EXAMINER’S REPORT ON PHD DISSERTATION

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TITLE: REASSEMBLING AIRPORT SECURITY: AN ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY ACCOUNT OF SECURITY PRODUCTION

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1. Relevance of the topic, relation to existing literature; contribution of the dissertation

From an airport security expert’s point of view, the topic provides an appropriate complement to current knowledge that focuses primarily on operational issues associated with the effectiveness of airport security measures and the overall capacity of airport security system. Clear benefit of this topic is new perspective on how the current system can be further explored. The adoption of Actor-Network Theory has enabled a particular understanding of airport security as a network created of the chains of translations between secure and insecure environment with focus on components of chains of translation – airport security technologies and their interaction with humans.

2. Research design

As it is specified in Introduction to submitted dissertation thesis, author works with contemporary daily realities and practice of establishing the entities as secure or insecure. Author’s main goal is the exploration of the nature and contemporary practice of airport security through the lens of Actor-Network Theory. Consequently, the theoretical framing, methodological position and choice of the methods are adapted to this goal and of course ANT determinates the direction for whole research.

Selected theoretical framework demonstrates an understanding of theories and concepts (Actants, Mediators, Intermediaries, Action and Chain of Translation) that are relevant to the
topic of author’s dissertation thesis and relates to the broader areas of knowledge. Actor-
Network Theory, its concepts and definitions are appropriate, easy for application, and has
definition, analytic and explanatory power. Dissertation thesis is clearly inspired by work of
French philosopher, anthropologist and sociologist Bruno Latour (Actor-Network Theory
including respective clarifications). Utilization of ANT is also compared within the work of
Daniel H. Nexon and Vincent Pouliot, Michelle Acuto and Simon Curtis (International
Relations and particularly ANT in this domain), Benjamin Noys (Critique of “Anti-Critique”),
to this topic Venturini with his research team brings quantitative, qualitative methods and
IT insight. It provides also appropriate overview in aviation domain based on research of
Matthias Leese, Randy Lippert and Daniel O’Connor, Thomas Martin, Robert Mc Crie and
David Haas, Peter Adey, Claudia Aradau with her team and many others (terrorism, security
and particularly airport security). This theoretical framework is a foundation and it enables
to expand this thesis in the chosen research direction.

3. Empirics

Author of dissertation thesis undergone full security training to get the first-hand authentic
experience. This process provides valuable reflection of the in-field situation. Mix of
qualitative research and inductive analytical approach was performed to examine the
nature and production of airport security. Interviews were focused on airport security
screeners (BEK employees) including other expert employees on other positions (EI-Al,
Handling, Custom Administration, ICTS and Foreign Police), airport managerial positions
(BEK management, administration and control) and passengers (travellers) from 24 contries.
There were also participant observations done in place. Questionnaires are published in
Appendix 2 and 3. Scope of investigation is described in chapter 1.11. As the interviews were
held in native languages of interviewed persons, after translation the process was followed
by analysis. For analysis MaxQDA 11 was used. Detailed results of this part are not published
due to various reasons. The coding list is available in Appendix 5. Observations and
questionaires were described, represented and analysed in detail in chapter 3 and chapter
4. According to this analysis chains of translation were constructed.
4. **Style, language, grammar**

As there is a need to hold original language in the interviewee's statements, I would prefer to avoid some expressions which are indecent. From technical point of view, domain specific vocabulary, terms and expressions is used in accordance with real airport security environment. Some misuses of words security and safety remain in text. I appreciate smooth confluence of several different expert domain languages and vocabularies in one work. In general, I found style, language and grammar of the thesis clear for understanding and easy for reading. Even if English is not my native language and technical works and papers in my domain are much more brief and implicit, I found the magic of expressions in this domain. I am not only sure if the Czech version of the Abstract is sufficiently accurate compared to its English origin.

5. **Comments to individual issues**

It is important to emphasize that implementation of research in airport security domain in extent described and with appropriate results provided in thesis requires exceptional capability to inspire confidence (of airport representatives mentioned in part Acknowledgement). This art must be well-founded by vision, knowledge, skills, presented intention and practical benefits for industry. This is the reason why the thesis is outstanding from the aviation expert perspective.

6. **Conclusion of the evaluation, recommendation for the examination board, questions to be raised during the defence**

As a person who is deeply involved in all kinds of airport operations, efficiency problems and real demands of airport business, I can confirm the relevance of the topic is high and well selected. The topic is fresh and extraordinary. The thesis provides unique perspective on current over complicated system hit by operational blindness of aviation specialists and operation practitioners. Easy to grasp concept is used to reveal actual relationships inside complex socio-technical airport system.

The author closely follows several thought streams, which are fruitfully discussed, critically compared and interconnected in text. The thesis provides an excellent overview of
literature in all subtopics and in all procedures and approaches and methods of author's research. Not only author’s own expertise and appropriate methods are well defined and described, but also parts covering specific domain of aviation and airport security point out deep understanding to practical problems.

I recommend considering all above-mentioned comments and advise this dissertation thesis for the final defence.

Questions:

1. Could you please describe the crucial break points an milestones of your research?

2. Which benefits of research was introduced to airport representatives to convince them about the importance of research in this field?

3. How the results of research were accepted by airport representatives? Did the results of research cause any subsequent activities?

In Prague on 18th of March 2019

[Signature]

Peter Vittek