



“Guest Workers and Native Voting Behaviour: a Dutch case”

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I. Introduction

With labour shortage problems on the political agenda, the recruitment of labour migrants is a lively political debate in the Netherlands at the moment. Leftists, rightists, liberals, and socialists, they all have different conceptions whether migrants are welcome, necessary, or unwanted.

“The Netherlands needs labour migrants” - Klaas Dijkhoff (9 December, 2022).

This quote comes from the former party chairman of the Dutch liberal party. In 2023, the question arose in Dutch politics as to whether guest workers are desirable to fill the gap caused by the labour shortage. Political parties are divided: the liberal party and the Christian Democrats only desire foreign guest workers, not economic refugees, while the labour party takes the view that the Netherlands should be an open country that facilitates the welcoming of foreigners. There are also anti-immigration parties who oppose all foreigners. This debate was also present in the 1960s, with the only difference being that the flow of refugees was considerably smaller, and only guest workers were a point of discussion. It is relevant to examine the effects of the 1960s on voting behaviour and the mechanisms through which migration influenced political preferences because this debate continues to persist.

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of migration on the voting behaviour of natives. This thesis will research the Netherlands for several reasons. Firstly, this case is largely unexplored. Secondly, the availability of very detailed data encourages a deeper dive into the Netherlands specifically. Lastly, this case is interesting because some say this time period of investigation is the starting point of the multiculturalization of the Netherlands.

In this thesis, I investigate the effect of the ratio of migrants in a municipality on the vote shares of the three major political parties in the 1960s. By employing instrumental variable regression, I address potential endogeneity problems. Furthermore, the novelty of this study lies in the carefully developed dataset, which includes socio-economic variables retrieved from census data and voting results of the Netherlands, all at the municipality level.

The contribution of this thesis in the research area of political economics is three folded. Firstly, it adds an extensive dataset to the literature, which includes digitised census data, merged with election data, and migration statistics data. Secondly, it develops a new instrumental variable approach in the field of migration, which includes regional specialisation as a determinant. Thirdly, it sheds light on the Dutch political landscape, and shows how the Netherlands became a more diversified country.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: In section II, I present the literature review. In section III, I briefly discuss the political landscape in the 60s in the Netherlands. Furthermore, I will develop my hypothesis in section IV. In section V, I present the data and methodology, including the instrumental variable approach. In section VI, I present the empirical results, after which I will discuss the possible

channels behind my findings in section VII, and in section VIII, I will conclude my study.

II. Literature Review

Earlier research investigates how different channels affect voting behaviour and/or political outcomes, with immigration as a dependent variable. Most studies emphasise the effect of the labour market channel (Borjas, 2003; Dustmann and Preston, 2007; Gerdes and Wadensjö, 2010; Otto and Steinhardt, 2014; Barone et al., 2016; Halla et al., 2017; Harmon, 2018; Tabellini, 2019), while not neglecting the effect of the cultural environment change due to migration. Another branch of literature focuses on the effect of the welfare state on attitudes towards migrants (Dustmann and Preston, 2007; Barone et al., 2016; Alesina et al., 2019). Additionally, there is evidence that racial prejudice plays an important role in this migration debate (Dustmann and Preston, 2007).

When examining the effect of immigration on the voting behaviour of native-born individuals, Barone et al. (2016) found several significant effects in the case of Italy for the period 2001-2008. They analyse three national elections (2001, 2006, 2008) and the voting outcomes of the centre-right parties. One strength of this study is the availability of data, which includes the share of immigrants, population data, and several demographic and economic variables at the municipality level.

Instrumental variable approach

The empirical strategy of previous papers involves studying the effect of the share of immigrants in a fixed-effects model. They address the potential problem of endogeneity by using an instrumental variable. This endogeneity problem is profound in this field of study due to concerns of reversed causality. It is reasonable to believe that migrants will not move to places that have anti-immigration sentiments. Therefore, it is necessary to develop an instrumental variable approach. Most of the instruments are based on the assumption that immigrants tend to move to areas where groups of the same ethnicity already reside. This approach is widely used in the literature (Otto and Steinhardt, 2014; Halla et al., 2017; Tabellini, 2019) and is called the shift-share approach (Card, 2001). For example, Barone et al. (2016) use data on the ethnicity composition of municipalities in 1991. It is important to note the specific year because the use of this lagged variable as an instrument is relevant. The relevance lies in the assumption that the ethnicity composition in 1991 does not affect voting behaviour on the centre-right parties in Italy because the political landscape was drastically altered in the period 1992-1994. Therefore, the choice of residence of the 1991 immigrants was not affected by the politics of the centre-right parties.

Another form of this instrument is used by Gerdes and Wadensjö (2010) where they did not have data available on the ethnicity composition. Instead, they used the number of refugees who received social assistance, named *Kontanthjælp*, in a given year. They also used a lagged variant of this variable, so the 'share of non-Western immigrants' in one year is instrumented by the number of recipients of *Kontanthjælp*

three years prior.

Harmon (2018) also faced the problem of data availability of ethnicity composition. He studied the effect of migration in Denmark on voting from 1981 to 2001 at the municipality level. He solved this problem with a creative solution: using historical housing stock data as an instrument for immigrants. This is due to the specific characteristics of Danish housing laws, where foreigners are almost exclusively entitled to rental houses. Therefore, the availability of rental housing is a predictor of immigrants'

Furthermore, an interesting feature of the study by Barone et al. (2016) is the section that elaborates on the several channels through which immigration affects voting behaviour. They focus on four different channels: religious diversity, competition in the labour market, competition for public services, and crime. While the first three channels show significant positive effects on centre-right voting when interacting with immigration, crime does not show a significant effect. The channel concerning competition in the labour market is set up in an interesting way, with a dummy variable indicating whether a municipality has a lower share of graduates than the median share. This primarily addresses the concern that immigration impacts the unskilled labour market, but it does not imply that immigration does have an effect on the labour market. It only shows that the effect of migration on centre-right voting is larger when a municipality has a lower share of graduates. However, overall, Barone et al. (2016) highlight the complex relationship between immigration and politics and suggest that immigration may be an important factor in shaping the preferences and voting behaviour of native-born individuals.

Previous studies mention several transmission mechanisms through which migration affects voting behaviour, I will discuss these mechanisms more detailed after the results section.

In conclusion, previous research makes it clear that an instrumental variable approach is justified for this thesis, and that the necessary data should include, among other things, migration, population, election results, economic variables such as labour composition, and a variable that can show social differences across municipalities.

III. Historical Context

Since the second world war, the Dutch government was always formed between two of the three traditional parties. I would like to call this the social-democratic-liberal-Christian stronghold. However, with the election in 1963, eleven other parties besides the stronghold were chosen into parliament, reducing the total vote share of the stronghold. However, during the 1960s the government would still consist of only parties from the stronghold.

First, to study the effects of migration on voting behaviour in the Netherlands, we need to understand the mechanisms that drove migrants to the country. After the Second World War, rapid economic growth led to labour shortages, prompting industrial firms to recruit labour from abroad. Between 1960 and 1971, over 800,000 people moved to the Netherlands. Until 1960, most immigrants came from the former colonies of the Netherlands. However, from the early 1960s, immigration from Mediterranean countries steadily increased as the Dutch government arranged bilateral agreements with these nations (Lucassen and Penninx, 1997). The main reason for this increase can be attributed to the arrival of so-called "guest workers," who were recruited as temporary labour migrants. The temporary nature was of big concern for the labour party, which insisted that the maximum stay should be no more than 2 years, while the liberal party pleaded for longer stays. These workers were mostly men without children or wives, low-skilled, and crucial for the industrial sector. The Dutch government did little to nothing for their integration into society, as employers were responsible for arranging housing, and the workers started at the bottom of the social ladder, taking jobs that couldn't be filled by Dutch men.

However, the temporary nature of the guest worker program did not hold. Firstly, Dutch companies did not always comply with the law in their search for labour. Additionally, men with children and wives were recruited, although these family members were initially unable to join them in the Netherlands, leading to unrest. Eventually, on November 22, 1963, the Council of Ministers decided in favour of family reunification after one year of employment (Bonjour, 2008). This decision marked the beginning of a process that ensured that the previously targeted temporary workers would actually stay in the country.

In the 1960s, the liberal party and the Christian parties supported the recruitment of "temporary" migrants to address labour shortages, while the labour party held a more critical stance towards the development of guest workers. The labour party was concerned about the labour position of low-skilled Dutch workers, which they felt was being threatened by the arrival of migrants. After the Dutch labour party (PvdA) seized power in 1972, they quickly reduced the recruitment of foreign labour, also influenced by the 1973 oil crisis, which decreased labour demand and led to a recession.

Political parties

The Dutch liberal party (VVD) is a conservative liberal party. The PvdA, the Dutch labour party, is a left-wing social-democratic party. The Christian conservatives (KVP, ARP, and CHU) are three Christian parties that, during the 1960s, almost exclusively governed the Netherlands together, sometimes with support from the liberal party and other times with support from the labour party. The KVP, ARP, and CHU eventually merged in 1980 to form the CDA, which still exists today. I have already merged these three Christian parties together because they always worked together during this period, shared most of their ideas, and eventually merged in 1980.

To summarise the positions of the political parties in the 1960s: the Dutch liberal party (VVD) and the Christian conservatives (a merger of KVP, ARP, and CHU) were in favour of the guest workers, while the Dutch labour party (PvdA) opposed their presence. This information will be important for the subsequent parts of the thesis. Furthermore, what makes this case more interesting is that prior to 1985, only natives could vote in the Netherlands. After 1985, active and passive voting rights were introduced for foreign-born citizens. Therefore, this research will focus solely on the natives' vote share, and the effect of migrants' votes will be excluded from the study.

IV. Methodology & data

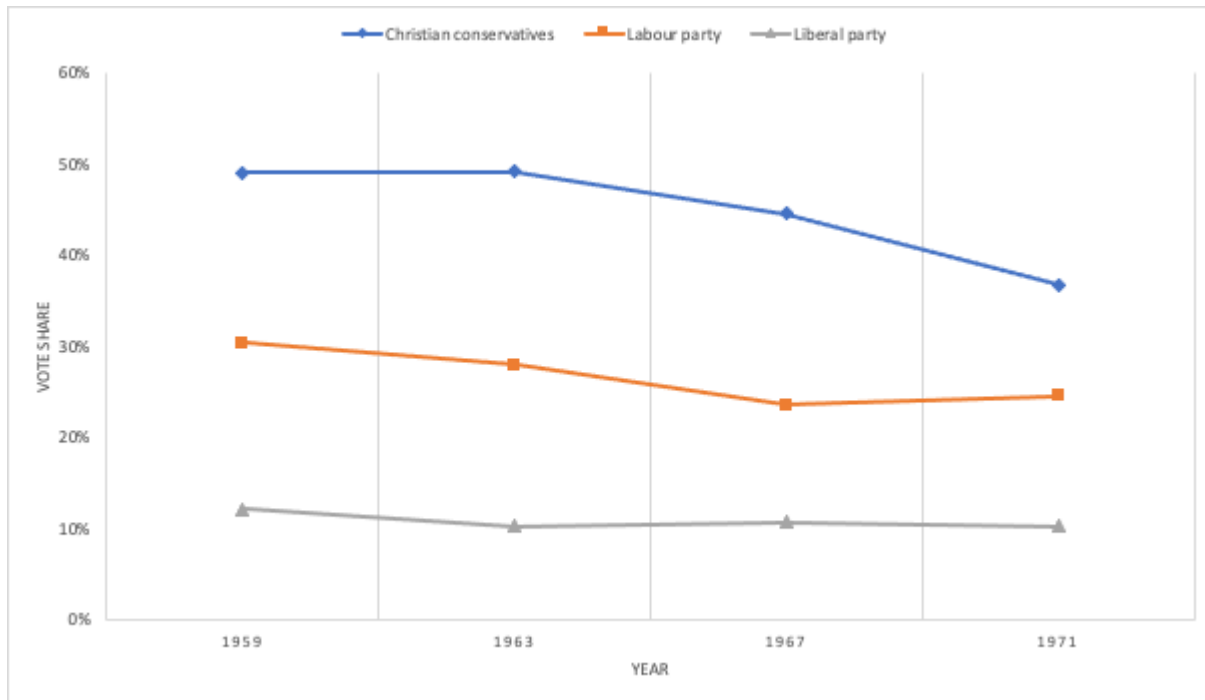
This study aims to identify the effect of "guest workers" (immigration) on voting behaviour in the Netherlands. To generate generalizable results over a longer period, the research is conducted as a longitudinal study spanning from 1959 to 1971. In order to study the political effects of immigration, I combine data from multiple sources: the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), the Dutch Census of Population (Volkstellingen), and the Kiesraad (Election Council). My analysis is based on a well-balanced panel of 844 Dutch municipalities for the two census years, 1960 and 1971, and four election years, 1959, 1963, 1967, and 1971. The sample includes all municipalities that existed in 1971.

National elections

Data on electoral returns (vote shares and turnout) for Dutch national elections are obtained from the Database of Election Results (Kiesraad). Given that on average, three major parties in the Netherlands hold the majority of votes (over 80 percent), the main focus is on the following three parties: PvdA (Labour Party), VVD (Liberal Party), and a merger of KVP, ARP, and CHU (Christian Conservatives). Additionally, the turnout, the number of invalid votes, and blank votes are also included and retrieved from the Kiesraad.

Graph 1 illustrates the evolution of vote shares for the three major parties in the Netherlands. It is evident that the vote share of the Christian conservatives has experienced a decline, going from an almost pure majority of 49 percent in 1959 to a moderate majority of 37 percent in 1971. However, it should be noted that neither the Labour Party nor the Liberal Party benefited from this decrease in votes. While the Labour Party also experienced a slight decrease in votes, the Liberal Party remained relatively stable throughout the 1960s. During this time period, the parties that gained votes included, among others, seven smaller parties that were in opposition to the government. These parties included the Communist Party, the Reformed Party, the Socialist Party, the Reformed Covenant, the Farmers Party, and Democrats '66 (D66).

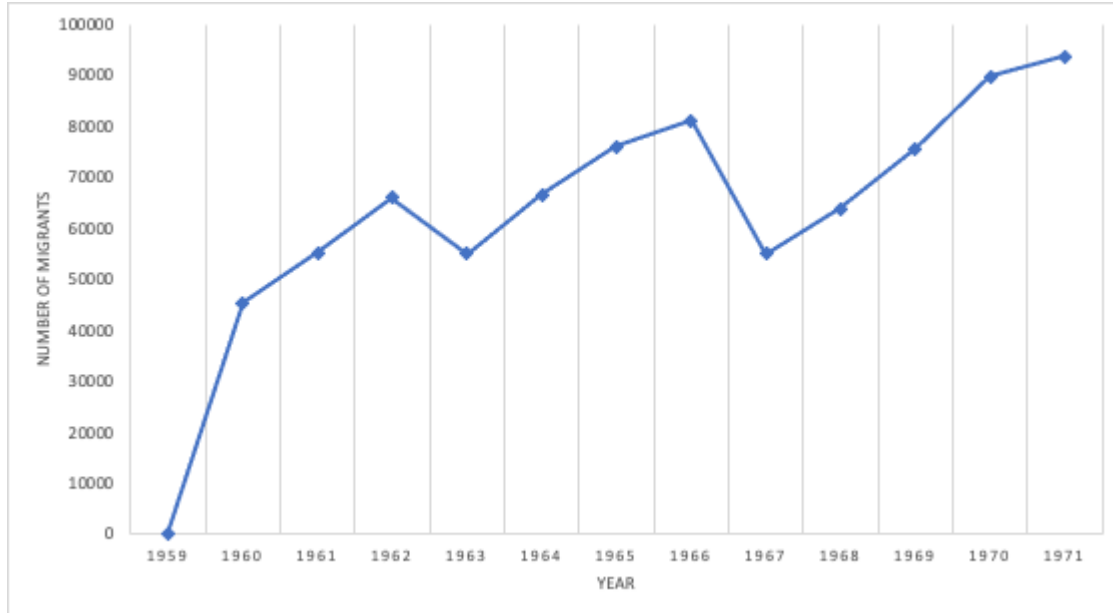
Graph 1: Voting trend of the three main parties



Immigration and municipality population

Data on city population and the number of immigrants were obtained from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), which has been available at the municipality level since 1960. The Netherlands initiated their foreign recruitment policy in 1960 with the first bilateral agreement with Italy, and subsequently extended agreements to include Spain (1961), Portugal (1963), Turkey (1964), Greece (1967), Morocco (1969), Yugoslavia (1970), and Tunisia (1971) (Nicolaas and Sprangers, 2007). In the 1960s, 90 percent of the migrants who came to the Netherlands were guest workers in the industry (Nicolaas and Sprangers, 2007). Graph 2 displays the evolution of migrants in the Netherlands over the years. For the year 1959, I assume zero inflow of migrants since the Netherlands did not recruit guest workers during that time. Including the year 1959 is relevant because it was the last election held before the implementation of the bilateral agreements with migrant-sending countries.

Graph 2: Total number of guest workers



Labour force composition

I gathered employment data from the Dutch Census of Population (Volkstellingen), which encompasses the Dutch Occupational Censuses. However, it is worth noting that the occupational sectors in the 1960 census are categorised differently compared to the 1971 census. As a result, for the purpose of this study, the distinction of occupational sectors is simplified into 'agricultural' and 'non-agricultural' occupations.

Control variables

Other included control variables are the share of graduates and church denomination, representing the percentage of followers of the following religions: Roman Catholic, Dutch-Reformed, Reformed, other, and non-religious. These variables are obtained from the Dutch Census of Population.

Since census data is not available for every election year, I estimate the relevant socio-economic control variables for the analysed election years. The analysis focuses on elections that occurred within a maximum of four years from the nearest census. In other words, I correlate the election results of 1959 and 1963 with the 1960 census data, and similarly, I relate the election results of 1967 and 1971 to the 1971 census data. I construct a panel from this data and include year fixed effects and municipality fixed effects in all regressions.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Christian conservatives share	3,376	.547	.229	.044	.986
Labour party share	3,376	.210	.138	.008	.723
Liberal party share	3,376	.091	.069	.000	.425
Other parties share	3,376	.015	.108	0	.079
Migrant ratio	3,376	.018	.031	0	.522
Population	3,376	13981.77	47587.56	256	872428
Agricultural ratio	3,376	.183	.136	0	.772
Roman catholic denomination	3,376	.437	.389	0	1
Dutch reformed denomination	3,376	.321	.264	0	.979
Reformed denomination	3,376	.108	.131	0	.912
Non-religious	3,376	.113	.128	0	.631
Share of graduates	3,376	.136	.101	0	.761
B_mt	3,376	.003	.002	0	.014

Fixed effects model

To test the relationship between voting shares of political parties and immigration, I estimate the following model:

$$y_{mt} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Imm_{mt} + \beta_2 X_{mt} + \eta_m + \mu_t + \varepsilon_{mt} \quad (1)$$

In equation (1), y_{mt} represents the vote share of the Labour Party, the Liberal Party, the Christian Conservatives, or other parties, for municipality m in year t , while Imm_{mt} denotes the fraction of guest

workers (immigrants) in the municipality's population. X_{mt} is a vector of municipality-specific controls, including population, labour force composition, the share of graduates, and church denomination. The variables η_m and μ_t represent municipality fixed effects and year fixed effects, respectively. This implies that β is estimated based on changes in the fraction of immigrants within the same municipality over time, and ε_{mt} describes the error term. The share of graduates is calculated by dividing the number of citizens who have completed middle or higher education by the number of people in the working population.

Considering that the liberal party and the Christian conservatives implemented the labour migrant recruitment policy, while the labour party was on the opposing side, several effects on the vote shares of the investigated parties can be anticipated.

Firstly, when investigating low-educated areas, I expect β_1 to be positive for the labour party. Conversely, for the liberal party and the Christian conservatives, I anticipate a negative effect. This comes from the fact that I expect the low-educated population to feel threatened by the migrants regarding the labour market, and therefore I expect that these people are more reluctant to vote for the opposing party.

Secondly, I expect a larger negative effect in municipalities with less cultural or religious diversity compared to those that are more culturally or religiously diversified. I expect this because I expect more culturally diversified communities to be more accepting to foreigners than less diversified communities.

Considering these effects, it can be expected that the migrant ratio will have a negative effect on the vote shares of the Christian conservatives and the liberal party, and a positive effect on the vote share of the labour party.

Furthermore, when considering the control variables, I expect church denomination to have a positive effect on the vote share of the Christian Conservatives. However, for the Liberal Party and the Labour Party, I anticipate either no effect or a negative effect. Additionally, in relation to the share of graduates, I anticipate a negative effect on the vote share of both the Labour Party and the Christian Conservatives.

Lastly, for the agricultural ratio, I expect a negative effect on the vote share of the Liberal Party and a positive effect on the vote share of the Christian Conservatives.

Instrumental variable approach

The fixed effects OLS estimation cannot be interpreted causally due to potential endogeneity. Reversed causality is a common occurrence in the context of migrants and voting behaviour. Migrants' choices of location are not random, as they are more likely to select destinations that are migrant-friendly rather than municipalities that support anti-immigration sentiments. In addition to this, changes in the economic and demographic climate can also attract new migrants and can induce a bias by pushing votes towards or away from the investigated parties. Therefore, an instrumental variable needs to be developed that control for these biases.

The approach utilised is inspired by Goldsmith-Pinkham et al. (2019), who employ the Bartik instrument. This instrument incorporates various variables, including the share of industrialization. In the Netherlands, the settlement pattern of migrants was largely predetermined, with a preference for moving to the more industrialised areas of the country due to labour shortages in the industrial sector. Therefore, the proposed instrument is a modification of the commonly used instrument that considers settlement patterns of previous immigrants (Altonji and Card, 1991). I argue that this modification remains relevant because regional specialisation can explain settlement patterns, and, by using a lagged approach of the variable, we control for the changing views on migrants after arrival.

Equation (2) shows the first-stage relationship corresponding to the IV estimation of equation (1).

$$Imm_{mt} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 B_{mt} + \eta_{mt} \quad (2)$$

This formula is explained more in detail below, where B_{mt} represents the fraction of industry workers in municipality m in the year 1956, divided by the population of municipality m in the year t , multiplied by the number of migrants that have come to the Netherlands between 1960 and the year t .

$$B_{mt} = Z_{mt,1956} \times g_{1960,t}$$

$$Z_{mt,1956} = \frac{N_{m,1956}}{N_{,1956}} \times \frac{1}{P_{m,t}}$$

$N_{m,1956}$ is the number of industry workers in municipality m in the year 1956

$N_{\Sigma m,1956}$ is the number of total industry workers in the Netherlands in the year 1956

$P_{m,t}$ is the population of municipality m in the year t

$g_{1960,t}$ is the number of ‘guest workers’ that have come to the Netherlands between 1960 and the year t

As mentioned in the introduction, the majority of migrants arrived in the Netherlands to address labour market shortages in the industrial sector. Consequently, I contend that the instrument presented above is relevant and provides a compelling basis for my empirical strategy.

One possible limitation of the Bartik instrument comes from the fact that some municipalities have persistent characteristics in terms of economy, culture, and institutions, that can affect the attraction of immigrants and also affect voting behaviour of natives. The inclusion of control variables of demographic characteristics can reduce this threat, but not eliminate it.

V. Results

OLS

Table (3) presents the OLS estimates including year fixed effects and municipality fixed effects. The estimates indicate that the Christian conservatives experienced negative effects from the migrant ratio. This finding indicates that the influx of low-skilled migrants has a negative effect on the vote shares of the Christian Conservatives, which was a promoting party of the migrant's recruitment. However surprisingly, the liberal party, their governing partner in this recruitment policy, did not show any significant effect from the migrant ratio. Similarly, no significant effect was found for the ratio of migrants on the vote share of the labour party. Lastly, I observe that an indication that the influx of migrants promotes a move to the less traditional parties (other parties) in the Netherlands, regarding the significant positive coefficient of this OLS estimation.

When examining the control variables, the coefficients of different religions all have a positive effect on the vote share of the Christian conservatives, which seems reasonable. However, it is questionable that the share of non-religious individuals also has a positive effect on their vote share.

Furthermore, the share of graduates has the greatest effect on the vote share of the liberal party, followed by the vote share of the labour party. In contrast, a negative effect is found for the Christian conservatives. This suggests that a highly skilled or highly educated population is associated with a higher vote share for the liberal party compared to a low-skilled population. For example, a 10 percentage point increase in the share of graduates is expected to result in a 1.25 percentage point increase in the vote share of the liberal party.

Table 3: OLS estimates of migration on vote shares

	(1) Christian Conservatives	(2) Labour party	(3) Liberal party	(4) Other parties
Migrant ratio	-.283*** (.046)	-.009 (.024)	.009 (.051)	0.283*** (.060)
Log Population	-.044*** (.006)	.005 (.003)	.014*** (.002)	.025*** (.008)
Agricultural ratio	-.133*** (.022)	-.091*** (.012)	.027*** (.009)	.197*** (.023)
Roman catholic denomination	.731*** (.082)	-.361*** (.043)	-.257*** (.032)	-.113** (.060)
Dutch reformed denomination	.405*** (.084)	-.212*** (.044)	-.147*** (.032)	-.046 (.063)
Reformed denomination	1.089*** (.093)	-.594*** (.049)	-.406*** (.036)	-.087 (.072)
Non-religious	1.143*** (.085)	-.640*** (.044)	-.416*** (.033)	-.085 (.063)
Share of graduates	-.222*** (.025)	.025* (.013)	.125*** (.010)	.072*** (.025)
Constant	.351*** (.102)	.559*** (.053)	.203*** (.039)	-.114 (.099)
Observations	3,376	3,376	3,376	3,376
Municipality fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
R-squared	.732	.523	.327	.873

Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: * 10%. ** 5%. *** 1%.

Relevance of the instrument

Table (4) shows the first stage relationship between the instrument and the variable that represents the ratio of migrants. It shows a F-statistic of 497.91, which is above the canonical value of 10, which implies that the instrument is strong.

Table 4: First-stage IV regression

	Migrant ratio
B_mt	4.037*** (.181)
Log Population	.013*** (.003)
Agricultural ratio	.074*** (.008)
Roman catholic denomination	.052 (.036)
Dutch reformed denomination	.076** (.037)
Reformed denomination	.030 (.041)
Non-religious	.017 (.037)
Share of graduates	.160*** (.008)
Observations	3,376
Municipality fixed effects	YES
Year fixed effects	YES
Cragg-Donald Wald F-statistic	497.91

IV regressions

Table (5) presents the results of the IV-regression estimates of the migrant ratio with vote shares as dependent variables. Firstly, the migrant ratio shows a significant negative relationship with the vote share of all the investigated political parties. This suggests that a higher share of migrants leads to a shift in votes from established parties towards alternative options. Additionally, the effect of the migrant share is more pronounced for the Christian conservatives compared to the other two parties, indicating that Christian conservative voters may attach greater importance to the issue of migrants. Furthermore, the estimates of the IV regressions display larger effects than in the OLS estimates. This suggests that the endogeneity does bias the estimates towards zero.

Regarding the control variables, the results indicate that an increase in population would boost the vote shares of the liberal party and the labour party, while weakening the share of the Christian conservatives. Moreover, we observe that most religious affiliations tend to have a positive effect on the vote shares of the Christian conservatives, but a negative effect on the labour party and liberal party, which is consistent with expectations. Lastly, a higher share of graduates predicts a higher vote share for the liberals and the labour party, but a lower vote share for the Christian conservatives.

Most importantly for my research, I find that an increase of 1 percent in the ratio of migrants of the population produces a decline in the Christian Conservatives vote share by 2.779 percentage points. Similarly for the labour party and the liberal party, where it produces a decline of respectively 0.581 and 0.433 percentage points. The decrease in vote shares result into more support for other parties outside of the social-democratic-liberal-Christian stronghold. An increase of 1 percent of the migrant ratio produces an increase in the vote share of other parties of 3.790 percentage points. This can be seen as a very early start of the breakdown of the social-democrat-liberal-Christian stronghold that was in place for years after the second world war.

Table 5: general IV estimates of migration on vote shares

	(1) Christian Conservatives	(2) Labour party	(3) Liberal party	(4) Other parties
Migrant ratio	-2.779*** (.189)	-581*** (.073)	-433*** (.051)	3.790*** (.170)
Log Population	-.067*** (.019)	.015* (.008)	.018*** (.007)	.034*** (.011)
Agricultural ratio	.300*** (.040)	-.016 (.015)	.046*** (.012)	-.329*** (.032)
Roman catholic denomination	.728*** (.234)	-.328*** (.103)	-.217*** (.073)	-.182 (.137)
Dutch reformed denomination	.478** (.244)	-.162 (.106)	-.101 (.075)	-.215 (.141)
Reformed denomination	1.057*** (.246)	-.573*** (.119)	-.377*** (.081)	-.106 (.156)
Non-religious	1.108*** (.244)	-.621*** (.105)	-.394*** (.074)	-.092 (.142)
Share of graduates	-.107** (.046)	.074*** (.017)	.233*** (.014)	-.200*** (.046)
Constant	.427 (.309)	.413*** (.126)	.113 (.100)	.046 (.173)
Observations	3,376	3,376	3,376	3,376
Municipality fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Cragg-Donald Wald F statistic	497.91	497.91	497.91	479.91

Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: * 10%. ** 5%. *** 1%.

Heterogeneity

Considering the low-skilled characteristics of the migrants, it could be the case that these migrants could compete in jobs of low-skilled natives and complement high-skilled natives. However, while there still exists some disagreement about the actual labour market effects of migrants, natives could vote on perceived effects of migrants, affected by media and political narratives. To test this so called ‘labour market channel’, I create two groups of municipalities, high-educated and low-educated, as a proxy for high-skilled and low-skilled. Table (6) presents IV-regression estimates based on different shares of graduates in a municipality. Columns (1) to (4) display results for municipalities with a share of graduates below the median value of 0.118, while columns (5) to (8) show results for municipalities with a share of graduates above the mentioned median.

One noteworthy observation pertains to the Labour Party, as evidenced in columns (2) and (6), where it becomes apparent that in high-educated municipalities, the impact of migrants is positively associated with the vote share. Conversely, in low-educated municipalities, this effect is notably negative. Given the Labour Party's historical advocacy for the working class, the unexpected outcome prompts consideration that the labour market channel may play a less significant role for these voters.

Turning to the Liberal Party, an interesting pattern emerges in columns (3) and (7). These findings indicate that the negative coefficient for the effect of migrants is more pronounced in lower-educated municipalities compared to higher-educated ones. This could be construed as indicative of the labour market channel effect, potentially affecting the opportunities of lower-skilled individuals despite the Liberal Party's stance on promoting migrants. However, since the confidence intervals of both coefficients are close to each other, it cannot be concluded that one effect is directly outperforming the other.

As for the Christian Conservatives, a counterintuitive effect is observed, where high-educated municipalities exhibit a stronger aversion to the party in light of migrants compared to low-educated municipalities. However, both groups demonstrate significant negative effects for the Christian Conservatives, and because of the significant difference in coefficients between the two groups, this could be interpreted as a stronger aversion for high-educated municipalities.

Lastly, looking at the results for the other remaining parties in the Dutch elections, both groups exhibit a positive effect of the migrant ratio on their vote share.

In conclusion, it is important to note that only the vote share of the Labour Party appears to be positively influenced by the migrant share, and this effect is confined to high-educated municipalities. In low-educated municipalities, an increasing share of migrants seems to lead voters toward alternative parties rather than either of the traditional Dutch governing parties. However, one should be careful by giving too much weight to the differences in coefficients within a party, the most important takeaway of this section is the difference in signs regarding the Labour party.

Table 6: IV estimates including the division of education attainment

	(1) CC	(2) Lab	(3) Lib	(4) Other	(5) CC	(6) Lab	(7) Lib	(8) Other
Migrant ratio	-1.800*** (.194)	-1.342*** (.131)	-1.029*** (.110)	4.160*** (.294)	-3.294*** (.179)	.152** (.069)	-.145*** (.044)	3.286*** (.156)
Log Population	-.016 (.011)	.000 (.007)	.011* (.006)	.005 (.017)	-.113*** (.014)	.018*** (.005)	.024*** (.003)	.072*** (.012)
Agricultural ratio	-.395*** (.067)	.058 (.045)	.126*** (.038)	.210*** (.101)	.861*** (.224)	-.505*** (.087)	-.114** (.055)	-.242 (.196)
Roman catholic denomination	-.570** (.286)	-.797*** (.193)	-.433*** (.163)	1.803*** (.433)	2.804*** (.463)	-.391** (.179)	-.455*** (.114)	-1.958*** (.405)
Dutch reformed denomination	-.605** (.272)	-.714*** (.183)	-.350** (.155)	1.671*** (.412)	2.108*** (.510)	.015 (.197)	-.226* (.125)	-1.897*** (.445)
Reformed denomination	-.140 (.356)	-1.170*** (.240)	-.686*** (.203)	2.000*** (.540)	2.421*** (.501)	-.772*** (.194)	-.571*** (.123)	-1.078*** (.438)
Non-religious	-.010 (.273)	-1.163*** (.184)	-.602*** (.156)	1.778*** (.414)	2.924*** (.509)	-.692*** (.197)	-.628*** (.125)	-1.604*** (.445)
Share of graduates	-1.679*** (.151)	.261*** (.102)	.475*** (.086)	.940*** (.229)	.210*** (.060)	-.111*** (.023)	.138*** (.015)	-.236*** (.053)
Constant	1.416 (.292)	1.101*** (.197)	.372* (.166)	-1.802*** (0.443)	-1.057* (.502)	.475** (.194)	.300** (.123)	1.281*** (.438)
Observations	1,688	1,688	1,675	1,688	1,688	1,688	1,688	1,688
Municipality fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Cragg-Donald F statistic	224.77	224.77	223.47	224.77	557.94	557.94	557.94	557.94

Abbreviations: CC (Christian conservatives), Lab (labour party), Lib (liberal party) Other (other parties). Columns (1)-(4) presents the IV-regression results, with the condition that the share of graduates is below the median value of the share of graduates of the total sample, for the vote shares of respectively, the Christian conservatives, labour party, and the liberal party. Columns (5)-(8) present the same regression, but with the condition that the share of graduates is above the median value. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: * 10%. ** 5%. *** 1%.

Robustness checks

Table (7) displays results from a different subsample aimed at assessing the robustness of our findings in Table (5). In this analysis, I exclude the year 1959 from the regression to examine the impact of dropping observations from that year.

In column (1), my estimates demonstrate that the results for the Christian conservatives remain consistent even when we reject the assumption of zero migrants in 1959. The magnitude of the coefficient becomes more negative in this subsample, indicating a stronger negative effect when excluding the year 1959. More precisely, an increase of 1 percent in the ratio of migrants of the population produces a decline in the Christian Conservatives vote share by 4.813 percentage points.

Moving on to column (2), I present the same regression but with the vote share of the labour party as the dependent variable. It is important to note that the sign of the migrant ratio changes from negative to positive. This suggests that the results presented in Table (5) may be influenced by assumptions made regarding the number of migrants in 1959. A 1 percent increase in the ratio of migrants of the population produces an increase in the Labour party vote share by 0.731 percentage points.

Similarly, in column (3), I present the regression estimates for the vote share of the liberal party. Here too, the sign of the migrant ratio changes from negative to positive. A 1 percent increase in the ratio of migrants of the population produces an increase in the Liberal party vote share by 0.147 percentage points.

Lastly, regarding the other parties participating in the Dutch elections, there is a significant positive effect of migration on their vote shares. A 1 percent increase in the ratio of migrants of the population produces an increase in their vote shares by 3.934 percentage points.

These results indicate that the labour party, which opposed the recruitment of labour migrants, experiences an increase in vote share as the ratio of migrants rises. This phenomenon is interesting to see in relation with today's political landscapes around the world. Nowadays, right-wing nationalist/populist parties seem to experience an increase in votes, which is largely attributed to their anti-immigration stance. These parties differ considerably from the Dutch labour party, but this stance seems to address the concerns of voters.

Table 7: Robustness (exclusion of the year 1959)

	(1) Christian Conservatives	(2) Labour party	(3) Liberal party	(4) Other parties
Migrant ratio	-4.813*** (.262)	.731*** (.079)	.147*** (.043)	3.934*** (.207)
Log Population	-.103*** (.019)	.005 (.006)	.014*** (.003)	.083*** (.015)
Agricultural ratio	.288*** (.044)	-.080*** (.013)	-.018** (.007)	-.190*** (.034)
Roman catholic denomination	.607*** (.190)	-.336*** (.057)	-.161*** (.031)	-.110 (.150)
Dutch reformed denomination	.410** (.195)	-.210*** (.059)	-.096*** (.032)	-.103 (.154)
Reformed denomination	.864*** (.216)	-.544*** (.065)	-.242*** (.035)	-.077 (.170)
Non-religious	.923*** (.197)	-.561*** (.060)	-.283*** (.032)	-.079 (.156)
Share of graduates	.149*** (.057)	-.138*** (.017)	.103*** (.009)	-.114*** (.045)
Constant	.871*** (.265)	.513*** (.080)	.112*** (.043)	-.497** (.209)
Observations	2,532	2,532	2,530	2,532
Municipality fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES
Cragg-Donald F statistic	373.19	373.19	373.19	373.19

Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: * 10%. ** 5%. *** 1%.

Religious diversity

Another possible channel through which migration can affect voting behaviour is racial prejudice. I attempt to capture that effect by making a division of two types of municipalities, based on religious diversity. Table (8) presents IV-regression estimates with a focus on religious diversity within municipalities. Like the robustness check, the year 1959 is dropped. The variable 'religious diversity' is calculated by summing the squares of the percentages of followers of various religions, including Roman Catholic, Reformed, Dutch Reformed, other, and non-religious. An increase in the value of this variable indicates a decrease in religious diversity within a municipality. The median value for the religious diversity variable is .490306. Municipalities with values below this median are considered more religiously diverse, while those above the median are considered less diverse. The reason to investigate this is because diversity of religions can also be seen as diversity of cultures.

Columns (1) to (3) in Table (8) present results for the more diverse municipalities, while columns (4) to (6) show results of their counterparts.

First, considering the migrant opposing party, the labour party, the results show a strong significant positive effect in less diversified municipalities of migrants on their vote share. In more diversified areas this phenomenon changes to a negative effect. These results could be interpreted as evidence for some form of perceived cultural threat to the homogeneous municipalities.

Second, for the liberal party, these results tend to be like those of the labour party, however, considering that this party was a strong proponent of the recruitment of migrants, it could be seen as support for migrants in the less diversified areas among liberal voters. This could be due to some of the positive aspects these migrants brought to the economy, and thus liberal voters did not perceive the migrants as a threat to their culture.

Lastly, for the Christian conservatives, the opposite is observed as expected. The results suggest that the negative effect of migrants on the vote share of the Christian conservatives may be driven, in part, by the level of religious diversity within the municipality, and thus that Christian Conservative voters may see migrants as a threat to their culture.

Table 8: IV estimates including division of diversity

	(1) CC	(2) Lab	(3) Lib	(4) Other	(5) CC	(6) Lab	(7) Lib	(8) Other
Migrant ratio	-4.322*** (.258)	-.163** (.079)	-.046 (.060)	4.532*** (.251)	-5.084*** (.456)	1.621*** (.167)	.282*** (.056)	3.179*** (.297)
Log Population	-.128*** (.016)	.007 (.005)	.020*** (.004)	.101*** (.015)	-.104*** (.042)	.007 (.016)	.007 (.005)	.090*** (.028)
Agricultural ratio	.384*** (.048)	-.031** (.015)	-.032*** (.011)	-.321*** (.047)	.088 (.089)	-.072** (.033)	.033*** (.011)	-.048 (.058)
Roman catholic denomination	.885*** (.157)	-.297*** (.048)	-.154*** (.037)	-.434*** (.154)	-1.366** (.073)	.694*** (.266)	.035 (.088)	.637 (.472)
Dutch reformed denomination	.356** (.154)	-.027 (.047)	-.032 (.036)	-.297** (.150)	-1.376** (.734)	.736*** (.270)	.072 (.090)	.569 (.477)
Reformed denomination	.914*** (.169)	-.409*** (.052)	-.192*** (.039)	-.313* (.165)	-.921 (.911)	.381 (.335)	-.117 (.111)	.657 (.592)
Non-religious	.737*** (.159)	-.327*** (.049)	-.174*** (.037)	-.235 (.155)	-.640 (.781)	.232 (.287)	-.131 (.095)	.539 (.508)
Share of graduates	.324*** (.052)	-.072*** (.016)	.068*** (.012)	-.320*** (.051)	-.217** (.108)	-.156*** (.040)	.176*** (.013)	.197*** (.070)
Constant	.939*** (.217)	.426*** (.066)	.043 (.051)	-.409* (.211)	2.959*** (.807)	-.589** (.296)	-.063 (.098)	-1.309** (.525)
Observations	1,302	1,302	1,302	1,302	1,142	1,142	1,142	1,142
Municipality fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year fixed effects	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Cragg-Donald F statistic	305.91	305.91	305.91	305.91	129.64	129.64	129.64	129.64

Abbreviations: CC (Christian conservatives), Lab (Labour party), Lib (Liberal party), Other (Other parties). Columns (1)-(3) presents the IV-regression results, with the condition that the religious diversity variable is below the median value, for the vote shares of respectively, the Christian conservatives, labour party, and the liberal party. Columns (4)-(6) present the same regression, but with the condition that the religious diversity variable is above the median value. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: * 10%. ** 5%. *** 1%.

Turnout

Table (9) presents the effects of migration on voter turnout. The results are intriguing as they reveal a significant negative effect of the migrant ratio on turnout. This finding suggests that an increase in the number of migrants within a municipality may discourage the native population from participating in elections. It also implies that ideologically driven voters who oppose immigration may choose not to vote at all, rather than casting their vote for a party that does not align with their ideology.

Table 9: IV estimates - turnout

	Turnout
Migrant ratio	-3.495*** (.210)
Log Population	-.054*** (.018)
Agricultural ratio	.384*** (.038)
Roman catholic denomination	.287 (.236)
Dutch reformed denomination	.297 (.236)
Reformed denomination	.278 (.239)
Non-religious	.282 (.246)
Share of graduates	.452*** (.046)
Constant	1.047*** (.299)
Observations	3,376
Municipality fixed effects	YES
Year fixed effects	YES
Cragg-Donald F statistic	497.91

Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. Significance levels: * 10%. ** 5%. *** 1%.

VI. Possible channels behind our findings

In this section I investigate the transmission channels that influence natives' voting behaviour because of immigration. I will discuss three main categories of channels. The first one relates to the labour market channel, i.e. increased competition for natives. The second one concerns the public service channel, which suggests that natives worry about increased competition in the welfare state. The last one has to do with culture clash, i.e. racial prejudice.

The first mechanism I discuss is the most debated: labour market competition, which increases due to the increased supply of labour through migration. According to Borjas (2003), when competition for native's jobs increases, the wages of natives decrease. This only applies to natives with the same skill level as the migrants. In other words, unskilled migrants decrease the wages of unskilled natives. Proof of the labour market channel is found by Halla et al. (2017), who investigate the case of Austria regarding the effect of migration on far-right voting. They find results that suggest that voters worry about negative effects of migration on the labour market. They find heterogeneous effects regarding skill levels of natives, namely, a positive effect of migration on voting for the anti-immigration party among low-skilled natives, and vice versa for high-skilled natives. These results are in line with the theory of Borjas (2003).

Another study, conducted by Moriconi et al. (2018), has similar findings. They find that the inflow of high-skilled migrants has a negative effect on votes for nationalist preferences, and a positive effect when the migrants are low-skilled. This study contains a wider sample, which includes election and migration data of 12 EU countries in the time period 2007-2016. Their IV and OLS regressions confirm the view that the inflow of low-skilled migrants increase the vote share for anti-immigration parties.

I find evidence for this effect for the liberal party with the negative effect of the migrant ratio in lower-educated municipalities being larger compared to higher-educated municipalities. However, I also found differing outcomes, concerning the Christian conservatives, where the vote share of the Christian conservatives, who also supported the recruitment of labour migrants, is more negatively affected by the migrant ratio in higher-educated municipalities compared to lower-educated ones. However, the negative effect is still present in both groups of education.

Secondly, concerns about increased competition for public services can affect voting behaviour. Natives tend to worry about migrants "taking advantage" of the welfare state. This phenomenon was examined by Alesina et al. (2019). They investigated 140 regions in 16 western countries and found that natives develop a negative attitude towards public services when the ratio of migrants is higher in their region. The effects are stronger when the migrants are unskilled or come from Middle-Eastern countries. However, there are also papers that do not find the effects of this public services/welfare channel, such as Gerdes and Wadensjö (2010). These authors find consistent positive effects for the socialists party, which obviously pleads for a more social welfare system. However, these findings are related to the inflow of

refugees instead of labour migrants, which could have another effect.

On the contrary, the study of Otto and Steinhardt (2014) finds significant effects concerning the public services channel interacting with migration in the light of right-wing voting (i.e. anti-immigration voting). They focus on the concerns of natives regarding child care, and schooling. They show how these factors have an increasing effect on the vote share of anti-immigration parties, by making a distinction in terms of the shares of foreign children.

Additionally, a study of Edo et al. (2019) researches the effect of migration on voting for the far-right and far-left in France. They find evidence for the labour market channel, but they also find less support for redistribution when the migration increases, which translates into a decrease in the vote share of left-wing parties. I could not find any evidence for this effect because of the lack of additional data on public services such as childcare facilities, or local government spending on social services.

Thirdly, racial prejudice plays an important role in the debate. Dustmann and Preston (2007) analysed the three major channels that influence natives' attitudes towards migrants: labour market concerns, public services discussion, and racial or cultural concerns. For the first two channels, they found the same results as mentioned above. Additionally, for the third channel, racial prejudice, they found an even stronger effect. According to them, racial prejudice is an important factor that contributes to the negative attitude towards migrants, but only for migrants from ethnically different countries.

I find evidence for this effect in the regression estimates of religious diversity. Looking at the results for the Christian conservatives, in a more religiously diversified municipality, the negative effect of migration on their vote share is smaller than in a less diversified municipality. Keeping in mind that the labour party was opposing the recruitment of labour migrants, I observe that in more diversified municipalities the vote share is expected to increase less because of migration than in less diversified municipalities.

VII. Conclusion

In this paper I have investigated the relationship between voting behaviour and the arrival of migrants. The case of the Netherlands has interesting features because of the implementation of their labour recruitment policy in the 60s which ensured a large supply of low-skilled migrants to the Netherlands. While the literature focussed mainly on European cases, the case of the Netherlands was not investigated separately.

My results indicate a negative and significant impact of growing shares of foreigners on the political decline of the Dutch Christian conservative parties, which was the one of the sides promoting labour migration policies. Furthermore, this finding continues to hold when I consider endogenous location decisions of immigrants by instrumenting the migrant ratio with previous industrial specialisation shares of municipalities. In addition to this, the OLS estimates suggest no effect of migration on the vote shares of the liberal and labour party, while the IV regressions estimates show negative effects on both vote shares. But when the year 1959 is dropped, these effects tend to be positive and significant. This suggests that the former IV-regression results may be influenced by assumptions made regarding the number of migrants in 1959.

All taken together, my research gives evidence that the Christian Conservatives are negatively affected by their stance on migration and the influx of those migrants mostly through the racial prejudice channel, while for the liberal party other factors seem to play a more important role, such as the labour market channel in lower-educated municipalities. However, the issue of migrants seems a far more important factor for voting behaviour of the Christian Conservatives than the liberal party.

Furthermore, looking from the opposing side, the labour party, because of the positive effect in less diversified areas, seem to benefit from their migration stance through the perceived cultural threat to homogeneous municipalities. However, in contrary to their party name, they do not reflect beneficial effects on their vote share through the labour market channel, possibly because this channel would be less important for their voters.

With respect to policy implications, my analysis displays the short-term political effects of a massive influx of unskilled migrants. These might have important future implications for migration policy, politics, and economic policy. And looking at debates today, these effects should be considered by political parties to see where voters worry about, what endangers them, and how they respond in terms of voting.

Overall, these findings provide insights into the relationship between the migrant ratio, political parties, and the effect of education and religious diversity on vote shares. What would be interesting is to find quantitative evidence for the public spending channel effects. Therefore, further research and analysis are needed to fully understand the complex dynamics and potential causal relationships underlying these findings.

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