

Aviation Safety and Airline Security in the

United States: A Social Issue

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to provide researched information on a recent study based on a terrorism attack widely known as 9/11. Multiple resources are reviewed and discussed within this piece explaining how airports nationwide and worldwide were impacted by this tragedy. Since the devastating incident, aviation safety and airport security improved the technology within the airports. The resources evaluate material based on particular individuals resembling the terrorists involved in the attack. Limitations are brought to attention primarily because the new and improved airport security makes certain passengers of specific religions and backgrounds feel as though they are not welcomed within the United States' airlines. Correspondingly, innocent people are frequently limited when traveling with American Airlines based on their physical appearance, triggering sensitive occurrences which result in them not being able to travel by plane. This paper examines Kessler, Luongo, and Mujahid's (2017) research to offer an insight regarding the effects on airports in the United States after the 9/11 terrorist attack.

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After certain catastrophes or tragedies such as the September 11th terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, occurring throughout the past decade and a half. Multiple instances in which average citizens from various countries with distinct religions and backgrounds were restricted from flying in the airports of not only the United States but airports worldwide. Not only were individuals from the countries where the attacks originated banned, but there was a ban on individuals that possessed the same characteristics as well. Innocent people are frequently limited when traveling with American Airlines based on their physical appearance, triggering sensitive occurrences which result in them not being able to travel by plane. From the aftermath of the tragedies, airline security and aviation safety has progressively increased in strictness over whom is eligible to fly on certain airlines by requiring airports to control access utilizing extravagant methods such as a security personnel, keypad access codes with personal identification numbers, and vehicle gates; ultimately prolonging a targeted individuals' traveling experience. The urgency of the advanced requirements within the bounds of the airline security are to guarantee safety amongst both employees and travelers. Current policies in the United States and other countries complicating individuals' air travel by singling out individuals subjected to their religious practices and physical appearances, this great dilemma needs to be resolved immediately for the benefit of everyone.

Literature Review

Passing through an airport screening can be extremely time consuming for any business traveler, however, it is much worse for an American Muslim wearing a hijab, or a head covering. Often times individuals of this particular religion get pulled aside at security check-in for

secondary screening and pat-downs. An example is Ms. Syed; the examiner specifically felt Ms. Syed's head through the hijab. Ms. Syed, along with many of her American Muslim friends and Islamic-rights advocates all too familiar with what many refer to as stigma of traveling while Muslim (Luongo, 2016). There are many means that Muslims might draw unwanted attention from airport security officials and gate agents at airports, like when a Middle Eastern or any other foreign-sounding name comes across might result in being contrasted against no-fly lists. Still, for devotees of Islam who indicate their identity through the way they dress, their clothing occasionally may resemble a red flag (Luongo, 2016).

There are countless examples of Muslims being kicked off of flights because someone, a passenger or pilot, felt uncomfortable with their appearance, or that particular individual said something seemingly benign which identified as dangerous. It is not just the necessary security cautions which everyone must appreciate, but also a little tyranny and insanity some human beings with authority display that needs to be reviewed (Mujahid, 2017). Although Muslims certainly are watched and harassed more while traveling, there are non-Muslim, white folks who are also subjected to this tyrannical treatment if they dare to be defiant. Too often are people of particular backgrounds and religions treated as not equal in a country like United States.

It is important to consider that the officials of the TSA, which conducts airport screening, view the extra scrutiny as not a matter of criticizing religious groups but can be mandatory because scanners may have difficulty when producing clear, concise images under certain clothing. But many Muslim Americans contend that, very often for their comfort are they targeted (Chamseddine, 2016). Many groups attempt to avoid traveling with cultural or religious clothing by deliberately wearing university attire to mitigate potential discrimination. Numerous

human rights groups have flagged it as an issue of increasing concern, including the Council on American-Islamic Relations (Chamseddine, 2016). For individuals to have to modify behavior, or be concerned prior to traveling about what they may wear is a negative response to the newly enforced airline security.

Perspective of the Officials. Aviation safety and airline security are on high alert and state that they are only doing their job to insure domestic tranquility for everyone. Officials believe all the security measures being taken are in no doubt necessary for every traveler traveling by plane. In an airport in Massachusetts, "At least 1,000 new cameras are in place, including a pilot for a state-of-the-art 360-degree camera system that will improve video surveillance by leaps and bounds. (Assessing Airport Security, 2011, p. 9). TSA relies upon several layers of security to detect and disrupt individuals posing a probable risk to aviation security. The security layers in combination multiply their value, creating a stronger system (Assessing Airport Security, 2011, p. 12). The airports in the United States and globally are only concerned with an their improvement in technical security rather than the comfort levels of most of their travelers.

Discussion

Based on a prolonged set of research, there are several inharmonious issues relating to the material evaluated, discussing technological advancements and the experience travelers obtain while at an airport in the United States. For instance, according to the TSA, individuals should now be more secure when traveling at airports, yet that is not the case for many. Over the past decade, Muslims have joined African-Americans and Latinos as targets of profiling (Mujahid, 2017). There were multiple occurrences within the Muslim community in which security levels

when traveling as a passenger in the United States were questionable, setting limitations on the opinions of the individuals who are impacted by the changes in airline security.

Limitations of These Studies

Currently, giant, unfamiliar machines are scanning travelers' bodies for any objects a terrorist might use to harm others during a flight. The two main types of full-body scanners are "millimeter wave" and "backscatter" (The Associated Press, 2011, p. 2). Both machines are designed to uncover what a physical pat-down could while acquiring certain attributes that metal detectors do not comprise. Including plastic or chemical explosives and nonmetallic weapons inside a pocket or strapped to somebody's body. Impacting everyone, not just Muslims or other forms of religions groups, airfare involves everyone's safety, ranging from passengers to airport officials.

Technological Limitations. Travelers are still attempting to adapt to removing their footwear in public, pouring their hair cosmetics into miniature bottles, and unbuckling their belts in front of strangers. Additionally, individuals are now put through X-ray machines that will detect guns, knives, and other metallic objects that might set off a metal detector. However, there are flaws in the new security measures; generally, the machines cannot find items stashed in a body cavity (Kessler, 2017). Meaning the scanners would not restrain a common smuggling method used widely by terrorists. In the U.S. airports, the Transportation Security Administration began to increase the use of the full-body machines, although passengers can opt for a physical pat-down as an alternative. The technology has evolved to minimize the clarity of identifying details for the safety of the individuals. According to Gleen Kessler (2017), minimizing identifying features is a let down if the individual needs to be identified thereafter. Meaning,

airport officials are challenged or limited when distinguishing an individual's facial features if that particular individual is a potential threat to society.

Social Limitations. Muslim women, in particular are consistently facing random selections for extra screening at the airport for wearing a hijab. Passengers of this particular religion expect a full-body pat-down and it is not right; mainly because the airport officials are ill-mannered towards certain groups. It is essential for the United States security to proceed in airport screening, but amplified procedures that make our society more afraid and less secure need to come to a halt. The Transportation Security Administration needs to prevent and analyze or evaluate distinct methods that are more effective, less invasive and does not discriminate based on religion or race (Luongo, 2016). With the division between Muslims and Americans, tolerance and opened mindedness is much needed by both sides in order to repair the divide. Putting ethical and pragmatic reasons aside, it is arduous to justify not caring; even if racial profiling affects only a select group of people. It affects individual's friends, family members, co-workers, television personalities— and the list goes on. Just because it is life as usual does not mean that it must continue in the same vein.

Conclusions and Further Study

In a nutshell, improvement in the aviation safety and airport security must definitely continue to make the lives of others feel safer by amplifying the technology within the airport systems throughout the United States and globally. Not only were individuals from the countries where the attacks originated banned, but there was a ban on individuals that possessed the same characteristics as well. Moreover, airports nationwide are currently not all equipped with the recent, new-and-improved technology; unfortunately they are only seen in the more populated

airports. In order to gain a complete comprehension of what the individuals of certain religions and backgrounds endure, officials within airports need to understand that not every individual poses a threat when their appearances resemble those who were responsible for the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Improvement in the aviation safety and airport security has and will continue to make the lives of others feel safe.

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