Were political elite attitudes toward immigration securitized after 11 September? Survey evidence from the European Parliament

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Many immigration scholars either implicitly or explicitly agree that the post-11 September 2001 period is witness to a 'problematization' and 'securitization' of immigration that is new in its scope and scale. In this view, 11 September is perceived as a critical juncture in and a major accelerant of the process of securitizing immigration in Europe and the United States. Against this backdrop and drawing upon data gathered from our original 1993 and 2004 surveys of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) we investigate in this article if and to what extent the purported securitization of immigration in post-11 September Europe is reflected in the self-reported immigration-related attitudes of MEPs, parliamentarians who are now central actors in forging a common immigrant and immigration policy in Europe. As our following analysis of the data demonstrates, MEP attitudes in the aggregate were not significantly altered by 11 September. In the face of catastrophic events in the international security environment MEP opinion and policy preferences held relatively constant over time. Moreover, contrary to our expectations and in contradiction of a core tenet of securitization theory, MEPs in 2004, as in 1993, were *not* especially inclined to view immigration through the prism of either national or European security. Rather, our findings suggest the differential effects of security events on elite attitudes on matters of immigration, thus compelling us to adopt a more nuanced view of security as it is linked to different national conceptions and aspects of immigration policies.

Keywords: securitization, immigration, European Union, Members of European Parliament

1. Introduction

Of the numerous themes preoccupying contemporary scholars within the rapidly expanding field of immigration studies few have attracted greater attention than the 'securitization' of immigration (Bigo 2001, 2002; Bourbeau 2011; Chebel d'Appollonia 2012; Givens, Freeman and Leal 2009; Guild 2009; Huysmans 2006; Lahav 2003, 2010; Rudolph 2006). As interpreted by the Copenhagen School of security studies, securitization is the process by which ostensibly non-security issues, such as immigration, are transformed into urgent security matters as a result of securitizing speech acts. The securitization of immigration generally is said to occur whenever actors—usually but not exclusively political elites (Doty 2000: 73; Mantouvalou 2005)—redirect 'low politics' public policy issues to the realm of 'high politics' by adopting discourses that frame immigrants as an existential, material and/ or physical safety threat (Diez 2006; Huysmans 2000: 752; Karyotis 2007; Kicinger 2004; Lahav and Courtemanche 2012). Indeed, Wæver (1995: 54) goes so far as to suggest that 'by definition something is a security problem when elites declare it to be so'. Although 'securitizing moves' must be supported by objective evidence, the process of securitization is ultimately intersubjective in that in order for a securitizing actor to mobilize her/his target audience the latter must accept the legitimacy of the securitizing actor's claims (Balzacq 2005). Once such claims are widely accepted as valid, decision makers purportedly can extricate the aforementioned issues from the sphere of conventional politics and policymaking and transfer them to the realm of emergency politics, where they are subject to 'exceptional clauses' and can be expeditiously resolved outside of the normal policymaking procedures (Hampshire and Saggar 2006).

What has precipitated the securitization of immigration? The consensus among securitization-of-immigration scholars is that the phenomenon is inextricably linked to the economic, political and social conflicts precipitated by the arrival and indefinite settlement of ethnically, culturally and/or religiously distinctive minority populations, and particularly the objective (e.g. employment, housing, and welfare) and subjective (e.g. cultural homogeneity, national identity and/or societal values) challenges that immigrants pose for policymakers and the so-called natives within the immigration-receiving countries (Alexseev 2005; Bigo 2001). Although the process of conflating immigration with security is said to predate the events of 11 September 2001, most securitization-of-immigration scholars either implicitly or explicitly agree that the post-11 September period is witness to a ' "problematization" and "securitization" of . . . [immigration] that is new in its scope and scale' (Freedman 2004: 1). In this view 11 September is perceived as a critical juncture in and a major accelerant of the process of securitizing immigration in Europe and the United States.

Against this backdrop we investigate in this article if and to what extent the purported securitization of immigration in post-11 September Europe is reflected in the self-reported immigration-related attitudes of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), parliamentarians who, as a consequence of creeping communitarization, are now central actors in forging a common immigrant and immigration policy in Europe (Lahav and Messina 2005). Drawing upon data gathered from our 1993 and 2004 MEP surveys, we particularly wish to assess the degree to which MEP attitudes in 2004 confirm or contradict a key

supposition within the securitization of immigration literature: i.e. that in response to 11 September-related events in the United States and Europe political elites are disposed to adopt perspectives which frame immigrants as an existential, material and/or physical safety threat (Chebel d'Appollonia 2012). We also wish to investigate whether or not post-11 September MEPs evolved to support greater economic, political and social rights for immigrants and to prefer an EU over a national policymaking venue for regulating immigration policy.

This article poses and seeks empirical verification for three propositions. First, against the backdrop of the shock of 11 September MEPs will be more likely in 2004 than in 1993 to view immigration as a salient public policy challenge. If so, and logically following from this proposition, we hypothesize that a higher percentage of 2004 MEPs will favour reducing the level of new immigration and, moreover, a robust majority of Members (inspired by the logic of exclusion) will perceive immigration as a cultural, economic and physical safety threat. Our second proposition is that in trying to mitigate the 'internal' security risks posed by the uneven or inadequate incorporation of settled immigrants (Chebel d'Appollonia 2008) MEPs will be more likely in 2004 than in the previous decade to favour extending economic, political and social rights to settled immigrants. We therefore hypothesize that, inspired by the logic of inclusion, in 2004 MEPs should be more willing than previously to support expanding the rights of immigrants in order to improve the state of 'native'–immigrant social relations and to diminish the spectre of domestically-bred terrorism. Finally, given the policy contradictions posed by contemporary immigration (i.e. immigrant exclusion vs inclusion), we expect a higher percentage of MEPs in 2004 than in 1993 will prefer that the primary responsibility for regulating immigration policy reside at the EU rather than the national level. We hypothesize that MEPs who are most inclined to view immigration as an 'urgent' problem for physical safety will prefer a European rather than a national policymaking venue. These expectations are inspired by the widely-embraced supposition among securitization-of-immigration scholars that political elites are inclined to exploit the 'emergency' precipitated by 'focus events' like 11 September—i.e. extraordinary events potentially underscoring policy failure and thus dramatically increasing its salience among policymakers and the general public (Birkland 1997: 22; Birkland 2004)—and seek to transfer immigration-related issues out of the sphere of conventional politics and policymaking. A declared preference among most MEPs to devolve such issues from national legislatures and other domestic policymaking institutions to the distant and often more bureaucratic supranational institutions of the EU would validate empirically the aforementioned assumption.

As the following analysis of the data generated by our two surveys demonstrates, MEP attitudes in the aggregate were not significantly altered by 11 September. Even in the face of catastrophic events in the international security environment MEP opinion and policy preferences were relatively constant over time. Moreover, contrary to our expectations and in contradiction of a core tenet of securitization theory, MEPs in 2004, as in 1993, were *not* especially inclined to view immigration through the prism of either national or European security. Instead, our data suggest that MEPs understand and thus frame immigration-related issues in a nuanced manner, and one that more likely than not is primarily shaped by and is especially sensitive to their respective long-term experiences within national settings.

This article proceeds as follows. First, we describe the methodology employed in executing our two surveys. Second, we present descriptive evidence of the evolution (or lack thereof) of MEP opinion between 1993 and 2004 with regard to the salience of immigration, appropriate level of immigration, whether or not immigration poses a security threat, whether or not immigrant rights should be expanded and, finally, at which level of government should the responsibility for regulating immigration policy primarily reside. Next, we more closely analyse by means of ordered probit regression the factors related to cultural, economic and physical security which influenced MEP attitudes in 2004 on the proper venue for regulating immigration policy (i.e. national or supranational). The final section concludes.

2. Methodology and the profile of MEPs

As cited above, the data presented below derive from two surveys of the Members of the European Parliament. For the first, carried out in 1992–3 during the third assembly (1989–94), we sent a close-ended questionnaire to 518 MEPs in English, French or Italian. The 167 MEPs who responded to the survey (32 per cent of the total) were broadly representative of the then 12 country parliamentary delegations and the nine official party groupings, excluding the Independents, in the European Parliament (Lahav and Messina 2005). The representativeness of the sample in terms of the distribution of the larger MEP population by country is verified by a chi-square test of association that is statistically significant at the .05 level.

The second survey repeated many of the questions posed by the first but expanded upon the latter to take into account the changes in the international security environment after the first questionnaire was executed. In 2003–4 we sent each of the 625 MEPs of the fifth assembly (1999–2004) a questionnaire in French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, or English. In all 148 MEPs responded, a sample representing 24 per cent of the total group. As in the earlier survey, the respondents were drawn from each of the then 15 member countries and eight formal political party groups. As in 1992–3, the backgrounds of MEPs in our second sample fairly well reflect the proportional distribution of MEPs by country and party family within the Parliament (Lahav and Messina 2005: 855–7). However, since chi-square tests of the sample and population based on country and party family were not statistically significant, we are not confident our 2004 sample is quite as representative as our 1993 sample.

3. Evolution and trajectory of MEP opinion

3.1 Increased salience of immigration?

There is little doubt that MEPs viewed immigration-related issues as more salient in 2004 than in the previous decade. As might have been reasonably anticipated in the light of the deterioration in the international and regional security environment during the period between our two surveys, fewer (10 per cent) MEPs in 2004 than previously identified the issue of immigration as 'not important' (Table 1), a difference that was statistically

Table 1. Importance of immigration by country, 1993–2004 (in percent)

Country	Not important		Neutral		Very important		Change in not important 1993–2004	Change in very important 1993–2004
	1993	2004	1993	2004	1993	2004		
Austria	—	0	—	0	—	100	—	—
Belgium	0	17	20	0	80	83	+17	+3
Denmark	0	0	25	14	75	88	0	+13
Finland	—	50	—	50	—	0	—	—
France	4	0	9	19	87	81	−4	−6
Germany	9	0	5	13	86	83	−9	−3
Greece	13	0	50	0	38	100	−13	+62
Ireland	83	0	0	0	17	100	−83	+83
Italy	4	0	12	7	84	95	−4	+11
Luxembourg	0	0	0	0	100	100	0	0
Netherlands	14	0	0	0	86	100	−14	+14
Portugal	14	17	29	17	57	67	+3	+10
Spain	26	6	21	12	53	82	−20	+29
Sweden	—	0	—	25	—	75	—	—
UK	12	0	36	13	52	88	−12	+36
Total	13	3	17	12	70	85	−10	+15

N = 167 (1993); 148 (2004).
Question: 'How important do you think the immigration issue is to you?'

significant at the 0.05 level based on a Wilcoxon rank–sum test, which was used as a non-parametric alternative to a *t* test.[1] As Table 1 also indicates, there were several notable shifts in the distribution of MEP attitudes within several of the 12 original national delegations. Specifically, while the percentage of MEPs that identified the issue of immigration as 'not important' remained relatively constant in Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Portugal, the percentage perceiving it as 'very important' increased by between 29 and 83 per cent in Ireland, Spain and the UK between 1993 and 2004.

How to explain the aforementioned shifts, or lack thereof, in MEP attitudes within the 12 original national delegations over time? Although arriving at a definitive answer to this question is beyond the scope of this study, there are at least two plausible explanations. First, the UK excepted, the salience of immigration for MEPs from traditional immigration-receiving countries was already at a very high level in 1993 and, perhaps not surprisingly, it either simply remained high (Belgium, Luxembourg), only slightly decreased (France, Germany), or increased significantly but not dramatically (Denmark, Netherlands) after 11 September. For many of these MEPs, as well as for their respective electorates, it is probable that immigrants were already established as an object of general insecurity well before 2001 (Chebel d'Appollonia 2012; Messina 2012). On the other side of

the coin, given their relatively new experience with mass immigration and its societal effects, the salience of the subject among MEPs in our survey from the newer countries of immigration (Ireland, Portugal and Spain), Italian MEPs excepted, showed a increase over time.

Second, unlike mass attitudes (Lahav 2004: 1160) there is little reason to expect that political elite attitudes would perfectly align with the then existing objective national conditions; e.g. an especially high percentage of settled immigrants within a particular country or other objective variables related to immigration would reflexively influence MEPs to perceive immigration as more salient as a consequence of 11 September. Indeed, one plausible explanation for the null effect on MEP opinion in some countries after 11 September is implicitly suggested by Bourbeau (2011). According to Bourbeau, for political elites to engage in securitizing rhetoric *successfully*, as securitization theory presumes that they routinely do, the relevant historical and domestic sociocultural contexts have to be favourable; i.e. whenever/wherever these contexts are unfavourable the public is less likely to respond positively to elite securitizing rhetoric and, hence, political elites have less incentive to engage in it. For example, Bourbeau points to the reticence of most Canadians, for reasons linked to Canada's long history as a major country of immigration, to perceive immigrants as an existential security threat, including after 11 September. As a consequence of their reticence, he concludes, the potential for Canadian political elites to securitize immigration successfully was and continues to be significantly circumscribed, a finding that, while not necessarily applicable universally, nevertheless probably applies elsewhere and especially to the traditional countries of immigration in Europe (Messina 2012). In short, the well-established variation in the aforementioned national historical and sociocultural factors likely leads to variation in the propensity of European political elites to perceive immigration-related issues as salient and, consequently, actionable in the wake of shared experiences like 11 September and subsequent incidences of domestic terrorism within Europe.

3.2 Less immigration?

Given the aforementioned spike in the percentage of MEPs perceiving immigration as an important issue in the aggregate since 1993, we also reasonably expected a higher percentage to favour decreasing the overall level of new immigration in 2004. Somewhat surprisingly, and perhaps for the reasons cited above, this expectation was not satisfied. As Table 2 illustrates, MEP opinion on the question of immigration levels changed relatively little from 1993 to 2004, as the percentages of parliamentarians that favoured one of three respective options—increasing immigration, keeping immigration at current levels, and decreasing immigration—remained relatively constant.

3.3 Securitize immigration?

Given that MEPs viewed immigration-related issues as more salient in 2004 than in the previous decade, did 2004 Members see immigration as equally threatening along all three of the security dimensions (cultural, economic and physical safety) or, alternatively, did they discriminate among them? Although our 1993 and 2004 surveys did not ask these

Table 2. Preferences about immigration by country, 1993–2004 (in per cent)

Country	Increased		Kept at present level		Decreased		Net change decreased
	1993	2004	1993	2004	1993	2004	1993–2004
Austria	—	25	—	0	—	75	—
Belgium	11	25	56	75	33	0	−33
Denmark	0	25	33	63	67	13	−54
Finland	—	50	—	50	—	0	—
France	16	15	47	54	37	31	−6
Germany	41	17	26	50	35	32	−2
Greece	43	25	14	50	43	25	−18
Ireland	0	0	83	67	17	33	+17
Italy	32	40	45	47	23	13	−10
Luxembourg	0	0	100	100	0	0	0
Netherlands	16	0	62	80	23	20	−3
Portugal	17	0	83	100	0	0	0
Spain	44	46	44	54	11	0	−11
Sweden	—	50	—	0	—	50	—
UK	15	7	75	57	10	36	+26
Total	25	23	51	56	24	21	−3

N = 167 (1993); 148 (2004).
Question: 'Should immigration in general be kept at its present level, increased, or decreased?'

questions directly, several of our questions did tap into MEP opinion on the securitization of immigration (Table 3).

As Table 3 demonstrates, there is little doubt that with respect to linking immigration problems with other issue areas MEP opinion shifted somewhat between the first and second survey. Although the linkages drawn between immigration problems and social welfare, unemployment, education and drug trafficking remained relatively constant between 1993 and 2004, the connection of immigration to crime, citizenship and integration increased while race relations, unemployment and 'other' issue areas decreased.

Several results especially stand out with respect to the securitization of immigration. First, when offered a choice of nine possible responses, almost half of all MEPs cited one issue, immigrant 'integration', as the *first* area with which they linked immigration-related problems in 2004. Second, and somewhat surprisingly given the inordinate attention the popular press has given the issue, not a single MEP linked immigration with 'drug trafficking' in either 1993 or 2004. Third, the connection that MEPs drew between immigration and unemployment was conspicuously weak in 1993 (12 per cent) and even weaker in 2004 (8 per cent). Finally, despite increasing after 1993, relatively few MEPs (7 per cent) linked immigration with 'crime' in 2004. Taken as a whole, these results suggest that 2004

Table 3. Immigration problems and their linkage with other policy areas, 1993–2004 (in per cent)

Issue linkages	1993	2004
Integration	35	47
Citizenship	4	12
Race relations	25	10
Social welfare	7	8
Unemployment	12	8
Other	15	8
Crime	1	7
Education	1	1
Drug trafficking	0	0

N = 167 (1993); 148 (2004).
Question: 'When you think of immigration problems, to which other area do you relate them *first*?'

Table 4. Securitization of immigration, 2004 (in per cent)

Opinion statements	Agree	Disagree	No opinion
Immigration is a cultural threat	19	75	5
Economic immigration should be increased	56	29	15
Extreme right is exploiting immigration-related problems	74	23	3
European immigration policy urgent after 11 September	58	30	12

N = 148.
Statements: 'Immigrants and asylum seekers undermine my country's traditional culture.'
'Legal, economic immigration to my country should be increased.'
'Extreme political right groups in my country are successfully exploiting immigration-related problems.'
'The events of 11 September 2001 have made the pursuit of a common European immigration policy more urgent.'

Members *did* discriminate among immigration-related problems; that is, for most 2004 MEPs immigration problems *did not* pose an equal threat along each security dimension. Rather, problems related to 'internal security' and, particularly those pertaining to citizenship and social harmony, loomed larger in the minds of these MEPs than those posed by externally-driven security threats (i.e. drug trafficking) or internal economic insecurities (i.e. unemployment).

The data in Table 4 reinforce and generally complement these conclusions. Contrary to the impulse of a majority of their constituents at the time to view immigrants as an economic threat (Ederveen et al. 2004: 82), most MEPs (56 per cent) advocated *greater* economic immigration in 2004. Moreover, although a supermajority of 2004 MEPs (74 per cent) believed that extreme right groups were exploiting immigration-related problems, three-quarters of Members rejected the argument that immigrants posed a

cultural threat, thus suggesting that most MEPs in 2004 did not view immigration as either a significant economic or cultural threat. Having generally dismissed immigration as posing a cultural or an economic threat, however, there is some evidence that the events of 11 September influenced MEP opinion, and specifically heightened their sensitivity to the implications of 11 September for physical safety. As Table 4 demonstrates, more than half of MEPs (58 per cent) agreed that a common European immigration policy was more 'urgent' after 11 September, a finding about which we will have more to say below.

3.4 Expand immigrant rights?

What of the proposition that MEPs should have been more inclined in 2004 than in 1993 to favour expanding immigrant rights? As indicated in Table 5, this proposition generally was not validated by our data. Contrary to our expectations, MEP support for extending immigrant rights declined over time, while the percentage both of those advocating maintaining the status quo and restricting immigrant rights increased. This said, these findings require framing and, upon further consideration, may not be as negative as they initially appear. First, despite declining from 1993, the percentage of MEPs that supported extending the rights of immigrants was still very high in 2004 (63 per cent). Second, the percentage of MEPs that preferred the status quo increased from 1993 to 2004, a shift that may be explained in part by the objective expansion of immigrant rights in the period between our two surveys (Niessen, Peiro and Schibel 2005). If so, part of the decline in the percentage of MEPs that supported the extension of immigrant rights may be attributable to the perception that immigrant rights were already at historically high levels in 2004.

Support for the latter thesis is contained in Table 5, which represents MEP preferences with respect to extending the political, social and/or economic rights of immigrants. When immigrant rights were parsed into the aforementioned three categories in 2004,[2] support among MEPs for extending immigrant rights declined and their endorsement of the status quo rose from the general results (24 per cent): 43 per cent of MEPs preferred the status quo on immigrant political rights, 30 per cent on social rights and 34 per cent on economic rights, thus possibly suggesting that 2004 MEPs were especially satisfied with the post-1993 progress of the 'core' rights of immigrants. As the data indicate, MEPs in 2004 were most ambivalent about extending the political rights of immigrants.

3.5 Escape to Europe?

Given the purported securitization of immigration policy in the period between our two surveys, were 2004 MEPs more likely than previously to prefer a European rather than a national venue for regulating immigration policy? Moreover, did MEPs who viewed immigration as an 'urgent' problem for physical safety especially prefer a European venue to address and resolve immigration-related problems? Were 'physical safety' conscious MEPs especially inclined to 'escape to Europe' to address and resolve the contradictions posed by immigration in a post-11 September world?

As we've reported elsewhere (Lahav and Messina 2005: 863–4), MEPs were in fact less inclined in 2004 than in 1993 to look to Europe in order to resolve immigration-related dilemmas. A large minority (almost 40 per cent) of MEPs in 2004 embraced the view that

Table 5. Support for immigrant rights, 1993–2004 (in per cent)

Preference	1993*	2004*	2004**		
			Political	*Social*	*Economic*
Extended	77	63	48	58	58
Status quo	19	24	43	30	34
Restricted	4	13	9	12	8

N = 167 (1993); 148 (2004).
*Question: 'What should be done about the rights of immigrants?'
**Question: 'Should the following rights for immigrants be extended, left as they are, or restricted?'

the responsibility for regulating immigration policy should exclusively reside in the hands of national governments. More importantly, MEP support for this position rose by 12 per cent over 1993, a change that was statistically significant at the .05 level as confirmed by rank–sum tests.

The shift in MEP opinion between 1993 and 2004 in favour of maintaining the prerogatives of national governments coincided with the erosion of MEP support for the position that responsibility for immigration policy should reside in the institutions of the European Union, subject to the potential of a national veto. Whereas almost a third of MEPs in the aggregate endorsed the latter position in 1993, only just over a fifth did so in 2004. In contrast, support for the view that immigration should be regulated by the institutions of the EU on the basis of a majority vote was virtually identical in 2004 and 1993.

Although MEPs were less inclined in 2004 than in the previous decade to look to Europe to resolve immigration-related dilemmas, physical safety conscious MEPs were much more inclined than non-physical safety conscious Members to prefer an EU venue for regulating immigration policy. As Table 6 demonstrates, MEPs who saw a common immigration policy as urgent as a consequence of 11 September preferred a European to a national decision-making venue by approximately two to one; conversely, among the Members who *did not* agree that a common immigration policy was urgent, most preferred that the member states assume the primary responsibility for regulating immigration policy. These results may be skewed by the fact that embedded within our question about the urgency of responding to 11 September was an explicit association with the need for a common immigration policy. Nevertheless, the possible ambiguity of our question did not deter the 20 per cent of MEPs who saw a need for a common European immigration policy from preferring that such a policy be forged on an intergovernmental level, an especially surprising result given the EU's expanding role in regulating immigration policy (Messina and Thouez 2002).

4. Sources of 2004 MEP attitudes

As well as investigating whether and to what degree MEP attitudes on immigration-related issues changed in the wake of 11 September and its aftershocks, we were also interested in

Table 6. Security consciousness and preferred venue for regulating immigration policy, 2004 (in per cent)

		EU	Member states	Total
A common policy urgent	Agree	39	20	59
post-11 September	Disagree	13	17	30
	No opinion	9	2	11
	Total	61	39	100

N = 148.
Questions: 'The events of 11 September 2001 have made the pursuit of a common European immigration policy more urgent.'
'Who should be responsible for regulating immigration policy: 1) national governments acting independently; 2) national governments, through prior consultation with other EU governments; 3) EU institutions, with member governments retaining the right of veto; 4) EU institutions, through majority vote?'

determining the factors that influenced MEP attitudes on the proper venue for regulating immigration policy (i.e. national or supranational) when controlling for alternative explanations. We gave special attention to this question because of the supposition of securitization theory that elite political actors are inclined to exploit the 'emergency' precipitated by immigration-related focus events in order to transfer immigration issues out of the sphere of conventional politics and policymaking.

To investigate these factors we rely upon ordered probit regression analysis to model categorical outcomes. We exclusively focus our analysis on the 2004 survey because it was distributed after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the survey includes data pertaining to the physical safety dimension of the immigration-security nexus.

We begin by exploring how the variables related to cultural, economic and physical security influenced MEP preferences concerning which venue is best for regulating immigration policy. Next, we discuss models of MEP support for a common immigration policy. Finally, we examine the variables influencing the degree to which MEPs view a common European immigration policy as urgent in light of 11 September. However, before proceeding, we will first specify how we measured our variables.

4.1 Dependent variables

4.1.1 *Regulating immigration policy.* We are interested in learning which variables influenced MEPs to prefer either a national or supranational venue for regulating immigration policy. As a result, if the MEPs in our 2004 survey indicated that the responsibility for regulating immigration policy should reside with national governments acting independently or after prior consultation with other EU member state governments, their responses were coded as 4 and 3 respectively. Alternatively, those who indicated that regulatory responsibility should reside with EU institutions, either with member governments retaining a right of veto or through a majority vote, were coded as 2 and 1 respectively.

4.1.2 *Support for a common immigration policy.* We are also interested in understanding the factors that influenced the extent of Members' support for a common immigration policy generally. Thus, we created a variable measuring the degree to which MEPs agreed that there should be a common immigration policy. The responses were coded 4 for strongly agree, 3 for agree, 2 for disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree.

4.1.3 *Common immigration policy urgent post-11 September.* This variable measured the degree to which MEPs acknowledged that a common immigration policy is urgent in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September. This four-part categorical variable is coded as 4 for strongly agree, 3 for somewhat agree, 2 for somewhat disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree. In addition to being interested in the aforementioned as dependent variables, in several models they are also used as independent variables as indicated below.

4.2 Independent variables

Each of the following main independent variables represents a different dimension of the immigration–security nexus.

4.2.1 *Threat to traditional culture.* Since immigrants and asylum seekers are oftentimes viewed as a threat to the national culture or identity, we include this variable to discover if it has a statistically significant effect on our dependent variables. Given the seriousness with which assaults against traditional culture are viewed in many parts of Europe, we expected MEPs who view immigrants as a threat to their country's traditional culture to prefer that the responsibility for regulating immigration policy reside in the hands of national governments on the assumption that they are more likely than EU institutions to be protectionist. Therefore, we included this variable with the following expectation:

> *Hypothesis 1*: As an MEP's view of immigration as undermining his/her country's traditional culture increases, he/she will be a) more likely to support unilateral approaches to regulating immigration policy, as well as b) a common immigration policy (CIP) and c) a sense of urgency for a CIP post-11 September.

Although the first and the following hypotheses address three different dependent variables, we offer them in this way in order to economize on space. In this hypothesis and the following ones, the third portion denoted with the letter 'c' relates to the degree to which the events of 11 September created a sense of urgency among MEPs for a common immigration policy. At first glance this could well leave some readers perplexed regarding how different independent variables—in this instance concern for traditional culture—could affect a sense of urgency following 11 September. Our logic in anticipating this relationship is based on insights regarding the role played by windows of opportunity and issue framing (Baumgartner and Jones 1993). From this perspective, the events of 11 September offer MEPs who are already disposed toward supporting a common immigration policy an opportunity to frame their parochial concerns in terms of broader national security issues. For example, we anticipate that MEPs who believed that immigration undermines traditional culture will see a greater urgency for common immigration policy in the wake of 11 September because the latter provided a more dramatic, compelling frame in which they

might be able to achieve a common immigration policy that will address their underlying concern about preserving traditional culture. Thus, we expect that each of our independent variables will exert the same directional influence both on MEPs' personal preferences for a common immigration policy and on their sense of urgency for such a policy post-11 September.

This variable measures the degree to which MEPs perceive immigrants and asylum seekers as undermining their respective country's traditional culture, with values ranging from 4 to 1 for responses ranging from strongly agree and somewhat agree to somewhat disagree and strongly disagree.

4.2.2 *Support for increased economic immigration.*   This variable allows us to get a sense of how attitudes on economic security influence the outcomes delineated earlier. We expect that support for increased economic immigration will foster support both for multilateral approaches to a common immigration policy, as well as for a CIP more generally, because immigration is viewed as a policy area that can be safely moved beyond policy competence of individual states. Therefore, we include this variable with the following expectation:

> *Hypothesis 2*: As support for economic immigration increases, support for a) uni-lateral approaches to regulating immigration policy will decrease. At the same time, b) personal support for a CIP and c) a sense of urgency for a CIP post-11 September will increase.

Again, as can be seen in section c, we believe that MEPs who prefer a common immigration policy because it facilitates economic immigration will communicate an urgency to act accordingly within the issue frame offered by the attacks of 11 September. This variable was operationalized in four categories with respect to whether or not MEPs thought legal, economic immigration to their country should be increased. Responses were located on a four-point scale with the highest score assigned for 'strong agreement' followed by modest agreement, modest disagreement and strong disagreement, respectively.

4.2.3 *Value of police cooperation.*   The final study variable pertains to the perceived benefits of police cooperation within the EU to reduce crime. Of all our variables, this one best approximates the EU's capacity to safeguard physical safety. We anticipate that MEPs who see great value in police cooperation within the EU will favour multilateralism and a common immigration policy. Therefore, we offer the following hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 3*: Perceptions of effective police cooperation within the EU in fighting criminal activity will negatively affect a) unilateral approaches to regulating immi-gration policy, while b) increasing support for a CIP as well as c) the perception that a CIP is urgent post-11 September.

We measured the perceived value of police cooperation within the EU in reducing crime on a scale of 4 to 1, reflecting whether the MEP strongly agreed, somewhat agreed, somewhat disagreed, or strongly disagreed.

4.3 Control variables

4.3.1 *Conservative ideology.*   It is quite possible, indeed perhaps likely, that MEP attitudes regarding immigration were influenced by Members' ideological proclivities, with those on the political right tending to be more leery of new immigration than those on the political left and more inclined to support national rather than multilateral or supranational approaches to immigration regulation. Consequently, we predict the following relationship:

> *Hypothesis 4*: As a Member's self-proclaimed political conservatism increases, support for a) unilateral approaches to regulating immigration policy will also increase, while b) general support for a CIP as well as the c) sense of urgency for a CIP after 11 September will decrease.

This variable has nine levels on an ideological spectrum ranging from conservative (9) to liberal (1) reflecting Members' ideological self-placement.

4.3.2 *Perceived public support for a common immigration policy.*   As with many policy issues, it is quite possible that the public's support or lack of support for a common immigration policy within a Member's home country could influence MEP attitudes. Therefore, we expect the following to hold true:

> *Hypothesis 5*: As public support for a common immigration policy increases, MEP support for a) unilateral approaches to regulating immigration policy will decrease, and b) his/her personal support for a CIP as well as c) the sense of urgency for a CIP after 11 September will increase.

This trichotomous variable was coded from 3 to 1 representing responses that were respectively favourable, indifferent, and unfavourable.

4.3.3 *Support for speedier European integration.*   It is reasonable to assume that the disposition of MEPs toward the progress of European integration as a whole could influence their attitudes toward the proper venue for regulating immigration policy, precipitating varying degrees of unilateral, multilateral, or supranational impulses. Thus, we control for this factor with a variable measuring an MEP's support for the speed of European integration:

> *Hypothesis 6*: As support for faster European integration increases, support for a) unilateral approaches to regulating immigration policy will decrease, while b) overall support for a CIP and c) the urgent need for a CIP after 11 September will increase.

This categorical variable was coded as having three levels. MEPs preferring accelerated European integration were coded as 3, those supporting the present rate of integration were coded as 2, and finally, those wanting to slow the progress of integration were coded as 1.

4.3.4 *State ineffectiveness in dealing with refugees and asylum seekers.*   Logically, an MEP's attitude toward his/her country's ability to address issues related to refugees and

asylum seekers could influence his/her attitudes toward several of the outcomes that interest us. We thus offer the following hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 7*: The perception that problems of asylum seekers and refugees are so difficult that they can't be effectively or exclusively dealt with on a national level will negatively affect support for a) unilateral approaches to regulating immigration policy, but positively affect b) overall support for a CIP and c) a sense of urgency for a CIP post-11 September.

This variable ranges from 1 to 4, with 4 representing the value of the greatest scepticism of national government effectiveness (based on the response 'strongly agree') to 1 for the least scepticism (for the response 'strongly disagree').

4.3.5 *Perceived extreme right-wing group exploitation.*   We also suspect that successful efforts by actors on the political far right to capitalize domestically on immigration problems can influence MEP preferences concerning the venue within which immigration-related policies are formulated. Given that most MEPs are likely moderate or progressive on immigration-related issues (Lahav and Messina 2005) it stands to reason that these MEPs might prefer to have such policies crafted by the European Parliament as opposed to national venues where such efforts might be more easily thwarted by illiberal domestic actors. Thus, we offer the following prediction:

> *Hypothesis 8*: The perception that extreme right groups are exploiting immigration-related problems domestically will negatively affect MEP support for a) unilateral approaches to regulating immigration policy, while b) increasing support for a common immigration policy as well as c) the desire for a common immigration policy post-11 September.

To measure the degree to which MEPs perceived immigration-related problems as being successfully exploited for political gain by domestic extreme right groups, we coded their responses from 4 to 1 in accordance with whether an MEP agreed strongly, agreed only somewhat, somewhat disagreed, or strongly disagreed.

4.3.6 *Support for immigrant rights.*   Because the EU is seen as generally more supportive of immigrant rights than some member state governments, MEPs seeking to expand immigrant rights will likely prefer that this policy area fall within the jurisdiction of EU institutions. Consequently, we expect the following statement to hold true:

> *Hypothesis 9*: With greater MEP support for expanding immigrant rights, support for a) unilateral approaches to common immigration policy will decrease, while support for b) a common immigration policy and c) a sense of urgency for a common immigration policy post-11 September will increase.

This trichotomous categorical variable assumes a value of 3 for MEPs supporting an extension of immigrant rights, 2 for those backing the status quo, and 1 for those who want immigrant rights to be restricted.

4.3.7 *Support decreased Muslim immigration.* We include this variable to control for how MEP opposition to Muslim or Arab immigration influences overall attitudes. We anticipate the following relationships:

> *Hypothesis 10*: The desire to decrease Muslim immigration will exert a positive effect on a) unilateral approaches to regulating immigration policy (since the EU would be seen as generally more open than national governments to immigration) and a negative effect on b) general support for a CIP as well as the c) the sense of urgency for a CIP after 11 September.

To operationalize this dummy variable we pooled responses indicating that MEPs preferred decreased immigration from the Middle East, North Africa, or Turkey. Such responses were coded as 1, while responses favouring present levels or increased immigration from these areas were assigned a 0. While realizing that non-Arabs and non-Muslims also emigrate from these areas, most immigrants from these areas are either Muslim or Arab.

4.4 Models and analysis

Our first pair of models in Table 7 examines the influence of the variables pertaining to MEP concerns about cultural, economic and physical security on unilateral approaches to regulating immigration policy. In Model 1 concerns about traditional culture had a positive effect on unilateral approaches to immigration policy that was highly statistically significant, as we anticipated in Hypothesis 1a. However, neither of the other security-oriented study variables was statistically significant. Our second model introduces an array of

Table 7. Models of MEP preferences for a unilateral approach to regulating immigration

	Model 1	Model 2
Traditional culture	.373***	.073
Support for economic immigration	−.165	−.334
Police cooperation	−.175	.190
Conservative ideology		.126
Public support		−.290
Support faster integration		−.455
State ineffective with refugees		−.657***
Right-wing exploitation		−.301*
Support > immigrant rights		−.446
Support < Muslim immigration		−.150
N	110	76
Log likelihood	−127.84	−62.44

*p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .005.

theoretically relevant control variables so we can better identify whether concerns that immigrants undermine traditional culture alone has as strong an effect on unilateral approaches when controlling for other rival explanations. Ultimately, we find that in the presence of control variables the statistically significant effect of concerns about traditional culture evaporates.

As for the control variables, perceptions of state ineffectiveness in dealing with refugees has a negative and statistically significant ($p \leq .005$) effect on unilateral approaches to regulating immigration, a finding consistent with Hypothesis 7a. We also find support for Hypothesis 9a, because the variable for perceived right-wing exploitation has a negative effect on unilateral approaches. We believe this suggests MEPs who fear right-wing exploitation of immigration domestically would wish to escape to Europe. This impulse may stem from two possible motivations. First, MEPs who fear domestic right-wing actors may be concerned their adversaries will successfully manipulate the events associated with 11 September to thwart desirable immigration policies. Second, MEPs may fear the political fallout from having immigration policy crafted within their respective states where right-wing players could politically exploit immigration-related debates. Of course, these explanations—the first, policy oriented and the second, politically motivated—are not mutually exclusive.

In Table 8 we use two models to estimate the effects of several variables on MEPs' personal support for a common immigration policy. In Model 1 we find that concerns about the threat immigration poses for a country's traditional culture and the benefits of EU law enforcement cooperation have highly significant coefficients with respect to MEP support for a common immigration policy. However, these relationships do not persist in

Table 8. Models of MEP support for a common immigration policy

	Model 1	Model 2
Traditional culture	−.542***	−.024
Support for economic immigration	−.109	−.052
Police cooperation	.601***	.348
Conservative ideology		−.101
Public support		−.165
Support faster integration		.529
State ineffective with refugees		.577***
Right-wing exploitation		.116
Support > immigrant rights		.318
Support < Muslim immigration		−.157
N	111	77
Log likelihood	−88.94	−51.62

*$p \leq .05$, **$p \leq .01$, ***$p \leq .005$.

Table 9. Models of MEP urgency for common immigration policy post-11 September

	Model 1	Model 2
Traditional culture	−.221	−.449*
Support for economic immigration	−.146	−.127
Police cooperation	.563***	.573**
Conservative ideology		.117
Public support		−.084
Support faster integration		−.096
State ineffective with refugees		.296
Right–wing exploitation		.458***
Support > immigrant rights		−.275
Support < Muslim immigration		.228
N	101	70
Log likelihood	−127.87	−81.29

*p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .005.

the presence of the control variables. It is important, nonetheless, to take note of the performance of the variable for perceptions of state ineffectiveness with regard to refugees. The coefficient for this variable has the predicted positive sign and achieves high levels of statistical significance consistent with Hypothesis 7b.

The results for the models of urgency for a common immigration policy following 11 September are displayed in Table 9. Unlike the two previous models, the variable for effective EU police cooperation has a positive, statistically significant coefficient that is robust across both the small and expanded models, which is consistent with Hypothesis 3c. Another study variable that was statistically significant was concern about traditional culture, although its coefficient had a negative sign contrary to Hypothesis 1c. This finding raises two possibilities. First, MEPs who were concerned about the effect of immigration on traditional culture may have recognized that their fears were best addressed by a common immigration policy. Of course, this begs the question why traditional culture did not also display a similar relationship in Model 2 from Table 8 when the outcome was MEP support for common immigration policy? We suspect that the difference in the performance of traditional culture in Model 2 of Table 9 (but not in Model 2 of Table 8) resulted from an urgency born of political opportunism. We contend that MEPs concerned about protecting traditional culture see the events of 11 September as creating a favourable opportunity for opposing a common immigration policy.

A similar process may also be at work in the opposite direction with respect to one of the control variables in the second model of Table 9. In that model we find that concerns about the exploitation of immigration by right-wing groups have a positive and highly significant association with declarations of an urgent need for a common immigration policy after 11 September. This result dovetails nicely with Hypothesis 8c and supports our supposition

that MEPs who most earnestly identify right-wing exploitation of immigration problems want immigration policy formulated outside of the national arena for considerations related to either policy or politics, or a combination of the two. This is not altogether surprising as many MEPs may have feared that the events of 11 September could open a window of opportunity for domestic right-wing actors to thwart worthwhile immigration policies.

5. Conclusions

It was reasonable to presume that 11 September, a classic securitizing event, would result in immigration-related issues becoming more politically salient among MEPs. Moreover, in turn, that the increased salience of these issues would influence MEPs in 2004 to be less inclined than previously to support new immigration and persuade a majority to view it as a potent threat along all three dimensions of the immigration-security nexus. Third that, in order to mitigate the internal security risks spawned by the uneven incorporation of settled immigrants, MEPs in 2004 would be more disposed than previously to favour extending their economic, political and social rights. Finally, given the supposition of securitization theory that political elites seek to transfer immigration-related issues out of the sphere of conventional politics and policymaking in response to focusing events like 11 September, we expected a higher percentage of MEPs in 2004 than in 1993 to prefer the responsibility for regulating immigration policy reside at the EU rather than the national level; moreover, the MEPs most inclined to view immigration as an 'urgent' problem for physical security would prefer a European over a national decision-making venue.

In point of fact, our analysis of the survey data yielded mixed results. On the one hand, a supermajority of 2004 MEPs concluded that immigration was 'very important' and the percentage who viewed it as 'not important' was smaller in 1993 than in 2004. On the other hand, and contrary to our expectations, a majority of MEPs in 2004 preferred immigration to remain at its current level, a majority that actually increased from 1993.

Equally surprising in the aftermath of 11 September is the extent to which MEPs in 2004 favoured increasing economic immigration and the very high percentage of Members who rejected the suggestion that immigration poses a cultural threat. Although a robust majority agreed that a European immigration policy was more urgent after 11 September, it is fair to conclude on the basis of the data that MEPs in 2004, as in 1993, were not especially inclined to view immigration through the prism of either national or European security. This conclusion must be tempered, of course, by the results reported in Table 3 which indicate a high percentage of 2004 MEPs were concerned about the current state both of immigrant incorporation and native-immigrant social relations. Nevertheless, as we observed above, MEP concern about drug trafficking and crime, signature issues among domestic political far right groups, was conspicuously weak both in 1993 and 2004. At the very least, the data suggest that Members in 2004 differentiated among immigration-related problems and thus, for most MEPs, immigration problems did not pose an equal threat along each security dimension. Moreover, several problems related to internal security, and particularly those pertaining to citizenship and social harmony, loomed larger in the minds of MEPs than those posed by externally-driven security threats (i.e. drug trafficking) or

internal economic problems (i.e. unemployment). The distribution of these views was not entirely surprising considering the greater threat immigration posed to external borders and admissions in the USA, as opposed to the greater salience of immigrant integration questions in much of Europe post-11 September (Lahav 2010).

Also contrary to our expectations, MEP support for extending immigrant rights declined from 1993 to 2004, while the percentage advocating maintaining the status quo and restricting immigrant rights increased. Moreover, when the rights of immigrants were parsed into three categories in 2004, MEP support for extending immigrant rights further declined from the general results. Post-11 September MEPs were especially ambivalent about extending the political rights of immigrants.

Perhaps most surprising is that MEPs were less inclined in 2004 than in 1993 to look to Europe in order to resolve immigration-related dilemmas. Almost 40 per cent of MEPs in 2004 embraced the view that the responsibility for regulating immigration policy should exclusively reside in the hands of national governments. Although Members were less inclined to 'escape to Europe' to resolve immigration-related dilemmas, however, physical safety conscious MEPs, as we had anticipated, were much more inclined than non-security-oriented Members to support an EU venue for regulating immigration policy—with those seeing a common immigration policy as 'urgent' in the aftermath of 11 September pre-ferring a European to a member state decision-making venue by a wide margin.

What can we conclude from these mixed and often counter-intuitive results? One unimpeachable conclusion is that the general public's alleged conflation of the cultural, economic and physical threats to domestic and European security (Huysmans 2000) was not mirrored in the collective thinking or policy preferences of post-11 September MEPs. Most Members differentiated one dimension of immigration from another, and perhaps more importantly they successfully resisted the atmospheric political pressures—such as they then existed—to restrict all new immigration, and especially economic immigration (Table 4). Put differently, the events of 11 September did not precipitate a 'fortress Europe' mindset among most MEPs. Members did not become especially xenophobic. In general, the events of 11 September did not securitize immigration-related issues for most MEPs.

Moreover, post-11 September Member attitudes were polarized on the issue of immigration restrictions, with approximately a quarter of MEPs favouring increasing restrictions, a quarter against and approximately half favouring the status quo. Similarly, while cognizant of the problems associated with immigrant incorporation and generally supportive of extending immigrant rights, MEPs were much more divided on the question of whether the latter should be extended. A sizeable percentage of MEPs preferred either the policy status quo or restriction on each of the three rights' dimensions, thus leading to the conclusion that there was an absence of consensus for policy change among the Members. In light of Lahav and Courtemanche's (2012) findings that the physical security dimension of immigration generates greater consensus thinking, we can safely conclude that European political elites—at least in 2004—did not generally perceive immigration as a physical safety threat.

Second, there was similarly no consensus within the fifth assembly on the preferred venue for regulating immigration policy. Regarding the question of where the primary responsibility for regulating immigration policy should lie, post-11 September MEPs were distributed among three very *different* and *conflicting* poles. Sixty per cent of MEPs in 2004

supported the proposition that immigration should be regulated either by national governments or by the EU, subject to the retention of an individual member state veto. Even in the wake (or perhaps because?) of 11 September, most Members preferred to defend their country's traditional prerogative to regulate immigration policy.

Finally, although these findings suggest that 11 September did not have a significant impact on immigration attitudes cross-nationally, we might do well to temper our conclusions about its ultimate impact. While traumatic, the attacks of 11 September on American soil may have not played a uniform or definitive role as a 'critical event' in the thinking of European elites. Given the timing of our surveys, it is possible that the linkage of security with foreign networks, immigrants and ethnic minorities could have occurred after the London or Madrid terrorist bombings, and in the process precipitated a greater securitization of elite immigration thinking.

What do these results imply about the robustness of the securitization of immigration paradigm? At the broadest level, they suggest the differential effects of security events on elite attitudes on matters of immigration. Moreover, they compel us to adopt a more nuanced view of security as it is linked to different national conceptions and aspects of immigration policies (admissions or immigrant integration).

There is, of course, little doubt that political elite discourse often has been inflammatory toward immigrants since 11 September (Faist 2002; Huysmans and Buonfino 2008; Tsoukala 2005). It is equally evident that immigration policy has recently become more illiberal and exclusionary in many immigration-receiving countries (Diez and Squire 2008). Nevertheless, the tendency of the securitization of immigration literature to identify 11 September as a critical historical juncture wrongly assumes that it elicited a more or less uniform response among political elites. Rather, with respect to how, when and to what degree immigration-related issues intersect with security our data suggest that political elites likely understand and thus frame these issues in a manner that is less influenced by events—even catastrophic events—in the regional and/or the international security environment than securitization theory tends to suggest. Moreover, elite attitudes toward immigration demonstrate continuity and diversity depending on the length and success of national experiences with immigration. These factors, in turn, are refracted through the lenses of domestic politics and political ideology.

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Notes

1. See http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/stata/notes2/analyze.htm (accessed 21 August 2013).
2. This question was not posed in 1993.

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