oblimin rotation returned a single factor. Cronbach's α was 0.85

Quantity of contact was a scale comprised by 5 items ranging on a -7 Likert scale ("never" =1 to "often"=7) . Exploratory Factor Analysis using direct oblimin rotation returned a single factor. Cronbach's α was 0.88

Symbolic threat was a scale comprised by 3 items ranging on a 1-5 Likert scale ("absolutely disagree" =1 to "absolutely agree"=5) . Exploratory Factor using direct oblimin rotation returned a single factor. Cronbach's α was 0.88

Realistic threat was a scale comprised by 3 items ranging on a 1-5 Likert scale ("absolutely disagree" =1 to "absolutely agree"=5) . Exploratory Factor using direct oblimin rotation returned a single factor. Cronbach's α was 0.80

The survey included several items designed to measure participants' attitudes toward climate change, energy projects, and Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) in Cyprus.

In particular, participants were asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement with the development of various energy projects before resolving the Cyprus issue. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ("strongly disagree" = 1 to "strongly agree" = 5). The energy projects proposed were:

1. Natural Gas Pipeline from Cyprus to Turkey
2. Electrical Interconnection from Israel via Cyprus to Greece (GSI).
3. Joint Photovoltaics Park in the buffer zone with the Turkish Cypriot community
4. Natural Gas Pipeline from Israel via Cyprus to Greece (East Med)
5. Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal in cooperation with Israel at Vasilikos

To assess attitudes toward CBMs, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with implementing several measures before resolving the Cyprus issue. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ("strongly disagree" = 1 to "strongly agree" = 5), with an additional option for "prefer not to answer" (6). The measures included:

1. Natural Gas Pipeline from Cyprus to Turkey
2. Photovoltaics Park in the UN buffer zone for use by both communities in Cyprus
3. Opening the Port of Famagusta and Tymbou Airport under UN jurisdiction and returning Varosha to UN administration
4. Joint account for Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots for revenue from Natural Gas reserves income
5. Testimonies by individuals from both communities who caused harm, submitted to a commission documenting past human rights violations
6. New school history books for Cyprus written by a team of historians and educators from both communities
7. New history textbooks written by experts from the Council of Europe and both communities

Participants were asked to rate their feelings toward members of the Turkish Cypriot community using a feeling thermometer ranging from 0 (cold/extremely negative) to 100 (warm/extremely positive) with 50 indicating neutral feelings. In order to evaluate contact with members of the other community participants were asked about their frequency of visits to the other side of the island since the opening of checkpoints on April 23, 2003.

The questionnaire also included some questions of political relevance to assess participants' preferences for possible solutions to the Cyprus issue. They were asked: *Which of the following options would you choose as a potential solution to the Cyprus problem?* Responses were measured on a 3-point scale with additional options for N/A: a) Against, b) Neither against nor in Favor, but I could tolerate it if necessary and c) In favor. The solutions presented included, Maintaining the status quo, Bizonal, Bicommunal Federation (BBF), Unitary State and a Two-state solution.

In terms of evaluating participants' readiness of co-operation between Cyprus and Turkey they were asked to express their agreement or disagreement with several statements about possible energy collaboration between Cyprus and Turkey and its implications for Cyprus and Turkey. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale ("strongly disagree" = 1 to "strongly agree" = 5). The statements included:

1. A natural gas pipeline from Israel to Turkey through Cyprus would have positive economic benefits for Turkey and negative ones for Cyprus.
2. Any energy collaboration between Cyprus and Turkey would strengthen Cyprus's strategic position.
3. Turkey's economic gains from energy projects involving Cyprus would weaken Cyprus's strategic position in the region.
4. Turkey's involvement in energy projects with Cyprus poses a security threat to Cyprus.

Finally, the questionnaire asked participants to identify the most important issue facing Cyprus today by selecting one from the following list:

- The Cyprus problem
- Corruption
- The economy

- Education
- Unemployment
- The environment
- Housing
- Migration
- The healthcare system
- Wars in the broader region
- Poverty
- Crime
- Other (with an open-ended response option)

3.Results

In the following section a more detailed description of the demographic composition of the sample is given followed by descriptive statistics and correlations between the variable. We also present the findings from the conjoint experiment, providing insights into participant preferences and decision-making patterns. Lastly, in the final section of the results section we summarize key outcomes from the citizens' assemblies, offering a comprehensive and mixed methods overview of public perspectives on green transition.

3.1 Demographic variables description

The research sample comprises a socio- demographically diverse adult sample in the GC community including 800 participants (with 58.4% males 41.1% females and the rest 0.5% selecting something else).

Participants' age had a mean of 42.55 years (SD = 14.21). Related to residency 81.6% pointed out that they live in urban area and 18,4% in rural area. Related to educational level 0.4% indicated middle school as their highest level of education, and 8.9% reported completing high school. The majority of participants had attained higher education, with 32.3% holding a university degree 48.2% reporting a master's degree and 10.2% (n = 77) holding a doctorate.

Regarding displacement due to the conflict of 1974 or earlier, 10.4% of participants indicated they were personally displaced. For displacement of spouses, 8.1% reported their spouse was displaced, when considering mothers, 23.3% reported their mothers were displaced, compared to 26.3% reporting the same for their fathers. For grandparents, 32.0% of participants stated that at least one grandparent was displaced. When asked if none of the listed family members were displaced, 41.9% of participants selected this option and 2.3% of participants indicated they preferred not to answer the question on displacement.

Regarding general party support, most participants (62.4%, n = 482) reported that they do not consider themselves supporters of any political party. Conversely, 28.0% (n = 216) identified as party supporters, while 9.6% (n = 74) opted not to answer. If parliamentary elections were held next Sunday, the most frequently mentioned parties were AKEL (14.2%, n = 110) and VOLT (14.4%, n = 111). A significant proportion of participants expressed uncertainty (18.3%, n = 141) or indicated they would not vote (7.8%, n = 60). Other notable responses included DISI (10.0%, n = 77) and ELAM (8.9%, n = 69).

Regarding household income, (3.5%, n = 27) stated less than €800 per month. Around 21.1% (n = 162) reported incomes of €801–€1700, the largest group reported earning between €1701–€2600 per month (27.7%), followed by those earning €2601–€4300 (25.6%). Smaller proportions of participants indicated earning more than €6000 (5.6%, n = 43). A notable 10.8% (n = 83) chose not to disclose their income.

Most participants reported being employed full-time (71.5%, n = 548). Smaller percentages were students (8.5%, n = 65), retired (8.2%, n = 63), or employed part-time (4.8%, n = 37). Only 3.3% (n = 25) reported being unemployed, while 3.7% (n = 28) preferred not to answer.

When asked about their type of employment, the largest group indicated working in the private sector (42.0%, n = 322), followed by the public sector (24.2%, n = 185). Other responses included self-employment (10.3%, n = 79) and semi-government organizations (6.5%, n = 50). Around 16.1% (n = 123) preferred not to disclose this information.

3.2 Descriptive statistics of main variables

Participants were first requested to state the extent to which they are concerned by climate change on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from "Not worried at all" to Extremely worried". The findings suggested that most of the participants were very worried with climate change. With the exception of 25,2% who stated none or little worry the rest (74,8%) indicated significant to extreme worry about climate change.

We used a question from the European Social Survey (ESS) to capture the position of the participants on climate change. We let participants know that some people argue that climate change is entirely due to natural processes, while others argue that it is due to human activity and then ask them what they thought is the cause of climate change. They could give one of five answers. Below are the percentages we got for each option: Entirely due to natural processes (2,7%), Mainly due to natural processes (5,9%), About equally from natural processes and human activity (25,4%), Mainly due to human activity (50,7%), Entirely due to human activity (14,2%), I prefer not to say (1%). From these answers it is clear that the vast majority recognizes the responsibility of humanity for climate change.

3.2.1. Stance on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs)

Using the same Agreement-Disagreement 5 point Likert scale we asked participants to state their opinion on seven possible Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). There was resistance to the idea of a pipeline from Turkey to Cyprus by a majority of Greek Cypriots. There were more people agreeing than disagreeing with the proposal of a joint account of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots from income from Natural Gas. On the rest of the CBM proposals (Opening of Famagusta port and Tymbou Airport under UN jurisdiction and return of Varosha to UN administration, the idea of the formation of a Truth Commission, History Textbooks rewriting and Photovoltaics park in the UN Buffer Zone there was a clear majority that accepted the proposals).

1) A natural Gas pipeline from Cyprus to Turkey (55% totally disagree/disagree, 19,8% neither agree nor disagree, and 25,2% totally agree/agree).

2) Photovoltaics panel in the UN Buffer Zone for use by both communities in Cyprus (21,5% totally disagree/disagree, 13,7% neither agree nor disagree, and 64,8% totally agree/agree).

3) Opening of Famagusta Port and Tymbou Airport under UN jurisdiction and return of Varosha to UN administration (22,3% totally disagree/disagree, 19,3% neither agree nor disagree, and 58,4% totally agree/agree).

4) The formation of a joint account of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots from income from Natural Gas (30,9% totally disagree/disagree, 22,3% neither agree nor disagree, and 46,8% totally agree/agree).

5) The individuals who personally harmed other individuals from both communities should testify on an investigative commission tasked to document past rights violations in Cyprus (7,8% totally disagree/disagree, 16,2% neither agree nor disagree, and 76% totally agree/agree).

6) New history textbooks of Cyprus should be written by a group of historians and educators from both communities of Cyprus (22% totally disagree/disagree, 13,2% neither agree nor disagree, and 64,8% totally agree/agree).

7) New history textbooks of Cyprus should be written by CoE experts and both communities of Cyprus (23% totally disagree/disagree, 15,5% neither agree nor disagree, and 61,5% totally agree/agree).

3.2.2. Quality of Bicommunal Relations

In another block of questions in the questionnaire we asked about the quality of intercommunal relations with Turkish Cypriots (Frequency of Crossings and Intergroup Contact, Prejudice, Realistic and Symbolic Threats) and Stance on Various forms of Solution to the Cyprus Problem (Continuation of the Status Quo, BBF, Unitary State and Two State solution). We also asked questions related to political preferences: Political Orientation, Party preference, Vote in last EU parliament elections.

On a thermometer that run from 0 (Very cold/negative feelings towards TCs) to 100 (Very warm/positive feelings towards TCs) with 50 indicating a neutral stance the results suggested that the majority shared positive feelings towards TCs. More specifically, there was 22,5% that scored between 0-49, 13,2% stated 50 and 64.3% scored 51-100 suggesting that the majority of Greek Cypriots are positively predisposed towards Turkish Cypriots.

Related to crossing the checkpoints, about one-third of respondents (33.7%) reported crossing to the north more than seven times, while 21.9% stated they had never visited. The remaining participants were distributed across lower visit frequencies, with 17.7% visiting 2–3 times, 14.8% once, and 12.0% reporting 4–6 visits.

To explore the quantity of contact with TCs we asked the following question: “Thinking about social contacts, communication, conversation, not just seeing each other--whether at home or at work, or somewhere else, whether you crossed over to the other side (occupied areas) or not--how much contact do you have these days with Turkish Cypriots under the following circumstances? Please answer on a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means Never and 7 means Often”. (Table 2).

Table 2. Quantity of Contact with TCs

	1- Never	2	3	4	5	6	7- Often
At work	60,2%	11,5%	7,2%	4,9%	4,7%	2,9%	8,8%
At bi-communal gathering	61,6%	11,2%	5,7%	6,0%	5,5%	2,6%	7,4%
In the area where you live	65%	13,4%	6,8%	4,5%	3,1%	2,6%	4,6%
Occasional meetings in the occupied areas	49,2%	13,2%	6,9%	9%	8%	3,9%	9,8%
Occasional meetings in the free areas	42,2%	20,7%	10,7%	8,3%	7,7%	4,2%	6,3%

We also explored the level of Realistic and Symbolic threats towards Turkish Cypriots with 6 items (3 relating to symbolic threats and 3 relating to realistic threats). On the whole it was revealed that both realistic and symbolic threats were below the midpoint of 3 so in this sense they were at low levels. For example, to the statement "I think that Turkish Cypriots do not have the same mentality as Greek Cypriots the findings were (41,5% totally disagree/disagree, 23,4% neither agree nor disagree, and 35,1% totally agree/agree). On the statement "Turkish Cypriots make it harder for Greek Cypriots people to find a decent job" most people clearly disagreed (77,4% totally disagree/disagree, 18,1% neither agree nor disagree, and 4,5% totally agree/agree). These findings point to the fact that more than 20 years after the opening of the checkpoints in 2003 contact has significantly reduced the levels of realistic and symbolic threats of GCs towards TCs.

3.2.3. Acceptance of various forms of solution and perceptions of co-operation with Turkey

We asked participants which of the three options (against, neither against nor in favor but I could tolerate it if necessary, and in favor) they would choose in relation to various possible solutions to the Cyprus problem? (Keeping the Status Quo, BBF, Unitary State, Two State Solution). A clear majority was against the continuation of the Status Quo and a Two State solution whilst tolerating or being in favour a Unitary State and a BBF solution (Table 3 below).

Table 3. *Acceptance of Various Types of Solution*

Type of Solution	***Against***	***Neither against nor in favor but I could tolerate it if necessary***	***In favor***
Keeping the Status Quo	61,3%	31%	7,6%
BBF	21%	33,6%	45,4%
Unitary State	21%	25%	54%
Two State Solution	69,8%	19,3%	11%

As we suspected that the majority of Greek Cypriots would be opposed to the idea of collaboration with Turkey *before* a solution to the Cyprus problem we wanted to enquire possible reasons for this resistance. So we asked them to position themselves on a 5 point Likert scale from totally disagree (1) to totally agree (5) on the following items:

1) Turkey's involvement in energy projects with Cyprus poses a threat to Cyprus' security (28,1% totally disagree/disagree, 26% neither agree nor disagree, and 45,9% totally agree/agree).

2) Any energy cooperation between Cyprus and Turkey will result in Cyprus strengthening its strategic position (31,1% totally disagree/disagree, 27,6% neither agree nor disagree, and 41,3% totally agree/agree).

3) Economic gain for Turkey from energy projects involving Cyprus will weaken Cyprus' strategic position in the region (38% totally disagree/disagree, 29,3% neither agree nor disagree, and 32,7% totally agree/agree).

4) A natural gas pipeline from Israel to Turkey via Cyprus will have positive economic benefits for Turkey and negative ones for Cyprus (26,4% totally disagree/disagree, 33,1% neither agree nor disagree, and 30,6% totally agree/agree).

The findings suggest that our sample can be divided more or less in 3 equal parts. About ⅓ sees the potential of a win-win relationship with Turkey, ⅓ sees a zero sum relationship and about ⅓ is unsure. Distrust and security concerns seem to be behind hesitancy to co-operate with Turkey before a solution to the Cyrus issue.

A correlation table between the main variables can be found in Appendix A. The pattern of correlations is suggestive of an interesting interconnection between increased opportunities of contact with the Turkish Cypriot community, environmental concerns and good quality intergroup relations (reduced realistic and symbolic threats). The older generation interestingly appears more sensitive to environmental concerns and more ready to engage with the other community.

3.3. Conjoint analysis

The conjoint analysis utilized the framework presented above in Table 1. Given overrepresentation of some demographic and political subgroups in our sample we present findings both with and without weights and control variables to control for overrepresentation some categories in terms of gender, age and residency area (urban/rural). We also run simulations that demonstrated how specific combinations of attributes could influence public approval likelihood. As explained above, the core of the experiment lies in presenting each respondent with 5 pairs of hypothetical agreement packages. Each package was defined by a set of six attributes, each corresponding to a policy domain in the context of a possible resolution of the Cyprus Problem: the political structure of the federal executive, territorial arrangements, compensation for displaced persons, the structure of the judicial system, security guarantees and implementation, and energy cooperation projects.

To analyse the data, we estimated two separate models using the same experimental dataset. The first model is a plain multinomial logistic regression[4] (Figure 1), which treats the

[4] We opted for an MNL model because it more accurately reflects the nature of our data. In our conjoint experiment, respondents make discrete choices between alternative profiles, and MNL models are specifically suited to model such probabilistic, non-continuous outcomes. They allow for non-linear relationships between attributes and choice probabilities, ensure that predicted probabilities remain within the [0,1] range, and account for the structure of repeated choices within respondents. Although

choice as a direct function of the attributes presented, without respondent-level weights or controls. This type of model is commonly used in conjoint experiments as they identify the relative effect of each attribute level on the probability that a respondent selects a given package. The second model is a weighted and controlled multinomial logistic regression (Figure 2). It includes post-stratification weights to better reflect the population characteristics of Greek Cypriots in terms of gender, age and residency area (urban/rural). In addition, it includes two individual-level covariates: ideological self-placement on the ideological left-right scale and a thermometer scale measuring affect toward Turkish Cypriots to control for self selection in the FB Ads sample. These variables were included also to check whether preferences vary based on ideological orientation or outgroup attitudes.

The logic behind this dual-model approach is to compare the robustness of findings. The plain model provides a clean estimate of the attribute effects as they appear in the raw experimental responses. The weighted/controlled model adjusts for sample representativeness and accounts for potential confounding from ideology or outgroup attitudes. If the patterns of support for policy attributes are similar across the two models, this strengthens our confidence in the reliability of the results.

Both models produced consistent conclusions. The magnitude and significance of coefficients remained largely the same. Minor differences were observed in the exact coefficient estimates, with some attenuation in the weighted model as expected when accounting for population structure. This suggests that preferences for most institutional options are shared across different segments of Greek Cypriot society. In Appendix B we also present an OLS analysis of the same data.

linear probability models are simpler to interpret, they rely on stronger assumptions, such as constant effects across the outcome scale. For transparency, we also present OLS estimates in Figures B1-B4 in Appendix B.

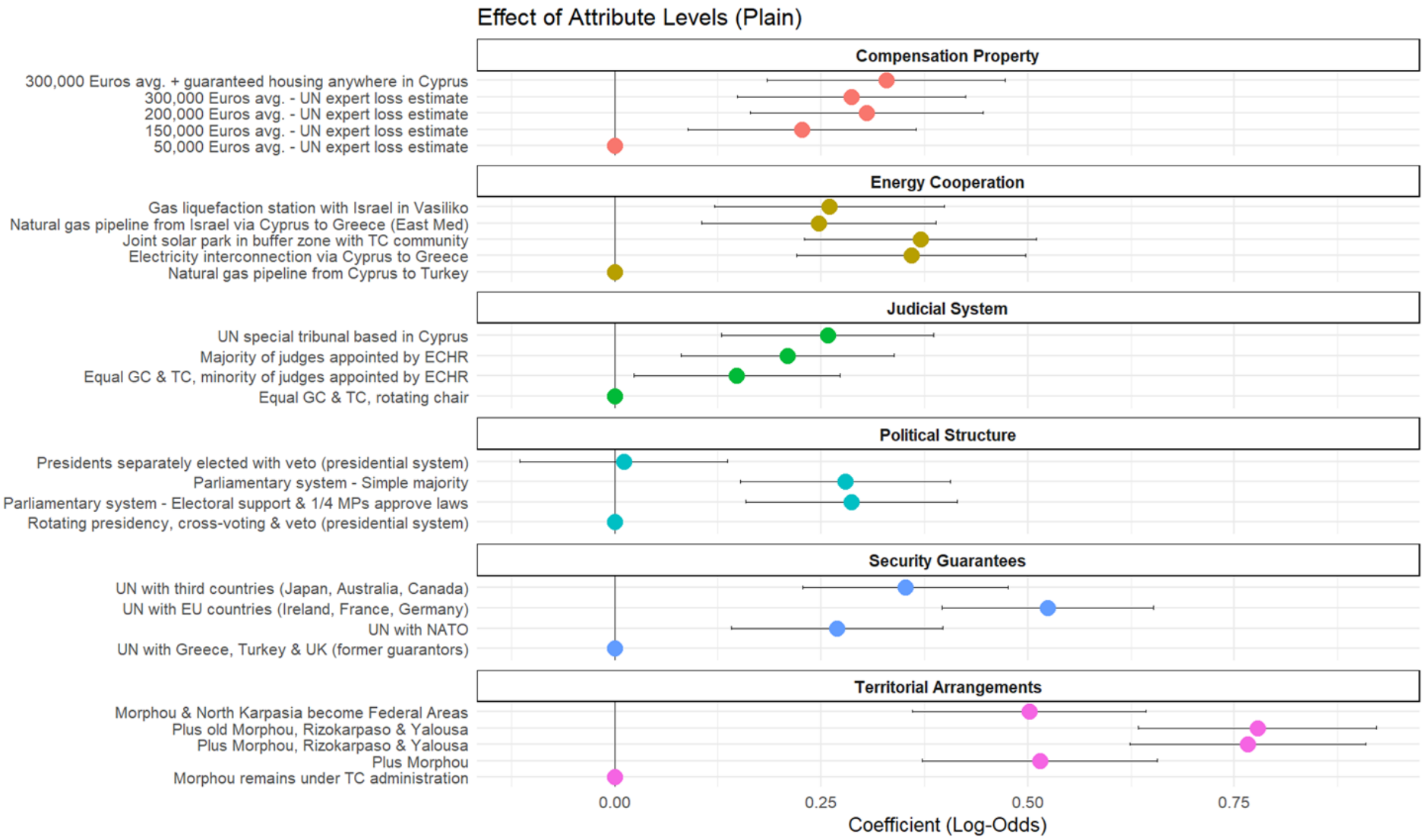

Figure 1 - Multinomial Logit Model - Pooled estimates without respondent-level controls or weights

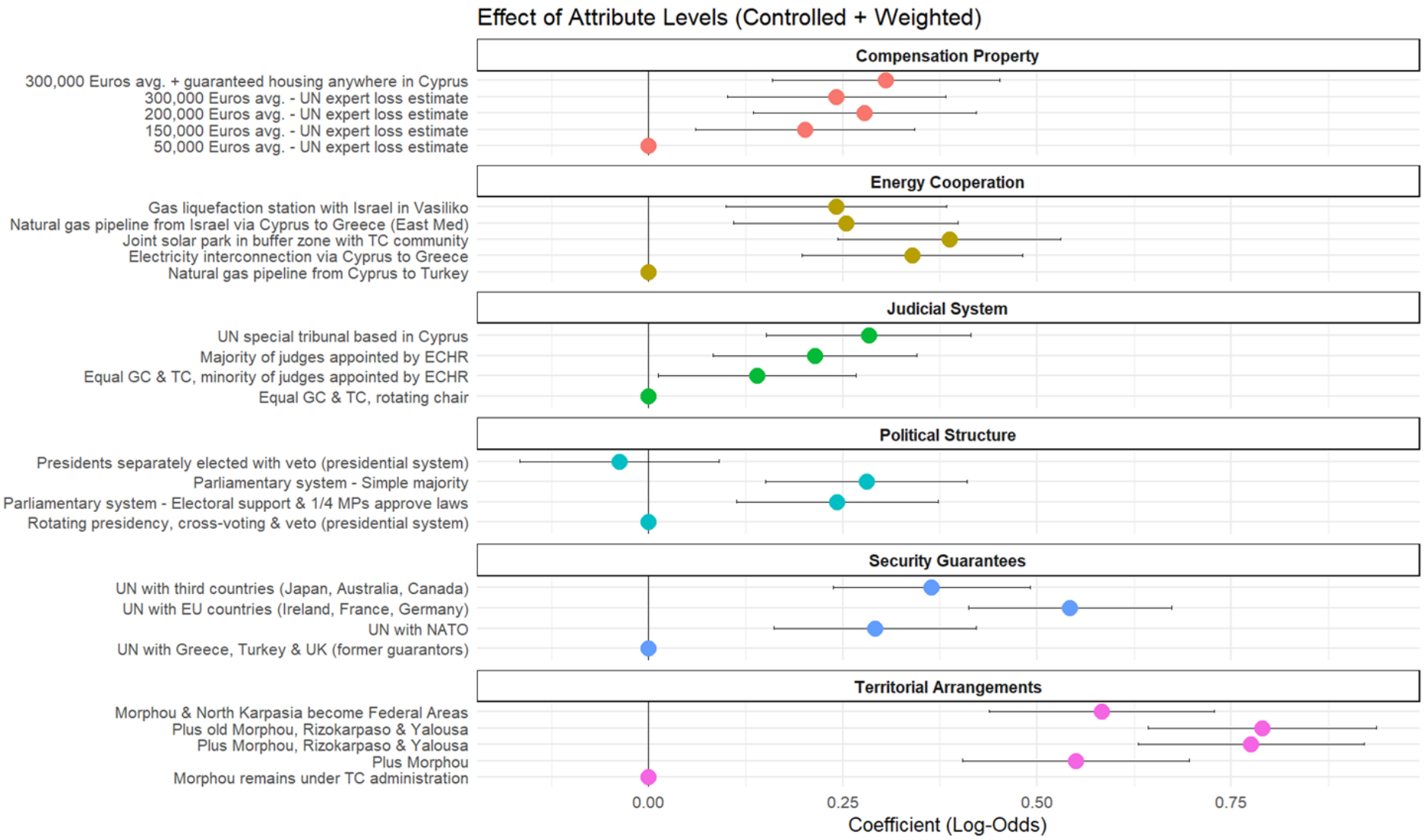

Figure 2 - Multinomial Logit Model - Weighted estimates with ideological and affective covariates (Left-Right and feelings toward Turkish Cypriots)

Each attribute in the experiment included multiple levels. They reflect realistic policy options discussed in past negotiation rounds. The political structure attribute comprised four levels. The baseline level was a rotating presidency with cross-voting and veto powers, which has featured prominently in past rounds of negotiations. This arrangement was contrasted with three alternatives: a parliamentary system with simple majority rule, a parliamentary system requiring cross-community approval by at least one-quarter of MPs from each community, and separately elected presidents with veto powers. The goal was to assess whether respondents preferred legislative-based structures over dual executive systems (which have historically been associated with political deadlock). Interestingly, past negotiations for Cyprus have entertained both type of systems for instance a parliamentary system in the Annan Plan (leading to a collective presidential council) vs. presidential one in Crans Montana (leading to a rotating presidency between a Greek and a Turkish Cypriot elected representative). Both models have been discussed publicly enabling informed responses by the public.

The model results show that both parliamentary options were significantly more popular than the rotating presidency. In particular, the parliamentary system with one-quarter MP approval had a positive coefficient of approximately 0.248 ($p < 0.001$) in both models, indicating that respondents preferred a political structure that ensures minority input in legislative decisions. The simple majority parliamentary system also received positive support, though to a slightly lesser extent. In contrast, the separately elected presidents with veto model was viewed less favourably, with a small and statistically insignificant coefficient in both models, suggesting that Greek Cypriots may associate this structure with past failures of power-sharing or consider it too rigid.

The territorial arrangements attribute included five levels, reflecting different configurations of territory returned to Greek Cypriot control. The baseline level was Morphou remains under Turkish Cypriot administration, which was contrasted with the following alternatives: Morphou returned, Federal status for Morphou and Karpasia, Plus Morphou, Rizokarpaso & Yalousa returned, and Plus old Morphou, Rizokarpaso & Yalousa returned. Territorial return was the most influential attribute in the model. The option Plus old Morphou, Rizokarpaso & Yalousa had the highest coefficients in both models, estimated at approximately 0.78. This finding suggests a strong public preference for a settlement that includes substantial territorial restitution. Even the option of returning Morphou alone showed a notable positive effect ($\beta \approx 0.55$), while the federal status arrangement, although less preferred than outright return, still performed better than the baseline.

The third attribute focused on compensation and resettlement measures for displaced persons. It included five levels, each presenting a different financial compensation amount and

structure. The baseline level offered an average compensation of €50,000 calculated by UN experts. Other levels included €150,000, €200,000, €300,000, and €300,000 plus guaranteed housing anywhere in Cyprus. The logic behind these levels was to examine whether a sense of restorative justice in the form of monetary compensation would increase public support for a peace package. The results were again clear. Support increased steadily with higher compensation levels. The €150,000 option had a coefficient of approximately 0.20, while €300,000 stood at about 0.24. The highest level, €300,000 plus guaranteed housing, had a coefficient of around 0.31, the highest within the compensation attribute. These patterns were virtually identical across both models.

A fourth attribute related to security guarantees and implementation oversight, an issue long debated in peace negotiations. The baseline level represented the existing guarantor model: UN oversight with Greece, Turkey, and the UK as guarantors. This was compared with three alternatives: UN with EU member states, UN with NATO, and UN with neutral third countries such as Canada or Japan. This attribute was included to assess the desirability of maintaining or replacing the 1960s guarantor framework. Respondents clearly preferred international arrangements that excluded the original guarantors. The UN with EU countries option received the highest level of support in this category ($\beta \approx 0.54$), followed by UN with third countries ($\beta \approx 0.36$) and UN with NATO ($\beta \approx 0.29$). These results suggest a clear perception that neutral or European-led oversight would be more legitimate and trustworthy. The traditional guarantor system, especially involving Turkey, seems to have lost credibility in the eyes of most Greek Cypriots. Again, these results remained stable between the basic and controlled models.

The fifth attribute addressed the judicial system under a future settlement. The baseline level was a bi-communal court with an equal number of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot judges and a rotating chairperson. Alternatives included a UN special tribunal based in Cyprus, a court where most judges are appointed by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), and a court with equal GC and TC judges, plus some appointed by ECHR. Preferences leaned toward greater international involvement. The UN tribunal option had a coefficient of 0.28, while the majority ECHR-appointed judges option received 0.21. Even the hybrid model involving ECHR participation alongside equal local judges scored better than the baseline ($\beta \approx 0.14$). This suggests that Greek Cypriots consider purely bi-communal models as not sufficiently robust.

The final attribute related to energy cooperation. The baseline option was a natural gas pipeline from Cyprus to Turkey. Alternatives included a joint solar park with Turkish Cypriots in the Buffer Zone, an electricity interconnection from Israel to Greece via Cyprus, a gas

pipeline from Israel to Greece via Cyprus (EastMed), and a gas liquefaction facility at Vasiliko in cooperation with Israel.

All four alternatives to the Turkey-bound pipeline were preferred by respondents. The highest levels of support were recorded for the joint solar/photovoltaics park ($\beta \approx 0.39$) and the electricity interconnector ($\beta \approx 0.34$). The EastMed pipeline and liquefaction facility also received positive coefficients, though lower. These results indicate that Greek Cypriots favour energy cooperation that promotes co-management and environmental sustainability while remaining cautious of cooperation with Turkey in the absence of a political settlement.

In both models, these patterns are consistent. This reinforces the conclusion that the observed preferences are shared across the Greek Cypriot population.

In addition to estimating how each attribute level affects the likelihood of a package being selected, we also conducted a Part-Worth Utilities analysis to determine the relative importance of each attribute in shaping respondents' choices (Figure 3). This approach calculates the difference between the highest and lowest estimated utility (log-odds) scores within each attribute. The wider the range of preferences expressed for different levels of an attribute, the more influential that attribute is in driving overall decision-making.

This analysis confirmed that Territorial Arrangements are by far the most decisive factor in respondent evaluations. The utility range for this attribute is 0.79, meaning participants expressed the strongest variation in preference depending on which territorial option was included. This reflects the fundamental role of land, restitution and symbolic return in shaping public opinion on a future settlement.

The second most important attribute was Security Guarantees, with a range of 0.542. This proves that the identity of external guarantors, whether traditional powers or neutral international actors, plays a significant role in shaping how secure a settlement package is perceived to be.

Energy Cooperation follows with a utility range of 0.387, indicating that while this attribute is somewhat less polarising, it still meaningfully influences support. Preferences are clearly dependent on whether energy projects involve Turkey. Apart from that, the most popular option was the joint solar park in the Buffer Zone.

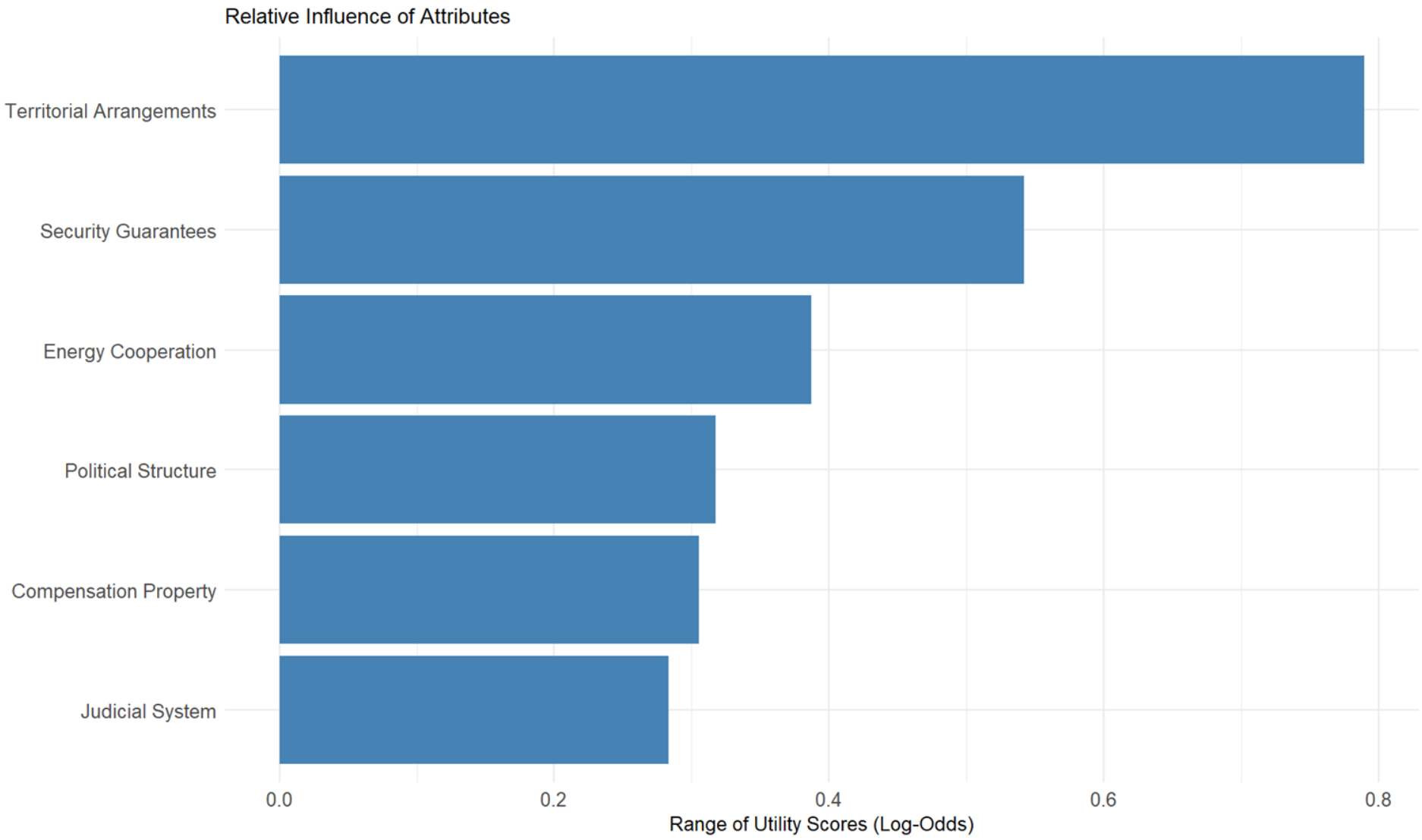

Figure 3 - Relative Importance of Settlement Attributes Based on Part-Worth Utility Rang

Political Structure, with a utility range of 0.318, shows that the federal executive institutional arrangements matter, but appear to be of somewhat lower salience than material or sovereignty-related issues. The same holds true for Compensation and Property, which had a range of 0.305. While generous compensation is positively received, the differences across levels are not as wide as for territorial outcomes. Finally, Judicial System came last with a utility range of 0.283, suggesting that while respondents express clear preferences here as well, this domain is less influential compared to others.

Simulations of Specific Packages

One of the strengths of conjoint analysis is that the preference for specific combinations of values of each attribute can be simulated and a predicted percentage of the population that would prefer the specific package could be estimated. This predicted percentage ranged in our data from 7.1% for a package that included all the least preferred values of Figure 1 to the most preferred values to 74.8% for a package that included the most preferred values. In between there were various accepted packages that garnered 50%+. Some indicative combinations with similar levels of acceptance to a previous conjoint experiment reported in Loizides et al., (2020) were also replicated here (see Table 4 below). It is worth noting that even the least preferred energy option of a pipeline from Cyprus to Turkey, if combined with other attractive elements of other packages can by accepted by 63% of the participants. Thes findings is suggestive of another advantage of the conjoint experiment which brings to the surface the fact that unpopular elements of a solution could be accepted as part of a comprehensive settlement when weighed against other more favourable values.

Table 4. *Simulations of Support of Peace Packages*

	1	2	3	4
	Guterres	New Deal 1	New Deal 2	New Deal 3
Federal executive	GC and TC co-presidents elected through cross-voting (FedEV1)	All parties in proportion to their seats in the assembly (FedEV3)	All parties in proportion to their seats in the assembly (FedEV3)	By political parties according to their electoral support, and at least a quarter of the MPs from each community must approve the legislation (FedEV2)

Territory	Plus Morphou (TerV2)	Morphou and North Karpasia to become federal areas (TerV5)	Plus old part of Morphou, Rizokarpaso, Yialousa (TerV4)	Plus old part of Morphou, Rizokarpaso, Yialousa (TerV4)
Properties	150,000 Euros (on average) depending on a fair UN-expert estimate of loss (ProV2)	300,000 Euros (on average) plus guaranteed housing anywhere in Cyprus (ProV5)	300,000 Euros (on average) plus guaranteed housing anywhere in Cyprus (ProV5)	300,000 Euros (on average) depending on a fair UN-expert estimate of loss (ProV4)
Implementation	UN with EU countries such as Ireland, France and Germany (ImpMV3)	UN with third countries such as Japan, Australia and Canada (ImpMV4)	UN with third party such as NATO (ImpMV2)	UN with EU countries such as Ireland, France and Germany (ImpMV3)
Supreme Court	With equal number of GCs & TCs with rotating chair (SupCV1)	By a special international UN tribunal with headquarters in Cyprus (SupCV4)	With equal number of GCs & TCs with rotating chair (SupCV1)	By a special international UN tribunal with headquarters in Cyprus (SupCV4)
Energy co-operation	Natural gas liquefaction station in cooperation with Israel in Vasiliko (EnergV5)	Joint solar park in the dead zone with the Turkish Cypriot community (EnergV3)	Joint solar park in the dead zone with the Turkish Cypriot community (EnergV3)	Natural Gas Pipeline from Cyprus to Turkey (EnergV1)
Predicted Package Support	48%	65%	61%	63%

Together, these results show that material and sovereignty-linked issues, namely land, return, and security, carry more weight than institutional design. This suggests that while governance structures and legal frameworks matter, proposals that do not offer meaningful gains on territory and security are unlikely to garner support among Greek Cypriots.

The conjoint experiment provides clear evidence that the Greek Cypriot public is more likely to support a settlement package that includes meaningful territorial restitution, a generous and practical compensation scheme, parliamentary governance with minority protections, international judicial oversight, and co-joint energy projects with TCs that symbolise Cypriot owned co-operation.

3.4. Citizens assemblies findings

The Citizen's assembly (CA) project served as a platform for employing mono-communal sessions to gather in-depth qualitative data. Conducted in December 2024, the project included 2 sessions in the Greek Cypriot community (seaside town and village in Famagusta district). Participants were recruited to reflect diverse political and demographic profiles, with particular efforts made in the Greek Cypriot community using the University of Cyprus Centre for Field Studies (UCFS) Online Panel to enhance diversity. Participants were incentivized with bakery vouchers. Each session introduced the concept of citizens' assemblies, provided expert insights into the green transition, and encouraged participants to propose policies, using electric vehicles and photovoltaics as a case study to illustrate the practical implications of the transition. Data collection included participant quotes, policy proposals, and observations from facilitators. The sessions, however, were limited to 2-3 hours and focused on a single question, constraining the breadth of discussion. Despite these limitations, the project captured valuable insights into local concerns, such as fairness in policymaking and scepticism about the role of corporations and political corruption in green transition policies. Shared themes and notable differences were revealed among the priorities and concerns between urban and rural participants with rural participants expressing more resistance towards Green transition policies, especially photovoltaics when they take up agricultural land.

Town participants were particularly focused on financial incentives to make the transition to electric vehicles more accessible where photovoltaics were also discussed. Proposals included providing incentives for consumers and investors to benefit both economically and environmentally, subsidizing electric car purchases to ensure social equality, and offering tax breaks or interest-free loans for electric vehicle purchases. Participants expressed a clear expectation for political leadership to take on these measures, reflecting the sentiment that the

transition needs robust financial support. However, they also raised broader concerns about renewable energy policies, emphasizing the need to go beyond photovoltaics. One participant noted, *"There was some disappointment with action on renewable energy by the political leadership,"* and highlighted *"mistakes, such as building photovoltaic farms without developing adequate energy storage."* Another participant expressed concerns about solar panels' unintended environmental impact, stating that they could *"contribute to rising temperatures because not all the sun's energy is captured, and some is reflected back."* These statements demonstrate a detailed engagement with the challenges of the green transition and a call for comprehensive planning.

In the village the focus shifted to fairness, health concerns, and the perceived role of commercial interests in shaping the green transition. Participants were sceptical about the health impacts of photovoltaic systems, with one individual stating, *"I've heard that photovoltaic panels, which draw a lot of energy on the roof of the houses, can cause headaches and discomfort for people living in those houses, even cancers."* Concerns about fairness were also prominent, particularly regarding land use. A participant questioned, *"Why aren't the rooftops of manufacturing companies used for photovoltaics instead of rural agricultural land?"* This frustration extended to the application process for converting state land (halitika) into other uses, with claims that it favored large companies who applied to use halitika for photovoltaics farms and immediately got permission at the expense of farmers who were asking for agricultural land use of halitica for years without success. One participant shared, *"Many farmers and livestock owners have been waiting for their applications for cultivation and lease permits to be processed for 17 to 20 years, while private companies benefit immediately."* These concerns shaped the most popular proposals in the village, which included subsidies for car purchases based on income, incentives for green housing policies, and long-term strategic planning for electric vehicle adoption.

A shared theme across both sessions was a deep mistrust of political leadership which parallels the finding from the quantitative study that most people are worried today about corruption in Cyprus.

In the village participants explicitly linked this mistrust to the influence of powerful interests, stating that *"private companies means political pressures."* This scepticism extended to concerns about the health and environmental impacts of technologies like photovoltaics and batteries, which some participants believed were being promoted without adequate consideration of their effects on communities in the long run. In the town disappointment with political leadership's mishandling of renewable energy (increasing cuts in photovoltaic production by the Electricity Authority of Cyprus in individual housing units) further reinforced this mistrust.

The urban-rural differences were also clear. In the town participants were focused on financial mechanisms and expanding renewable energy options, reflecting a forward-looking approach to facilitating the transition. In contrast, village participants prioritized protecting rural communities, threat of losing agricultural land and addressing health risks, and ensuring fairness. As one participant in the village remarked, *"The broader issue is that the positive energy transition has been turned into a negative one due to inefficiencies and the inability of our political system to manage these challenges effectively."*

Both sessions also revealed a tendency for some participants to express unconventional theories, particularly concerning the health effects of photovoltaics bordering conspiracy theories in a couple of instances from two participants. This indicates a mistrust of authority and expert opinion, suggesting that future citizens' assemblies must engage with these concerns more effectively. Overall, the discussions underscore the need to address the distinct priorities and apprehensions of urban and rural communities while fostering trust in the green transition process.

4. Discussion

This report employs conjoint experiment design data to understand citizen perspectives on regional cooperation and green transition in the context of Cyprus and adds contextual nuance with data collected from citizens assemblies. Together, these methods ensure comprehensive coverage of citizen views, preferences, and the dynamics of policy acceptance.

The conjoint analysis explored how variations in these attributes influenced public preferences, with data analysed using advanced statistical techniques, and both multinomial logit models and OLS estimating the effect of attribute levels on choice probabilities. Also, the analysis identified the relative weight of each attribute on decision-making using part-worth utilities. The results illuminated that preferences were mostly consistent across different demographic groups and attitudes.

Integrating findings from both studies reveals recurring concerns about the trustworthiness of political leadership, corruption, and the perceived fairness of green transition policies. While the Citizens' Assemblies (CA) project focused on local dynamics and differences between urban and rural communities, the Green Transition Research (GTR) study provided a broader perspective, showing how political affiliations and regional factors shape public preferences. Additionally, energy policies were found to be closely linked to the Cyprus problem, with certain projects gaining higher acceptance when associated with political resolution or economic benefits.

Despite the Citizens' Assemblies revealing regional differences in environmental concerns, these variations did not appear in the conjoint survey. The Citizens' Assemblies also highlighted institutional distrust, particularly in rural areas, where participants expressed scepticism about government-led initiatives. Furthermore, there was a lack of optimism regarding the success of the green transition, especially among rural communities. Conspiracy thinking also emerged as a common theme in discussions, reflecting broader concerns about misinformation and scepticism toward environmental policies. However, the conjoint experiment did not include these variables, making direct comparisons difficult. Interestingly, the survey provided indications of the tertiary transfer effect in intergroup contact (e.g., Meleady et al., 2019). This effect suggests that interactions between different social groups influence not only perceptions of a specific outgroup but also extend beyond intergroup relations to shape broader cognitive and social attitudes. According to Meleady et al. (2019), engaging with outgroup members enhances cognitive flexibility, reduces biases, and fosters

more open-minded thinking. Boin et al. (2021) further explain that while primary transfer effects improve perceptions of a directly encountered group and secondary transfer effects extend these positive attitudes to other outgroups, tertiary transfer effects influence overall cognitive processes, including problem-solving and creative thinking. From the quantitative analysis (see correlation table in Appendix A) we see that higher quantity of contact with TCs related to higher concern over environment and ranking environment over economy showing a cognitive flexibility expansion. While, we cannot infer direct association this shows an indication of the cognitive impact of intergroup contact to issues over the post-conflict settings which probably relate to the cultivation of universalist values that as know bring together an expansion of the ethical horizon of people to include various outgroups and also environmental concerns (see Schwartz, 2012).

To address these findings, policymakers should focus on building public trust through transparency and equitable policies, actively engaging local communities to ensure that policies reflect their specific needs, and institutionalizing regular citizen participation through assemblies. Clear communication about the environmental and health impacts of green technologies is essential in combating public scepticism. Projects such as the proposed buffer-zone solar/photovoltaics park should be implemented alongside widely accepted confidence building measures like a truth commission, revision of history textbooks and the return of Varosha and the Famagusta port under UN administration. A holistic approach that balances economic development, environmental sustainability, and social equity is crucial for a successful transition. Emphasizing economic benefits and ensuring support for vulnerable populations during the shift to green energy will further increase public acceptance.

In conclusion, the combined insights from these projects indicate a complex interaction of local, political, and environmental factors influencing Cypriots' views on the green transition. Policymakers can develop more inclusive and evidence-based strategies that promote sustainability while addressing broader societal challenges.

One of the most important findings of this project is that the window for regional energy co-operation between Cyprus, Greece, Turkey and Israel accompanied by a solution to the Cyprus problem is wide open, with the project findings proposing specific variations of the Guterres framework that can be accepted by a clear majority in the community. Future, research should replicate these findings in the Turkish Cypriot community.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. *Bivariate Correlations of main variables (Note: *p<0.05 ,**p=<0.01 , two-tailed, Gender[Male=1, Female=2, Residency [Urban=1, Rural=2])*

		Political Ideology	Gender	Residency area	Age	Climate concern	Human vs natural processes	Quantity of contact	Symbolic threat	Realistic threat	Environment vs economy	Collective action for environment
1	*Political ideology*	—										
2	Gender	.00	—									
3	Residency area	.02	.01	—								
4	Age	-.07*	-.25**	-.03	—							
5	Climate concern	-.16**	.13**	.00	.10**	—						

		Political Orientation	Gender	Residency area	Age	Climate concern	Human vs natural processes	Quantity of contact	Symbolic threat	Realistic threat	Environment vs economy	Collective action for environment
6	Human vs natural processes	-.12**	.09*	-.03	.02	.36**	—					
7	Quantity of contact	-.23**	-.03	.04	.23**	.26**	.13**	—				
8	Symbolic threat	.33**	.13**	-.02	-.26**	-.27**	-.15**	-.37**	—			
9	Realistic threat	.30**	.10**	.00	-.19**	-.28**	-.12**	-.35**	.63**	—		
10	Environment over economy	-.11**	.12**	.00	.04	.53**	.29**	.24**	-.22**	-.24**	—	
11	Collective action for environment	-.26**	.14**	.00	.07	.62**	.40**	.30**	-.29**	-.30**	.58**	—

Appendix B. Figure B1. AMCE of plain model using OLS (Cregg Package in R)

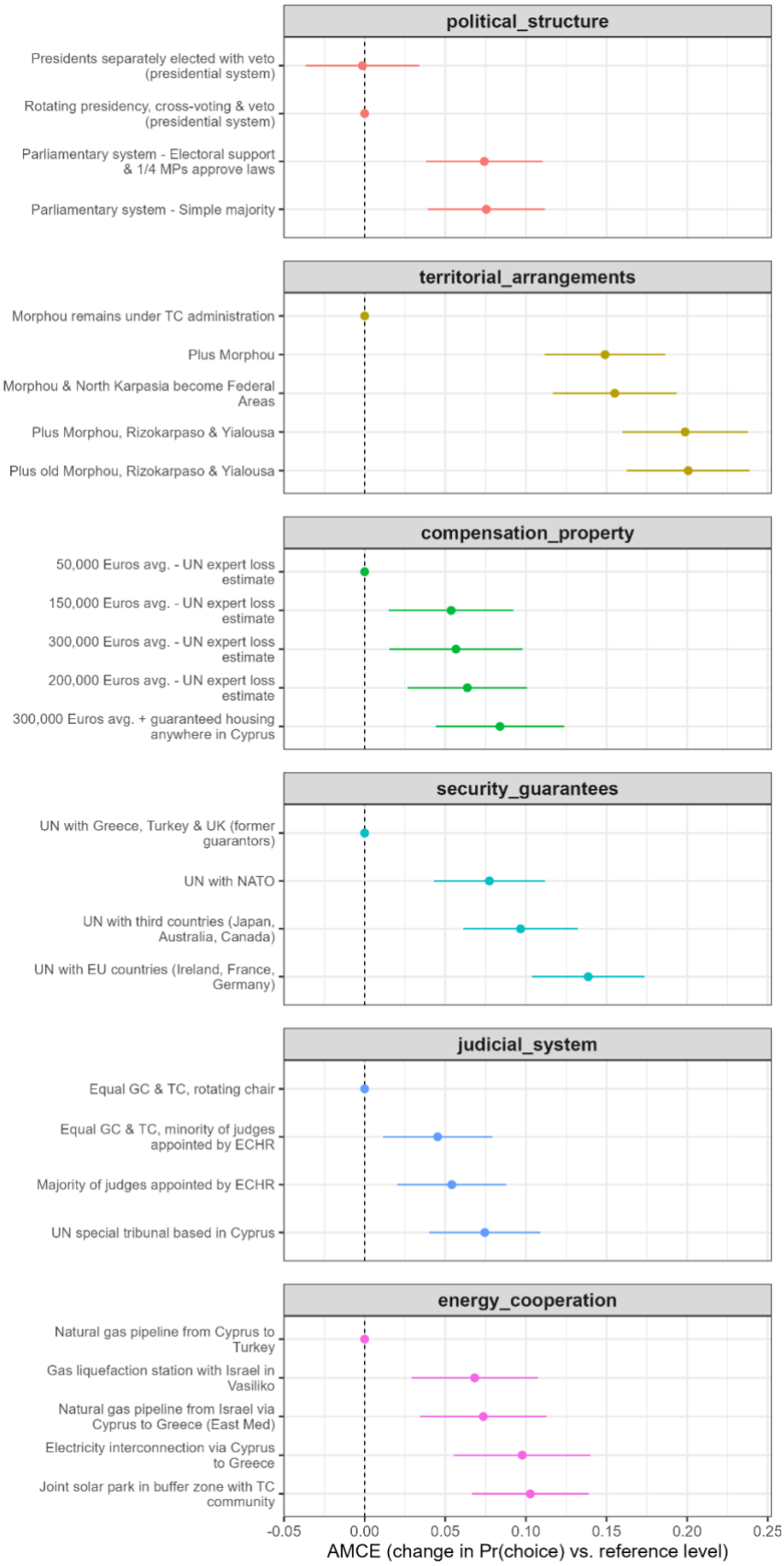


Figure B2. MM of plain model using OLS (Cregg Package in R)

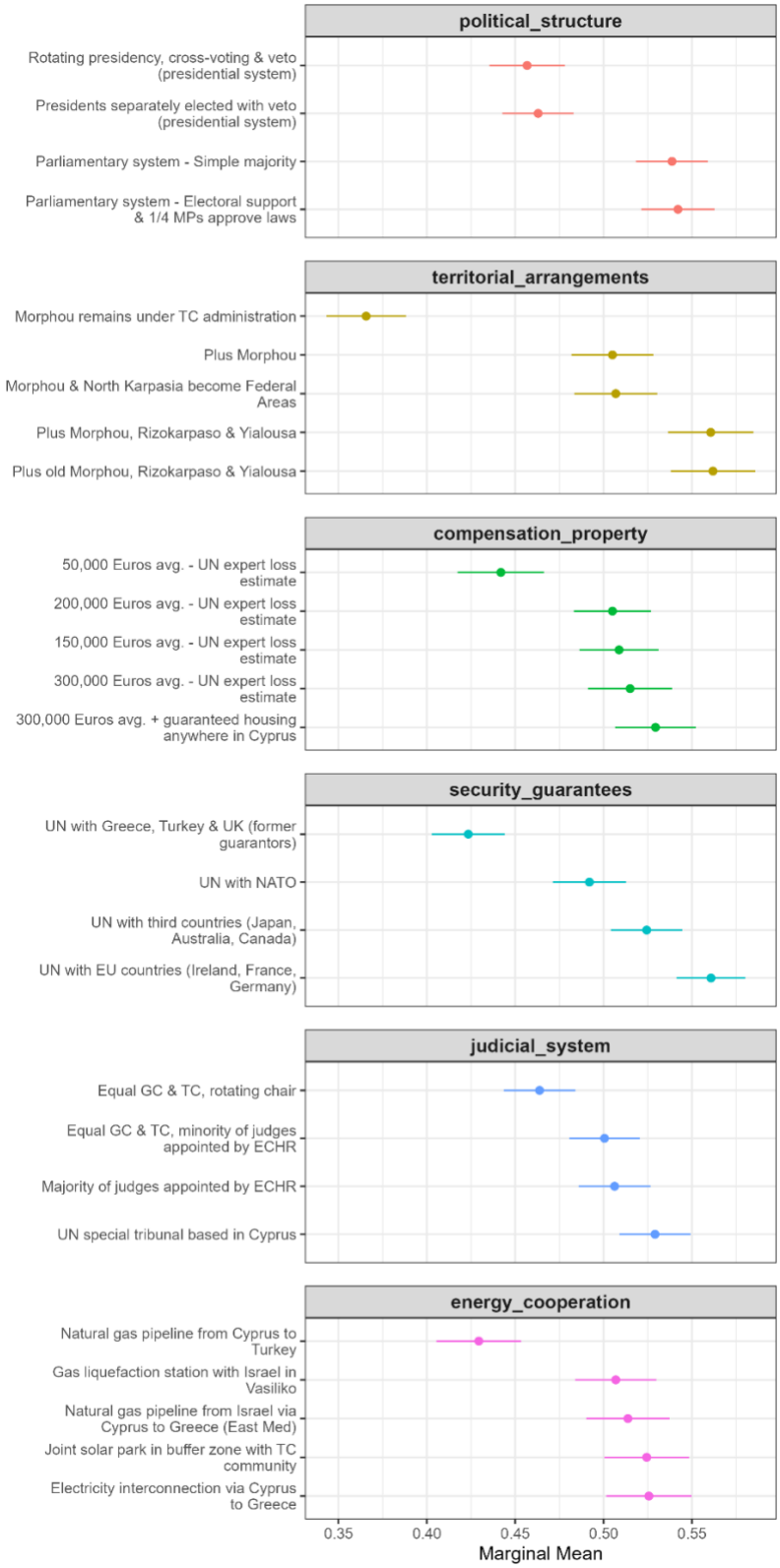

political_structure
Rotating presidency, cross-voting & veto (presidential system)
Presidents separately elected with veto (presidential system)
Parliamentary system - Simple majority
Parliamentary system - Electoral support & 1/4 MPs approve laws
territorial_arrangements
Morphou remains under TC administration
Plus Morphou
Morphou & North Karpasia become Federal Areas
Plus Morphou, Rizokarpaso & Yialousa
Plus old Morphou, Rizokarpaso & Yialousa
compensation_property
50,000 Euros avg. - UN expert loss estimate
200,000 Euros avg. - UN expert loss estimate
150,000 Euros avg. - UN expert loss estimate
300,000 Euros avg. - UN expert loss estimate
300,000 Euros avg. + guaranteed housing anywhere in Cyprus
security_guarantees
UN with Greece, Turkey & UK (former guarantors)
UN with NATO
UN with third countries (Japan, Australia, Canada)
UN with EU countries (Ireland, France, Germany)
judicial_system
Equal GC & TC, rotating chair
Equal GC & TC, minority of judges appointed by ECHR
Majority of judges appointed by ECHR
UN special tribunal based in Cyprus
energy_cooperation
Natural gas pipeline from Cyprus to Turkey
Gas liquefaction station with Israel in Vasiliko
Natural gas pipeline from Israel via Cyprus to Greece (East Med)
Joint solar park in buffer zone with TC community
Electricity interconnection via Cyprus to Greece
0.35
0.40
0.45
0.50
0.55
Marginal Mean

Figure B3. AMCE of weighted model using OLS (Cregg Package in R) and controls

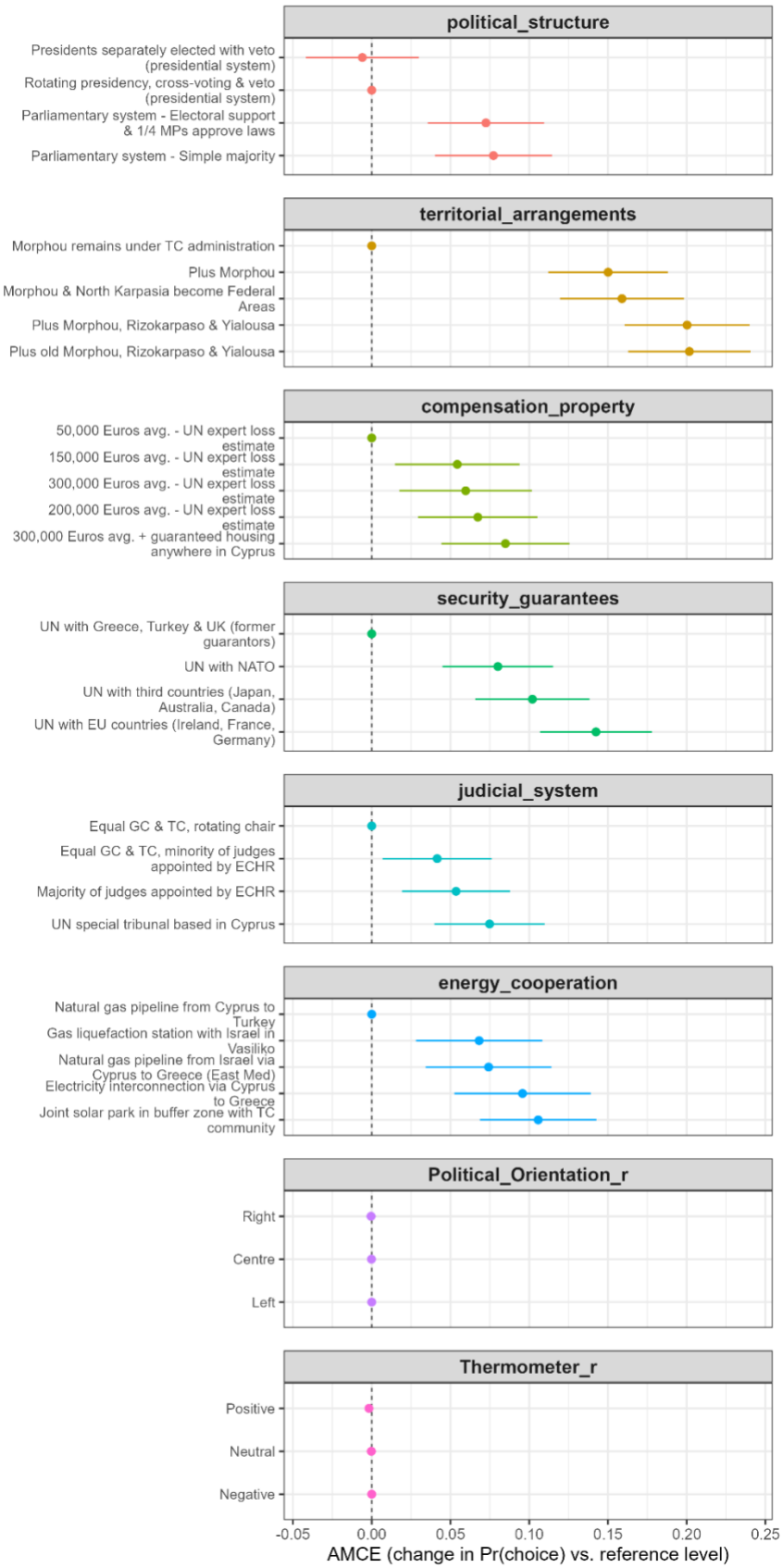
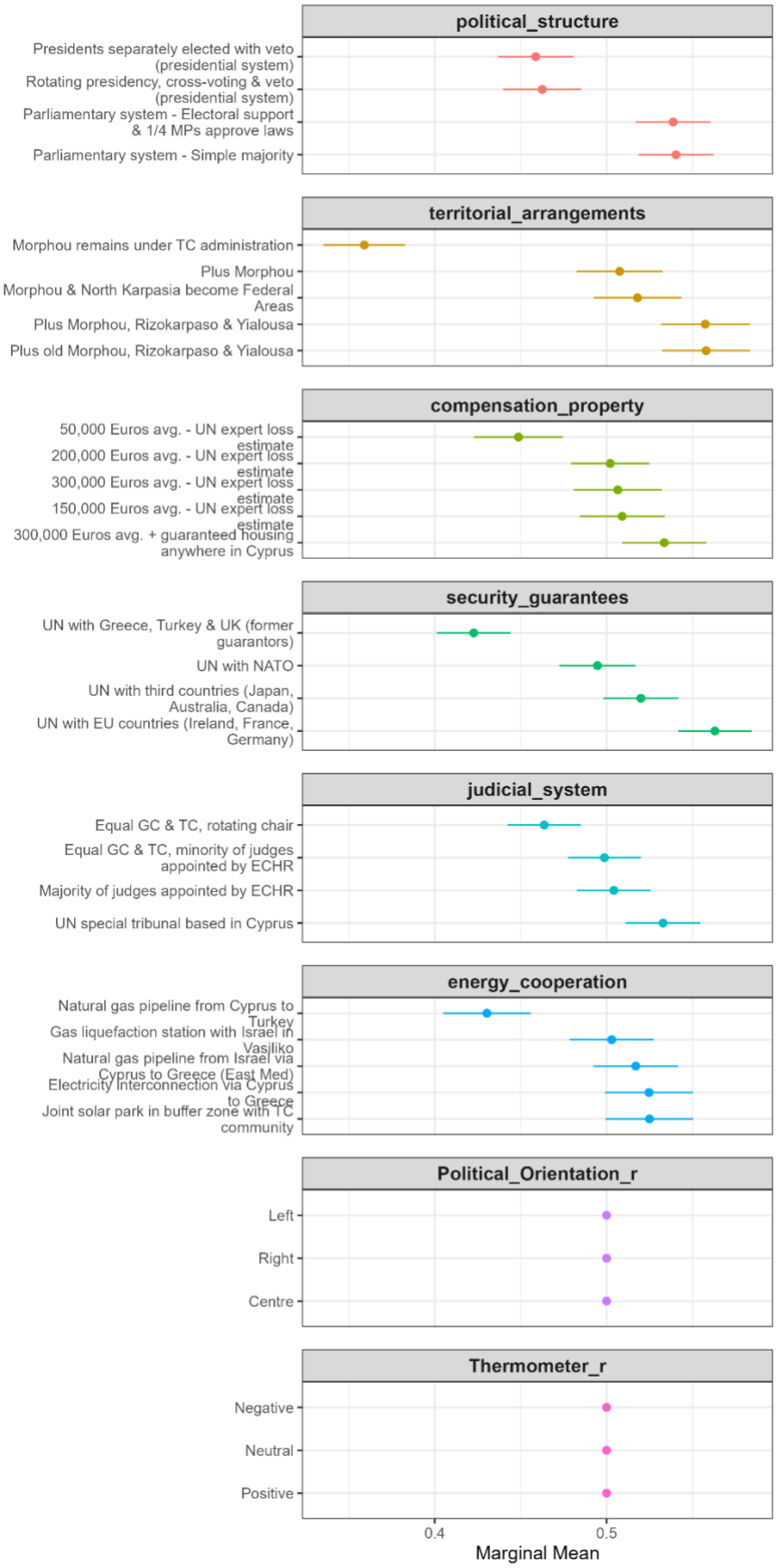


Figure B4. MM of weighted model using OLS (Cregg Package in R) and controls


political_structure
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Rotating presidency, cross-voting & veto (presidential system)
Parliamentary system - Electoral support & 1/4 MPs approve laws
Parliamentary system - Simple majority
territorial_arrangements
Morphou remains under TC administration
Plus Morphou
Morphou & North Karpasia become Federal Areas
Plus Morphou, Rizokarpaso & Yialousa
Plus old Morphou, Rizokarpaso & Yialousa
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200,000 Euros avg. - UN expert loss estimate
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300,000 Euros avg. + guaranteed housing anywhere in Cyprus
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UN with Greece, Turkey & UK (former guarantors)
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UN with third countries (Japan, Australia, Canada)
UN with EU countries (Ireland, France, Germany)
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Equal GC & TC, rotating chair
Equal GC & TC, minority of judges appointed by ECHR
Majority of judges appointed by ECHR
UN special tribunal based in Cyprus
energy_cooperation
Natural gas pipeline from Cyprus to Turkey
Gas liquefaction station with Israel in Vasiliko
Natural gas pipeline from Israel via Cyprus to Greece (East Med)
Electricity interconnection via Cyprus to Greece
Joint solar park in buffer zone with TC community
Political_Orientation_r
Left
Right
Centre
Thermometer_r
Negative
Neutral
Positive
0.4
0.5
Marginal Mean