

Threat and Security Production at Václav Havel Airport Prague

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Abstract: Building on empirical qualitative research, this article explores the nature of security and threat resulting from the contemporary security practice at Václav Havel Airport Prague. The article, building on Actor-Network Theory, interprets a security check as a chain of translation, the possibility of threat deployment as a program of action, and activities aiming to disable threats as a security antiprogram. Deployment of threats is further conceptualised as a failure of a security chain implementation, its design, threat program expectation, and the sole existence of a particular program. Considering inflight explosions as the main threat to be identified, the article proceeds by finding divergences between travellers and employees regarding the subject of protection, and analyses the notion of terrorism present in practice as well as its consequences. Security is then identified as a service of agency take-over. The article indicates the importance of security agency and the ANT-based inquiry enabling its exploration.

Key words: security, threat, airport, ANT, Václav Havel Airport Prague, passengers, employees.

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Airport security influences the lives of millions of passengers daily. While the increasing aerial mobility with increasing passenger and cargo numbers is making aviation mundane on one hand, the growing concerns about terrorist attacks produce both public and official demands for exceptional security measures on the other. As such, airport security is a domain where public perceptions interact with expert knowledge, resulting in priorities and spending decisions (Gierlach – Belsher – Beutler 2010, 1540); therefore airport security becomes a civil security phenomenon, where the nature of security itself is negotiated on a daily basis, establishing its content and shaping its agency through on-site performance. This article, building on empirical qualitative research, explores the nature of security and threat resulting from the contemporary practice of security provision at Václav Havel Airport Prague (LKPR).¹

The article answers the question of how threat and security are enacted and understood in LKPR by actants included in the process, building on Actor-Network Theory (ANT), which enables one to approach the fluidity of airport security content by examining its setting-specific performative characteristics. Through ANT, the security provision is understood as a sequence of interrelated transformations which gradually alter the ontological nature of an entity. As such, the article in its conclusions provides not only an empirical insight into the practice in place, but also goes beyond the state of the art by proposing an innovative understanding of the security provision process. Therefore, it contributes more generally to the research of security performativity by proposing a distinct manner of security framing and a possible mode of analysis.

Compared to research options working either with an objectivist understanding of security or a discursive analysis of security phenomena, ANT permits one to tackle the complexity of reality networks encompassing but not exclusively restricted to humans and their thought work. ANT also enables one to understand security as a heterogeneous phenomenon. Within the context of International Relations (IR), employment of ANT might be seen as a response to the limitations of the Copenhagen School (Balzacq 2010; Buzan – Wæver – Wilde 1998), and the call for greater interest in material aspects of security present, e.g., in the work of Claudia Aradau or Peer Schouten (Aradau 2010; Schouten 2014). ANT thus enables one to approach interactions of humans and non-humans (Aradau 2010; Balzacq – Caveltly 2016; Nexon – Pouliot 2013; Porter 2013), or to focus on practice (Balzacq – Caveltly 2016; Barry 2013; similarly it proposes a solution to the unpleasant problems of the agent-structure debate (Bueger 2013; Nexon – Pouliot 2013; Porter 2013). This is an issue which has been materialised, in IR especially, by the interest in the concept of assemblage, either derived from the work of Bruno Latour (Bueger 2013) or, by following a different route (usually Bourdieu), building on the work of Gilles Deleuze (Williams – Abrahamsen 2014).

Although this article follows this route as well, it works directly with a Latourian inspiration and goes beyond solely employing the notion of assemblage, building particularly on the notion of the chain of translation explained in the following section. Simultaneously, it follows the preceding interest in these concepts of Marieke de Goëde, Rocco Bellanova and Gloria González Fuster (Bellanova – Fuster 2013; Goëde 2018), with significant emphasis on the possibility of building an inductive account deeply rooted within empirical practice and, contrary to the objections of some IR authors (Barry 2013; Nexon – Pouliot 2013), of basing an abstract understanding of the topic on it. On the other hand, ANT is rather a description style than a technological system analysis tool.

With respect to the existing IR literature on airport security, the contemporary work has primarily focused on the distinct spatiality of airports, emphasising both the movement and its connection to security (Adey 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010; Pascoe 2001) while concentrating fully on airport security, and inquiring into the private-public divide and the risk environment resulting from public-private mergers. Studies on these topics were conducted by Mark Salter (Salter 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2013), Lippert and O'Connor (2003), and Hainmüller and Lemnitzer (2003). Interactions between humans and technologies, and data processing have been studied by Peer Schouten (Schouten 2010, 2014), Matthias Leese (Leese 2014, 2015, 2016; Govert Valkenburg and Irma van der Ploeg (2015), and many others. However, little attention has been paid to *“the control of the microscale movements that occur in border zones and airports”* (Adey 2004: 1365). Specifically, neither threat nor security has been handled as a consequence of systems presently in place. Similarly, the contemporary theoretical background mostly reduces the research either to a problem-solving approach, or a general inspiration by the material turn embracing the notion of security assemblage (Salter 2008c). But, as put by Peer Schouten, *“The study of the production of security should involve investigating the processes through which activities, behaviours and spheres or fields are established as (in)secure”* (2010: 5), which is the goal of this article.

The article structure is as follows: first, the ANT background and a particular case-specific employment of this framework are presented, followed by practical field research details and the methodological solutions implemented. Subsequently, the notion of threat and security identified at the LKPR is presented in two distinct sections. The first section is further divided into segments dealing with threat programs, endangered actants, and the danger of system failure, and a section analysing the identified terrorism notion. The second section presents the role of security measures, actants deemed to be protected, and finally the positive delimitation of the security provided.

ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY

In regard to the presented research goals, ANT is a theoretical-methodological framework focusing on entity performance where the activity itself is seen as a defining characteristic for an entity delimitation (Latour 1987: 89, 1999: 120, 2005: 71, 2013: 230). ANT emphasises the heterogeneity of the entities involved, which might include humans as well as material entities and, less remarkably, also ideational factors (Latour 2005: 76). In order to strengthen the notion of entities' equality a specific term – actant – was coined (Latour 2005: 54).²

The actant's agency – the ability to make a difference and transform others – is necessary for the actant's conception; without agency, there is no actant (Latour 2005: 53). The emphasis on action provokes ANT's interest in exploring the ways of mutual influences among multiple actants. Showing indirect actant connections, ANT traces the chain which enables one thing to influence another or to be transformed into another. Such a chain is referred to as the chain of translation, chain of reference, or chain of transformation (Latour 1999: 70, 2013: 78; Law 2002: 98). Every transformation between two points is seen as a total rupture from the preceding ontological state; the parts of the chain are seen as active elements shaping the outcome, as actual actors (Latour 1999: 60). The chain of translation therefore represents an interrelated sequence of transformations which gradually alter an entity's ontological nature. The chain of translation can be employed to clarify the process of information abstraction or generalisation – in the original context, the concept was used to describe the establishing of scientific knowledge (Latour 1999). Translation enabled by the activity of chain elements has an important productive effect.

Regarding this notion, ANT employs the idea of program and antiprogram. A program is a script, an expectation of an activity to be realised (Latour 2008: 152, 168). Unlike a chain of translation, a program of action does not focus on the ontological shift but on the realisation of an action's expectation. ANT examines how these programs are realised, i.e. which actants produce and shape the action, and how, and also what prevents actions from being realised – namely which actants are composed into an antiprogram, and how they disable a target activity (Latour 2008: 152, 168).

The conceptualisation of a proposed action as program or antiprogram is then strictly a matter of perspective. This notion is exploited as a leading process in understanding the threat environment and its transformation into the state of security. In this interpretation, the article stems particularly from the notion of program and antiprogram as introduced in the article *"Where Are the Missing Masses? The Sociology of a Few Mundane Artifacts"* (Latour 2008: 152, 168), though this notion was previously mentioned in *"A Convenient Vocabulary for the Semiotics of Human and Nonhuman Actors"* (Akrich – Latour 1991). The notion is also employed in Latour's later work (Latour 2013: 392) under a different name.

Providing an account of reality in terms of relationality, ANT enables constructing non-hierarchical maps of networks and mutual interactions (Latour 1987: 180, 2005: 45). The relational notion of reality assumes a symmetrical approach to information about reality provided by individual actants. This endeavour is embodied in the term of symmetrical anthropology, which is seen as a methodological goal (Latour 2009: 35). This stance entails an effort to map an environment or a process on the basis of actants' voices from the field, not on the basis of the researcher's prior normative evaluation. As such, ANT counters the premature deconstructive criticism (Latour 1986: 264, 199: 268, 2005: 49).

THREAT AND SECURITY

This article uses the chain of translation to capture the airport security control process. Airport security is seen as produced by the translation of an actant from a general potential threat background into a secure ontological status by using a sequence of active

control elements enabling movement between security provision stages (Latour 1993: 10, 78, 1999: 73). Even though this article does not cover translation procedure details, it builds on the notion of an ontological rupture between the entity statuses before and after the control. The security checks, performing the translation, alter the incoming actant's identity, which entails uncertainty and the possibility of a threat, into a certain status characterised as a dichotomy of security and threat. The system then applies this notion to particular material entities, be they objects or persons.

The article focuses on the way this translatory activity shapes the initial environment of ontological uncertainty and the security provision product. The article also analyses how environments – the uncertainty involving a danger and the secure environment – are produced by a presence of a particular translatory chain which is now practiced at LKPR. The article proceeds in this direction in accordance with ANT expectations, paying special attention to activity, material actants, and particularly the provision of a symmetrical, non-hierarchical account where all actants are treated equally.

The term chain of translation was already partially employed in a similar manner by Rocco Bellanova and Gloria González Fuster (Bellanova – Fuster, 2013), and more closely by Marieke de Goede (Goede 2018). De Goede, building especially on ideas proposed by Latour in *Pandora's Hope*, focuses on one instance of translation, and highlights the process of information abstraction producing a threat presence. Unlike in her conceptualisation, which is more faithful to Latour's original form in some aspects, the emphasis in the present text lies on the stabilised practice and the gradual act of ontological transformation of the object, the change of its identity.

In relation to this conceptualisation, the event of a threat realisation or full threat employment is understood here as a *program of action*. This program of action is countered by the *antiprogram* of airport security, which intends to prevent its performance (Akrich – Latour 1991: 260–261). Importantly, the program of action entails a full plan of a threat employment. Within the actual system, this program of action is usually expected to use an actant; this actant is to be labelled as a threat by the chain of translation in place. The existing chain of translation is shaped by expectations of possible programs of action.

Security is then a state where the threat program of action is not present, and which is in practice realised through enactment of the antiprogram, which is deemed eligible to ensure the threat's absence. As Latour and Akrich write, antiprograms are “[a]ll the programs of actions of actants that are in conflict with the programs chosen as the point of departure of the analysis; what is a program and what is an antiprogram is relative to the chosen observer” (1991: 261). We may therefore interpret security as a program preventing the realisation of a threat.

This perspective reflects the self-perception, narrative and technological composition of the living actants in the field as well as their technological counterparts, which are designed and set up to *counter* threat employment. Although security and threat might be produced at the same time as a result of a productive dichotomy in accordance with ANT's demands for reproducing the standpoints of actants encountered in the field, this perspective is employed because the alternative solution would be a result of very different fieldwork. ANT emphasises the actors' viewpoints; employing a perspective which counters this notion could be understood as an a priori criticism negatively perceived by ANT (Latour 1986: 264, 1999: 268, 2005: 49).

The contemporary security antiprogram is based mostly on sorting incoming actants by their characteristics, translating those not sharing threat material qualities into secure entities assigned to the secure space of the Security Restricted Area (SRA), and excluding the rest from the realm of security. This process is based on the expectation of threats' material manifestation based on previous accidents. The actant materiality therefore determines the threat identity assignment. Specific material features, and the agency of matter further determine the enrolment of (technological) actants capable of constituting

ideally defining and unique characteristics of a threat. This technological choice is influenced by the technological and knowledge network available at the time of the threat's emergence. The system is therefore structured as a consequence of the knowledge network, threat historicity and their materialities.

In consequence to this notion, the possibility of threat deployment emerges in multiple contexts derived from the fieldwork – as a system failure, meaning either a failure in the performance of a particular chain of translation, a failure to detect particular material characteristics, or a failure to counter an unexpected program of action; and lastly as the very existence of a program of action.

On the contrary, airport security is produced as a response to the framing of constantly emerging new threats. Chains of security translation are established to counter particular threat materialities and to produce spaces and actants deemed free of these. This allows for understanding security as the absence of particular actants and consequently programs of action implying a threat. However, translatory procedures produce a notion of security beyond the notion of threat exclusion. This perception is created not only by the smooth cooperation of multiple actants but also by the credibility of a system which allows for taking the content of the security for granted (Latour 1986: 242). As such, airport security is produced not only as a negative notion based on the absence of a viable threat program, but also as a positive end-product which is thought to be generally trusted. For example, an Israeli research found that a *“majority of 83 % of the passengers felt that the security check contributed to their sense of safety during flight”* (Hasisi – Weisburd 2011: 879). The situation at LKPR also shows an enhanced feeling of added value promoted by the security system. The positive notion of security, encompassing a distinct and explicit content, is provided to the actants protected.

DATA AND METHODS

Following the ANT framework, the inquiry is based on a mix of qualitative methods, employing an inductive analytical approach fully building on the empirical grounding. The above-proposed conceptualisation of threat and security is therefore a result of fieldwork. The empirical inquiry was shaped by ANT focuses, paying particular attention to ongoing action, technologies, materialities and their interactions with humans, and especially to connections, and relationality and means of its realisation among all the actants present. However, specific ANT concepts and the manner in which they are employed to explain security production have been derived from actions witnessed. The realisation of this process points at the possibility to travel up the ladder of abstraction using an ANT-based fieldwork, showing the explanatory value proposed by ANT.

The fieldwork consisted of full participant observation, observatory activities and a set of interviews with general airport security control employees, management, passengers and other relevant security actants. The research was conducted at LKPR in 2017. The first stage of the research (participant observation) took place from 6 to 8 July 2017; after undergoing the appropriate training, the author took part in security searches, which provided first-hand experience of the system internality, and enabled her to inquire about the chain of translation and understand security control's productive effects. Furthermore, this stage enabled the author to witness otherwise inaccessible translation points, and interaction between employees and travellers, and particularly to experience interactions between humans and specialised technologies. A non-participant observation was conducted from 10 July to September 29. An external examination of the system helped the author increase her understanding of how the system is shaped by the technologies in place, how the technological solution context shapes processes and legislation, how it produces unintended consequences and particularly how it frames the notion of security and threat.

The interviews broadened this experience by adding the accounts of system operators and their material counterpart actants, and the perspectives of travellers who are the

subjects as well as contracting parties of the whole process. 41 in-depth open-ended interviews with Security Control employees (Bezpečnostní kontrola – BEK), 10 interviews with BEK Management, Administration and Control employees (BEK M&A&C), 167 shorter semi-structured interviews with travellers, and five in-depth open-ended interviews with other security actants were conducted. The participant sampling and observations were guided by sampling for variance. This interview form reflected the time possibilities of the airport environment, where longer and therefore less guided interviews were made possible by the airport management and shift schedule, whereas the screening and departure organisation prevented longer interviews with passengers, with variability covered. The actant-topic relationship was strong: for the employees the research question and the whole airport security phenomenon represented an important part of everyday work, and in many cases also a crucial life experience. In these cases, the interviews involved broad, thoughtful ideas and contributed to the whole inductively-oriented research activity. For travellers, the issue concerned was not usually an important part of their lives, and therefore the more closed framing in these cases rendered more specific reactions.

The interviews have been conducted in Czech, English, and French by the author, interpreted for Russian, Chinese and Arabic-speaking travellers, and given in written form for Korean travellers. The acquired data was treated in accordance with ethical recommendations. To emphasise the airport employees' anonymity, the interview recording dates were replaced by random numbers.

All the interviews have been transcribed manually. Based on the transcript examinations, some codes have then been induced with an expressed idea set as a coding unit. After the trial coding and adjustment of the inductively derived coding scheme, the whole data corpus has been coded using these data-driven inductive codes. Subsequently, an analytical choice was made to integrate a specific list of codes into the analysis. These codes have been chosen so as to provide accounts of a threat and security nature. The selected codes have been internally examined using the logic of thematic analysis (Boyatzis 1998), and their inner meaning, variation and relations were interpreted. When needed, further sub-coding was implemented in order to enhance the understanding of the codes' dimensions.

Subsequently, relations and co-occurrences among the codes, sub-codes, and cases were inquired into, forming the results presented. During this phase, the idea of a security check as a chain of translation, as well as the notion of security and threat deployment, crystallised from the data, emerging from the examination of the security check sequence and its productive consequences. The understanding of security and threat deployment as a program of action and an antiprogram has developed in a similar way during the analysis of technology performance with respect to incoming actants. Lastly, some indicative quotations have been selected for the purposes of the results presentation: These serve only as an illustrative representation of salient results based on their broad presence within the data. All cases with a unified contrasting view to a chosen quotation or presented point are mentioned in the text.

RESULTS

The notion of threat and security reconstructed during the analysis is presented as follows. Firstly, the dimension of a possible threat program is introduced; this part explores what is considered a possible action to be undertaken. This section introduces the variance of dangers and threats, and partially also the inherently connected possible modes of threat employment in airport practice. Secondly, the possibility of threat realisation in regard to the security system is examined by tackling the possible mode of threat deployment building on the identified presentation of threat realisation as a system failure. Such a failure means either a malperformance within a particular chain of translation or a failure in ability to detect a particular material characteristic representing a design failure, a failure

to counter an unexpected program of action, and the presence of a program of action itself. This cornerstone conceptualisation is related to the remaining sections. Finally, the understanding of terrorism is examined.

The second section involves security analysis – the second actant present in the field. Three basic analogic dimensions have been identified here: firstly, the role of the security antiprograms is presented, and particular ideas, approaches, and procedures taken in order to avoid threat deployment are analysed, with the threat examination being taken into account. Secondly, the notion of actants rendered as protected by the security control system is explored. Lastly, the analysis presents the image of the security provided. Here the security is analysed in regard to its positive delimitation, exploring its substantive nature as the end point of the security translation.

THREAT

The Threat Program of Action in the Terrain

In accordance with the general trend, the leading threat program of action empirically identified at LKPR mostly focuses on the possibility that an explosive system could be placed within a safeguarded area or airplane and detonated. Within the terrain studied, employees consider explosions a predominant threat, and travellers consider them a leading specific threat program of action.

The danger of explosion is tangible given two important material aspects. Firstly, an explosion is seen as an ultimate threat to the inflight employment. Here, the airplane materiality shapes an inflight explosion as a main source of concern. This concept, which is endorsed in the terrain, stems from general observations. For example, McCrie and Haas pointed at the advantageous choice of an airplane as a target given its propensity to total destruction, and therefore its particular vulnerability to explosions (2018: 55). Similarly, Nilsson's examination of terrorist tactics noted that inflight employment enhances the explosion's destructive effect so that it inflicts more casualties independently of the tactics enacted (2018: 10).

Secondly, given its historicity, the security check has been conceptualised so that the focus has predominantly been on the idea of a kidnapping involving a hand-held metallic weapon, and therefore on countering threats represented by metallic items. Furthermore, explosive materiality is rendered as difficult to counter due to the explosives' varying chemical composition and varying shapes, which make explosive detection particularly challenging (Cormier – Fobes 1996: 2–3). The trend of a new threat emergence is also embodied within contemporary European legislation, particularly in the Commission Implementing Regulation 2015/1998 stipulating the obligatory inclusion of innovations – such as explosive threat detectors (ETD), liquid threat detectors, or random sampling – within the chain of security translation focusing especially on this potentiality (European Union 2015).

The idea of an inflight explosion or an explosion in the SRA thus emerges as a program of threat action which is prone to a system failure, either due to a failure in performance caused by operating the system on the edge of possibilities of particular chains of translation, or as a potential complete failure to detect a specific new, material characteristic. A contrasting idea is an explosion in a public hall where the aircraft multiplier effect might not be expected, yet the program of action seems not to face any substantial antiprogram compared to inflight employment. This represents threat deployment as a consequence of a failure to counter an unexpected program of action. Furthermore, the traditional understanding of airport security as in-flight protection is questioned here. In the terrain, the traditional stance is slightly predominant among employees, given their focused tasks (BEK Employee 1 2017; BEK Employee 2 2017), whereas passengers, concerned with personal protection, are more inclusive to terminal

security, even though also feeling most endangered during the flight itself (Czech traveller 1, 2017). This difference reflects the broader security shift toward soft target protection comprising control delocalisation as well as space and crowd surveillance as a reaction to non-hardened target attacks (Ahmed 2018: 380; Bigo 2008: 17; Klausner – Ruegg – November 2008; Nishiyama 2018: 2).

Within the field, employees sometimes discuss the idea of a non-weaponised threat deployment, e.g. using only blackmail, bare hands, or everyday items purchased in a duty-free store, with other threats being mentioned only occasionally (BEK Employee 3 2017; BEK Employee 4). The corresponding program of action is based on the idea of an unexpected program of action. It is therefore mainly emerging as a contrast to the contemporary system logic based on the SRA, which mostly expects that the threat item's absence is a sufficient security guarantee. The idea of threat deployment without a threat item smuggled in seems to be a go-to circumvention of the security system. This framing of threat does not mean that the airport security network does not consider other options but rather that the enacted security antiprogram is either considered efficient, as, for example, in the case of metals screening (BEK Employee 4 2017), or enforced by a different part of the system, and therefore is not seen as pivotal by the BEK employees.

Lastly, passengers might consider goods and especially drug trafficking a part of the BEK's interest. Here, the expected program of action more or less misses with antiprograms in place, given that such findings are rather collateral hits allowed by materialities of trafficked actants (Representative of Customs Administration 2017). Still, such a program of action expects to take advantage of a system failure, and some interviewed passengers understand security control, particularly the ETD, as primarily targeted on drug screening (Slovak traveller 1 2017; Czech travellers 2).

Means of a Threat Program Realisation

When a threat program realisation process is examined in closer detail, a system failure is a leading source of threat presence for employees and LKPR management as well as for travellers. A system failure is overwhelmingly rendered as a possibility that a forbidden item might be brought into the SRA – either due to a failure to employ an existing procedure correctly or due to an unexpected program of action. The mere presence of an item which should have been labelled as a threat in the SRA is presented as a source of danger. Such an item with a threat identity is inherently dangerous,³ given its material agency enabling it to cause harm. Such a failure is not framed as a mistake but as a result of a perpetrator's malicious activity, which enables one to consider the situation as a security matter. In most cases, the nature of this item is not expressed, and the threat is related to a general notion of breaching the SRA.

A similar idea is also included within the considerably less popular notion of an unauthorised intruder in the SRA. The threat identity of the actant – living or not – leads to the expectation that it will be identified within the chain of translation, and proposes an agency for it, an inherent program of action to be countered by the security antiprogram. The influence is then twofold and the conceptualisation of a threat identity is also understood as a result of the actant's agency. However, the two notions might be significantly detached in practice. For example, a presence of an unexamined liquid in the SRA is rather a case of the former than the latter, even though the conceptualisation of the liquid as a threat is a consequence of the latter notion.

The mere presence and legal entry of a suspicious person, for example, might be a threat source, and it is de facto also caused by a system failure. Importantly, given his or her widely recognised agency, a dangerous person can be further classified in regard to their system function. The main categories emerging here are a professional, an employee, a nad'vé perpetrator, and a lunatic. A professional is rendered by human actants as a person equipped with superior knowledge, means and motivation (BEK Employee 8 2017). The

professional's knowledge makes him or her a threat which might not be averted (BEK Employee 3 2017; Russian traveller 2 2017). A professional therefore employs a system failure to detect a specific material characteristic, or to counter an unexpected program of action, and as such might employ a program of action which deterministically would not be countered by the airport security anti-program. A professional's advantage is their understanding of the chain of translation applied and of threat identities included in this system. The position of an employee is similar. An employee represents an inner threat due to the combination of their limited knowledge of the airport and particularly their access that could allow them to circumvent some parts of the security procedure (BEK Employee 8 2017; BEK Employee 9 2017; Observation 1 2017).

On the other hand, a *naďve* perpetrator might be theoretically detected by the chain of translation concerning brought material actants, but completely disables the possibility of suspicious behaviour identification, as they do not share the behavioural features of a suspect. A *naďve* perpetrator employs a system failure by disabling the ability of the chain of translation to detect a particular characteristic of identity. Such a person is considered a possible threat, but is also strongly emphasised as an important reason for an equal approach to all passengers, which contrasts with the use of profiling (BEK Employee 10 2017; BEK M&A&C 1 2017). The advantage of a *naďve* perpetrator argument also relies on the fact that this framing is non-conflictual toward the passenger, which was also mentioned by the management (BEK M&A&C 2 2017; BEK M&A&C 3 2017).

The last kind of person saliently present within the threat map is a lunatic. Similarly to a *naďve* perpetrator, a lunatic is more difficult to reveal and particularly unpredictable given their "*lunatic*" irrational nature, which again disables the ability of the chain of translation to assign a correct threat identity to him or her. A lunatic penetrates the system primarily by their determination (which also constitutes their key defining characteristic), mostly not on the basis of their invisibility, but rather on the basis of their disregard for consequences (BEK Employee 10 2017; BEK Employee 9 2017). A lunatic as a term has a significant agency in framing a cornerstone concept of terrorism.

Terrorism

Terrorism was present both in the interviews and within the airport security network as an ultimate threat or an ultimate reason and motivation for the threat program realisation, combining aspects of threat perception with further uncontrollability and the emotional dread proper to terrorism itself, as has been mentioned in existing studies (Avdan – Webb 2018: 2; Lee – Lemyre – Krewski 2010: 263). The distress experienced in relation to the perceived ultimate nature of terrorism made some passengers seemingly intentionally avoid mentioning this particular type of danger; or it made them call upon their beliefs in destiny and/or predestination, and pray to their deity for generally safe travels, while avoiding a direct terrorist threat label (Russian traveller 3 2017; Saudi traveller 2017). Such responses highlight the emotionality in passengers' perceptions of terrorism. Complex answers reflecting the notion were rare. Although the field might consider terrorism an aggregating notion connecting most possible programs of action, aspects of intentionality potentially leading to the realisation of such a program seem to be missing.

In the comprehensive answers provided, terrorism was most frequently defined in connection to a particular attack (passengers usually mention the 9/11 attack, and employees the Richard Reid attack [American traveller 1 2017; Israeli traveller 1 2017], or a particular tactic – namely bombing (Czech traveller 4 2017)). The interviewees rarely mentioned the political nature or motivations of such attacks. This observation is in consonance with the terrorist threat perception research by Lee, Lemyre, and Krewski, who pointed out that their interviewees mostly "*mentioned a specific attack or referred to an attack in general terms (25.2%). Others thought about different types of terrorism or weapons that might be used in an attack (19.5%)*" (2010: 251). If terrorism in the

field contained a dimension beyond the idea of a specific threat deployment mode or a concrete instance, the ideational dimension could be then described as Islamic (BEK Employee 1; German traveller 2017). This is again in consonance with the findings of Avdan and Webb, who point out that violent acts perpetrated by Muslims tend to be more frequently classified as terrorism also within the North American public (2018: 3).

Nevertheless, this notion was at the same time contested with efforts to avoid cultural preconceptions (BEK Employee 10 2017). For example, one employee reported the following during a passenger inspection: *“He told me that 95% of people with this turban are not terrorists.”* This was met with an answer: *“That is true, Sikhs usually are not terrorists”* (Participant observation 1 2017). Here an effort for cultural understanding strives for multicultural acceptance, which at the same time meets the probability misconception and underlying idea that terrorism is culturally rooted. Importantly, this framing is present not only on the part of the employee, but on the passenger’s part as well.

The second ideational feature of terrorism is its unnaturalness (Saudi traveller 2017). The characterisation of terrorism as deviant reveals a real partisanship of a lunatic character as was described above. A lunatic in this sense is in fact a terrorist. Both the lunatic and the terrorist perform terrorist activities; it is just that in the case of the lunatic, they are not labelled as such (BEK Employee 1 2017; BEK Employee 10 2017). As one passenger explained: *“one crazy person is running around with a knife, then it is in the news in particular when he says something about Allah”* (German traveller 2017). The connection between terrorism and psychological conditions has been already broadly researched and despite some weak evidence that terrorists might express, for example, a *“lack of empathy”* (Argomaniz – Lynch 2018: 8), *“the idea that terrorists, in general, must be sociopaths or psychopaths has little empirical support”* (Nilsson 2018: 2). The use of this label enables one to explain that a terrorist attack is so hard to avert since its irrational nature renders it unpredictable (BEK Employee 3 2017; BEK Employee 9 2017). This notion is strengthened by the allusion of the lunatic to lone-wolf attacks that cannot be predicted by intelligence services (Barnea 2018: 219).

Although the cultural and unnatural rendering of terrorism then ultimately does not identify terrorism as a political matter, both notions are engaged in an interesting dialectic. As was already noted, the lunatic label enables one to depoliticise and delegitimise the terrorist act (Larsen 2018: 3; Salter 2008b: 245). At the same time, this notion is conversely employed to counter the idea of terrorism’s cultural rooting. Labelling a terrorist as a lunatic (along with pointing to their exceptionality and abnormality) enables some of the respondents to avoid the issue of cultural prejudice, because rendering the perpetrator as an exception helps them avoid a biased judgement (BEK Employee 11 2017; German traveller 2017). The program of action may be understood as unsubstantiated and its intentionality disregarded, but this strategy enables one to avoid cultural prejudice, entirely breaking the connection between the threat and the perpetrators’ ethnic identity.

Security

Security Antiprograms

Security antiprograms are devised to counter the programs of action examined. Their contemporary main component, reflected by all groups of human actants, is the idea of the SRA and its enforcement against all actants framed as threats. Security is provided by the fact of control performance itself, which essentially promotes the certainty of a security presence in passengers. The most common expression of a sense of security in passengers was: *“We feel safe, they have checked everything”* (Israeli traveller 2 2017). Security therefore emerges as a product of a chain of translation in place, and the passage of an actant through the procedure by itself is evaluated as sufficient. Unlike the perspective of employees, the travellers’ perspective does not consider the parts of the chain in

place as particularly substantial – everything was checked and therefore none of it can represent a threat because otherwise it would have been labelled accordingly. The sense of good security performance is strengthened in a passenger’s eyes when some of the passenger’s items have been further scrutinised and allowed, as this process emphasises the possibility of threat identification and its correct assessment; the management’s experience also confirms this (French traveller 2017; BEK M&A&C 3 2017). Similarly, some passengers tend to imagine that more scrutiny is involved than there actually is, which makes certain passengers feel uncomfortable and others feel more safe (Czech traveller 5 2017; Belarusian traveller, 2017). As one passenger explains: *“There were controls here I am not even aware of; maybe, yes, there are cameras; maybe I have passed through some detector I have not noticed; maybe, I hope that... yes, I want to feel secure”* (Czech traveller 6 2017).

A similar argument of *“passing the security check”* also emerges among the employees, although here it usually involves the idea of rules. For some employees, following the rules means certain security since they believe the system could not have been designed imperfectly (BEK Employee 5 2017; BEK Employee 12 2017). In an environment where accepting a low-risk probability is considered unthinkable, this notion is usually connected with the idea of zero risk. A similar precautionary notion of zero risk has been criticised by Aradau and Van Munster (2007: 103). Yet, this notion contrasts with system settings based on probability. The zero-risk stance might also lead to inner misunderstandings where insistence on detailed rule enforcement might result in a failure to recognise what is substantial for the particular chain of translation and what is not (BEK M&A&C 1 2017). In this form, the security performance might become commodified, not in terms of the relationship between the contracting authority and the client but in regard to the security performance framed as the procedure performance, as a formalised technique (Abrahamsen – Williams 2009: 5).

However, in other cases, the control is openly acknowledged by both passengers and employees as a risk-diminishing activity based on risk knowledge and evaluation (BEK Employee 10 2017; Swiss traveller 2017). In these cases, the risk form is as described by Abrahamsen and Williams: *“it is a particular way of thinking about and responding to potential dangers. It is preventative, not restorative. Primarily actuarial and calculative, it works by designing and controlling spaces, through the collection of statistics and the production of categories of danger, and by surveillance”* (2009: 5).

The risk perception is also encompassed in the security deterrence antiprogram. The introduction of the control itself importantly raises the threshold for a damaging program of action producing a deterring effect, given that the general public does not fully comprehend the chains of security translation. Nevertheless, the deterrence logic is mentioned only marginally – even by the employees. Yet, this antiprogram could have been understood as a rationale of probability-based control methods. The scarcity and framing of deterrence within the terrain seems to point at a predominant risk perception bias rather than any actual adoption of deterrence.

Protected Actants

The concrete service offered to passengers might be then reflected in the antiprogram and its main goal. Many of the interviewed passengers perceived travellers as the main actants in danger, as in their view, the overall goal of the airport security antiprogram is to *“make all passengers safe and feel safe; you yourself feel more safe when you see these kinds of policies”* (Emirati traveller 2017). These types of answers emphasise the passengers of a particular flight with the important inclusion of the passengers themselves. Importantly, passenger protection in the vital interest of physical survival is also emphasised. This is in contrast with the employees’ perspective, where the concern is to define goals in the context of the aircraft or the flight (BEK Employee 5 2017). This framing stresses

the need to ensure suitable conditions for the transportation process. The main actant to be protected against the harmful program here is rather the aircraft or the civil aviation system.

The translation into the secure state is provided by translating the actant itself, as well as by translating all actants on the flight, leading to a personalisation of the security provided. However, this does not erode the negative notion of security translation – for a traveller, security is provided as a trade-off where an unnecessary personal check is performed on him or her just to ensure the same level of control of other passengers (American traveller 2 2017). The translation of oneself is only caused by a failure of the “*act of truth*” (Salter 2005), whereas the translation of others is the factual performance of security (BEK Employee 7 2017; Bulgarian traveller 2017). The argument “*I have nothing to hide*” (Russian traveller 4 2017) centres on the uncertainty about the behaviours of others and being persuaded of one’s own flawlessness. Within the studied terrain, this notion was occasionally also extended not only to the real transportation of threats but to all problems in general (even those not caused by passengers), which seemed to indicate an overall non-compliance with security measures among passengers. One of the responses to the question whether passengers ever experienced some type of problem during the control was: “*No, if one does not carry on anything of that kind, how can one have problems?*” (Russian traveller 5 2017).

So, on one hand, we have the call for protection of the public, which materialises as a personal demand for feeling safe which should be satisfied by the control (Sakano – Obeng – Fuller 2016). The opposite perspective reflects the professional view which perceives the multiplicity of stakes within the framework as well as the legal grounds; for example, Annex 17 of the Chicago Convention defines security as: “[s]afeguarding civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference” (ICAO n.d.) and only later specifies what this term entails. The second part of the explanation might result from a practice of interaction where poor compliance of travellers may contribute to a conceptualisation more distanced from individual passengers (BEK Employee 6 2017). Here, individuals are still one of the actant groups to be endangered and protected, but on the other hand, they are not accepted as distinctive individual targets, but rather as passive components of the whole. Nevertheless, not all employees follow this logic and some find a way to frame the task as a guidance or client relationship (BEK Employee 7 2017).

Security seems to be stretching in two directions: not only toward the inclusion of oneself but also toward very broad networks of actants – the state and society. The aforementioned inclusion of trafficking moves the idea of security provision toward the state interest, while the passengers, in comparison to the employees, do generally incline toward “*a matter of state*” perception of airport security (Russian traveller 1 2017; Chinese traveller 1 2017; Czech traveller 3 2017).

Mark Salter described this situation as a case where: “*(inter)national mobility is first problematized and then managed*” (2008d: 12). This extension is not made much by the employees, for whom security remains mostly flight-bound, but again it appears more frequently on the part of the passengers. For them, security control entails a border protection directly bound to the control of movement of humans and non-humans, and to the protection of the state within the international environment itself (Slovak traveller 2 2017). When airport security is understood even more broadly as a way to “*enforce the laws of that country you’re in*” (British traveller 2017), airport security then becomes an actant contributing to state sovereignty. For other passengers, this type of extension might reach an even broader community such as a part of mankind as a whole (Pakistani traveller 2017). Nonetheless, such an inclusion points rather at the general idea of the nature of security.

The idea of a threat program of action does not target civil aviation here but the state itself. This trend is also present in other dimensions of threats that are mentioned only

marginally and nearly exclusively by the passengers as the dangers of a specific person's presence in a given state territory. Here the idea of a system failure enabling threat actants to penetrate the state territory connects with the notion of the presence or existence of a threatening program of action by itself. Only the actual arrival of persons labelled as threats or items sharing threat characteristics (especially narcotics) constitutes a threat realisation.

The Nature of the Security Produced

The security achieved after the control in the first order depends on the level of security perceived before. This is so because when no threats are present, and all actants are secure within the general environment, no translation is needed. In these terms, the Czech Republic is a very safe country. According to the Global Terrorism Database, which contains data since 1970, 33 persons died due to terrorism-related causes in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. This includes 26 passengers of the flight JU367, who had no direct relation to the country (ASN 2018; START: 197201260002' n.d.). Out of the seven remaining casualties, one was a suicide, and another was a victim of a letter bomb explosion in a pool-producing factory that was only questionably labelled as terrorist (START: 201301190012' n.d.; START: 201401150065' n.d.). Even though criticism of the overly extensive security focus on airport security, or at least a perception of a bad focus (Pakistani traveller 2017), is to some extent present among the passengers, including foreigners (Russian traveller 6 2017), the country security profile also influences the perception of the need for security among Czech nationals. The controls in place are often seen as more than satisfactory, and in some cases, the focus on security is criticised on the grounds that it is an empty bubble (BEK Employee 3 2017; Czech traveller 7 2017). This notion is also reflected abroad, where some passengers mention the airport security situation in the country as one of the important aspects of the visit experience (Bulgarian traveller 2017; Swedish traveller 2017). As such, airport security reflects inputs into the chains of translation.

The resulting product of the chains of security translation is then usually rendered as "*psychological*." The employees view this notion rather negatively as something that is not real, that is just a perception, a trick on the viewer. Here, the ontological translation of actants into the secure state is actually not performed; it is not a "*total rupture from the preceding state*" (Latour 1999: 60), or an "*ontological shift*" (Schouten 2014: 28). It is just an illusion of these changes (BEK Employee 9 2017). Although the translation is not performed, the rules must be followed because otherwise the illusion ceases. As one employee said when answering the question of what is security: "*This is such a concept. The people believe that if we've thrown out their water, we have checked them*" (BEK Employee 13 2017). This also renders security as a service to the psychological needs of the crowd.

Passengers accept the promoted service most willingly, even though they also reflect it in psychological terms. For them, the psychological dimension of security means a positive, reassuring feeling that the responsibility, their security agency, has been taken over by a different actant. Security is then a possibility to not pay any attention to safety, not see it and not care (Czech traveller 1 2017; Italian traveller 2017). This again turns security into a service provided, as also framed, e.g., by Gkritza, Neimeier, and Mannering (Gkritza – Niemeier – Mannering 2006: 219). Security then might be evaluated in terms of passengers' "*comfort*" (American traveller 3 2017; Belarusian traveller 2017). The ideal security is thus an 'other-taken' process (Latour 2005: 45; Venturini – Guido 2013) which is clearly present but also invisible: "*Security means that you do not notice it. That is security*" (Russian traveller 1 2017).

Security thus operates with significant agency entrusted by travellers who are willing to take part in an other-taken process and thus subsequently acknowledge their agency

removal and submission to the agency of security (Israeli traveller 3 2017). Relatively similarly to the process described by O'Malley, the security agency is then imposed on the population "*in their own interest*" and accepted by the other party (2006: 419). The agency of security can then serve to promote the security translation. The employees might use the security agency to enforce a particular behaviour or prohibition (BEK Employee 4 2017; BEK Employee 5 2017). The agency takeover also significantly limits the knowledge of travellers about the process and practically disables the agency retrieval in case of conflict. This process is in part endorsed spontaneously by employees who become enlisted actants of airport security agency and sometimes strict rule-followers themselves (BEK Employee 12 2017).

It is also an intentionally applied approach which points out the impossibility of the decision reversion, particularly enrolling the European legislative framework (BEK Employee 13 2017; BEK M&A&C 4 2017). Similarly, security agency might be enlisted even in relations between employees and management, where security might oblige the parties involved to either ease working tasks or comply with rules (BEK M&A&C 1 2017; BEK Employee 10 2017).

Security is understood as a certainty of non-interference with the actant agency, and thus as an assurance of the actant's own preservation, which alludes to the notion of biopolitics, though "positively" formulated (Nishiyama 2018: 3). This phrasing has been clearly formulated particularly by Asian travellers (including those from Russia) but it seems to be shared more broadly (Chinese traveller 2 2017; Chinese traveller 3; Russian traveller 7 2017). As such, security is an essential need of an actant, and in the human context it is understood as the preservation of life (Chinese traveller 4 2017; Russian traveller 2 2017) and an ultimate condition of flourishing (Uruguayan traveller 2017). In the airport security context, these ideas might be entailed in the notion of coming home, where home is the ultimate shelter free of so much as a potential of threat (Lebanese traveller 2017). When one leaves the individualist cultures of Europe and North America, security might be positively seen as an extrapolation of its psychological dimension, as a general environment which "Latouriantly" encompasses not only humans but also actants, where no latent danger is present – a state of tranquillity, happiness and peace of all existence (Chinese traveller 5 2017; Indian traveller, 2017).

CONCLUSIONS

Employing ANT premises, this article explores the nature of threat and the positive form of security delimitation as two end-points of security translation in the particular case of LKPR. This theoretical-methodological underpinning allows one to explore distinct aspects of security provision and explain the role of the materiality-ideas interplay in moulding the form of contemporary security practice. Similarly, security is portrayed as a setting-specific practice with its particular form and content shaped by continual negotiation. Multiple heterogeneous actants play significant roles in this negotiation, including security agency itself.

Specifically, the article discusses identified threat programs of action focused on the idea of inflight explosions, pointing at the causes for this program saliency resulting from the materialities of a plane and the explosives themselves. The article witnesses a broadening of the program of action toward terminal security, which is manifested particularly as a divergence in the perception of the object of protection between the employees and passengers. A similar divergence is found between the concept of passengers and the civil aviation system as protection priorities. Terrorism is identified as an underlying threat program conceptualised in the field in a way that reflects its tactical scope, and variations of the program, but not its political intentionality. The article also discusses an essentialist understanding of terrorism entailing the notion of unnaturalness and the possibility of threat identity identification through the chain of translation in

place. This notion is contrasted with the idea of the cultural rooting of the term – the second aspect identified. Consequences for the practice in place are indicated where this notion contributes to specific security practices and assumptions embedded deeply into the contemporary security system. Moreover, the contemporary practice therefore contributes to building the shared societal vision of terrorism, with important consequences – in terms of not only security but also politics.

The article further discusses the security antiprogram, positively identified as a service. The term “positive” implies an outreach of the factual state provided by the security check and proposes security as an agency. This notion enables one to describe its nature, but also crucially to further explore security agency production and its subsequent tangible impacts resulting from the practice in place, particularly in regard to the authority and prescriptive powers granted to security in this manner. Security identified in psychological terms is found to imply diverging notions between travellers and employees. The positive delimitation of security is framed as a security agency take-over proposed to the traveller, which concurrently serves as a security enforcement tool. Security as an agency take-over then provides an opportunity for actant non-interference with the threat. This enables one to explore a case of security commodification and to understand the changing grasp of security, as it becomes a commodified interest of an individual, but concurrently remains framed as a state affair by many of the actants included.

Similarly, the possibility of the security performance perception failure is shown. The article stems from an empirical inquiry and understanding of security, connecting the ANT ideas of the chain of translation, program and antiprogram. Specifically, the understanding of threats in relation to the antiprogram has been newly conceptualised in the article. This conceptualisation is then further refined into four types of threat programs of action employing either a system failure based on an insufficient performance within a particular chain of translation, on the ability to detect a particular material characteristic, or on the failure to predict and counter an unexpected program of action. Lastly, the threat is identified as the presence of a program of action itself.

Doing this, the article represents one of the cases where ANT-based fieldwork enables climbing the ladder of abstraction and thus contributes to showing the explanatory value proposed by this approach. As such it contributes to posing a counter-argument against reservations expressed in this regard by Barry, Nexon and Pouliot (Barry 2013; Nexon – Pouliot 2013).

The image of security proposed is based on following the non-human actants as well and witnessing how they form the chain of security translation in everyday practice. It is therefore shown how the non-humans directly impact the threat program of actions and the security antiprograms, either via their technological capabilities (explosive detection) or raw materialities (an airplane or explosives). The article shows how these actants actively produce what is contemporarily understood as threat and security. This would not be possible if we built solely on discursive approaches. Even in instances where the agency of non-humans was not witnessed directly but identified through an interview, this identification has been based on actual experience of human and machine interaction. This notion can be evaluated and conceptualised only through the analytical perspective employed.

Further, ANT, similarly to the discursive approaches, aims at reproducing ‘the world of the actants.’ In contrast to them, it reflects their activities, not their speech acts; the nonhumans which lack language are therefore invited to shape such a network as well. For this reason, the lexical means employed by the actants are not decisive. This can be seen as another advantage of ANT.

Nevertheless, the research would have profited from an even more balanced access to all groups of actants, which could have been provided, for example, by structured analyses of the direct output from particular technologies. This could build, for example, on the ideas proposed by post-ANT research interested in network analysis of this type of data

(e.g. Venturini 2012). However, a systemic access to this level of data is considered even more sensitive than traditional qualitative methods.

Similarly, from the traditionalist point of view, a more quantitative approach would bring stronger and more directly generalisable outcomes. However, it would be much harder to approach the actants followed here, or even impossible. Furthermore, by focusing on one case, the article pays attention to actual experience and its fine detail and as such the article proposes a comparative background for further research of airport security. The article explores a specific case of security production, presenting an instance of a temporal on-site situation where there is “an essentially contested concept, a controversy that is never settled, where the agreement over the definition of threats means a way to counter them and where the enactment of protection is a result of crossing interests” (Schouten 2010: 2).

Even more importantly, by exploring threat and security in a focus moderated by ANT, this article points out the importance of inquiry into security agency and exploration of setting-specific practice. Moreover, this mode enabled us to identify also broader societal consequences of the distinct form of security understanding, which could be further enhanced by mapping parts of the airport security landscape not treated here, such as cargo security and contracting authorities, perimeter protection specificities, or particularly the interplay among multiple security forces present within the area.

¹ LKPR is an official abbreviation of the airport's name used by the International Civil Aviation Organisation, which is an United Nations Specialised Agency (for a full listing of codes see: ICAO 2012).

² This term will be employed throughout the article, even though Latour himself uses the terms actant and actor interchangeably, as is proven in the name of the Actor-Network Theory itself. The term actant is employed by him only in special emphases on the mixed nature of actors/actants (for another example of the mixed use, see the page following the term definition: Latour 2005: 54–55). The words “actor” and “agent” were left in the present paper only when they were included in quotations.

³ This applies to cases where the item is not directly connected to a particular identity (e.g. that of a policeman), but even in cases where it is connected to an identity, the utmost caution is applied as the combination of place and object is seen to produce a particular vulnerability.

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