

## MIGRATION TO EUROPE IN AN AGE OF TERROR: WHAT EFFECT ON PUBLIC OPINION?

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The conflation of immigration with terrorism in public political discourse across post-September 11 Europe has challenged national governments to reconcile the contradictions embedded within what hitherto had been a coherent policy equilibrium. For most of the post-WWII period, this equilibrium was comprised of three discrete dimensions: 1) *economic*: securing an adequate supply of foreign labor; 2) *societal*: successfully incorporating immigrants into the host societies; and 3) *external safety*: safeguarding national territorial borders. Indeed, until September 11, Europe's political elites could more or less assume that state decisions taken along one of the aforementioned policy dimensions did not circumscribe decisions made along others. However, with the inclusion of immigration in a new "security continuum" (Aradau 2001), the veracity of this premise is challenged. Specifically, the balance of scholarly opinion has shifted from the view that Europeans are ill informed about and/or largely deferential to the preferences of political elites on immigration-related questions toward the conclusion that policy makers currently forge immigration and immigrant policy in a super-heated political environment within which their policy options are severely circumscribed by an attentive and predominantly illiberal public (Bigo 2002; Karyotis 2007, 11).

Against the backdrop of this claim, this article poses and addresses two related questions. First, *has* European public opinion become more illiberal on immigration-related questions since September 11? Is it *significantly* less receptive to new immigration and/or less accommodating toward settled immigrants than previously (Jennings 2005; Noelle-Neumann 2002, 95)? Second, does the opinion survey record demonstrate that European publics feel less economically, socially, and physically secure? Have immigration-related issues become *more* "securitized" post-September 11?

To address these questions, this article will go far back in the respective national public opinion records, paying special attention to the patterns of public attitudes in Britain, France, and Spain. Why emphasize these countries? Moreover, why conflate the aforementioned European experiences with the 9/11 U.S. tragedy? I offer two justifications. First, the trauma of September 11, 2001, serves as a useful proxy for the 1995 terrorist incidents in France, the July 2005 London bombings, and the March 11, 2004, Madrid train attack. In each of these European countries a major terrorist event linked to immigration (however tangentially and/or

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rhetorically) either preceeded or followed September 11. In so doing, it potentially prepared the groundwork for the experience of terrorism in these countries to be interpreted—albeit retrospectively in the French case—by the public through the lens of the U.S. experience. Specifically, it is often hypothesized that, for Europeans, September 11 has reinforced, although to varying degrees, the appropriateness of viewing immigration-related issues through the prism of security (Guild 2003, 336; Soledad Saux 2007, 62). Second, because the events of September 11 and their links to immigration carry a meaning for the British, French, and Spanish publics that few other European publics can be expected to appreciate (Collyer 2006), we can reasonably assume that if public opinion on immigration-related issues did *not* become more illiberal or more securitized for these publics, it is highly unlikely that they did so among other Europeans.

### **Attitudes toward Immigration in Historical Perspective**

On the basis of the evidence in the public opinion record, it is fair to conclude that few policy areas have aroused greater *apprehension* and *negativity* among Western Europeans during the past half century than immigration (Lahav 2004, 1176). This is not to suggest that the public has always and everywhere been overtly hostile to immigrants. Rather, it is simply to underscore that in contrast to other major policy issues, public opinion is unusually consensual *and* negative on immigration-related matters. Since mass immigration began after WWII, relatively few Europeans have supported it, and fewer still have embraced the social changes that permanent mass immigrant settlement have visited upon the immigration-receiving societies (Schain 2008a, 9).

#### EARLY AND CONTINUING APPREHENSION

To be sure, post-WWII migration to Western Europe commenced under relatively favorable economic, social, and political circumstances (Messina 2007, 52). The first wave of labor migrants generally flowed against the backdrop of widespread economic prosperity and popular and elite expectations that most migrants would eventually return “home,” thus engendering the so-called “myth of return.” Partly because of this myth, the original foreign workers were fairly well tolerated.

The context in which the second wave of predominantly family migrants unfolded was very different. By the mid-1970s the postwar economic boom had run its course. Economic stagflation, high unemployment, and painful structural economic adjustment converged to erode the generally permissive political and social environment in which, for the most part, the first wave of foreign workers had been received. Although economic conditions in Western Europe were better by the start of the third wave of migration during the late 1980s, the end of the decade and the beginning of the 1990s unfortunately coincided with a period of structural eco-

conomic adjustment and persistently high unemployment. Compounding these difficulties were the lingering political aftershocks from the first two waves of immigration. Indeed, by the time the third wave was peaking during the early 1990s, Western European mass publics were not at all disposed to embrace it, despite the positive economic contributions that immigrant workers continued to make (Kuijsten 1997, 209-228).

Even during its comparatively benign phase, however, public concern about the fallout from mass immigrant settlement was evident across the major host countries. In Britain, where the public opinion record is especially extensive, immigration-related issues emerged during the 1950s as one of the most politically charged areas of public policy. To illustrate: by the 1960s and 1970s more than 80 percent of the public felt that too many immigrants had been admitted; moreover, in 1968, more than 25 percent identified "immigrants" as the most urgent problem facing Britain (Messina 1989, 12-13). Indeed, so strongly did the British public resent immigration during the late 1960s and early 1970s that a majority (56 percent) on average agreed that immigrants should be encouraged to repatriate (Studlar 1974, 377).

Even during the late 1970s, i.e., after tens of thousands of migrants were already long settled, 49 percent of Britons expressed the opinion that the government should financially assist immigrants who were willing to return to their "country of origin" (Gallup 1980, 310). Particularly ominous for long-term immigrant-native relations were the results of seven opinion surveys conducted between 1959 and 1972, in which on average, a plurality of respondents (42 percent) said that relations between "white people and colored people" were "getting worse," and 84 percent reported a "color problem" in their district (Studlar 1974, 374).

The British public's dissatisfaction with mass immigration and permanent immigrant settlement persisted throughout the early 1980s. In July 1981, a near majority of the public (49 percent) expressed the view that Britain's political parties were not saying enough about immigration (Hastings and Hastings 1983, 386). In the same month "immigrants/colored persons" were cited as "very serious social problems" by 56 percent of respondents, outranking other social problems including drunkenness, pornography, heavy smoking, gambling, prostitution, and homosexuality (Hastings and Hastings 1983, 438). A further 38 percent of respondents endorsed repatriating immigrants as a solution to Britain's "racial problems" (Hastings and Hastings 1983, 444). From 1978 through 1990, either a plurality or a majority of the public disapproved of the government's handling of immigration in every public opinion survey but one (King 2001, 179-180).

How typical was the British public's reception of early post-WWII immigration? Although the opinion record elsewhere is less extensive, the evidence suggests that the British experience was not unusual. In Germany, for example, 55 percent of what researchers considered the attentive public in 1956 opposed allowing Italian workers into the country (Noelle and Neumann 1967, 359). In 1964, a plurality of respondents (36 percent) felt that foreign workers were a "serious problem," judging them to be "always after the girls" (42 percent), "loud" (39 percent), "not very clean" (30 percent), and "often violent" (27 percent) (Noelle and

Neumann 1967, 360-61). In 1975, 83 percent of Germans concurred that “foreign workers will become a serious problem for us in the future” (Noelle-Neumann 1981, 288). Three years later, 73 percent of the public ranked the issue of foreign workers as either “important” or “very important” (Gallup 1980, 277). Moreover, either a majority or plurality of respondents in 1980 and 1984 endorsed the respective statements that guest workers “should adjust their lifestyle to the German lifestyle” (66/56 percent), “be sent home when jobs are tight” (53/41 percent), and be barred from participating in all political activity (57/47 percent) (Hoskin 1991, 71).

The German public’s continuing unease with post-WWII immigration and its social fallout is perhaps best reflected in the results of two 1980s opinion surveys. In the first (1980) half of all respondents agreed that “in the next year or two” tensions between foreign workers and Germany would escalate (Noelle-Neumann 1981, 494). A second (1986) revealed that although most Germans (61 percent) recognized the economy needed foreign workers, a supermajority (70 percent) nevertheless advocated that their numbers be reduced (Hoskin 1991, 72).

If anything, the aversion to early post-WWII immigration was greater among the French public. Half of all respondents surveyed in 1947 (Watson 1952, 20) objected to the presence of Spanish, North African, and Italian immigrants in France, and a near majority (47 percent) opposed the “idea” of immigration (Mauco 1950, 21). Four years later only half of all French respondents judged that settled foreigners were “rendering services to the country” (Girard 1971, 834). Against this backdrop of negativity toward mass immigration, a majority of the French public in 1947, 1949, and 1965—that is, at the very height of foreign worker contributions to the postwar French economy—opposed allowing a “certain number” of foreigners to enter and settle in France (Girard 1971, 861).

The French public’s apprehension about immigration and immigrants was fueled by a fear that foreigners, particularly North Africans, black Africans, and Turks, would not assimilate into French society. In a 1971 opinion survey, for example, only 56 percent of respondents considered that foreigners in France would gradually become French, while 35 percent expressed the belief that they would always be different (Girard 1971, 840). Moreover, despite the fact that in 1971 less than a quarter of respondents (23 percent) indicated that their particular neighborhood was directly affected by immigrant settlement (Girard et al. 1974, 1021), a near-majority (49 percent) agreed that the then-existing ratio of one foreigner for every 13 French people was “too high” (Girard et al. 1974, 1022).

In comparison to the British and French, the reaction of the Spanish public to mass migration to Spain during its take-off phase in the early 1990s was relaxed and their reception of immigrants relatively tolerant. In contrast to most other Europeans during this period, only a minority (25 percent) of Spaniards during this period believed there were “too many” immigrants in their country (European Commission 1991, A35). Indeed, immigration barely registered on the Spanish public’s issue agenda through the late 1990s; moreover, even at the start of the current decade less than 10 percent of the public identified immigration as one of Spain’s three major problems (Table 4).

Nevertheless, against this generally positive backdrop were several worrying signs. First, beginning in 1992 and continuing throughout the decade, a majority of Spaniards thought that the entry of immigrants from the less developed countries should be restricted (Díez Nicolás and Ramírez Lafita 2001, 159). Second, in 2000 a supermajority of Spaniards (83 percent) endorsed the view that there were either “too many” or “many” persons of other nationalities residing in the country (Díez Nicolás and Ramírez Lafita 2001, 121). Third, most Spaniards felt that immigration levels would only increase: almost 80 percent predicted that the number of foreign immigrants would rise within five years (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas 1999), a higher percentage than those foreseeing an increase in the overall consumption of alcohol (55 percent) and illegal drugs (50 percent), and nearly the same percentage of respondents as those who anticipated a rise in the number of couples living together outside of marriage (81 percent). Finally, in 1996 and 2000 more survey respondents than not felt that migrants were being received with “contempt,” “aggressiveness,” “distrust,” and “indifference,” rather than with “friendliness” (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas 1996-2008).

#### PUBLIC OPINION BEFORE SEPTEMBER 11

Although public attitudes toward immigration and immigrants fluctuated somewhat in response to changing economic, social, and political conditions during the late 1980s and into the 1990s (Coenders and Scheepers 2008; Kessler and Freeman 2005), they nevertheless remained mostly negative (Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008). A large plurality of Europeans (46 percent) in 1988 endorsed the view that the presence of non-European Community citizens in their country was a “bad thing,” including either a plurality or majority of citizens in three of the six major European immigration destination countries: Belgium, Denmark, and Germany (European Commission 1988, 64). In France, a majority of respondents (58 percent) in 1984 concurred with the statement that the proportion of immigrants in the population was too large and an equal number (57 percent) in 1989 were “personally concerned” about immigration (Lynch and Simon 2003, 164). In the Netherlands, a plurality (45 percent) of persons surveyed in 1986 endorsed the prescription that all *legal* immigrants should be encouraged to repatriate (Moors, Van Dam, and Esveldt 1999). In Italy, a plurality of respondents in 1987 (49 percent) and 1989 (43 percent) perceived either “only” or “mainly” disadvantages to immigration; moreover, a majority (57/51 percent) wanted immigration to be restricted (Bonifazi 1992, 32-33).

With some exceptions, European public attitudes about immigrants and immigration did not improve much during the 1990s (Semyonov and Raijman 2006). As previously, a large majority (74 percent) of Britons perceived the future United Kingdom either as a “multi-racial society with tensions” or one where “groups live separately but in tension,” although in contrast to the 1959-1972 period, only a minority (27 percent) of the public perceived that British race relations were “getting worse” (Hastings and Hastings 1998, 463-464). In France, when asked to

choose between either “integrating” immigrants or having them “depart,” a majority of respondents chose the latter option in three surveys between 1990 and 1992 (TNS Sofres 2002). A majority of the French also endorsed offering “working immigrants” financial incentives to return to their respective countries of origin (Lynch and Simon 2003, 166). In the Netherlands, the 45 percent of respondents advocating that all immigrants be repatriated in 1986 swelled to 48 percent in 1990 and 51 percent in 1994 (Moors, Van Dam, and Esveldt 1999). By 1998, even larger majorities *disagreed* that “Muslims have a lot to offer Dutch culture” (55 percent) while *concurring* that Western European and Muslim “ways of life are irreconcilable” (53 percent) (Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007, 23). In Germany in 1991, a majority of respondents endorsed the statement that most politicians worry “too much” about foreigners and “not enough about Germans” (Legge, Jr. 1996, 520). In Italy, a robust majority (63 percent) agreed with the statement that foreigners who had lived in Italy “for quite some time should eventually return to their own country” (Bonifazi 1992, 32).

During the 1990s, Europeans as a whole continued to hold the opinion that there were “too many immigrants” in their country, although the percentage of respondents endorsing this view either declined or stayed constant in 8 out of 13 countries surveyed in both 1991 and 1997 (Table 1). Interestingly, Britain, France, and Spain were among the countries where the percentages declined. Undoubtedly fueling the public’s aversion to immigrant numbers during the decade was its un-

TABLE 1  
VIEW THAT THERE ARE “TOO MANY” IMMIGRANTS, 1988-2000 (%)

Country	1988	1991	1992	1993	1994	1997	2000
Austria	—	—	—	—	—	49.6	30.5
Belgium	42.9	56.6	53.0	53.7	57.1	59.5	54.5
Denmark	35.5	42.7	45.9	42.8	40.5	46.1	33.8
Finland	—	—	—	—	—	10.4	17.3
France	44.6	55.8	51.5	55.6	55.1	46.1	42.0
Germany	48.1	54.9	55.0	59.5	40.1	51.8	43.2
Greece	19.1	28.6	45.1	57.4	63.9	71.0	58.3
Ireland	7.3	12.1	11.3	7.9	8.0	19.0	33.3
Italy	33.7	63.0	65.0	64.3	45.9	52.6	42.6
Luxembourg	30.0	20.3	32.1	20.6	23.0	32.8	23.3
Netherlands	30.0	44.1	48.7	47.3	47.2	39.6	41.3
Portugal	13.9	18.2	27.6	25.1	30.2	28.1	30.9
Spain	17.4	24.6	23.4	25.2	26.5	20.4	22.6
Sweden	—	—	—	—	—	37.8	27.6
UK	44.5	54.1	50.1	50.2	42.4	42.3	44.1
EC/EU	37.4	50.5	50.0	51.6	43.5	44.5	39.9

SOURCE: Kessler and Freeman (2005, 831).

easiness about the presence within their society of large numbers of persons of color and, increasingly, different religious traditions. As reflected in Table 2, a substantial percentage of Europeans continued to find the “presence of people of another race disturbing” during the 1990s, an especially pervasive sentiment among Belgians, Danes, and the French. Given this, it is not surprising that a fifth of European Union citizens in 2000 endorsed the view that “foreigners should be sent back to their country of origin” (Thalhammer et al. 2001).

TABLE 2  
AGREE THAT THE “PRESENCE OF PEOPLE OF ANOTHER RACE  
[Is] DISTURBING,” 1993-2000 (%)

Country	EB 39 1993	EB 48 1997	EB 53 2000	Average Percent	Average Rank	% Foreign- Born Pop. 2000	Rank Foreign Pop.
Belgium	21.6	22.3	26.7	23.5	1	8.4	3
Denmark	19.3	24	23.1	22.1	2	4.8	6
France	23.4	13.0	23.1	19.8	3	5.6	4
Austria	—	22.2	13.8	18.0	4	9.3	1
Germany	15.2	13.7	16.8	15.2	5	8.9	2
Italy	12.8	13.9	14.2	13.6	6	2.4	10
Britain	13.6	12.0	13.5	13.0	7	4.0	8
Ireland	8.6	8.6	19	12.1	8	3.3	9
Sweden	—	8.8	11.7	10.3	9	5.4	5
Netherlands	7.9	11.8	9.7	9.8	10	4.2	7
Finland	11.0	7.2	10.2	9.5	11	1.8	13
Portugal	8.3	5.4	11.5	8.4	12	2.1	12
Spain	10.7	6.4	5.6	7.6	13	2.2	11

Correlation between average rank and percent foreign rank = 0.75

SOURCE: European Commission (1993, 1998, and 2000).

## Public Opinion after September 11

Did the events associated with September 11 transform public attitudes toward immigration and immigrants? Did public opinion become more negative? As might have been expected, European opinions about immigration and immigrants *did not* improve after September 11 (Pew Research Center 2007, 28). Nevertheless, as we will see below, it was *not* significantly transformed by the trauma of September 11; nor did it radically change in Britain, France, and Spain as a consequence of these countries' respective domestic tragedies (Fetzer and Soper 2003, 256). Although immigration-related issues became more salient after September 11, public attitudes largely continued along the trajectories established years and, in some cases, decades earlier.

## More Salient?

Although it is reasonable to presume that European publics would perceive immigration as more salient after September 11, according to at least one yardstick, this does not seem to be so universally. As Table 3 demonstrates, the percentage of respondents identifying immigration as a priority for either European or national public policy actually declined in more EU countries than it increased between 2000 and 2003. Immigration also failed to become more salient in 6 of 15 member-state countries and in the EU as a whole between 1997 and 2003, a pattern which largely continues through to the present. Indeed, only 32 percent of EU citizens in 2008 expressed the view that immigration should be made a priority during the 2009 European election campaign, thus firmly establishing it as a second-order issue compared with unemployment (47 percent), economic growth (45 percent), inflation (41 percent), and crime (37 percent) (European Commission 2008b, 30).

As might have been expected, immigration increased in salience among Britons and Spaniards between 2000 and 2006, a period which conveniently brackets opinion prior to September 11 and after the 2004 train bombings in Spain and the July 2005 terrorist events in Britain. However, inexplicably, its salience declined in France: indeed, by 2004, the salience of immigration for French citizens (8 percent) was among the lowest within the EU and only half the EU average. Moreover, after increasing as a driver of vote choice in French national elections between 1984 and 1997, the immigration issue *diminished* in importance in 2002 and 2004 (Schain 2008b, 127).

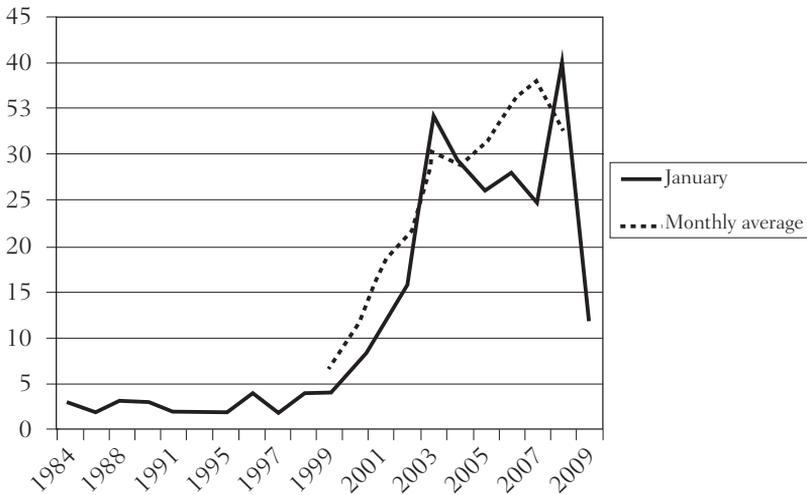
TABLE 3  
SALIENCE OF IMMIGRATION AS A POLICY ISSUE AMONG EUROPEANS,  
1997-2008 (%)

Country	1997	2000	2003	Trend			2008	Trend	Trend
				2000-2003	2004	2006		2004-2008	1997-2008
Austria	23	17	10	-	10	17	14	+	-
Belgium	11	14	16	+	18	16	17	-	+
Britain	18	20	32	+	41	32	35	-	+
Denmark	15	13	25	+	23	27	18	-	+
Finland	5	9	5	-	5	5	7	+	+
France	15	13	11	-	8	11	7	-	-
Germany	25	22	5	-	8	8	6	-	-
Greece	2	16	6	-	6	3	4	-	+
Ireland	6	9	10	+	12	11	5	-	-
Italy	12	17	13	-	12	15	7	-	-
Luxembourg	8	10	10	N	17	12	10	-	+
Netherlands	8	16	8	-	16	16	18	+	+
Portugal	2	3	2	-	2	3	2	N	N
Spain	4	6	17	+	20	33	18	-	+
Sweden	5	6	10	+	11	7	12	+	+
EU 15	15	16	13	-	16	17	(11)	-	-

SOURCE: European Commission (1998, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2008a).

The extent to which immigration-related issues became more salient in Britain after September 11 is clear in the data represented in Chart 1. As it indicates, immigration-related issues generally fell below the threshold of greatest import during the 1980s and 1990s; only in 2001 did they consistently rank among the most important. Since 2001, however, their salience has soared, increasing more than twofold. Indeed, 30 percent or more of respondents viewed them as among the most salient in 37 different monthly surveys between September 2001 and December 2007. By contrast, before September 2001, immigration failed to achieve this threshold of salience in *any* month during the previous 27 years (Ipsos MORI 1974-2009).

CHART 1  
RACE/IMMIGRATION/IMMIGRANTS "MOST IMPORTANT"  
ISSUE IN BRITAIN, 1984-2009 (%)



SOURCE: Ipsos MORI (1974-2009).

On the surface, the trajectory of Spanish public opinion was somewhat similar to the British. As we observed earlier, until this decade immigration barely registered on the Spanish public's issue agenda; less than 10 percent of the public identified it as one of Spain's three major problems (Table 4). After the March 11, 2004, bombings, however, the number of Spanish respondents identifying immigration as a major problem rose to 28 percent.

This said, three facts lend perspective to the state of contemporary Spanish public opinion on immigration. First, by 2007 public concern had fallen back to what it had been at the beginning of the decade (that is, before rising again in 2008). Second, although a large minority of the Spanish public perceived immigration as a "problem" for their country, many fewer saw it as a problem for them

“personally.” Finally, at no point either before or after September 11 did the salience of immigration for the Spanish public ascend to the heights recorded in post-September 11 Britain.

TABLE 4  
MIGRATION TO SPAIN: ONE OF THREE MAJOR PROBLEMS, 1998-2008 (%)

	1998	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
For Spain	2.5	9.9	9.3	12.0	13.9	17.8	28.0	17.3	10.1	23.7
Personally	2.4	3.4	3.6	4.9	5.1	7.7	8.1	12.2	8.7	7.9

SOURCE: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (1996-2008).

### **More Illiberal?**

Because immigration is a multi-faceted phenomenon and problems of immigration control and immigrant incorporation are often conflated in public, political discourse, any longitudinal analysis of the trajectory of public opinion must be approached cautiously. However, because we are less concerned in this essay with measuring social tolerance or prejudice toward established immigrants (Coenders and Scheepers 2008) than we are with the question of whether or not public opinion has become more securitized, the aforementioned problem is somewhat less severe.

Did the events of September 11 alter the center of gravity of public opinion? Are Europeans less tolerant of immigration and immigrants post-9/11? In Britain the opinion survey evidence suggests not. As the data in Table 5 reveals, the response of Britons to the question of whether or not there are “too many immigrants” has remained relatively constant over recent years: robust majorities agreed with this statement both *before* and *after* September 11; indeed, the distribution of responses to one survey in 2007 was strikingly similar to what it was both in 1989 and 2000. A different longitudinal opinion survey (Simon and Sikich 2007, 957), which posed the question of whether immigration should be reduced, increased, or remain the same, also discovered that the British public’s views were fairly constant pre- and post-September 11 (in 1995 and 2003, respectively). Indeed, compared to the 1960s, when more than four in five persons felt that too many immigrants had been admitted into Britain (Messina 1989, 12), contemporary British public attitudes toward immigration in the post-September 11 period seem positively relaxed and tolerant.

Evidence of greater continuity than discontinuity in British opinion after July 2005, Britain’s September 11 moment, is contained in Table 6. When asked to choose among five statements about immigration policy, large majorities predictably preferred the option of making immigration laws “tougher.” Yet, the size

TABLE 5  
 "THERE ARE TOO MANY IMMIGRANTS" IN BRITAIN, 1989-2007 (%)

	<i>Total Agree</i>	<i>Total Disagree</i>	<i>Neither/Nor*</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
1989	63	18	18	1
1994	64	33	—	3
1997	61	35	—	4
1999	55	33	—	13
2000	66	17	13	3
2001	54	31	10	5
2007	68	22	8	2

\* 1994-1999 data from surveys using self-completed questionnaires with no "neither/nor" option and, except in 1999, no "don't know" option.

SOURCE: Ipsos MORI (2007a).

of this majority varied little over time and was actually slightly smaller in 2003 than it was in 2006 and 2007. Fairly constant, too, were the percentage of respondents advocating that "immigration should be stopped altogether." Somewhat surprisingly given the negative environment for immigration purportedly generated by terrorism, this minority opinion never exceeded more than 13 percent between 2003 and 2007.

As Table 7 reveals, more focused public attitudes on immigration from the Middle East and North Africa did not significantly change in the wake of the 2005 London bombings either. Although the percentage of respondents affirming

TABLE 6  
 BRITISH ATTITUDES ON IMMIGRATION POLICY, 2003-2007 (%)

	2003	2005	2006	2007	<i>Change 2003-2007</i>
<i>Laws on immigration should:</i>					
Be abolished, so anyone can come live in Britain.	2	2	1	2	0
Be relaxed.	4	8	5	5	+1
Remain as they are.	12	19	17	13	+1
Be much tougher.	67	58	63	64	-3
<i>Immigration should be stopped altogether:</i>					
	13	11	12	12	-1
Don't know	3	2	2	3	0

SOURCE: Ipsos MORI (2007b).

TABLE 7  
EUROPEAN ATTITUDES ON MIGRATION FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA, 2002-2007 (%)

Country Year	Britain			France			Spain			Germany			Italy		Sweden		
	2002	2005	2006	2007	2002	2005	2006	2007	2002	2005	2006	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	
Good thing	53	61	57	51	44	53	58	53	67	62	44	33	34	34	26	20	57
Bad thing	40	30	32	34	53	45	41	44	26	33	45	59	57	59	64	67	28
Don't know	7	10	11	15	3	2	1	2	7	5	11	8	8	7	10	14	15
Trend		Positive				Positive				Negative				Negative			

SOURCE: Pew Research Center (2007, 28).

immigration from the aforementioned region as a “good thing” declined between 2005 and 2007, a *majority* of the British public nevertheless remained positive. Moreover, the minority concluding that Middle Eastern and North African immigration was a “bad thing” actually *decreased* between 2002 and 2007.

Although attitudes toward settled immigrants have shifted somewhat in France since the 1990s, similarly to Britain, they have *not* done so in the expected, illiberal direction. As Table 8 indicates, the percentage of French respondents preferring immigrants “to depart” *decreased* in the interval prior to and after the 1995 bombings (1992-1998) and again between 1998 and 2002. Indeed, fewer respondents preferred that settled immigrants leave France in 2002 (38 percent) than in 1998 (47 percent). On the other side of the coin, the percentage of the public preferring that immigrants “integrate” into French society *increased* between 1992 and 1998 (41 to 47 percent) and again between 1998 and 2002 (47 to 53 percent).

These results do not, of course, suggest a liberal turn in public attitudes. The more recent majority advocating the integration of immigrants into French society says nothing about the motivations underlying that preference or the preferred means by which immigrants should integrate (e.g., through forced assimilation or voluntary incorporation). This said, the fact that many more respondents chose the option of immigrant integration over repatriation in 2002 dispels the notion that the terrorist events of either 1995 or 2001 caused French public opinion to become especially illiberal. Indeed, it is particularly revealing that the public opinion majorities favoring repatriating immigrants (1991 and 1992) were recorded *before and not after* the domestic terrorist bombings in 1995.

TABLE 8  
FRENCH ATTITUDES TOWARD SETTLED IMMIGRANTS, 1989-2002

Year	Wish for Immigrants to:	
	Depart (%)	Integrate (%)
1989	46	48
1990	46	42
1991	51	40
1992	52	41
1998	47	47
2002	38	53

SOURCE: TNS Sofres (2002).

French attitudes toward immigration from the Middle East as well as North Africa have not become more illiberal as a consequence of September 11. Indeed, if anything, the French public became more tolerant of immigration from the region over time. As Table 7 indicates, the majority perceiving this particular immigration stream to be a “bad thing” in 2002 became an equivalent majority endorsing

it as a “good thing” in 2007. This result generally echoes the findings of a 2007 opinion survey (PRNewswire 2007) in which a majority of the French public (54 percent) concurred with the suggestion that immigration “helps” the country, a sentiment also shared by either a plurality or majority of Italians (51 percent), Germans (48 percent), and Spaniards (53 percent).

In contrast to the public in Britain and France, Spaniards have become more negative toward Middle Eastern and North African immigration (Table 7), albeit over a shorter interval. From two-thirds who concurred that immigration from the region was a “good thing” in 2005, popular feeling deteriorated to the point that a plurality (45 percent) viewed it as a bad thing in 2007. This said, the erosion of Spanish public support for Middle Eastern and North African immigration is not likely to be a direct reaction to the 2004 Madrid train bombings, since the latter postdated the former result by three years. Moreover, as Table 7 demonstrates, even in 2007 Spaniards were far less negative about immigration from the Middle East and North Africa than either Germans or Italians, neither of whom has yet directly experienced a September 11 moment.

## Discussion

What can be concluded about this public opinion survey evidence? First, although immigration-related issues have become more politically salient in some countries since September 11 across most of Western Europe, including in France and Spain, they are and have been historically second-order concerns: that is, they fall below the threshold of political significance routinely exceeded by economic and other issues. After increasing as a motive for vote choice in French elections between 1984 and 1997, for example, immigration declined in importance in 2002 and 2004. Moreover, immigration-related issues played only a negligible role in the 2005 British general election (*Economist* 2005).

Second, there has generally been greater continuity than discontinuity in public opinion on immigration-related issues. Put simply, European publics have always been wary of mass immigration and immigrant settlement. The post-1995 incidents of domestic terrorism as well as the U.S. experience of September 11 *do not* seem to have influenced European public opinion to become more illiberal toward new immigration or immigrants. This counterintuitive conclusion holds true even with regard to Middle Eastern and North African migration.

How can these counterintuitive results be explained? Yankelovich (1993) argues that “public opinion develops slowly over a long period—at least 10 years for a complex issue.” In doing so, he claims that it winds through seven stages, the last of which results in citizens endorsing a course of action, accepting its costs and trade-offs, and living with the consequences. Immigration, it could be reasonably assumed, is just such a complex and multifaceted issue. If so, September 11 probably had relatively little impact on the trajectory of public opinion because the most disruptive and disturbing effects of mass immigration had long ago been factored

TABLE 9  
EUROPEAN ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRATION, 1999-2005(%)

Answers to the following:  
I am going to read you a list of statements concerning topical issues. Could you please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, slightly disagree or strongly disagree (% who said "strongly agree or agree," not counting "non-response")

<i>Immigrants a threat to:</i>	<i>Italy</i>			<i>France</i>			<i>Germany</i>								
	1999	2000	2004	2005	1999	2000	2002	2004	2005	1999	2000	2002	2004	2005	
Culture, identity, and religion	27.3	25.3	23.9	30.2	26.6	25.6	25.3	30.5	25.6	22.4	25.1	22.2	22.7	25.1	29.2
Employment	32.2	32.3	29.2	31.5	35.1	28.3	27.4	27.7	26.0	26.7	28.8	29.4	41.3	47.5	39.9
Public order and safety	46.1	42.8	39.7	37.2	39.2	29.4	35.8	40.2	29.9	22.8	22.5	24.4	31.9	33.8	34.1

SOURCE: Diamanti and Bordignon (2005, 12).

<i>Immigrants a threat to:</i>	<i>Spain</i>			<i>Britain</i>		
	1999	2000	2002	1999	2000	2002
Culture, identity, and religion	10.6	18.5	25.8	31.0	35.6	37.4
Employment	18.7	26.3	31.0	—	49.9	46.0
Public order and safety	13.7	25.8	34.2	26.2	32.0	35.9

SOURCE: Diamanti and Bordignon (2002, 13).

into most Europeans' thinking, particularly among publics within the traditional immigration-receiving countries. Indeed, McLaren has astutely observed that popular "fears related to the religion and culture of new immigrants were apparent in Europe before the attacks of September 11, July 7, and the Madrid train attack of 2004" (2008, 15).

Evidence supporting this hypothesis is presented in Tables 9 and 10. As the data demonstrate, not only were immigrants perceived negatively by many Europeans before 2001, but the former were already established as objects of general insecurity (Table 10) and viewed by a substantial minority of Europeans as specifically threatening to national culture/identity, employment, and public safety (Table 10). In short, issues pertaining to mass immigrant settlement were already "securitized" for many Europeans before September 11.

Much like the evidence reported in previous tables, the data in Table 9 reveal that whatever the level of public concern about immigrants prior to 2001, the trajectory of opinion did not significantly change after September 11. Indeed, of the five Western European countries represented, only in Spain did public perceptions of immigrants as threatening along all three security dimensions significantly spike upward from 1999 to 2005; in France and Italy it receded.

In light of the aforementioned results, public opinion does not seem to be more securitized after September 11 than before. As a consequence, and all else being equal, the historically expansive bias of state immigration and immigrant policy is likely to continue as long as political elites in Europe view immigration to be in their country's best interest (Messina 2007, 224-245).

TABLE 10  
MINORITY GROUPS AS A CAUSE OF INSECURITY, 2000 (%)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Tend to Agree</i>	<i>Tend to Disagree</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
Greece	77	19	3
Denmark	60	33	7
Belgium	56	35	9
France	51	41	8
Germany	46	34	19
Norway (2002)	45	41	14
Netherlands	45	44	11
Austria	44	39	17
Ireland	42	43	14
EU	42	47	15
Luxembourg	40	47	13
Italy	38	46	16
Spain	34	56	11
United Kingdom	32	48	20
Finland	32	61	8
Sweden	24	66	10

SOURCE: Statistics Norway (2002).

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