

Supplementary Material

Manuscript: *Organisational Determinants of Administrative Decision-making Quality in European Asylum Offices: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA)*

Table of Content

1. Case-selection.....	2
2. Calibration: Method & Data.....	4
2.1. Outcome set: Overturn rate	4
2.2. Condition 1: Experience of the Asylum Office.....	5
2.3. Condition 2: Administrative insulation.....	6
2.4. Condition 3: Competence of Caseworkers.....	8
2.6. Condition 4: Asylum application pressure	17
3. Supplementary Analysis	18
3.1. Necessity analysis of single conditions.....	18
3.1.1. Single necessary conditions.....	18
3.1.2. Sufficient but Unnecessary and Insufficient (SUIN)	18
3.1.3. Sufficiency analysis of single conditions.....	19
3.2. Standard Analysis.....	19
3.2.1. Conservative solution	19
3.2.2. Parsimonious solution.....	20
3.3. Analysis of the absence of the outcome.....	20
3.3.1. Parameters of fit for single conditions (~OUT).....	20
3.3.2. Truth table and minimisation for ~OUT	21
3.4. Robustness	22
3.4.1. Threshold sensitivity.....	22
3.4.2. ESA and Standard QCA	23
4. Dataset.....	24
References	25

1. Case-selection

Comparing court overturn rates, the outcome set in this analysis, across countries is challenging due to substantial differences in asylum appeal systems. These differences include the organisation of appeal bodies, court competences, procedural practices, and safeguards (Gill et al. 2024; Dallara and Lacchei 2024). The case selection follows four main criteria to ensure comparability:

- Type of Appeal:

Asylum appeals can take the form of administrative or judicial reviews. Administrative appeals (e.g., Greece, Spain, Portugal, Hungary since 2020) are conducted by specialised administrative bodies with a narrow focus on immigration law. Judicial appeals are carried out by formal courts that provide broader legal scrutiny, reflecting values such as judicial independence, procedural fairness, and more detailed legal reasoning (Thomas and Tomlinson 2019). For this reason, only countries with judicial appeal systems are included.

- Scope of Review:

EU law requires that asylum applicants have access to an effective remedy through judicial review, where courts must consider facts and circumstances as they exist at the time of the judicial decision, not only as presented during the administrative phase. This requirement is not fulfilled uniformly across member states (e.g., Cyprus, Spain, Hungary). Only countries meeting this criterion are selected.

- Right to Remain During Appeal:

The right to remain in the country while an appeal is pending is essential for effective remedies, even though it may be limited in cases such as manifestly unfounded claims or accelerated procedures. Removal before the appeal is decided breaches this right. All European states except Hungary (which repealed this provision in 2015) maintain a regular appeal stage with automatic suspensive effect. Countries retaining this right are included.

- Access to the Appeal Procedure:

Access is measured by the time allowed to substantiate an appeal. Excessively short deadlines can hinder effective legal challenges (Reneman 2008: 73). EU law does not define a minimum reasonable deadline. The European Parliament recommended 45 days (Peers et al. 2015: 288), though this was not adopted. Constitutional courts in the Czech Republic and Austria have ruled that deadlines of two and seven days respectively are too short¹, and the Court of Justice of the European Union has found deadlines of 15 days or fewer insufficient. Consequently, only countries allowing more than 15 days to lodge an appeal are included.

These criteria ensure that the cases analysed share comparable institutional and procedural frameworks, allowing meaningful cross-country comparison of judicial overturn rates. Table 1 presents an overview.

¹ Austrian Constitutional Court, Decision G31/98, G79/98, G82/98, G108/98 of 24 June 1998; Czechia, Czech Constitutional Court, Decision No. 9/2010.

Country	Type of Appeal ²	Court competence	Automated suspensive effect	Time limits to provide evidence
AT	V	V	V	V
BE	V ³	X ⁴	V	V
BUL	V	V	V	V
CT	X	X	V	X
CZ	V	V	V	V
ES	V	X	V	V
FI	V	V	V	V
FR	V	V	V	V
GE	V	V	V	V ⁵
GR	X	V	V	V
HUN	X	X	X	X
IE	X	V	V	V
IT	V	V ⁶	V	V
NL	V	V	V	V
PL	X ⁷	V	V	X
SW	V	V	V	V

Table 1: Case-selection

² Administrative appeals are handled by specialized bodies with streamlined processes focusing on immigration law, while judicial appeals occur in formal courts, providing a broader scrutiny and legal interpretation, often with more procedural safeguards and the possibility of further appeals.

³ Belgium is an exception within this selection due to the full jurisdiction (“volle rechtsmacht”) of its politically independent Council for Alien Law Litigation (RvV). The Council may rule on both legal and factual aspects of a case, allowing it to entirely reform decisions taken by the Commissioner-General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS), including granting or denying protection status.

⁴ However, it has no investigative powers of its own and must rely solely on the evidence in the file or provided by the parties. If insufficient information is available, the RvV annuls the decision and refers the case back to the CGRS. In cases of annulment appeals, the RvV assesses legal compliance, procedural validity, and reasonableness, without ruling on the substance of the protection request itself. Suspension of execution must be separately requested in such cases. The overturn rate for Belgium should therefore be calculated as the sum of the annulements and reforming decisions.

⁵ In Germany, according to Section 74 of the Asylum Act, the intention to appeal has to be submitted within 14 days after the notification of the decision of the BAMF. Claimants do have up to one month to submit evidence and build their appeal case in front of the Administrative Court.

⁶ Except in cases under Article 35-bis of the Procedure Decree (Law 130/2020), which refers to Article 3 (4-bis) of Decree Law 13/2017 and Law 46/2017, such as when the applicant is detained in a CPR or hotspot.

⁷ In light of Article 46 of the recast APD, the Polish Refugee Board should be treated as a quasi-judicial body. Members of the Polish refugee board should be asylum experts and at least half of them should be lawyers. However, they have a different competence as the formal courts in the judicial appeal.

2. Calibration: Method & Data-collection

2.1. Outcome set: Overturn rate

The overturn rates for the nine countries in the sample have been calculated using Eurostat data on *Asylum decisions at final instance by type of decision - % of total decisions at final instance* (Eurostat: migr_asydecfp). Only decisions related to international protection were considered. Decisions based on humanitarian protection were excluded (e.g. Italy), as this status is grounded in national law and, in some countries (e.g. Belgium), is granted by administrative bodies outside the asylum authority, such as the Immigration Office. Furthermore, for Belgium, the Council of Alien Law Litigation may either reform or annul first instance decisions. Both types of outcomes were included in the overturn rate, as both reflect a revision of the initial administrative decision. Data for these outcomes were retrieved from the annual reports of the Council.

Year	AT	BE	CZ	FIN	FR	GE	ITA ⁱ	NL	SW	EU average
2010	19	6	50	43	18	8	4	14	9	15
2011	19	9	6	28	16	11	26	14	14	13
2012	21	10	4	14	15	11	71	14	13	13
2013	70	10	3	15	16	12	77	13	12	15
2014	51	19	1	11	16	6	55	14	11	11
2015	34	18	3	10	16	8	28	11	19	12
2016	52	16	1	12	17	34	23	9	12	27
2017	50	19	3	24	19	33	12	10	9	24
2018	50	18	4	22	21	24	13	8	7	21
2019	49	15	3	24	25	19	15	9	5	18
2020	50	10	14	41	22	22	17	14	7	20
2021	52	21	19	25	22	20	14	17	7	20
2022	59	23	9	16	21	21	10	14	6	19

Table 1: Administrative decisions overturned (in %) (incl. lag ⁱⁱ). Source: Eurostat - migr_asydecfp; For Belgium: CALL - Annual reports.

To align court decisions with the corresponding administrative year, a time lag of one year was applied. This reflects the average duration of appeal procedures in most countries. For Germany and Italy, a two-year lag was applied from 2019 onward due to documented delays in the appeal process. This adjustment is based on information from the ECRE Asylum Country Reports. For Czechia and Finland no data regarding processing times was found, hence, the standard one-year lag was applied.

To calibrate temporal patterns in overturn rates, the observation period from 2010 to 2022 was divided into three sub-periods. An overview of national overturn rates is provided in the Supplementary Material; the purpose of this section is to document the calibration procedure underlying the outcome set reported in Table 1. For each country, annual overturn rates were compared to the sample-wide average for the corresponding year in order to establish an external benchmark. Deviations from this benchmark were then calculated and aggregated at the sub-period level. To capture within-country variation over time, each country's average deviation from the benchmark in a given sub-period was contrasted with its average deviation over the full observation period. Countries that displayed

consistently large positive or negative deviations from the sample average were assigned full membership or non-membership in the outcome set, depending on whether overturn rates were substantially higher or lower than the benchmark for at least three years within a sub-period. For all remaining cases, sub-period averages were evaluated relative to national averages across the entire period to identify relative improvements or declines in administrative decision-making quality.

Condition 1: Experience of the Asylum Office

For the condition “experience of the asylum office”, a baseline indicator was constructed using data from 1990 to 2000, following an approach analogous to Van Wolleghem and Sicakkan (2022). The indicator combines two population-adjusted measures capturing a country’s historical exposure to asylum decision-making. The first measure reflects the average size of the resident population of recognised refugees and asylum seekers per thousand inhabitants during the period 1990–2000, based on data from the UNHCR Data Portal. This measure accounts for the accumulated presence of individuals granted protection or awaiting decisions, including those who applied before 1990. The second measure captures the average number of new asylum applications per thousand inhabitants over the same period, based on Eurostat data, indicating the level of incoming procedural demand. Multiplying these two components yields a composite indicator that approximates the structural and sustained decision-making experience of national asylum authorities over time.

To derive period-specific values for this condition, the baseline indicator was adjusted to reflect subsequent developments in each country’s exposure to asylum applications. For the period 2010–2013, the baseline value (1990–2000) was increased by the average national share of total EU asylum applications received between 2000 and 2010. For the period 2014–2017, the value for 2010–2013 was incremented using the average share recorded during 2010–2013. The same procedure was applied to the period 2018–2022, based on the average share observed during 2014–2017. This stepwise adjustment produces a relative measure for each period that captures both long-term institutional exposure and changes in a country’s relative position within the European asylum system.

The resulting values serve as an approximation of the accumulated operational experience of national asylum offices across time. However, to improve the calibration and contextualise its development, additional sources were consulted to trace the institutional evolution of the asylum authorities. This included an examination of founding dates, reforms, and institutional trajectories. The following sources provided country-specific information:

- Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands: Caestecker and Ecker (2022; 2023), with a particular focus on institutional path dependencies and bureaucratic structuring. For Belgium specifically Caestecker & Ecker (2024).
- Czechia: Kušniráková and Čížinský (2011) and Drbohlav (2012), which provide background on administrative formation and legislative shifts.
- Finland: No additional qualitative or institutional accounts were consulted.
- France: Akoka (2020) and Macias (2021), which examine the institutional and procedural developments of OFPRA and CNDA.
- Germany: Kreienbrink (2013), which offers a historical overview of BAMF’s development and internal structure.
- Italy: Ponzo (2023), focusing on the legal and organisational shifts following the 2008 and 2017 reforms. Salvatici (2023), the evolution and operation of the Italian asylum regime before the 1990s.
- Sweden: Caestecker and Ecker (2022), although Sweden was not treated as a detailed case study in their analysis.

These sources supported the interpretation of the quantitative baseline by situating the numerical trends within broader institutional trajectories.

Condition 2: Administrative insulation

Administrative insulation was evaluated through a multi-stage procedure. First, the formal level of insulation was examined by analysing the legal framework governing each administrative authority, including their appointment procedures and budgetary autonomy. Subsequently, additional sources were consulted to assess the practical autonomy of asylum offices, although such information was not available for all countries in the sample (for example, Czechia). Third, an assessment was made of the political climate in which the asylum offices operate at the time of study, looking at the policies implemented and the positions of the governmental parties.

The assessment drew on the following country-specific sources (*step 1 and 2*):

- Austria: Analysis focused on the internal organisation of the Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl (BFA) within the Bundesministerium für Inneres (BMI), referencing the Fremdenpolizeigesetz 2005 (FPG) and Asylgesetz 2005 (AsylG), as well as publications by the BMI and Verfassungsdienst and scholarly work (Dahlvik 2018)
- Belgium: Alien Law of 15 December 1980.
- Finland: The Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) was analysed with reference to the Immigration Act (301/2004), complemented by Migri's own publications and expert interviews.
- France: The Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides (OFPRA) was assessed according to law n°52-893 of 25 July 1952.
- Germany: The Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF) was reviewed in relation to the Asylum Procedure Act (AsylVfG).
- Italy: Examination centred on the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and relevant decrees such as Legislative Decree no. 142/2015, supplemented by data from the ECRE Asylum Information Database and expert interviews.
- Netherlands: The Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) was assessed based on the Aliens Act (Vreemdelingenwet 2000), IND annual reports, and expert interviews.
- Sweden: The Swedish Migration Agency was evaluated under the Aliens Act (Utlänningslagen 2005), drawing on Migration Agency annual reports and expert interviews.

Based on this review, administrative insulation was coded on a four-level scale: 0, 0.25, 0.75, and 1. Lower values indicate lower degrees of insulation, while higher values reflect greater administrative autonomy.

To assess the degree of insulation from political influence (*step 3*), two datasets were used: CHES-Europe and DEMIG-QUANTMIG.

- The CHES-Europe dataset provides measures of the immigration policy positions of governing parties in selected European countries between 2006 and 2019. It captures shifts and variations in party stances along a spectrum from liberal to restrictive immigration policies. The positions are weighted according to each party's relative influence in government, based on their proportion of parliamentary seats. Italy displays the greatest volatility over the period. Table 2 presents the weighted average immigration stance per country across four time points, on a scale from 0 (strongly liberal) to 10 (strongly restrictive).

Country	AT	BE	CZ	FIN	FR	GE	ITA	NL	SW	Average
2006	8,44	4,43	5,19	5,01	7,57	6,68	4,64	5,01	5,24	5,80
2010	6,57	4,36	6,15	5,08	8,44	5,92	8,54	5,08	5,07	6,13
2014	5,24	5,63	5,31	4,31	4,60	6,89	3,48	4,31	2,23	4,67
2019	7,02	5,71	8,29	4,02	6,18	5,49	6,48	4,02	5,61	5,87

Table 2: Position on immigration of participating parties in the government, weighted based on parliamentary seats and election results between 2006 and 2019; (0 = Strongly favors a liberal policy on immigration; 10 = Strongly favors a restrictive policy on immigration) (CHES-Europe)

- The DEMIG-QUANTMIG dataset (De Haas et al., 2015; Schreier et al., 2023) tracks over 7,600 migration policy changes in 31 countries from 1990 to 2020. The data categorises policy reforms by type, magnitude, target group, origin, and restrictiveness level. This enables longitudinal analysis of immigration policy trends. For this study, only reforms targeting refugees, asylum seekers, other vulnerable groups, their family members, and irregular migrants were selected. These mainly concern access to asylum procedures, family reunification rights, work rights for asylum seekers and refugees, readmission agreements, and asylum procedure regulations, including national transpositions of EU directives.

The sample includes 905 reforms enacted between 1990 and 2023 across nine countries. The total restrictiveness score for a given country c in year t is calculated as:

$$R_{c,t} = \sum_i M_{c,t,i} \cdot D_{c,t,i}$$

where

where $M_{c,t,i}$ denotes the magnitude of reform i in country c and year t , taking the values 0.5, 1, 2, or 3, and $D_{c,t,i}$ denotes the direction of reform i , coded as 1 for more restrictive reforms and -1 for less restrictive reforms.

These annual scores were aggregated into key policy periods reflecting major shifts in EU asylum and migration policy. Table 3 summarises the net restrictiveness scores by country and period.

Period	Average	Restrictive Reforms Countries	Liberal Reforms Countries
Pre-harmonisation (1990-1998)	10.55	BE (25), FR (13.5), GE(19), IT (18), NL (13.5)	AT (0.5), CZ (0), FI (6), SW (-0.5)
After Tampere & 9/11 (1999-2004)	4.5	AT (7), FR (6.5), GE(12.5), IT (6), NL (10.5)	BE (2), CZ (3.5), FI (-7.5), SW (4)
CEAS Phase 1 (2005-2009)	-2.61	AT (5), GE(3.5), IT (12.5)	BE (-3), CZ (-16.5), FI (-3), FR (-9), NL (-3.5), SW (-9.5)
CEAS Phase 2 (2010-2013)	-0.5	AT (5.5), BE (9.5), FI (2), IT (3), NL (4)	CZ (-5), FR (-10.5), GE(-6.5), SW (-6.5)
EU Refugee Crisis (2014-2017)	3.17	AT (20), BE (18.5), GE(25)	CZ (0.5), FI (-1.5), FR (-17.5), IT (-14.5), NL (-4.5), SW (2.5)
Post-crisis, Global Compacts, New Pact (2018-2020)	8.33	AT (13), CZ (8.5), FR (18), IT (23.5)	BE (2), FI (-1.5), GE(2.5), NL (3.5), SW (1)
Contemporary policies (2021-2023) ⁸	3.95	CZ (6), FI (8), FR (4), IT (17)	AT (3), BE (0), GE(-11), NL (0.5), SW (8)

Table 3: Directory of policy changes in selected EU member states for different periods. Higher number, more restrictive.

⁸ Calculation of policy reforms (N=76), based on national asylum development of EASO (2021) and EUAA (2022; 2023; 2024), made with the same methodology as the DEMIG-QUANTMIG database (See De Haas et al. 2015).

After normalising the values, I calculated the overall political climate within each country for the three periods and multiplied this composite score by the insulation value to produce a combined measure reflecting the interaction between political context and bureaucratic insulation. The resulting values, ranging between 0 and 1, were then calibrated using thresholds of 0, 0.25, 0.75 and 1, although the raw values could have been used without calibration.

Condition 3: Competence of Caseworkers

The condition “Competence of Caseworkers” was disaggregated into three empirical parameters: recruitment strategy (especially in times of high burden);

- *Staff Changes and Adjustments*, which measures the capacity of asylum agencies to respond effectively to fluctuating application volumes through timely staffing adjustments and sustain staff retention.
 - Full Membership (1): Agencies consistently demonstrate adequate staff adjustments to match caseload fluctuations and maintain high staff retention. This includes proactive recruitment, efficient resource reallocation, and measures to prevent burnout and turnover, ensuring operational capacity.
 - Point of maximum ambiguity (0.5): Agencies make efforts to adjust staffing levels in response to changing application numbers but experience significant challenges such as recruitment delays, persistent backlogs, or retention problems (e.g., high turnover, burnout, reliance on temporary contracts).
 - Full Non-Membership (0): Agencies systematically fail to make necessary staffing adjustments, resulting in severe capacity shortfalls, chronic backlogs, and unresolved retention issues.
- *Background of Staff*, which assesses the educational and professional qualifications of caseworkers, focusing on compliance with formal legal requirements or common practices concerning academic degrees and relevant experience in migration or asylum-related fields.
 - Full Membership (1): Cases where legal requirements or established recruitment policies consistently require caseworkers to hold a university degree (preferably Master’s level) and/or demonstrable prior professional experience in migration, asylum law, or related disciplines.
 - Point of maximum ambiguity (0.5): Cases where a university degree is generally required (Bachelor’s or Master’s), but specific prior experience in migration or asylum matters is less emphasised or inconsistently applied. This also includes cases where the degree requirement is below Master’s but still academically significant.
 - Full Non-Membership (0): Cases lacking clear or enforced educational standards or where caseworkers commonly have backgrounds unrelated to migration or asylum expertise.

Training of Staff

This parameter evaluates the scope, organisation, and consistency of both initial and ongoing training programmes provided to asylum caseworkers.

- Full Membership (1): Systems with comprehensive, structured, and regularly reviewed training programmes for new recruits and existing staff. Programmes cover legal frameworks, procedural knowledge, interviewing skills, vulnerability assessments, and frequently involve external experts (e.g., UNHCR, EUAA).

- Point of maximum ambiguity (0.5): Systems where training exists but is irregular, partially structured, or heavily reliant on informal on-the-job learning, with notable gaps in critical training areas.
- Full Non-Membership (0): Systems lacking formal or adequate training structures, with learning predominantly informal or ad hoc, resulting in widespread deficits in caseworker knowledge or skills.

In Table 4 additional information per country is provided:

Country	Staff Changes and Adjustments	Background of Staff	Training of Staff	Sources
Austria	Post-2014, the Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl (BFA) nearly doubled caseworker numbers from 169 (2014) to 316 (2016), peaking at 427 in 2018 due to the surge in applications (89,098 in 2015). Despite a 165% increase in staff, persistent backlogs remained. By 2021, numbers reduced to 365 as applications declined. Between Jan 2022 and July 2023, 318 new hires contrasted with 265 departures, revealing retention challenges. Staffing rose alongside organizational reforms, including introduction of standardized training in 2016.	Standardized training introduced in 2016 sought to unify decision-maker competencies. No explicit legal requirement documented for Master's degrees or prior asylum-specific experience. Early staff often lacked legal backgrounds.	Before 2008, training was inconsistent. UNHCR-supported initiatives, such as the QUADA project (2014), improved interpreter and procedural training. From 2015, BFA developed a procedural training course aligned with quality standards. In 2016, a 4-month standardized training launched covering 23 modules on law and procedure. UNHCR continued support via the 'Bridge' project (2020+), focusing on interviewing and vulnerable groups. Training initially relied on learning by doing and peer knowledge transfer. Ongoing biannual seminars based on the European Asylum Curriculum complemented formal training.	Rechnungshof Report (2019), p. 11; Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl (2015), p. 37; Parlamentarische Anfrage Nr. 15277/J (2023); Dahlvik (2018), pp. 53-57, 64-65.
Belgium	From 2009, the CGRS recruited additional staff on fixed-term contracts using temporary credits. Staff exceeded 450 FTEs by 2012, improving processing times. The 2015 refugee crisis led to 44,760 applications, overwhelming staff despite emergency recruitment. Post-2016, staff shortages and high workloads persisted with ongoing retention problems linked to temporary contracts and budget constraints. Employee well-being initiatives and	Officials directly involved in asylum decisions must hold a university degree or equivalent, a legal requirement enshrined since CGRS's establishment. This ensured baseline qualifications for decision quality.	2010 recruitment of new officers involved an intensive training trajectory combining foundational courses, interview techniques, simulated hearings, and the European Asylum Curriculum "Inclusion" module. Training included targeted mentoring, supervised gradual responsibility increase, and assessments. Additional modules addressed vulnerable groups and involved	CGRS (2011, p.55); EMN annual reports; Royal Decree, Belgian Official Gazette (2004)

	coaching programs were introduced from 2017 onwards.		external expertise in legal, managerial, and technical skills.	
Czechia	No detailed information found on staff changes or retention patterns in asylum offices.	Vacancy announcements require bachelor's or master's degrees and the ability to independently manage asylum cases per the Asylum Act. Job tasks include administrative processing, decision drafting, and handling stressful situations. Computer and foreign language skills (English) are mandatory.	No specific data available on training programs or structures for asylum caseworkers.	Ministry of the Interior vacancy announcement; no further sources provided.
Finland	Between 2010 and 2014, Migri experienced fluctuating application volumes and staffing shortages, with persistent backlogs. The 2015 refugee crisis increased applications to 32,476, prompting staff doubling and recruitment of 154 new caseworkers. Despite innovations, backlogs and high workloads continued. The 2022 Ukraine crisis led to a sharp increase in temporary protection applications (>47,000), increasing workforce strain. Caseworker turnover is high, with a double-digit annual attrition rate as staff move to other employers or better-paid positions.	Caseworkers generally hold a Master's degree, often in social sciences, administrative sciences, or law. They tend to be young with limited prior experience in asylum matters, viewing the position as entry-level. Many have some prior public sector or legal experience, or international organizational backgrounds.	New caseworkers receive approximately five to six weeks of organized training, combining general and case officer-specific content, initial supervised case handling, and reflection time. EUAA training plays a key role, with basic modules on interviewing, inclusion, and evidence assessment delivered within the first year, plus at least one annual EUAA training thereafter. UNHCR Nordic office provides occasional specialized training.	Head of Department International Protection - Migri (personal communication, 2024)
France	OFPPA historically depended heavily on temporary contracts and faced high turnover and stress until 2011. Reforms starting that year focused on hiring permanent staff to stabilize workforce. Recruitment efforts increased from 2015, targeting officers with specialized regional expertise.	Prior to 2011, caseworkers often lacked specialized education in asylum law. Reforms focused on hiring candidates with legal, humanitarian, or regional expertise, especially related to vulnerable groups. By 2022, staff were described as better educated and	Initial training evolved from informal learning to a structured 12-week induction program by 2015, including EASO modules on eligibility and interview techniques, plus legal, geopolitical, and organizational content. Ongoing training	Macias (2021), pp. 22-36, 118-126; OFPPA (2020, 2021, 2022)

	Mental health support and work-life balance initiatives were introduced from 2016 to 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated telework and digital recruitment adaptation.	professionally prepared. OFPRA classifies caseworkers as category A public agents.	expanded with thematic sessions, expert meetings, and increased EASO participation from 2017 onward. Informal knowledge exchange remained central alongside formal programs.	
Germany	BAMF has faced recurring staff fluctuations since the 1990s. The 1992/93 peak in asylum applications triggered large-scale recruitment, followed by dismissals once numbers fell, creating recurring cycles of expansion and contraction. From 2009 onwards applications rose steadily, yet requests for reinforcements were disregarded until the 2015 crisis, when staff numbers increased from around 3,000 to 9,000. Many were temporary employees or secondees from other agencies with limited screening. After 2017, staffing was reduced again to roughly 7,000, with the expiry of fixed-term contracts leading to the loss of experienced personnel and the arrival of new but inexperienced decision-makers. Since 2018, leadership has aimed to stabilise staffing with more permanent contracts and a stronger emphasis on professionalisation.	Between 2010 and 2013, most caseworkers were jurists or administrative economists without asylum-specific expertise, with an average age of around 51 years. During the rapid expansion of 2015-2016, backgrounds became more heterogeneous, as many new staff lacked legal training and were recruited primarily to increase output. A “Fordist” approach divided tasks between hearing officers and decision drafters, further diluting asylum-specific competence. This method was abandoned after 2017 in favour of reuniting hearing and decision-making. Post-2018 reforms placed greater weight on legal qualifications and administrative experience in recruitment. Staff discontinuity and the limited presence of asylum-specific expertise undermined consistency and quality, which reinforced calls for structural training and more professionalised selection procedures.	Training before 2015 was minimal, consisting largely of self-study and observation. During the 2015-2016 crisis, emergency training programmes lasted only a few days and were widely criticised as insufficient. Some new staff received no training at all, as management prioritised throughput over quality. After 2017, structured training aligned with the European Asylum Curriculum was introduced, with an emphasis on recurrent training and exchange between decision-makers. Initial shortcomings persisted, but the reforms signalled a shift towards embedding professional training as a cornerstone of consistent decision-making.	Koch et al. (2023) Thränhardt (2021; 2023)

Italy	Between 2010 and 2013, the Territorial Commissions (TCs) were still establishing their institutional identity. Staffing relied mainly on personnel seconded from police forces and local administrations, who often lacked prior specialisation in asylum or protection law. Caseworker adaptation was reactive and experiential without structured role differentiation. The limited autonomy of protection officials and the absence of full-time staff constrained the professionalisation of decision-making. From 2014 to 2017, under increasing CEAS influence and European Commission recommendations, reforms gradually replaced generalist personnel with a specialised cadre. The Minniti-Orlando reform (D.L. 13/2017) excluded police and local authority officials from panels and introduced 250 full-time civil servants dedicated exclusively to asylum decision-making. This reform introduced competitive recruitment and established caseworkers as a defined professional category responsible for asylum claims, reinforcing institutional clarity and accountability. From 2018 to 2022, institutional consolidation followed the reform. The number of caseworkers increased, with	In the initial phase (2010-2013), staff profiles varied considerably. Commission members from police or municipal backgrounds rarely had qualifications in asylum or refugee law. Legal expertise was mainly provided by UNHCR representatives, who compensated for institutional knowledge gaps. After the 2017 reform, caseworker profiles shifted towards legal professionalism. Recruitment was merit-based, including examinations in law, geography, history, and English. The selected cohort included numerous professionals with law degrees, often specialised in international or constitutional law, some holding postgraduate or doctoral degrees. Between 2018 and 2022, the educational profile further developed. A significant proportion held degrees in law or political science, with growing expertise in migration and human rights law. Of 410 recruits during 2018-2019, approximately 30 had doctoral degrees, and many had experience in NGOs or legal aid, enhancing legal reasoning in decisions. UNHCR's operational role decreased, replaced by independent experts selected through public calls.	Training was minimal and fragmented between 2010 and 2013. Knowledge acquisition occurred primarily on the job, with no standardised national curriculum. Sessions focused on general procedural rules rather than substantive refugee law, leading to variability in decision quality. Between 2014 and 2017, training became formalised. New staff underwent four weeks of training provided by UNHCR and EASO (now EUAA), covering protection standards, interview techniques, and legal interpretation. Post-training supervision was introduced, but continuing professional development remained limited. From 2018 onwards, the CNDA standardised training across commissions. EUAA and UNHCR developed curricula including COI analysis, vulnerability, exclusion criteria, and decision drafting. 'Train the Trainers' programmes internalised training capacity. Specialised workshops addressed complex topics, and online resources expanded, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.	Interviews with Territorial Commission members; UNHCR Italy; National Commission for the Right to Asylum (2022). Internally stored at Ghent University.
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	multiple lawyers per commission becoming standard. Specialised staff, known as <i>Funzionari istruttori altamente specializzati</i>, conducted interviews and drafted decisions, marking asylum adjudication as a professional and specialised activity. Staff held permanent positions, with internal differentiation by experience and task division. Although workload management remained challenging, mechanisms for redistributing cases were more systematically applied. experience in NGOs or legal aid, enhancing legal reasoning in decisions. UNHCR's operational role decreased, replaced by independent experts selected through public calls.		Training was linked with case assignment.	
Netherlands	From 2010 to 2013, Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) staff were often recruited from operational agencies such as the Custodial Institutions Agency, Immigration Police, or Armed Forces. Around 2001, recruitment shifted strategically to reshape organisational culture by hiring individuals with social science backgrounds. Between 2014 and 2022, peaks in asylum applications, notably in 2015, led to large-scale hiring of temporary staff, often recent law graduates capable of rapid deployment with minimal training. In 2020, a Taskforce was established to address backlogs,	Staff professional backgrounds reflect the IND's evolving recruitment strategy. Initially, recruits mainly came from operational and enforcement backgrounds. Following the 2000 Aliens Act, recruitment prioritised legally trained personnel, a requirement later relaxed. Current staff commonly hold higher professional education, with varied international experience. Legal, administrative, and social science backgrounds are common. Long-serving staff sometimes exhibit a more rigid approach, potentially linked to lower formal education	Permanent IND staff participate in a two-year internal training to obtain procedural authorisation. Training combines practical experience with instruction in law and interview techniques. Newcomers typically start with initial interviews before progressing to detailed interviews and decision-making. During intake peaks, rapid deployment often involved minimal formal training, sometimes limited to observing a single interview. The profession relies heavily on experiential learning and mentoring by senior staff,	Hertoghs (2019); Ministry of Justice and Security (2020); Severijns (2019)

	recruiting experienced professionals including former IND officers, judges, and lawyers. This initiative combined workload redistribution, specialisation, and outsourcing. Despite COVID-19 challenges, the Taskforce processed a substantial number of cases and introduced procedural innovations such as remote hearings and partial outsourcing, which were considered useful beyond the Taskforce period.	compared to recent hires. Temporary staff hired during intake peaks often lack asylum law experience, causing occasional inconsistencies.	maintaining an 'oral tradition' of practice and law.	
Sweden	No specific data is available on staff changes and adjustment processes within the Swedish Migration Agency over time.	Swedish Migration Agency caseworkers must have academic master qualifications in law, social sciences, or behavioural sciences, emphasising administrative law and migration issues. Experience with complex cases under the Aliens Act is highly valued. Decision-makers are expected to coach and mentor colleagues. Proficiency in Swedish and English, both written and oral, is mandatory, alongside competence in computer and digital case management systems. Knowledge of the Aliens Act, Administrative Procedure Act, and Public Access to Information and Secrecy Act is essential for legal compliance. Personal qualities include stress resilience, sound judgement under pressure, accuracy, interpersonal skills,	No specific information was found on training practices for Swedish asylum staff over the period analysed.	Parusel (2016); Parusel (2021)

		conflict resolution abilities, and internal training capability.		
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Table 4: additional information on caseworkers competence

Condition 4: Asylum application pressure

To calibrate the final condition, fluctuation in asylum applications, a combination of statistical indicators and secondary sources was used. The aim was to construct a meaningful proxy for the level of relative pressure experienced by national asylum systems over time, taking into account each state's capacity to manage incoming claims.

The first step involved calculating the relative administrative pressure on asylum systems across the selected countries. Drawing inspiration from Czaika's (2005) Refugee Burden Index, a modified approach was applied. Unlike the original index, this calibration excludes the components related to ethnic composition and the strength of democratic institutions. The focus is placed exclusively on administrative capacity, operationalised through three key indicators:

- GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) (Eurostat), positively associated with a state's ability to provide for asylum seekers.
- Population density (Eurostat), negatively associated with the capacity to absorb newcomers due to spatial and infrastructural constraints.
- Government effectiveness (World Bank), reflecting the quality of institutional performance and the reliability of public administration.

Each of these indicators was normalised to a scale from 0 to 1. The average of the three normalised scores serves as a composite measure of administrative capacity for each country-year. This composite score was then used to adjust the raw number of asylum applications per 1,000 inhabitants, resulting in a measure of relative administrative pressure. This adjusted value reflects how burdensome the inflow of asylum seekers is in light of a country's institutional and economic resources.

However, the analytical focus lies on the fluctuation of this pressure over time, rather than its absolute level. This recognises that public administrations can adapt to rising demand, for instance by recruiting additional personnel or modifying internal workflows. To capture such variation, the change in the relative pressure value was calculated relative to the previous period. To enable fuzzy-set calibration, the logistic function was applied to the resulting change scores to reach a score between 0-1.

The score served as a starting point to interpret the country's ability to deal with fluctuations in asylum applications. The further interpretation and calibration were carried out by reading the asylum applications and the asylum decisions for a given year in conjunction. In addition, multiple sources addressing the burden on national asylum systems were consulted. The analysis also considered how states adapted their systems, including the strategies employed to absorb and process shifts in inflow.

3. Supplementary Analysis

3.1. Necessity analysis of single conditions

The analysis of necessity concludes that no non-trivial necessary (single or disjunctive) condition exists for the outcome.

3.1.1. Single necessary conditions

Table 5 indicates that none of the individual conditions meets the conventional threshold for necessity (consistency ≥ 0.90). The highest consistency scores— $\sim$ INS (0.687), APL (0.682), and CW (0.626)—remain well below this benchmark. These results show that no single condition, whether present or absent, can be considered necessary for the outcome. The outcome therefore cannot be explained by the indispensability of any individual antecedent.

Condition	Consistency	Coverage	Relevance of Necessity
EXP	0.597	0.480	0.620
INS	0.455	0.392	0.618
CW	0.626	0.472	0.581
APL	0.682	0.619	0.740
$\sim$ EXP	0.516	0.489	0.698
$\sim$ INS	0.687	0.602	0.719
$\sim$ CW	0.574	0.590	0.769
$\sim$ APL	0.488	0.408	0.608

Table 5: Single necessary conditions for OUT

3.1.2. Sufficient but Unnecessary and Insufficient (SUIN)

The SUIN procedure assesses whether disjunctive combinations of conditions approximate necessity while remaining individually insufficient and unnecessary. Table 6 identifies one disjunctive configuration as potentially SUIN, as it displays a high inclusion score ($\text{inclN} = 0.912$). However, its relevance of necessity (RoN) is low and coverage is only moderate, indicating that the configuration neither consistently nor uniquely accounts for the presence of the outcome. Although SUIN formally flags this disjunction as approximating necessity, its empirical robustness remains limited and warrants further diagnostic assessment.

Configuration	inclN	RoN	covN
CW + $\sim$ APL	0.912	0.436	0.654

Table 6: SUIN-configuration

Indeed, the skewness diagnostics in Table 7 show that the SUIN disjunction is extremely common in the dataset, with 88.89% of cases scoring above 0.5. Such a high level of skewness indicates that the condition is almost always present, making it substantively trivial and analytically uninformative. Consequently, despite being identified by the SUIN procedure, this disjunction cannot meaningfully function as a necessary condition.

SUIN-condition	Cases > 0.5	Percentage
CW + $\sim$ APL	24 / 27	88.89%

Table 7: Skewness check of SUIN configuration

3.1.3. Sufficiency analysis of single conditions

Here we assess whether any single condition, on its own, is sufficient for the outcome. As shown in Table 8, none of the individual conditions reaches the conventional consistency threshold for sufficiency (≥ 0.80). The highest consistency scores are observed for $\sim$ APL (0.735) and INS (0.730), yet both remain below the required benchmark. In addition, several conditions display PRI values below the recommended minimum of 0.50, which points to limited directional relevance and potential ambiguity in their relationship with the outcome. As such, no single condition, whether present or absent, can be considered sufficient for the outcome.

Condition	Consistency	Coverage	PRI
EXP	0.611	0.585	0.480
INS	0.730	0.651	0.642
CW	0.679	0.693	0.567
APL	0.536	0.454	0.374
$\sim$ EXP	0.618	0.502	0.529
$\sim$ INS	0.522	0.458	0.383
$\sim$ CW	0.616	0.461	0.477
$\sim$ APL	0.735	0.677	0.651

Table 8: Single sufficient conditions

3.2. Standard Analysis

The standard analysis examines sufficiency through configurational combinations of conditions using a truth table. The truth table and its calibration choices are presented in the main text, while here the conservative and parsimonious solutions are reported.

3.2.1. Conservative solution (Solution consistency: 0.895; Solution PRI: 0.839; Solution coverage: 0.564)

The conservative solution identifies only those configurational pathways that are fully supported by empirical evidence, avoiding the use of logical remainders. The conservative solution in Table 9 identifies three distinct pathways leading to the outcome, together covering 56.4% of the outcome cases. Overall solution consistency (0.895) and PRI (0.839) indicate a reliable and directionally coherent configurational relationship with the outcome. Pathways 1 and 2 both combine the absence of EXP with the presence of INS, differing with respect to CW and APL, and each displays moderate consistency and limited unique coverage. In contrast, Pathway 3 ($\text{EXP} * \text{CW} * \sim\text{APL}$) shows exceptionally high consistency (0.997) and PRI (0.994), as well as the largest coverage (0.391) and unique contribution (0.239), indicating a particularly strong and empirically distinct route to the outcome.

Pathway	Configuration	Consistency (inclS)	PRI	Coverage (covS)	Unique coverage (covU)	Cases
1	$\sim\text{EXP} * \text{INS} * \text{CW}$	0.799	0.726	0.261	0.064	4, 12, 23; 6, 24
2	$\sim\text{EXP} * \text{INS} * \sim\text{APL}$	0.857	0.799	0.262	0.065	9; 4, 12, 23
3	$\text{EXP} * \text{CW} * \sim\text{APL}$	0.997	0.994	0.391	0.239	22; 13, 14, 27

Table 9: Conservative solution

The conservative solution helps to assess the robustness of the intermediate solution reported in the main text by showing which pathways are supported without relying on simplifying assumptions. The close correspondence between the two solutions indicates that the intermediate solution is largely empirically grounded. Specifically, two of the three intermediate pathways ($\sim\text{EXP} \cdot \text{INS} \cdot \text{CW}$ and $\text{EXP} \cdot \text{CW} \cdot \sim\text{APL}$) also appear in the conservative solution, with very similar consistency and coverage scores. This overlap suggests that these configurations represent robust and reliable routes to the outcome. The remaining intermediate term ($\text{INS} \cdot \sim\text{APL}$) does not appear as a standalone pathway in the conservative solution but is subsumed within more restrictive configurations, indicating that it relies more strongly on simplifying assumptions.

3.2.2. Parsimonious solution (Solution consistency: 0.893; Solution PRI: 0.837; Solution coverage: 0.565)

The parsimonious solution identifies the simplest sufficient configurations by permitting the use of all logical remainders. The parsimonious solution presented in Table 10 consists of two pathways that together explain 56.5% of the outcome cases, with high overall consistency (0.893) and PRI (0.837), indicating a reliable and directionally coherent solution. The first pathway ($\sim\text{EXP} * \text{INS}$) represents a reduced version of the more complex conservative configurations combining the absence of EXP with the presence of INS, and displays acceptable consistency (0.830) alongside substantial unique coverage (0.174). The second pathway ($\text{EXP} * \text{CW} * \sim\text{APL}$) directly corresponds to the same configuration identified in the conservative solution and again shows near-perfect consistency (0.997), a very high PRI (0.994), and the largest raw and unique coverage.

Pathway	Configuration	Consistency (inclS)	PRI	Coverage (covS)	Unique coverage (covU)	Cases
1	$\sim\text{EXP} * \text{INS}$	0.830	0.765	0.326	0.174	9; 4, 12, 23; 6, 24
2	$\text{EXP} * \text{CW} * \sim\text{APL}$	0.997	0.994	0.391	0.239	22; 13, 14, 27

Table 10: Parsimonious solution

In relation to the intermediate solution, the parsimonious solution shows a high degree of overlap. All intermediate terms are either retained in identical form ($\text{EXP} * \text{CW} * \sim\text{APL}$) or absorbed into a more general configuration ($\sim\text{EXP} * \text{INS}$). This suggests that the intermediate solution captures the core empirical patterns while maintaining greater specificity than the parsimonious solution, thereby balancing empirical robustness with theoretical parsimony.

3.3. Analysis of the absence of the outcome

This section assesses the configurational conditions associated with the absence of the outcome. Using the same analytical framework as for the presence of the outcome, it assesses necessity and sufficiency in relation to the negative outcome. This allows for an explicit evaluation of causal asymmetry between the presence and absence of the outcome.

3.3.1. Parameters of fit for single conditions ($\sim\text{OUT}$)

Table 11 reports the parameters of fit for the analysis of single necessary conditions for the absence of the outcome ($\sim\text{OUT}$). None of the conditions, nor their negations, reach the commonly applied

consistency threshold of 0.90 for necessity. This indicates that no single condition can be considered necessary for the absence of the outcome, mirroring the results obtained for the presence of the outcome.

Condition	Consistency	Coverage	Relevance of Necessity
EXP	0.597	0.480	0.620
INS	0.455	0.392	0.618
CW	0.626	0.472	0.581
APL	0.682	0.619	0.740
~EXP	0.516	0.489	0.698
~INS	0.687	0.602	0.719
~CW	0.574	0.590	0.769
~APL	0.488	0.408	0.608

Table 11: Necessity of single conditions for ~OUT

As shown in Table 12, none of the individual conditions qualifies as sufficient for the absence of the outcome, as all consistency scores fall clearly below the recommended threshold of 0.80. Moreover, most conditions exhibit low PRI values, indicating weak directional consistency and limited discriminatory power between the presence and absence of the outcome. Even the comparatively stronger conditions (APL and ~INS) fail to meet the combined consistency and PRI criteria for sufficiency. These results underscore that, as with the presence of the outcome, the absence of the outcome is not driven by any single condition in isolation, further justifying a configurational approach to analysing ~OUT.

Condition	Consistency	Coverage	PRI
EXP	0.480	0.597	0.305
INS	0.392	0.455	0.195
CW	0.472	0.626	0.287
APL	0.619	0.682	0.486
~EXP	0.489	0.516	0.370
~INS	0.602	0.687	0.486
~CW	0.590	0.574	0.443
~APL	0.408	0.488	0.221

Table 12: Sufficiency of single conditions for ~OUT

Taken the parameters of fit for ~OUT stress the asymmetric causal structure identified in the main analysis. While the outcome is generated through specific configurational pathways, its absence cannot be accounted for by the presence or absence of individual conditions, nor by a simple inversion of the causal configurations leading to the outcome.

3.3.2. Truth table and minimisation for ~OUT

The truth table for the absence of the outcome (~OUT) in Table 13 contains a relatively large number of empirically observed configurations, none of which simultaneously achieve high inclusion and high PRI values indicative of robust sufficiency. In line with this pattern, conservative, intermediate, and parsimonious minimisation procedures do not yield a viable solution for ~OUT under the applied thresholds.

Row	EXP	INS	CW	APL	~OUT	n	incl	PRI	Cases
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4	0	0	1	1	1	3	0.781	0.717	2, 3, 11
10	1	0	0	1	1	2	0.749	0.667	17, 18
3	0	0	1	0	1	1	0.715	0.504	10
12	1	0	1	1	1	1	0.702	0.500	21
14	1	1	0	1	1	1	0.624	0.401	20
5	0	1	0	0	1	1	0.556	0.207	9
9	1	0	0	0	1	2	0.555	0.333	1, 16
16	1	1	1	1	1	4	0.532	0.275	5, 15, 25, 26
11	1	0	1	0	1	1	0.504	0.000	22
1	0	0	0	0	1	3	0.502	0.337	7, 8, 19
7	0	1	1	0	1	3	0.454	0.250	4, 12, 23
8	0	1	1	1	1	2	0.405	0.147	6, 24
15	1	1	1	0	1	3	0.404	0.003	13, 14, 27
2	0	0	0	1	?	0	–	–	–
6	0	1	0	1	?	0	–	–	–
13	1	1	0	0	?	0	–	–	–

Table 13: Truth-table for $\sim$ OUT at 0.8

In contrast to the analysis of the presence of the outcome, the configurations associated with $\sim$ OUT are highly heterogeneous and do not reduce to a limited number of coherent pathways. These configurations are not simple logical negations of the core configurations identified for the outcome, which does indicate a clear pattern of causal asymmetry. Whereas the outcome is generated through specific and structured combinations of conditions, its absence results from a more diffuse set of configurations that do not converge into a stable solution. This asymmetry supports the analytical focus on explaining the presence of the outcome and strengthens confidence that the identified pathways reflect an underlying asymmetric causal structure in the data rather than modelling artefacts.

3.4. Robustness

To assess the stability of the findings, a series of robustness checks were conducted examining the sensitivity of the results to alternative analytical specifications. Across these tests, the configurational pathway $\text{EXP} \cdot \text{CW} \cdot \sim \text{APL}$ consistently emerges as sufficient for the outcome. This pathway remains intact under different inclusion and PRI thresholds and persists when applying an Enhanced Standard Analysis (ESA) with a more conservative treatment of logical remainders, indicating a high degree of robustness.

3.4.1. Threshold sensitivity

Table 14 reports the results of a threshold sensitivity analysis in which inclusion and PRI cut-offs are systematically varied. Under the baseline specification ($\text{incl.cut} = 0.80$; $\text{PRI.cut} = 0.45$), both the parsimonious and intermediate solutions identify two core configurations: $\sim \text{EXP} \cdot \text{INS}$ and $\text{EXP} \cdot \text{CW} \cdot \sim \text{APL}$. Lowering the inclusion threshold to 0.75 expands the solution space and leads to the appearance of additional configurations, reflecting reduced selectivity. Nevertheless, the core pathways from the baseline analysis remain present. Raising the inclusion threshold to 0.85 produces more restrictive and fragmented solutions, increasing model complexity, yet $\text{EXP} \cdot \text{CW} \cdot \sim \text{APL}$ continues to appear across solution types. Varying the PRI threshold while holding inclusion constant does not affect the parsimonious or intermediate solutions. In sum, these results indicate that changes in threshold settings primarily influence solution complexity rather than the substantive configurational conclusions.

Specification	incl	PRI	Conservative solution	Parsimonious solution (Core terms)	Intermediate solution (Core terms)
Main analysis	0.80	0.45	$\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\text{CW};$ $\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\sim\text{APL};$ $\text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$	$\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS};$ $\text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$	$\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS};$ $\text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$
Lower inclusion	0.75	0.45	$\text{INS}\cdot\text{CW};$ $\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\sim\text{APL};$ $\text{EXP}\cdot\sim\text{INS}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$	$\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS};$ $\text{EXP}\cdot\sim\text{APL};$ $\text{INS}\cdot\text{CW}$	$\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS};$ $\text{EXP}\cdot\sim\text{APL};$ $\text{INS}\cdot\text{CW}$
Higher inclusion	0.85	0.45	$\text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL};$ $\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\text{APL};$ $\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\sim\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$	$\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\sim\text{CW};$ $\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\text{APL};$ $\text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$	$\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\sim\text{CW};$ $\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\text{APL};$ $\text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$
Higher PRI	0.80	0.50	$\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\text{CW};$ $\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\sim\text{APL};$ $\text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$	$\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS};$ $\text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$	$\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS};$ $\text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$
Lower PRI	0.80	0.40	$\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\text{CW};$ $\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\sim\text{APL};$ $\text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$	$\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS};$ $\text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$	$\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS};$ $\text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$

Table 14: Overview of threshold sensitivity

3.4.2. ESA and Standard QCA

Applying ESA modifies the treatment of logical remainders by imposing more conservative constraints on counterfactual reasoning, resulting in a more specific intermediate solution. As shown in Table 15, the standard QCA identifies two sufficient pathways, $\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}$ and $\text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$. Under ESA, the former is no longer retained as a single reduced configuration but is decomposed into more restrictive terms ($\text{INS}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$ and $\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\text{CW}$), indicating that its sufficiency in the standard analysis partly depends on simplifying counterfactual assumptions. In contrast, $\text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$ remains unchanged across both specifications, suggesting that this pathway is directly supported by the empirical evidence and is robust to alternative treatments of logical remainders.

Specification	Intermediate solution terms
SA	$\sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS} + \text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$
ESA (adjusted remainders)	$\text{INS}\cdot\sim\text{APL} + \sim\text{EXP}\cdot\text{INS}\cdot\text{CW} + \text{EXP}\cdot\text{CW}\cdot\sim\text{APL}$

Table 15: comparison of SA and ESA Intermediate Solutions (OUT).

4. Dataset

Country	OUT	EXP	INS	CW	APL
Austria_2010-2013	0,33	0,66	0,00	0,33	0,33
Austria_2014-2017	0,00	0,33	0,00	0,66	1,00
Austria_2018-2022	0,00	0,33	0,00	0,66	1,00
Belgium_2010-2013	1,00	0,33	1,00	1,00	0,33
Belgium_2014-2017	0,33	0,66	1,00	0,66	0,66
Belgium_2018-2022	0,66	0,33	1,00	0,66	0,66
Czechia2010-2013	0,66	0,00	0,33	0,00	0,00
Czechia2014-2017	1,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
Czechia2018-2022	1,00	0,00	0,66	0,00	0,00
Finland2010-2013	0,33	0,00	0,00	1,00	0,00
Finland2014-17	0,66	0,00	0,33	0,66	1,00
Finland2018-2022	0,00	0,00	0,66	0,66	0,00
France2010-2013	0,66	1,00	1,00	0,66	0,00
France2014-2017	0,66	1,00	1,00	1,00	0,33
France2018-2022	0,33	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
Germany2010-2013	1,00	1,00	0,33	0,33	0,00
Germany2014-2017	0,33	1,00	0,00	0,00	1,00
Germany2018-2022	0,33	1,00	0,33	0,33	0,66
Italy2010-2013	0,00	0,33	0,00	0,00	0,33
Italy2014-2017	0,00	0,66	0,66	0,33	1,00
Italy2018-2022	0,66	1,00	0,00	1,00	0,66
Netherlands2010-2013	0,66	0,66	0,33	0,66	0,00
Netherlands2014-2017	1,00	0,33	0,66	0,66	0,33
Netherlands2018-2022	1,00	0,33	1,00	0,66	0,66
Sweden2010-2013	1,00	1,00	0,66	0,66	0,66
Sweden2014-2017	0,66	1,00	0,66	1,00	1,00
Sweden2018-2022	1,00	0,66	1,00	1,00	0,33

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ⁱ In the Italian context, including national forms of protection in the overturn rate would have significantly distorted the data, i.e. the overturn rate including all statuses stands at approximately 56% between 2010 and 2024, rising to 62% for the last five years. Law Decree 113/2018 abolished the general humanitarian protection status and introduced a closed list of grounds for residence. Nonetheless, the judiciary continued to interpret humanitarian protection as a constitutional right and an open-ended category, unaffected by the 2018 reform (Supreme Court of Cassation 2020: 6ff). This interpretation was confirmed by the United Chambers of the Court of Cassation, which ruled that the repeal of the humanitarian clause did not apply to applications lodged before 5 October 2018 (Cass., Sez. Un., No. 29459/2019). The administration's restrictive application of the reform, when contrasted with broader judicial interpretation, may explain the high rate of court reversals. Moreover, prolonged waiting times in the appeal procedure increases the likelihood to receive the special protection under Article 8 ECHR of the courts.

ⁱⁱ The figures are attributed to their corresponding years based on the 'average processing time for the appeal body to make a decision,' as reported in the available ECRE Country Reports. Germany and Italy saw a significant increase in appeal processing times around 2019. In Germany, the average rose to 26.4 months by 2022, while in Italy it approached three years in the same year. Other countries maintained relatively stable processing times at the appeal stage. For the other countries a lag of one-year lag was applied. For Czechia and Finland, where data on processing times are not available, also a standard one-year lag has been applied.