Airport, Sub Cultures and Social Norms

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Abstract

This article explores the airport as a space of transition where social norms are reconfigured through anonymity and individualization. Based on Marc Augé's concept of the "non-place," the research investigates how airports allow for the flexibilization of interpersonal norms while reinforcing individual identity through security and individualization rituals. The methodology involved participant observation, interviews with passengers, and an analysis of airport security procedures. The findings indicate that, within the airport environment, anonymity reduces social expectations, allowing behaviors typically regulated in other social contexts—such as dress codes—to become more flexible. At the same time, individualization rituals, such as check-in, baggage screening, and boarding pass verification, emphasize personal identity within the collective flow of travelers. Although social norms do not disappear, they are reshaped to accommodate the transient and impersonal nature of the space. The study concludes that the airport operates as a non-place where social norms adapt to maintain both individual autonomy and collective order.

Keywords: Individualization, anonymity, non-place, social norms, airport.