AIRPORT PERSONNEL AND PASSENGERS: A THEORETICAL MODEL OF PERCEIVED SECURITY

GLI EFFETTI DELL’INTERAZIONE SOCIALE SULLA SICUREZZA PERCEPITA DAI PASSEGGERI

Keywords
Perceived security, security personnel, passenger, social interaction

This work was financed by a PhD project funding

ABSTRACT
For many years, the main concern of civil aviation was the improvement of airport safety. Since 1974, with the enactment of Annex 17 to the Chicago Convention, a culture of security has begun to develop, which pays more attention to airport security. There are few studies that analyzed the airport environment from a psychological perspective and provide support for this important change in the field of civil aviation.

This research was conducted at an international Italian airport and investigated the social interactions between passengers and security agents at the checkpoint. What kind of psychosocial dynamics emerge during the security control phases? What are the biggest problems that security agents have to face when interacting with passengers? The aim was to identify the psychosocial processes that help or hinder the success of security con-

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Abstract
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trolls, through ethnographic observations and interviews with key informants and analysis of internal documents.

The main results highlight the importance of an airport vision statement able to give directions to the personnel actions; this would be important for the success of an airport as it provides a sense of direction on where the airport business want to go. Furthermore the study provides an innovative overview because it analyzed airport complexity in all its aspects, from a multilevel perspective. Emphasis is placed on elements that deserve increased attention from airport operators, such as the interaction between security agents and passengers, the communication processes between the social actors, and the information provided to passengers. The main results and the theoretical model of perceived security will be discussed.

► INTRODUCTION

AIRPORT PERSONNEL AND PASSENGERS: A THEORETICAL MODEL OF PERCEIVED SECURITY

What happens at psychosocial level when a passenger arrives at an airport and interacts with the airport personnel? Why do critical issues emerge only with some passengers? Do these results arise only from the personal features of the passengers and security agents, or are there psychosocial processes involved? This article is an exploratory study of the psychosocial aspects that help or hinder the success of social interactions between security operators and passengers in tra il personale di terra nell’interazione con il passeggero? L’obiettivo è identificare i processi psico-sociali che favoriscono o ostacolano il buon esito delle fasi di controllo; sono state condotte osservazioni etnografiche sul campo ed interviste a testimoni privilegiati.

I principali risultati evidenziano l’importanza del fatto-re umano alla base delle interazioni positive tra il passeggero e gli operatori aeroportuali nelle fasi di controllo. Lo studio fornisce una panoramica innovativa sugli aeroporti poiché, attraverso una prospettiva psicologica, ne coglie e ne analizza la complessità in tutte le sue sfumature. Viene posto l’accento sugli aspetti che meriterebbero di ricevere maggiore attenzione da parte dei gestori aeroportuali, come l’interazione personale aeroportuale-passeggeri ed il processo di comunicazione tra gli attori sociali e l’informazione che viene fornita ai passeggeri.

► INTRODUZIONE

LE DIVERSE FACCE DELLA SICUREZZA AEROPORTUALE

Cosa avviene a livello psico-sociale, quando un passeggero arriva in aeroporto ed interagisce con il personale aeroportuale? Perché con alcuni passeggeri si verificano interazioni problematiche e con altri no? Tali esiti sono ascrivibili solamente alle caratteristiche di personalità del passeggero e dell’operatore aeroportuale, o coinvolgono altre dinamiche più propriamente psico-sociali?

In questo articolo, abbiamo voluto far luce sui processi psico-sociali che inevitabilmente favoriscono o
an airport, as this is an important issue for passengers’ service quality satisfaction.

The passenger can have a positive or negative experience at the airport during security checks. The passenger satisfaction will depend on its perception of what he/she has just experienced. We defined the perception as a more complex process than the simple sensations that allows us to acquire information from the outside world through the sense organs. It is also more complex than cognitive activity, a reworking at the cognitive level in the inside world of the individual on a mnemonic and interactive basis. Our perspective considers perception as a reworking that forms not only through individual knowledge, but also through beliefs and past experiences, for a specific situation, interaction and culture. Therefore, perceiving does not consist of a simple registration of sensory, environmental and social stimuli: every traveler will have a personal perception of events, and therefore a subjective interpretation of reality that he amends and re-elaborates through interactions with others and with the environment [1,2,3].

In the psychological literature there are several studies on service quality, which is considered an important issue for successful business operations in the aviation field [4,5,6]. However, the overall service quality studies adopted only the managers’ perspective, neglecting personnel and passengers’ expectations and evaluation [7]. In a recent study, Alards-Tomalin et al. (2014) [8] highlights the importance of security professionalism and how the airport security personnel were positively correlated with future intentions and the administration of security procedures: “more invasive forms of security procedures associated with higher perceived threat to personal dignity” (p. 64). Passengers’ satisfaction is considered central to competitive advantage and long-term success of business organizations, so several studies, models and definitions were developed in literature in order to provide evidence of the increasing importance of customer orientation and service quality aspects [9, 10, 11, 12, 13]. Although there is no uniformity on identification of service quality criteria, all researchers seem to agree on the complex and multidimensional nature of this construct [14, 15, 16, 17, 11, 6]. Chou (2012) [18] proposed an extensive literature review on some important criteria for the evaluation of the quality service in an airport. In particular, Gilbert and Wong (2003) [19], Yeh and Kuo (2003) [6] and de Barros et al. (2007) [20] are just some of the many scholars who have emphasized the importance of the psychosocial and interactive aspects in the evaluation of service quality process (e.g. courtesy of the security check staff, passenger processing at the airport, check-in process, convenience of transit, passengers’ overall impressions, etc.). However, recent studies in marketing and services would seem to go in the different direction and examined personnel and passengers’ well-being and satisfaction/dissatisfaction in the business of air transport [21, 22, 20, 11, 23].

...
In the current paper, we presented an exploratory study at an international airport of Northern Italy with the aim to investigate the successes and issues encountered by security personnel during their interaction with passengers at the checkpoint, in order to deepen the understanding of the psychosocial components of perceived security and to develop a preliminary theoretical model of perceived security. In order to examine the security personnel perspective, the study was conducted on a range of textual data: airport internal documentations, ethnographic observations notes and transcription of semi-structured interview with security personnel. Full texts of interviews, were manually transcribed by the research team and the corpora were subjected to thematic content analysis using the software for qualitative analysis TransAna [24]. The transcriptions were coded using the extract as the unit of analysis [25], therefore the frequencies listed in the tables and figures, that will be shown below, refer to the number of statements in which it was possible to find a particular aspect. Inductive analysis was conducted and, after reading the total corpus, the conceptual grid was constructed.

This research is part of the ASARTS project (Airport Security: social actors and technological artifacts), which aims at contributing to the empirical analysis of factors and processes that foster or hinder the perceived security at international airports in Italy. The research was approved by the University of Padova, Department of Applied Psychology and by the Italian Civil Aviation Authority (ENAC), following two protocols approval (0117794-P and 0159702-P).

 METHODS

MATERIALS

The study was conducted on a range of textual data collected directly by the research team: airport internal documentations, transcription of semi-structured interview administered to security personnel and ethnographic notes of observations at airport. These qualitative instruments were developed ad hoc for this research and derived from preliminary informal meeting with airport security managers and unstructured observation at airport.

PARTICIPANTS

The corpus of data consists of:
- 127 airport internal documents, selected using the keywords sicurezza (Italian word) and security as search criteria, covering the period from 1967 to 2011 (Figure 1).
- 10 semi-structured recorded interviews with key informants, for a total of 7h 51m 38s (eight individual and two in small groups -2 and 4 people-) (Table 1).
- 100h of ethnographic unstructured observations (gathering textual note) and 889 ethnographic structured observations (using ethnographic grids) of social casuale) di assenza di pericolo relativa al bene ed al suo ambiente rispetto a possibili fonti non intenzionali e/o naturali di danno”.

La security implica, invece, la protezione da eventi perpetrati volontariamente da terzi (attacchi, aggressioni, danni) con l’intenzione di nuocere (es. guerre, attacchi terroristici, impossessamento illecito di dati personali) e costituisce, pertanto, l’insieme delle misure, delle risorse umane e tecnologiche volte a salvaguardare l’aviazione civile da interferenze illecite di qualunque natura. Nel dettaglio, la security coinvolge pratiche, risorse umane e tecnologiche, finalizzate alla protezione dell’aviazione civile da “interferenze illecite”, ossia dall’impossessamento illecito degli aeromobili a terra e in volo, dall’introduzione illecita a bordo di un aeromobile o in aeroporto di oggetti pericolosi (armi, ordigni esplosivi, articoli pericolosi e di ogni altro oggetto in grado di causare confusione), dall’irruzione a bordo di aeromobile o in aeroporto di persone pericolose, dalla diffusione di comunicazioni false che possono compromettere la sicurezza (dell’aeromobile, dei passeggeri, degli equipaggi, degli operatori, del pubblico e delle infrastrutture aeroportuali), ed anche dall’aggressione di operatore aeroportuale, presa di ostaggio a bordo di aeromobile in aeroporto, diffusione di comunicazioni false che possono compromettere la sicurezza dell’aeromobile, del passeggero, degli equipaggi, ecc. (ENAC, 2004; Manuta, 2003).

Questa duplice sicurezza fanno parte del costrutto stesso di sicurezza e sebbene la loro integrazione sia non solo auspicabile, ma indispensabile, è allo stesso tempo di difficile realizzazione. La letteratura specialistica italiana inerente la sicurezza aeroportuale mostra notevoli contributi in riferimento alla safety (Passatore, Lio, Calvo Blaterno, 1998; Passatore, D’Amico, 1995; Passatore, Staderini, 1986; Passatore, 1983), ma fino al 2012 è mancato in Italia un testo ufficiale che ponesse l’accento sull’importanza del settore di nostro stretto interesse: quello della security.

Se in un aeroporto la sicurezza assoluta è costituita dal livello massimo di protezione da fattori esterni, che comporta la totale assenza di alterazioni nelle pratiche aeroportuali (Armenti, Cottone, 2010), l’unico aeroporto assolutamente sicuro sembra essere un aeroporto chiuso. Infatti, basti pensare come in casi di estremo pericolo, gli aeroporti vengono chiusi e i voli annullati (ad esempio come è avvenuto nel caso della SARS, o della nube vulcanica proveniente dall’Islanda, o nel caso dell’uragano Sandy che ha colpito gli Stati Uniti nell’ottobre 2012).

L’implementazione delle misure di controllo e degli artefatti tecnologici adottati negli aeroporti nel corso del tempo, sono finalizzati ad incrementare la sicurezza reale (SR) (l’estremo superiore della sicurezza), cercando di elevarlo quanto più possibile alla sicurezza assoluta (SA), che costituisce il massimo livello di protezione.

Come si può evincere dalla Figura 1, con il passare degli anni e in concomitanza dei picchi di atti criminosi e terroristici (87 casi raggiunti nel 1969) che hanno al-
interaction between security personnel and passengers at checkpoint in the sterile and non-sterile areas (Table 2).

INSTRUMENTS

Airport internal documentations. Data were collected from the ENAC Library, Section of Venice, and from the ENAC Central Library of Rome. Directives and regulations, which are the measures of safety and security issued by the Airport Management, have been selected from a total of 501, using the keyword ‘security’, and constitute about 23% of the total documents issued during that time. The last document considered for the development of this work is number 38, issued in October 2011 and on the renewal of the agreement between the Civil Aviation Authority of Venice and the University of Padua on the project in question.

Semi-structured interviews. The aim of the interviews was to analyze the specific roles of the respondents, but also to understand the development of the personal and professional experiences, in a constantly changing context. The interviews began with a presentation and a general introduction to the motivation for choosing the interviewee, and the document about privacy (informed consent) was signed by the participant. We proceeded to investigate the role of the respondent within the security system, encouraging him/her to think about his/her everyday activities and responsibilities. After that, we asked the interviewee about the main issues that he/she met in his/her everyday routines. By ‘issues’, we meant the alteration of the normal practice of the airport. At the end of the interviews we gave the respondents the possibility of asking us questions, before thanking them for their collaboration and ending the interview.

Ethnographic observations. A preliminary observation grid was prepared and tested. An example of the refined grid used to systematically collect observations in the main study is represented in Figure 2.

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Depicted is an interaction between security personnel and passengers at checkpoint in the sterile and non-sterile areas (Table 2).

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The interaction between security personnel and passengers at checkpoint in the sterile and non-sterile areas (Table 2).
**Tab. 1 Data corpus of semi-structured recorded interviews with key informants / Corpus dei dati relativi alle interviste semi-strutturate registrate con informatori chiave**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants (#)</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Rules</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test 1 (1)</td>
<td>airport manager</td>
<td>general security director</td>
<td>00:59:38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 2 (1)</td>
<td>airport manager</td>
<td>area manager</td>
<td>notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 3 (1)</td>
<td>airport manager</td>
<td>supervisor</td>
<td>00:46:42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 4 (1)</td>
<td>airport manager</td>
<td>technical director</td>
<td>00:43:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 5 (1)</td>
<td>supplier of aviation security services</td>
<td>supervisor sensitive flights</td>
<td>00:36:57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 6 (2)</td>
<td>supplier of aviation security services</td>
<td>profiler / security agent</td>
<td>01:05:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 7 (1)</td>
<td>sensitive flights</td>
<td>delta venice station manager</td>
<td>notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 8 (1)</td>
<td>airport manager</td>
<td>quality and services control director</td>
<td>01:03:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 9 (1)</td>
<td>firefighters</td>
<td>firefighters manager</td>
<td>01:24:46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 10 (4)</td>
<td>airport manager</td>
<td>profiler / security agent</td>
<td>01:11:42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tab. 2 Data corpus of structured observations / Corpus dei dati relativi alle osservazioni strutturate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Id</th>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>( n )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>Main Security Check-point</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>Main Security Check-point for sensitive flights</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sensitive flights Check-in</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sensitive flights Gate</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Passport Check-point</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOT.</td>
<td></td>
<td>889</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 2. Example of the grid used for the structured observations / Esempio di griglia usata per le osservazioni strutturate
The grids are composed of tables with predefined fields for the record of significant aspects of interests. Each row in the grid represents a passenger, and each column contains passengers or security agents values with respect to observable demographic characteristics, activities, and context. For the ethnographic observations, we focused the investigation on the interactions between the airport personnel and the passenger in relation to security inspections, choosing the places where those interactions usually happen.

Each observation grids constructed provided context of the observation, passenger and personnel data as follows:
- Date (weekly and hourly slot);
- Observer name;
- Time of a day (morning, afternoon, evening, night);
- Time of a week (weekday, weekend);
- Passenger age (apparent passenger age - Elder, Adult, Young adult, Child);
- Passenger gender (Male, Female);
- Passenger ethnicity (apparent passenger ethnicity - White, Black, Asian, Arabic, Indian, not clearly identifiable);
- Passenger disability (apparent passenger disability);
- Passenger mother-tongue (apparent passenger language: Italian, English, other);
- Passenger spoken language (the language used by the passenger during the interaction with the personnel);
- Kind of security workstation (single or double);
- Number of security personnel at security gate;
- Personnel gender (Male, Female);
- Splitting of security steps by area [duration; presence/absence of the alarm sound; presence/absence of the control of the passenger; presence/absence of verbal interaction between personnel and passenger; problematic interaction or not (verbal and non-verbal)];
- Field notes.

Each grid was structured in a different way, according to the peculiarities of the zone of interaction. Furthermore, the grid did not include any personal data (in agreement with the Italian Privacy Law 196/2003) or any information that could be linked to the passengers identities.

PROCEDURE

Airport internal documentations. The documents selected from old archives and therefore kept in paper format, required several treatment steps: (1) documents were scanned in .pdf format; (2) the .pdf format was converted in .txt format, with the aim of being able to analyze the textual data through software Atlas.ti [26]. After reading the selected document, the analysis took place on several levels.

Semi-structured interviews. The participants were recruited considering their role in the airport security structure. We tried to involve the key roles (subjects that we had investigated during our participation in

Seppur la sicurezza (SA) in ambito aeroportuale costituisca un imperativo, sembrerebbe non essere una condizione concretamente realizzabile. Ad essa si può solamente tendere con l’applicazione di strategie, strumentazioni e normative (SR) e creando un sentimento di sicurezza nei passeggeri (SP), con l’obiettivo ultimo di ridurre la probabilità che si verifichino eventi dannosi ed alterazioni nelle normali pratiche aeroportuali.


La percezione come attività psichica intermedia

In letteratura, la percezione è definita come il processo attraverso il quale l’individuo elabora le informazioni derivanti dagli organi di senso (vista, udito, olfato, gusto e tatto) e gli permette di cogliere adeguatamente la realtà circostante. La percezione sarebbe dunque costituita da un insieme di funzioni psicologiche che permettono all’individuo di acquisire le informazioni circa lo
the Venice Airport Security Committee), trying to reach security experts who were able to give us information on different elements and to help us to focus on different perspectives on security. Firstly, we met personally with most of the interviewed participants, and in some cases we contacted them by email. All the participants received a formal invitation to participate by email. The invitation contained a brief description of the project and the aims and contents of the interview, information about the use of video recording tools, and assurances about the privacy of the recorded and personal data (informed consent, Italian Law 196/2003). After the data collection, we transcribed all the interviews using the qualitative analysis software TransAna, and through a transcription system developed by Gail Jefferson (1984) [27] that allows elements related to nonverbal communication (see Appendix), such as pauses, tone of the voice, slowing or acceleration in speech, whispers, overlaps etc., to be retained in the transcription. The interviews were conducted in personnel office at the Tessera air terminal (Venice, Italy). The interviews were conducted by one main interviewer and one or two secondary interviewers. Full texts of interviews were manually transcribed by the research team and the corpora were subjected to thematic content analysis using the qualitative analysis software TransAna [24]. The transcripts were coded using the extract as the unit of analysis [25], therefore the frequencies present in the tables and graphs refer to the number of extracts in which it was possible to find a particular aspect. Inductive analysis was conducted and, after reading the total corpus, the conceptual grid was constructed. Three independent research team members with a background in social psychology, actively involved in the ASARTS project, carried out the coding process. The researchers coded the texts individually. Reliability and heuristic capacity of the coding procedure was enhanced by systematic supervision of the questions raised during the coding procedure. Finally, all the disagreements among researchers were discussed until a full consensus was reached. The final consensual coding sheet was adopted for the analyses.

Ethnographic observations. The situations observed concerned the interaction between airport personnel and passengers during security checks. The areas of interaction selected for the observations correspond to the places where such interactions may occur. The final areas selected were: main security check-point, main security check-point for sensitive flights, sensitive flights check-in, sensitive flights gate, passport check-point. In both observation kinds (unstructured and structured) a no probabilistic sampling was used: sample availability, randomly-continuous. The development and use of observation grids was crucial to be able to take firsthand observations of the behavior instead of working on accounts of third parties, thus maintaining the advantage of collecting a large amount of data in a very complex context, such as airports.

Il corpus dei dati comprende 10 interviste semi-strutturate (otto individuali e due di gruppo) e audio-registrate a testimoni privilegiati (Tabella 1) ed 889 osservazioni etnonetiche condotte in area sterile ed in area non-sterile.

Per area sterile si intende la zona in cui sono presenti i gate (comuneamente chiamata “area sicura”); mentre per area non-sterile si intende l’area prima dei controlli di sicurezza. La griglia utilizzata per annotare sistematicamente le osservazioni etnoetiche è presentata nella Figura 2. Ogni riga della griglia corrisponde ad un passeggero osservato, ed ogni colonna contiene le variabili di osservazione relative al passeggero ed agli operatori aeroportuali che interagiscono con quel determinato passeggero, con i rispettivi dati demografici,
RESULTS

CONTENT AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

For a more comprehensive analysis, we adopted a mixed method multilevel analysis of the context of the research.

We therefore investigated the successes and issues encountered by security personnel during interaction with passengers at the checkpoint, and also analyzed the organizational system and conducted field observations of interactions between passengers and operators.

Airport vision. The analysis of the organizational system showed the emergence of two main categories of meaning in the internal documentation that the airport management uses to communicate with the staff: Norms and Principles. (Figure 3).

The documents in the Norms category refer to specific rules and regulations that airport operators must comply with, whereas the documents in the Principles category refer to abstract values on ethics and leadership that airport operators are urged to follow. From Figure 3 it is possible to observe how, over the years, these two categories of content assume different trends: discontinuous for the Principles, constant and continuous for the Norms.

From a second level of analysis, results showed the emergence of two additional categories of content: a category relative to Structural problems and a category relative to Ongoing problems. In the latter category were codified documents enacted in response to occasional specific events (i.e. the Pope’s visit), while within Structural problems were codified ordinances enacted to modify and improve the existing ordinances (implementation of new security regulations at national level).

In Figure 4 it is interesting to note that the structural problems are managed in 65% of cases by documents containing norms, while in 35% of cases by documents containing principles. The Ongoing problems are managed by documents containing principles in 75% of cases, while in 25% of cases by documents containing norms.

le attività che si verificano ed il contesto specifico (fasi di controllo). Per quanto riguarda le osservazioni etnografiche, le situazioni principalmente oggetto di indagine hanno riguardato le modalità di interazione legate ai controlli di sicurezza tra operatore aeroportuale e passeggero, mentre per la scelta delle zone di interazione si è fatto riferimento ai luoghi in cui avvengono tali interazioni. Le zone d’interazione finali selezionate sono state: controlli centrali, controlli centrali dei voli sensibili, check-in voli sensibili, gate dei voli sensibili, controllo passaporti.

Gli intervistati sono stati scelti in base alla loro posizione di ruolo rispetto al contesto di ricerca. Si è cercato di andare anche oltre i ruoli centrali (indagati durante la partecipazione ai Comitati di Sicurezza Aeroportuale), cercando di raggiungere quegli esperti di sicurezza che, per la loro posizione, potessero fornirci elementi diversi e ci permettessero di cogliere le diverse angolazioni della sicurezza.

Il primo contatto con i partecipanti intervistati è avvenuto faccia a faccia e/o via email. A tutti gli intervistati è stata comunque inviata formalmente via email la richiesta di partecipazione, allegando una breve illustrazione del progetto di ricerca, descrivendo lo scopo dell’intervista, fornendo informazioni sull’utilizzo dei materiali di audio-registrazione e sul perché dell’utilizzo, garantendo la privacy e il trattamento dei dati mediante consenso informato (ai sensi del Dlgs 196, del 30 giugno 2003), nonché informandoli dei contenuti generali dell’intervista.

I contenuti prevedevano una presentazione ed introduzione generale sulle motivazioni per cui la persona era stata scelta per l’intervista; veniva illustrato il consenso informato al seguito del quale veniva apposta una firma in duplice copia. Successivamente veniva approfondito il ruolo dell’intervistato all’interno del sistema security, stimolando la riflessione sulle responsabilità ed attività svolte quotidianamente. L’intervista procedeva richiedendo al rispondente resoconti personali su eventuali criticità/problematicità riscontrate nel svolgimento del loro compito quotidiano. Per proble-
A third level of analysis involved the identification of recipients of orders, namely the Social actors involved, depending on the type of content (norms vs. principles). The results show that the ordinances enacted with reference to ethical and moral principles are directed more to the airport authorities, and therefore the social actors, with management responsibilities. This emphasizes the importance of ethical and moral values at the basis of the organizational culture of the airport, which regulates and makes shared decisions in the face of contingencies or ambiguous situations (Figure 5). Documents containing norms appear to be rather more directed to the operational staff of the airport (Figure 6), which are responsible for implementing the tasks determined by the Board of Airport Security (CSA).

Sixty seven percent (67%) of documents containing principles are addressed to social actors who have a leadership role in the organization and decision-making tasks (Figure 5). These are the creators and disseminators of the values and principles of organizational culture and structures at national (ENAC) and international (TSA) level.

Critical issues. The main results were obtained from the content analysis of the interviews and showed a series of critical issues related to security personnel and passengers interaction. Several aspects concerning passengers emerged from the airport personnel perspective, these issues have several features (Figure 7). On the one hand there was a difficulty in implementing and complying with regulations on a daily basis and in all types of situation. On the other hand, it seems that passengers are still lacking in knowledge about security procedures and the underlying reasons for these. The research highlighted that passengers do not understand the role and responsibilities of airport operators.

In order to perform his/her job, the airport operator must check the contents of the baggage as well as the passenger. Despite the permission that is asked, this operational step can be regarded as an intrusion of privacy, although the performance of these checks is a necessary operation. This action, according to what emerged from this research, becomes a regulating principle, by which the operator develops substantial power in the organizational culture of the airport, which regulates and makes shared decisions in the face of contingencies or ambiguous situations (Figure 5). Documents containing norms appear to be rather more directed to the operational staff of the airport (Figure 6), which are responsible for implementing the tasks determined by the Board of Airport Security (CSA).

I risultati principali emersi dalle analisi delle interviste evidenziano come per gli operatori aeroportuali, le principali criticità che emergono durante l’interazione con il passeggero, siano ascrivibili principalmente a due distinti aspetti: da un lato vi è la difficoltà ad attuare la normativa a tutte le situazioni quotidiane; dall’altro lato sembra che nei passeggeri manchi una conoscenza delle procedure di sicurezza e delle motivazioni che vi sono alla base, nonché una assenza di riconoscimento circa il ruolo dell’operatore.

L’operatore, per poter svolgere il proprio lavoro, seppur chiedendo il permesso al passeggero, deve in un certo senso invadere la privacy, controllando il contenuto dei bagagli ed eseguendo i controlli personali. In questi casi l’agenzia, definita come la libertà di azione che l’operatore possiede all’interno del contesto normativizzato, si manifesta utilizzando forme comportamentali e comunicative adatte per spiegare la necessità del controllo e per farlo accettare di buon grado ai passeggeri, specialmente ai passeggeri maggiormente sensibili (come ad esempio le donne di origine islamica).

Da riscontri degli intervistati emerge come molte criticità siano attribuibili alla poca chiarezza di alcune regole di sicurezza, legate sia ad una assenza di informazione da parte del passeggero, sia ad un insufficiente numero di informazioni divulgate dall’aeroporto. Anche in questo caso l’agenzia degli operatori si riscontra nelle forme comunicative utilizzate dall’operatore nell’interazione con il passeggero per mediare le informazioni tra 

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Fig. 4 - Percentage of principles and norms at contingencies (1) and structural problems (2) / Percentuale di norme e principi in situazioni contingenti (1) e problemi strutturali (2)

Fig. 5 - Percentage of airport actors to intended principles ordinance / Percentuale di figure aeroportuali a cui sono destinati i principi di ordinanza

Fig. 6 - Percentage of airport actors to intended norms ordinances / Percentuale di figure aeroportuali a cui sono destinate le norme di ordinanza
vogliono togliersi: il velo, non vogliono togliersi: quello che hanno addosso insomma ecco" (original version)

["In these cases we are very tolerant, but I do not say this because I am content to be very tolerant. In fact we are too tolerant: there is a law, and in some uh cases we should be a little more strict, especially in cases like this because problems arise more often, just because they do not want to take off the veil, basically they do not want to take off what they wear"] (translate version)

The analysis of the textual data highlights several problems between airport operators and passengers. In some cases, the security regulation appears difficult to understand or unclear, and this could be for two reasons: passengers need to collect information and they do not do so, or the airport policy does not provide enough information to passengers. The operator is bound by the scope of the legislation and by what the regulations allow to do, and the passengers need assistance in dealing with anything that is unclear. These activities underline the importance of discursive interaction as a requirement of agency negotiation.

The operator must choose appropriate forms of behavior and communication to convey the concepts and practices necessary to pass through the various stages of control and to ensure airport security, and must implement behavioral choices that are appropriate so that the passengers accept and understand the reasons for the control:

"Il passeggero vorrebbe l’eccezione ma <le eccezioni:>, non ci sono<.> il controllo lo deve fare< (0.5) dopo stai facendo sicurezza >le eccezioni<, ma perché? (0.5)<le eccezioni>" (original version)

["The passenger would like an exception but there are no exceptions. The control must be done when you’re ciò che la norma gli consente di poter trasmettere ed il bisogno del passeggero di risolvere l’ambiguità.

L’operatore si trova dunque a dover scegliere tra forme comportamentali e comunicative adeguate per veicolare le nozioni e le pratiche necessarie al superamento delle varie fasi di controllo per garantire la security aeroportuale, ed attuerà le scelte comportamentali più consono per far accettare e comprendere le motivazioni del controllo al passeggero.

Allo stesso modo la comunicazione messa in atto dall’operatore farà in modo che venga compresa, accettata e superata l’ambiguità del passeggero legata alla tipologia di controllo, e ciò garantendo il rispetto delle tempistiche previste ed evitando interazioni problematiche.

La necessità di operativizzare le procedure di sicurezza al cospetto di un traffico passeggeri così elevato, multiforme ed eterogeneo, porta gli operatori a dover semplificare la realtà attraverso l’utilizzo della mera categorizzazione. Dalle narrazioni degli intervistati emerge una organizzazione della security pianificata e completa, che tiene conto anche delle possibili varianti operative con categorie di passeggeri ritenute critiche.

L’utilizzo di sistemi di categorizzazione che nascono quotidianamente ed in maniera spontanea, di categorie ed etichette se da un lato permette una maggiore fluidità delle fasi di controllo, dall’altro può essere fuorviente e dunque controproducente per la security stessa. A questa cognizione si affianca il riconoscimento dell’altrità di un passeggero, di un individuo, che porta in sé le proprie identità sociali e la possibilità di fare dello stesso passaggio il soggetto di un’analisi critica e non il rappresentante di un’identità di gruppo.

Le osservazioni etnografiche confermano solo in parte questi risultati, mettendo in luce come sia innanzitutto la mancata conoscenza delle procedure e portare i passeggeri a presentarsi impreparati ai controlli (ad
doing security. Exceptions, why? exceptions][translate version]

Through the discursive interaction, operators are able to handle passengers and ensure the airport and flight schedule to operate on time. This efficient communication ensures that passengers understand, accept or appreciate the security measures. The airport staff need to operationalize their procedures even though passenger traffic growth is high and the volume is varied. This routine condition leads the operator to simplify reality by using categorization. From the narratives, a complete and well-planned representation of security and security procedures emerged, which uses a range of variables to identify critical types of passengers:

“i migliori: sono sicuramente i britannici(.) perché hanno come dire una cultura: del vivere insieme:>cioè< sono gli unici che non hanno bisogno di serpentine ad esempio” (original version)

[“the best are the British, definitely. Because they have a culture of living together; they are the only ones who do not need serpentine”][translate version]

Categorization generated spontaneous simplifications and linguistic labels, with two consequences: although it permits some fluidity to be created in the system for processing passengers and baggage, nevertheless, it could be misleading and therefore counterproductive for security in general:

“quelli di altre razze, come: cinesi: o:: i ↓colored, quelli di colore↑giocano molto sul fatto che per noi: è difficile esempio portando con sé liquidi oltre il consentito e non estraendo il computer dal resto del bagaglio), comportando una perdita di tempo nella fase di controllo.

Molto interessante è la seconda motivazione che emerge dalle osservazioni, alla base delle problematicità di interazione passeggero-operatore. Molti passeggeri, nonostante siano a conoscenza delle procedure di controllo, non sono sufficientemente motivate a comportarsi secondo norma soprattutto perché ignorano le motivazioni che sottostanno a tali procedure di controllo. Capita di consueto, ad esempio, che il passeggero che sa di non poter portare con sé liquidi oltre un certo limite, li porta comunque ed al controllo cerca di convincere l’operatore a lasciarlo passare.

Rendere il passeggero maggiormente informato anche circa le motivazioni alla base dei controlli di sicurezza permetterebbe di evitare emozioni negative in relazione al controllo ed all’operato del personale. Se la persona non è informata, o adeguatamente motivata al rispetto delle norme vigenti, provocherà inevitabilmente delle problematicità durante le fasi di controllo. Solamente con la mediazione dell’attore sociale addetto al controllo, ed a un’adeguata informazione preventiva, sarà possibile evitare eventuali situazioni critiche.

I principali risultati emersi hanno permesso ad aspetti nodali di affiorare e rendere visibili problematicità e rilevanza alla base delle interazioni critiche tra passeggeri ed operatori aeroportuali.

La varietà e eterogeneità degli attori sociali coinvolti nel sistema sicurezza formano un contesto di sicurezza
is fundamental that passengers are made aware of the checks to passengers. According to this concept, it and to disclose in advance adequate information about staff: the staff need to manage problematic situations of passengers seems to be related to the attitude of they are aware they are breaking the law. In other words, it is a very common phenomenon to wit- tive or motivation to conform to the security procedures. Revealed an interesting phenomenon: some passengers -ing the interaction between passenger and operator ropean flights. In areas frequented by passengers for domestic or Eu- personal baggage of the passenger; 2) more frequently observed: 1) in areas where there is the first contact between the operator and the passenger and therefore greater interaction with each other and also with the personal baggage of the passenger; 2) more frequently in areas frequented by passengers for domestic or European flights. Furthermore, the ethnographic background regard- ing the interaction between passenger and operator revealed an interesting phenomenon: some passengers understand security checks but do not have an incen- tive or motivation to conform to the security procedures. In other words, it is a very common phenomenon to wit- ness scenes where passengers attempt to convince the operator to let them pass through the checks even if they are aware they are breaking the law. The only way to improve the agreement and motiva- tion of passengers seems to be related to the attitude of staff: the staff need to manage problematic situations and to disclose in advance adequate information about the checks to passengers. According to this concept, it is fundamental that passengers are made aware of the multidimensional ed instabile. Il controllo di tale contesto richiede pertanto la sinergica collaborazione tra gli operatori aeroportuali coinvolti su più livelli. In pri- mis, gli organi ai vertici hanno il dovere di coinvolgere, formare, informare, dirigere e controllare tutti gli attori operanti nell’ambito della sicurezza all’interno dell’inte- ro comparto aeroportuale. Allo stesso modo degli ope- ratori, anche i passeggeri sono attori sociali in questo contesto, pertanto allo stesso modo dovrebbero riceve- re maggiore informazione e coinvolgimento nelle prassi di controllo. La comunicazione tra il passeggero e l’operatore è un aspetto importante e la sua fluidità consente un adeguato adempimento delle procedure di controllo, offrendo un clima consono allo svolgimento delle man- sioni dell’operatore e di comprensione da parte del pas- seggero a cui è garantito un servizio efficiente e rapido. L’operatore è in grado di gestire ogni tipo di interazione in modo adeguato, e ciò è determinato dalla responsabi- lizzazione messa in atto dai vertici; inoltre, la presenza di adeguate informazioni sulle procedure di sicurezza permette ai passeggeri di essere consapevoli del comportamento più consono da attuare in ogni momento, rendendo il compito degli operatori più semplice e i controlli più efficaci. La realizzazione di un ambiente in grado di fornire una corretta comprensione dello spazio permetterebbe al passeggero di vivere l’aeroporto come un luogo facil- mente interpretabile e gestibile. La consapevolezza e la comprensione di tale esperienza è un aspetto importanti- mento per quanto riguarda la percezione delle procedure di sicurezza che un passeggero si forma nella sua mente. Come abbiamo visto, i principali risultati mostrano come le criticità di interazione operatore- passeggero siano attribuibili principalmente a due aspetti: alla man- cata conoscenza delle procedure da parte del passeg- gero e alla sua mancanza di motivazione al controllo. La comparazione dei risultati emersi delle interviste e delle osservazioni sul campo, permette di tracciare un quadro ricco di vedute, inquadrature, costruzioni te- oriche e spunti che rendono evidente l’abbondanza di materiale rilevante e d’interesse per chi si approccia ad un’aerostazione con uno sguardo interculturale. In particolare, ciò che si evince da una prima compara- zione tra l’analisi delle interviste ai testimoni privilegiati e le osservazioni sul campo, è la presenza di interazioni

Tab. 3 Critical issues observed / Punti critici osservati

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Problems #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (CC)</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>Phase 1 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 2 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (CCS)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Phase 2 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (ChS)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Phase 3 (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Phase 3 (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reasons for inspection and other operational modes, and this could reduce the levels of distress and avoid unpleasant behavior.

DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS

The principal results showed that the interaction between a passenger and an airport operator is characterized by a series of critical aspects and problems. This can be ascribed to the fact that there are different social actors who take part in the security system, and thus a multidimensional and unstable ‘contexts of action’ develop. For this reason, we need to remember that the airport context requires a synergistic and multilevel collaboration between all the subjects in the airport. Firstly, the managers have a duty to inform, train, engage and supervise all the airport staff, since it is the staff who manage the operational modes concerning security. Secondly, the passengers, as the other players in the interaction, have the right to receive more information and engagement about ordinary and daily practice.

Communication between passenger and operator is one of the most important aspects of the interaction that was evaluated in the present study; good communication allows adequate performance by the airport staff, and ensures an efficient implementation of all the operational modes. At the same time, it facilitates and improves passengers understanding. The senior management should give more responsibility to the staff in order to make them able to operate with a high level of security competence and to handle passengers in a more assertive way. This vision is coherent with an increase in the passengers’ environmental and relational awareness. An airport should also be considered a comfortable environment, so it is fundamental that passengers can orient themselves in the airport and through its operational practices, perceiving all these as easily interpretable and manageable contexts. This implication is indissolubly related to how the passengers perceive all the security procedures. The results underline that the interaction between passenger and airport operator is characterized by these two critical aspects: passengers are still lacking in security knowledge, and do not yet have the motivation to deal with the steps taken to implement security. The discursive results and the ethnographic observations about the airport contexts reported in this research refer to different modalities of interaction between the airport as institution and operators, and passengers as a group and as individuals. This framework could be seen as the ‘thick description’ for agency, experience and environmental sustainability, and could be a precious resource for research with an intercultural approach in this field.

In particular, the first comparison between the analysis of the interviews with the key actors and the field observations shows that there are problematic interactions between the airport workers and passengers with specific nationalities. However, our observations do not highlight the constant repetition of these interactions problematiche tra operatori e passeggeri appartenenti a specifiche nazionalità. Le nostre osservazioni non hanno però evidenziato la presenza ripetuta di queste interazioni nelle zone esaminate, o una sostanziale differenza di controlli tra passeggeri di etnie differenti dovute all’uso dello stereotipo. Non aver riscontrato ciò che invece sembra essere la quotidiana esperienza degli operatori aeroportuali, richiede probabilmente l’esigenza di raccogliere un numero maggiore di osservazioni al fine di individuare un fenomeno rilevante che può invece apparire minimo se non confrontato con un campione adeguato. Le informazioni teoriche che abbiamo raccolto in materia di stereotipo e pregiudizio ci ricordano però che la costruzione dello stereotipo si basa spesso non su eventi frequenti e ripetuti, dunque osservabili e replicabili, quanto su una maggiore reattività nei confronti di eventi particolari e statisticamente infrequenti che, se collegati ad un gruppo etnico, verranno ricordati con maggiore facilità. Ricordiamo inoltre che le informazioni riguardanti uno stereotipo vengono utilizzate dall’individuo in maniera asimmetrica, ovvero tendono ad essere assimilate le informazioni che rafforzano ed avalorano la costruzione dello stereotipo piuttosto che le informazioni volte a smentirlo e destrutturarlo. La sovrastima dell’associazione tra elementi, inoltre, caratterizza la costruzione dello stereotipo, e sta alla base della percezione di un outgroup come strettamente correlato ad una condotta non desiderata. Queste considerazioni ci portano a pensare che, nella necessità di operativizzare la sicurezza con traffico passeggeri così elevato, multiforme ed eterogeneo, gli operatori siano portati a dover semplificare la realtà attraverso l’utilizzo della mera categorizzazione. Questo emergerebbe anche dalle affermazioni degli attori intervistati, i quali narrano una organizzazione relativa alla sicurezza pianificata e completa, che tiene conto anche delle possibili conseguenze operative con categorie di passeggeri ritenute critiche. A partire da questi risultati squisitamente qualitativi è stato sviluppato un modello multidimensionale di ipotesi del costrutto di sicurezza percepita (Fig. 9).

Nel modello vengono identificate quattro dimensioni che definirebbero il costrutto. Ipotizziamo che la sicurezza percepita dei passeggeri possa essere influenzata dalle caratteristiche individuali del passeggero (dimensione soggettiva), dagli elementi specifici del contesto aeroportuale (dimensione ambientale) e dal livello di conoscenza delle pratiche di sicurezza (dimensione conoscitiva). Inoltre, ipotizziamo che queste tre dimensioni, interdipendenti tra loro, possano avere un effetto sulla sicurezza percepita mediato da una componente interattiva (dimensione interattiva), costituita dalle modalità di azione che l’operatore aeroportuale attua con il passeggero, e questi con gli artefatti tecnologici durante le pratiche di sicurezza. Le analisi su più livelli hanno evidenziato chiaramente come la dimensione interattiva sia fondamentale e sia centrale nel modello di ipotesi, e come questa si esplichi nelle
within the examined areas, or any relevant difference in the inspections of passengers from different ethnicities that could be due to stereotyping.

These results indicate the need to collect more observations in order to decide whether this is a relevant practice, because of this dynamic, which seems to be an everyday experience for airport workers, risks are being minimized if not compared with the results of an adequate sample size. Studies about stereotypes and prejudice remind us that the construction of a stereotype is not grounded on frequent, repeated, observable and replicable facts, but on our reactions to specific and statistically infrequent facts that are more easily remembered when they are linked to an ethnic group [28]. Moreover, we use the information about stereotypes in an asymmetrical way, because we tend to keep hold on information that validate and strengthen the construction of the stereotype in spite of the existence of information that can deconstruct and refute it. The overestimation of the links between certain elements characterizes the construction of a stereotype and it is a basic element for the perception of a link between an out-group and specific undesirable behavior of members of that group.

Considering these conclusions, we think that the airport workers are brought to a position where they simplify reality through categorization, because of their need to operationalize security within the very intense, heterogeneous and multiform passenger traffic. This is also what emerges from the interviews, in which we were told of a complete and planned security organization that considers the possible operative consequences of critical passenger categories. Starting from these qualitative results we developed a multidimensional theoretical model of a hypothesis of the construct of perceived security (Figure 9).

This model identifies four dimensions that define the construct. We hypothesize that the perceived security of the passengers may be influenced by the individual passenger characteristics (subjective dimension), by the specific elements of the airport context (environmental dimension), and by the knowledge level of the security practices (knowledge dimension). We also hypothesize that these three interdependent dimensions can influence Perceived Security through an interactive element (interactive dimension), which is built from the action modalities used by the airport worker during his/her interaction with the passenger and those used by the passengers in their interactions with the technological equipment during the security practices. The multilevel analysis clearly highlights how the interactive dimension is fundamental and central in the model and how it is developed in the different situations.

► CONCLUSIONS

In 2008, Jeffrey Goldberg criticized the international security system at airports, arguing that it was a theater situation definite as “critical”. That result confirmed what emerged from the approach cultural: centrally are the interactions of the elements that unified the diverse parts of the system aeroportuale, and conduct the research on other levels allows to explore and analyze the modi in which these levels are intertwined and are anchored in the daily life.

In un articolo del 2008 di Jeffrey Goldberg sul “teatro della sicurezza” (proposed to the public Italian thanks to the Italian “Internazionale”), the author raises a criticism to the international system of security in airports, supporting that it is “uno spettacolo organizzato per far stare tranquilli i passeggeri” (Goldberg, 2008). In the article the Director of the TSA, Kip Hawley, underlines the impossibility concrete of reaching a security assoluta in an aeroportuale and pone the focus on the social actors and the analysis comportamentals. E’ a partire da questa affermazione di Hawley that venne catturata la nostra attenzione di ricercatori sociali. Da qualche anno ci interessavamo dello studio delle interazioni sociali in diversi contesti, e ci interrogammo soprattutto su come fosse possibile vedere nello sviluppo delle reti sociali l’unica vera chance per la sicurezza aeroportuale, quando nella letteratura scientifica l’aeroporto (Augè, 1993) era da sempre considerato esempio tipico di non-luogo, e dunque contesto in cui le reti sociali non sopravvivono.

La ricerca presentata in questo articolo, da un lato, è nata dal desiderio di offrire al settore dell’aviation civile un contributo da parte delle scienze psicosociali, che possono offrire una nuova prospettiva per la comprensione del tema della sicurezza; dall’altro lato, è stata mossa dal desiderio di offrire un contributo originale alla ricerca psicosociale attraverso l’analisi e l’approfondimento di un affascinante contesto di applicazione: l’aeroporto. Il modello teorico di sicurezza percepita svoluppatosi riassume quanto emerso dalle interviste e dalle osservazioni sul campo: l’importanza della conoscenza e delle interazioni positive tra gli attori sociali. Questa dimensione è più importante degli elementi fisici e sociali di disordine nell’ambiente e delle variabili individuali: ad esempio, ci possono essere elementi di disordine nell’ambiente aeroportuale, ma se ci sono operatori che riescono a gestire al meglio l’interazione con i passeggeri, e a fornire loro le informazioni necessarie, allora la sicurezza percepita dai passeggeri è garantita.

Per il passeggero l’operatore è il punto di riferimento nell’aeroporto, più dei monitor e della segnaletica inFORMATIVA. Nelle poche criticità osservate, il problema non era tanto il livello di istruzione del passeggero o l’incapacità di muoversi autonomamente nell’aeroporto, quanto piuttosto era legato al processo di interazione con l’operatore aeroportuale.

La conduzione di interviste agli operatori e la raccolta delle osservazioni libere e strutturate condotte sul cam-
organized to keep the passengers quiet. In Goldberg’s article, the Director of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Kip Hawley, emphasized the concrete impossibility of achieving absolute security in an airport, and put the focus on social networks and behavioral analysis.

Our attention as social researchers was captured by Hawley’s statement. For some years social interaction in different contexts had been studied, and answers had been found that suggested it was possible to see the development of social networks as the only real chance for airport security. Indeed, in the literature the airport was always regarded as a typical non-place [29], and therefore a context in which social networks do not survive.

The research presented in this article was born from the desire to offer a psychosocial sciences contribution to the field of civil aviation, by providing a new perspective for understanding the issue of security. This study was motivated by the aim to offer an original contribution to psychosocial research through the analysis and study of a fascinating context, the airport. The theoretical model of Perceived Security that we have developed summarizes the findings from the main results: the importance of knowledge and of positive interactions between social actors. This dimension appears to be the most important element of physical and social disorder in the environment and of the individual variables. For example, there may be elements of disorder in the airport, but if there are workers who are able to manage the interaction with passengers, providing them with the necessary information, then the perceived security of the passengers is assured.

For the passenger, the operator is the reference point at the airport, and is responsible for most of the monitors and signage information. We observed that the main problem was not the level of education of the passenger or his inability to move independently in the airport, but rather the issue was related to the process of the passenger interaction with the airport operator.

Conducting interviews with workers and collecting free and structured observations in the field allowed us to observe, at first hand and in a real context, the social interactions that take place daily between ‘insiders’ and passengers. It was therefore possible to place the person at center stage, in the context of everyday life, and focus on what is really significant for the social actors. The interviews with key informants focused on the specificity of everyday situations, and the ethnographic observations provided a broad overview of the interactions between the social actors and between them and the environment by means of artifacts.
The results of the interviews showed how an action relationship is found in the social and discursive practices that the operator uses, in the event of problems, to handle his/her interaction with the passenger. From the interviews of the very people whose daily life is spent in the airport, the workers, it is clear that the main causes of problematic interactions with the passengers are primarily due to the passengers’ lack of understanding of the regulations governing airport security. The workers complain mostly about the use of discretion and economic strategies, as well as the passengers lack of knowledge of security procedures, which create changes in the usual security practices. From the interviews, it emerges that the main factors causing problems in the interaction with the passengers are their lack of awareness of the laws and regulations that govern security and their lack of knowledge of the reasons for the procedures. The need to manage a high volume of heterogeneous traffic means that the operators need to simplify reality through the use of categorization. This is clear from the statements of the actors interviewed, who describe the organization’s security plan, which takes into account the possible consequences of operating with categories of passengers deemed to be critical. The cognitive representations of a passenger may be conditioned by the procedural aspects that give rise to those representations. This knowledge is joined to the recognition of the otherness of the passenger, who is an individual who carries within himself his own social and cultural identity, and as such should be respected. His privacy must be protected. This result emerges clearly from the observations in the field.

Our observations did not reveal the presence of repeated interaction problems in the areas examined, nor found a substantial difference between passengers of different cultures caused by the use of stereotypes. The construction of a stereotype is often based on our higher responsiveness to special and statistically infrequent events that, when connected to an ethnic group, will be remembered more easily. However, information relating to a stereotype is used by the individual in an asymmetric way: one tends to look out for information that reinforces and corroborates the construction of the stereotype, rather than for information that destroys and debunks it.
The overestimation of the association between elements characterizes the construction of a stereotype, and is the basis for the perception of an out-group of people who display a less than desirable attribute. There is a need to operationalize security because the passenger volume is so great and varied, so airport operators have to simplify reality through the use of categorization. This project clearly shows that the psychological sciences contribute to a better understanding not only of the dynamics of the interactions between the human resources in the airport (passengers and airport operators), but also of the interactions with the environment and the technological tools that are used during security checks, allowing a greater understanding of the requirements of security.

As argued by Mead (1934) [30] and Vygotsky (1978) [31], two of the main authors in the field of cultural and interactional perspectives in social psychology, minds are to be regarded as phenomena born and developed as part of the process of communication and social experience, whose cognitive characteristics emerge through participation in the social contexts of action and communication. Therefore, the content of the mind is only a development and a product of social interaction.

This study provides an innovative overview on airports since it captures and analyzes the complexity of an airport in all its aspects through an integrated methodology. In particular, it focuses on those aspects that deserve increased attention from airport operators, such as the interaction between the airport staff and passengers, the process of communication between the social actors and the information that is provided to passengers. The results this study offers may have significant implications and applications, and can be used to define investment priorities in the design of airport personnel training.

Finally, our curiosity about this fascinating research context has stimulated us to think about the possibility that today the airport is no longer the non-place that it was ten years ago. Today, airports are places of interaction, discussion and dialogue, and are not just places of transit that are intended to reassure passengers who are feeling lost after moving from one country to another. It can be argued that airports are also places of respect, where social actors interact while preserving the privacy and the social and cultural identity of others, and they have also become places of work.

These places have a history developed by the people and the events that occur in the world, and these people and events change internal practices. Therefore, airports develop a social and cultural identity built from the people's actions in encounters and permeable exchanges. We believe that airports are not all the same, but that they reflect the different organizational culture that structures the space and defines the values, norms, managerial styles and expectations of the people who work there or are passing through, basically who are there for life or just for a day.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Jeffersonian Transcription Notation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ text ]</td>
<td>Brackets</td>
<td>Indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Equal Sign</td>
<td>Indicates the break and subsequent continuation of a single utterance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(# of seconds)</td>
<td>Timed Pause</td>
<td>A number in parentheses indicates the time, in seconds, of a pause in speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( . )</td>
<td>Micropause</td>
<td>A brief pause, usually less that 0.2 seconds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. or ↓</td>
<td>Period or Down Arrow</td>
<td>Indicates falling pitch or intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>? or ↑</td>
<td>Question Mark or Up Arrow</td>
<td>Indicates rising pitch or intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>,</td>
<td>Comma</td>
<td>Indicates a temporary rise or fall in intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Hyphen</td>
<td>Indicates an abrupt halt or interruption in utterance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;text&lt;</td>
<td>Greater than / Less than symbols</td>
<td>Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more rapidly than usual for the speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;text&gt;</td>
<td>Less than / Greater than symbols</td>
<td>Indicates that the enclosed speech was delivered more slowly than usual for the speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>°</td>
<td>Degree symbol</td>
<td>Indicates whisper, reduced volume, or quiet speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL CAPS</td>
<td>Capitalized text</td>
<td>Indicates shouted or increased volume speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>underline</td>
<td>Underlined text</td>
<td>Indicates the speaker is emphasizing or stressing the speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>::::</td>
<td>Colon(s)</td>
<td>Indicates prolongation of a sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(hhh)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Audible exhalation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* or (hhh)</td>
<td>High Dot</td>
<td>Audible inhalation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( text )</td>
<td>Parentheses</td>
<td>Speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( ( italic text ))</td>
<td>Double Parentheses</td>
<td>Annotation of non-verbal activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REFERENCES / BIBLIOGRAFIA