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Guidelines in Response to Degrees of Anti-social Behaviour

Airline passengers and children as a case study

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Introduction

In an increasingly crowded world it is to be expected that stresses will be ever more frequently associated with the use of facilities. The following argument focuses on forms of behaviour on airlines -- variously labelled as unpleasant, anti-social, unacceptable, obnoxious, disruptive, unruly, air rage, etc. Examples range through crying babies, shouting, abuse, disorderly drunkenness, indecency, harassment, violence, to extreme threats framed as terrorism. For those exposed to such experiences, whilst possibly tolerable on short-haul flights, these become increasingly unacceptable on long-haul flights of 6 to 12 hours, especially when the behaviour is persistent.

The airline case is convenient because it offers a common experience, with which many are familiar. It is a closed environment in which behaviour is variously constrained by airline security regulations, commercial courtesies, and conventional sociability. However, given the experiences described below in the light of web resources, it is clear that the various participants in this environment are confronted by problematic options -- possibly of a controversial nature. Opinions are divided on the appropriate responses to different degrees of disruption.

The purpose here is to distinguish on a simple scale the degrees of "anti-social behaviour" and the possibilities of response of others in the environment. It includes options open to the "authorities" responsible for the environment. Such a scale is suggestive of ways of responding to anti-social behaviour in other contexts -- possibly of far greater relevance. Obvious concerns include anti-social behaviour in local neighbourhoods and demonstrations of various kinds.

The argument has implications for those obliged to spend time in closed environments where they are exposed to various levels of disruptive behaviour, including bullying and harassment: prisons, military, schools, work environments, etc. Especially relevant is the disempowerment experienced by those exposed to such behaviour and the rights assumed by those engaging in it -- and the complicity of those aware of such behaviour.

As a microcosm, **the cabin environment therefore constitutes a valuable model of wider social conditions in which disruption is variously experienced and only partially contained by the "authorities" in place -- the "forces of law and order"**. In the light of references made to the resource and management constraints of "[Spaceship Earth](#)", the restricted space of an airline cabin -- with passengers in a ranked and orderly array -- highlights the potential psychosocial challenges typically neglected in reflections on those constraints on an "overcrowded planet".

Existing institutional provisions

It is of course the case that the matter has been the subject of discussions and agreements within the airline industry, whether internationally (notably by ICAO and IATA) or nationally. However it is noteworthy that **existing provisions appear to focus on occasional cases of "disruptive" behaviour of a more physical nature** -- at the higher end of the scale to be discussed.

A number of such initiatives and measures are detailed [below](#). **Current initiatives do not seem to recognize the "unruly" behaviours to which passengers are much more frequently exposed and for which no provisions are made** -- deemed by the authorities to be tolerable (as is notably the case with violence in prisons). A similar focus on overt forms of violence is to be seen with respect to measures against "anti-social behaviour" and "disturbance of the peace" in countries like the UK. More extreme examples are provided in institutions like prisons or schools where subtler forms of harassment and bullying may again be deemed tolerable by authorities. Efforts over the past decade to clarify the nature of behaviour calling for anti-terrorism legislation have similarly avoided consideration of those terrorized by less blatant behaviours (*Varieties of Terrorism: extended to the experience of the terrorized*, 2004).

The more physical forms of disruption of course merge into concerns and provisions for dealing with potential terrorist threats. It is therefore probable that the details of such provisions are not now readily available -- given that they might offer guidance to those intending to perpetrate such violence.

At the other extreme, it is of course the case that airline cabin staff have a responsibility to manage incidents in as courteous and orderly manner as possible -- especially such as to enhance the reputation of the airline as "passenger-friendly", even "family-friendly". It is to be assumed that this is a feature of the training of such staff, especially to the extent that incidents may merge into those constituting a physical threat.

Again the explicit guidelines, possibly corresponding to the "safety card" which passengers are called upon to read at the beginning of each flight, are not readily available -- if they exist. It is appropriate to note that airlines do not appear to provide any form of "Airline Guidelines for Children" or "Airline Guidelines for Travelling with Children". Where these appear to exist, they focus exclusively (and often at length) on the associated logistic and security considerations, most notably with respect to unaccompanied minors, as with: [Traveling With Children And Infants](#) (American Airlines), [Flying with Children](#) (US Federal Aviation Administration), [Children Traveling Alone](#) (*Encyclopedia of Everyday Law*), [Traveling with Kids](#) (US Transportation Security Administration).

An exception, if only in the explicit nature of its title, is the [Passenger™s Behavior Policy](#) (Air Moldova). [Australian Training Packages](#) offers a unit on [Manage disruptive and/or unlawful behaviour](#) on "transport systems, including monitoring passenger behaviour, identifying and attending to disruptive/unlawful activity, taking appropriate action to control disruptive/unlawful behaviour, and reporting and documenting incident(s)". [GoSkills](#) offers a training unit on how to [Deal effectively with difficult passengers](#) on bus and coach in terms of the UK National Occupational Standards For Passenger Carrying Vehicle

Curiously, but with a similar focus, there are [Airline Guidelines for Pets](#), [Air Travel Guidelines for Pets](#), [Airline Guidelines for Pets, Rules and guidelines for your pet](#) (United Airlines).

Increasing frustration with "anti-social behaviour"

In addition to the more extreme disruptive behaviours which have preoccupied the airtravel industry, there are the low-level irritations with which passengers are most familiar. The irritation increases where the behaviour is persistent, especially on longer flights and in proximity to the source, notably when it becomes evident that cabin staff have limited options for responding to them in practice.

These behaviours, exemplified by unruly children, have given rise to a range of responses, detailed below:

- [travel media](#) representing passengers and frequent fliers offering a context for discussion of the issues
- [individual travellers](#) seeking to focus their complaints through communications on individual blogs, or through social media such as Facebook ([Airlines should have kid free flights!](#) [many comments])
- [parents](#), most notably mothers, protesting the unreasonable nature of the complaints regarding children on airlines

Proposals made and debated (noted below) include:

- allocating children (and those accompanying them) to a special section of the aircraft (as was done with the separation of smokers and non-smokers)
- providing for "adults-only" or "kids-free" flights

Complicit relationships: "exporting" the problem

It is useful to note the complex relationships by which behaviours and responses are governed in such closed contexts. These include:

- **"perpetrators"**: implying that others should "appreciate my child", or more generally "appreciate my cause". This exemplifies the attitude of those responsible for unruly children, or those celebrating noisily some event (football match, birthday, incentive travel group, etc). It is expected that other passengers should have sympathy, even welcome, the consequent disruption -- if only as a reminder of when they were in the same position as parents or celebrants. This may be experienced by others as a form of emotional blackmail. In the case of children, it is to some extent assumed that the cabin is a form of kindergarten -- with adults expected to look on fondly.

Especially relevant in this case is the questionable manner in which infants (through their parents) are "blamed" (stigmatized and potentially penalized) for a natural and understandable behaviour, namely crying -- the baby being necessarily "innocent", if not a "gift to the community". **Any framing of the disruption as "anti-social" then highlights the way in which otherwise tolerable behaviour can be rendered unacceptable in terms of the norms of the social context as preferred by others** -- especially a majority -- who did not pay to be exposed to the disruption or to be obliged to tolerate it as "normal".

A related case of interest, corresponding to a significant concern identified in surveys of passengers, is exposure to a seatmate with an obvious illness -- exemplified by coughing and sneezing. Here too the "perpetrator" may be understood as "innocent"

rather than blameworthy. However, notably in some Eastern cultures, there is a recognized responsibility to protect others out of courtesy -- namely by wearing a facemask. Again those exposed to the effects did not pay to acquire illnesses whilst travelling.

- **airline authorities:** these are faced with several conflicting pressures:
 - ensuring the competitiveness of the airline, crudely expressed in the language of the industry as ensuring "bums in seats", irrespective of their behaviour
 - cultivating the image of the airline as passenger-friendly, and possibly competitively distinguished as such
 - providing for cases of severely disruptive behaviour, likely to undermine the previous concerns, and (in the extreme case) resulting in expensive loss of equipment and business
- **cabin staff:** these are caught between conflicting demands:
 - servicing passengers as efficiently as possible under pressure (food, drinks, etc)
 - projecting an image of courteous welcome consistent with a passenger-friendly airline, notably requiring special attention to the vulnerable and those with children (often to the point of cultivating relationships such as to render them even more complicit in marginalizing the concerns of others)
 - managing problematic interactions with passengers, not necessarily to be framed as disruptive or anti-social -- but possibly including low-level harassment deployed in other contexts
 - dealing with unruly passengers, disturbing the experience of others
 - anticipating and responding to violence and threats of violence
- **passengers disturbed by behaviour they may find unpleasant:** as members of a temporary community, other passengers are expected by perpetrators to be tolerant of behaviour contrasting with their own. Three groups of passengers might be distinguished:
 - those tolerant of the behaviour: perhaps to be characterized as the "complicit beamers", remembering their own childhood or parenthood
 - those objecting to the behaviour. Their objections are then framed by the perpetrators as unreasonable, possibly inviting the response: "don't you like children" or even to be framed as "self-hating parents". However, such passengers do not believe that they paid expensive airline tickets requiring that they engage in policing inconsiderate behaviour, especially if they simply need to sleep. They may not be "conscientized" to the point of deeming it appropriate to protest, or have the character resources to do so -- as may be the case with an elderly or vulnerable person.
 - those recognizing that the behaviour is highly objectionable to some others but who have no desire to be supportive of initiatives to constrain the disturbance.

In the cabin environment it is clear that **the "perpetrators", the airline authorities, and cabin staff, all effectively "export" the problematic experience (arising from the "disruptors") onto the other passengers.** In economic terms, the latter effectively subsidize the inadequacies and inefficiencies of the former and are in no way compensated for doing so. To this extent the **airline authorities and cabin staff are complicit in the anti-social behaviour of the "perpetrators".**

As in wider society, many passengers may be complicit in the pattern of disruptive behaviours and collective inaction which are primarily disturbing only to a few. The pattern is also very familiar in restaurants and cafes where management, staff and clients all experience various forms of disempowerment.

What do you want me to do?

This question may be legitimately asked by each of the above:

- **"perpetrators":** what indeed should a parent do with an unruly child -- possibly one that suffers from hyperactive or other behavioural disorders? Who has advice to offer on the matter? How can it be made available in a timely manner -- on booking, on check-in, by cabin staff? In the case of coughing or sneezing, clearly the passenger could consider wearing a facemask.
- **airline authorities:** what indeed should an airline do in response to potential anti-social behaviour? Clearly relevant is that industry authorities have effectively avoided the complexity of the issue by focusing on its less controversial, more blatant, physical forms. Should facemasks be provided in the seatback, as with sickness bags?
- **cabin staff:** how indeed should cabin staff, under pressure, respond to the inconvenience caused by some -- possibly to others who may well be considered as overly sensitive? In the case of passengers with obvious manifestations of illness -- coughing or sneezing -- cabin staff could encourage them to wear a facemask
- **passengers:** how indeed should individual passengers respond to experience which is completely undermining any pleasure in travel for which they may have paid expensive tickets? For some, kept awake for long periods prior to an important business meeting, the matter may be far from trivial -- especially when executives are increasingly required to use economy class tickets. How are the vulnerable to be expected to respond to disruption by assertive others? In the case of a coughing or sneezing seatmate, could a facemask be requested by those concerned at their own vulnerability?

Palliative remedies: As a form of palliative, some airlines provide earplugs to mitigate noise -- and to avoid dealing with particular sources of it. This exemplifies the wider issue that it is not the process of "pollution" of the environment which is of concern to authorities but rather how individuals are enabled to protect themselves from such "pollution". This would be even more obvious if the response to unpleasant cabin smells was to issue perfume or gas masks -- rather than focus on the source of the smell. Others might see the inconvenience of disruption as a form of surreptitious encouragement to upgrade to business class -- although business travellers have proven to be a significant source of complaint themselves. One may wonder why approved "sedatives" are not recommended for

children -- "consult your paediatrician before flying with baby" -- given the alcohol that may be freely distributed by cabin staff to "sedate" other passengers.

Rights of passengers to "countermeasures": An alternative framing would suggest that every passenger has a "right" to engage in a commensurate degree of disruptive behaviour as a counteractant. Are there any formalized constraints -- with respect to volume -- on passenger use of MP3 (and other) players with loudspeakers? On long haul flights? Are there constraints on how loudly people can speak -- when others are seeking to sleep? Do passengers have the "right" to emit the same amount of noise as they receive -- even to the point of recording it and playing it back?

Options for cabin staff: The main option currently open to cabin staff is to relocate overly sensitive passengers to some quieter part of the aircraft -- even to upgrade them if space is available. However this is a response to the needs of "articulate", isolated passengers -- "activists" -- not to others in the cabin who may have chosen not to complain (as is characteristic of wider society). Less evident at present is the possibility of cabin staff engaging in some form of "stress management" in seeking to reduce the level of disruption.

Innovative options for consideration by airline authorities

Distribution of guidelines: There is a clear case for articulating and distributing one or more sets of guidelines to render the situation transparent to all concerned. Such guidelines might be made available (in a range of languages):

- to passengers (especially those accompanied by children) on check-in or on boarding -- those having "special needs" being understood to have "special responsibilities"
- in the passenger seat back, as with the plastified checklist of safety guidelines
- to disruptive passengers, or to those complaining of a disruption -- possibly with the current level of disturbance duly highlighted on the document

The purpose of the guidelines would be to:

- distinguish different degrees of anti-social behaviour (as suggested in a tentative model below)
- clarify the responses open to cabin staff at any given level of disruption
- clarify the rights of other passengers when exposed to perceived unruly behaviour

Noise-cancelling earphones: These could be made available to passengers complaining of excess noise and seen as a right of passengers located in the proximity of small children,

Proactive use of the air miles / points facility: Extensive use is currently made of "air miles" and "points" as a form of currency, whether within a single airline or with partner (code-sharing) airlines in [frequent-flyer programs](#). Passengers are repeatedly encouraged to acquire "points" by making purchases of various products and services. Possibilities therefore exist to extend this system to include:

- provision for acquisition of points by passengers exposed to undue disruption
- provision for passengers to acquire points by volunteering to be seated close to such disruption (following invitation at check-in or public announcement to that effect when in flight)
- provision for loss of points by passengers creating undue disruption -- as with driving licences and in the light of the relevance of the [polluter pays principle](#) -- possibility leading in extreme cases to transfer to a "no-fly list" (as has effectively been done with those considered a threat to national security in some countries)
- possibility of recovering lost points over time (as with driving licences in some countries)

Clearly this would be easiest to implement when those involved had "frequent flyer" membership. Where this is only the case of those disrupted, the "cost" of the disruption would then be (appropriately) borne by the airline in according extra points to those possessing such membership -- with implicit encouragement to acquire membership for those who do not have it

A related possibility is the use of a "downgrade" option to relocate the disruptive passenger to a less desirable class of seat.

Detection of disruptive noise: In the clear case of disruptive noise, as with screaming children, consideration could be given to attaching a decibel detector/recorder in the proximity of the sound source and at the location of any making a complaint (and/or making such a request). Associated options might include:

- enabling the detector at the source location to flash when the sound exceeds a certain level
- providing a signal to cabin staff in distant locations, and therefore typically unaware of the persistent nature of any disturbance
- an automatic accounting facility balancing deduction of excess decibel "points" (in air miles) against awarding such points to those affected in the vicinity -- potentially presupposing appropriate installation of detectors and recording equipment

It is curious that it has long been accepted that "smoke detectors" should be a feature of public announcements to passengers -- with respect to physical safety. However no consideration has as yet been given to "noise detectors" -- as potentially significant to the psychological stability of passengers, and therefore a potential safety hazard.

Given the sophisticated media facilities now available at each passenger seat -- with more anticipated (as noted below) -- consideration could be given to enabling decibel detection at each seat and to using software:

- to monitor disruption
- to automatically signal excesses and trigger light flashing
- to redistribute points automatically between seats (as suggested above).

Access by passengers to social media: With web access on the point of being enabled for passengers in flight, consideration could be

given to the design of suitable interfaces to enable and empower interaction between passengers -- notably in response to sources of stress. A typical facility might include polling passengers on any source of disruption, if only as a safety valve -- for example, allowing them to express an opinion that "something be done" or "it is tolerable". The dynamics reflect would use of social media in wider society.

This is consistent with a response to the tendency to "export" management of disruptive behaviours to passengers, whether individually or collectively -- as in society in general. If individuals are expected to "import" such responsibilities, then they should be given the tools to enable their collective response -- thereby empowering the community, as is suggested in other contexts. How would access to Facebook or Twitter reframe the dynamics within the constraints of an airline cabin? Would some render their profiles accessible to others -- irrespective of exposure to disruptive incidents?

Of potential interest in relation to distinguishing the "degrees" of anti-social behaviour in the "guidelines" (proposed [below](#)) is the use of interactive social media, anonymously recognizing seat location ("GPS"). This would offer the possibility of defining those degrees dynamically and with respect to areas of the cabin as experienced by the passengers there -- effectively producing a form of "stress map" for the flight. Using such facilities, a high level of unacceptability (say Level 6) might be recognized far more locally with its wider repercussions of an incident being rated otherwise (say at Level 3). Defined dynamically, the distinction between the "Levels" would then be "locally" as well as "globally". Such mapping might be indicated as an option on the seatback screens -- as is now done with flight maps.

Stress management: Some airlines make it a policy to announce the extensive range of languages spoken by cabin staff on a given flight. This approach might be extended to mention the "disruption management" skills available if necessary -- without including physical extremes (*Hong Kong Airlines Turns to Kung Fu to Deal With Disruptive Passengers*. *OneTravel.com*, 20 April 2011). **Emotional intelligence**, rather than *kung fu*? To what extent are cabin staff trained in **stress management**? On long haul flights, through connecting hubs, disruptive passengers recognized on the first leg could be "matched" by rotating into the cabin crew of the subsequent legs one or more people with such skills -- as might be done with "sky marshalls" ("air marshalls", "flight marshalls").

This approach offers the prospect that cabin staff, unusually distinguished by their capacity in managing particular disruptive instances, could be appropriately awarded "salary points".

Possible guideline scale

This approach is partially inspired by an early proposal of the [International Federation of Airline Pilots' Associations - IFALPA](#) (*Disruptive Passengers*) for an "*Airline Passenger Disturbance Report*" to be completed in the event of any disturbance. The proposal classified passenger disturbances into three levels:

- Level 1: Passenger receives a verbal warning because of disturbing behaviour. Passenger stops disturbance - no other action needed. (No report will be filed).
- Level 2: Passenger continues disturbance. The corresponding section of an Airline Passenger Disturbance Report (available in several appropriate languages) is completed and the tear-off part at the bottom of the form is handed to the passenger.
- Level 3: Passenger still continues disturbance. The Level 3 section of the Airline Passenger Disturbance Report is completed by the Captain. The authorities will be called to meet the passenger at the end of the flight for positive identification

The envisaged purpose of this system would be to provide standard categories of disruptive behaviour, to reveal underlying reasons for incidents, and to allow the exchange of information. Since that proposal was made, **it is to be assumed that reporting potential terrorist threats has overtaken any such initiative and sidelined any concern with the annoying forms of anti-social behaviour discussed here.**

What is clearly required is a simple scale as a guideline to the degrees of unacceptability of objectionable behaviour. To exaggerate, it might be compared with the simplicity of the [Richter Scale](#) for earthquakes, or the [DEFCON scale](#) for threats to national security -- and the consequent responses triggered. It might also benefit from insights in the elaboration of the [Holmes and Rahe stress scale](#) (Social Readjustment Rating Scale) or the [Life Events and Difficulties Schedule](#).

One procedure in place for the USA is the [NASA Aviation Safety Reporting System \(ASRS\)](#), which is also a focal point for the [International Confidential Aviation Safety Systems \(ICAss\) Group](#) and maintains an incident database. Although the databases focuses almost exclusively on non-behavioural issues, it does provide a facility for *Passenger Misconduct Reports*. As Linda J. Connell notes:

The leading anomaly category in cabin-crew reported incidents for 1999 was passenger misconduct. This distribution may represent the "tip of the iceberg" of a national phenomenon. Incidents of passenger misconduct toward cabin crewmembers have reached epidemic proportions in the last few years, prompting both airlines and legislators to consider more aggressive follow-up and stronger legal penalties. (*Cabin Crew Safety Information and the NASA Aviation Safety Reporting System*, presented at the 17th International Aircraft Cabin Safety Symposium, 2000, NASA pub 59; see summary for [effects on flight crews](#))

A study by K. Pierson et al. (*Airline passenger misconduct: management implications for physicians*, *Aviation Space Environment Medicine*. 2007 Apr;78(4): pp. 361-7) notes that:

Incidents of in-flight passenger misconduct represent a serious threat to passenger safety.... Awareness of the causes of passenger misconduct is required to adequately prevent, identify, and treat in-flight cases of passenger misconduct. Although most physicians will not be obligated to respond, liability issues do not appear to be a major factor preventing the offer of medical assistance.

Other points of reference include the [Ratings of Social and Anti-Social Behaviour \(Aggression\)](#) and the [Anti-Social Behaviour Order study](#). Of interest are attempts to distinguish [Handy tips for tackling low level Anti Social Behaviour](#) (Crime Concern, *Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour: a guide to recent research, policy and practice developments on effective approaches to tackling anti-social behaviour*). Relevant to the proportion of anti-social behaviour of which airline cabin staff may be aware, it is noteworthy that a recent study by the UK Inspectorate of Constabulary has found only a small proportion of anti-social behaviour is reported to the police -- only 3.5 million of the 14 million incidents of anti-social behaviour each year (Rhiannon Bury, *Police unaware of most anti-social behaviour, Inside Housing*, 27 September 2010).

The scale below has been tentatively conceived such as to include anti-social behaviour other than noise, namely harassment, indecency, insalubrity (especially smell), physical encroachment (across seat arm), and verbal abuse. It includes running up and down aisles, table-banging and seatback-kicking. With respect to noise, it implies the inclusion of the sounds of excessive card-shuffling, whistling and snoring. It takes account of the possibility of those affected by [Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder](#) (ADHD). An indication might also be offered of deprecated responses, notably on the part of those directly affected.

Guideline Scale in Response to Degrees of Anti-social Behaviour (tentative)				
Disturbance Levels	Examples (to be understood as persistent and/or repeated)	Approved Responses (tentative)		
		Affected passengers	Cabin staff	Airline authorities
1	Unsolicited verbal interaction.	Make the undesirability clear to the perpetrator. Consider informing cabin staff	Acknowledge the issue. Consider reinforcing the passenger's message to the perpetrator	Acknowledge (and clarify) in guidelines
2	Encroachment ("seatmates hogging your space"). Shoring neighbour. Unpleasant odours	Make the undesirability clear to the perpetrator. Consider informing cabin staff	Acknowledge the issue. Consider reinforcing the passenger's message to the perpetrator -- using highlighted guidelines. Consider moving the passenger	Acknowledge (and clarify) in guidelines
3	Crying (babies)	Make the undesirability clear to the perpetrator (in the case of an immediate neighbour). Consider informing cabin staff. Solicit support of other passengers	Acknowledge the issue. Consider reinforcing the passenger's message to the perpetrator -- using highlighted guidelines. Consider moving the passenger (especially if a neighbour)	Acknowledge (and clarify) in guidelines. Provide explicit guidance to parents travelling with children. Anticipate problem by offering air miles to those volunteering to sit in proximity to those with infants.
4	Shrieking (babies). Banging tables	Inform cabin staff? Make comments as deemed appropriate. Solicit support of other passengers	Dialogue with parent. Consider moving the passenger (especially if a neighbour)	Acknowledge (and clarify) in guidelines. Provide explicit guidance to parents travelling with children
5	Directed verbal abuse.	Inform cabin staff? Respond as deemed appropriate. Solicit support of other passengers	Dialogue with those responsible (stress management mode)	Acknowledge (and clarify) in guidelines.
6	Rowdy behaviour. Running in aisles. Seat-kicking	Inform cabin staff? Make comments as deemed appropriate (recognizing that these may evoke unwanted parental irritation). Solicit support of other passengers.	Dialogue with those responsible (stress management mode)	Acknowledge (and clarify) in guidelines. Provide explicit guidance to parents travelling with children
7	Verbal threats	Inform cabin staff? Make comments as deemed appropriate. Solicit support of other passengers	Dialogue with those responsible (stress management mode) -- noting that threats have to be taken seriously	Acknowledge (and clarify) in guidelines. Note that threats have to be taken seriously (as at security screening)
8	Physical violence against one or more individuals	Inform cabin staff? Act as deemed appropriate. Solicit support of other passengers	As provided by international regulations	Acknowledge (and clarify) in guidelines. Note the provisions of international (industry) regulations
9	Violent threats to life (of all)	Inform cabin staff? Act as deemed appropriate. Solicit support of other passengers	Action according to the provisions of international regulations.	Action according to the provisions of international (industry) regulations. Acknowledge (and clarify) in guidelines

Simulation and testing

With respect to the forms of anti-social behaviour and the responses, including any proactive/dissuasive use of the air miles system, the scale and the responses lend themselves to testing and revision through role playing and otherwise. This include future use of social media to empower passengers on a flight, notably enabling their communication with cabin staff -- or ground staff specializing in such matters.

This testing process could be extended across airline partnerships and code-sharing alliances -- with valuable input from cabin staff and international travel bodies. It might also include the responsibility of passengers to respond to inappropriate behaviour by cabin staff, as is occasionally reported.

The experience might also be extended to include the experience of various categories of the extremely vulnerable. For example, how is an elderly person, or one who is blind or otherwise handicapped, to be empowered to communicate their discomfort at a neighbour's behaviour -- especially when the buttons to summon cabin staff are beyond their comprehension and capacity? What other extreme forms of anti-social behaviour merit consideration in the light of the experience of passengers and flight attendants? What consideration needs to be given to cross-cultural sensitivities -- notably with respect to dress codes?

A further extension might explore the relevance of such a scale in other closed environments:

- public bars and cafes
- restaurants:
 - *Your Thoughts on Child Free Dining, Married No Kids Site*
 - *Should Some Restaurants Be Child-Free? ChowHound*
 - Charlotte Savino, *Child-Free Dining: The (Blissfully) Silent Trend*, Travel and Leisure, 03.04.10
- nursing homes and hospices
- orphanages
- schools (notably boarding schools)
- military establishments
- prisons

Institutional initiatives

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO):

-- *Report on the Implementation of Resolution A33-4 concerning Unruly/Disruptive Passengers*. C-WP/12004, 7/05/03

The Secretariat Study Group on Unruly Passengers was established in 1998 to consider "Acts or offences of concern to the international aviation community and not covered by existing air law instruments", an item in the General Work Programme of the Legal Committee. The Study Group, in the course of its work from 1999 to 2001, developed model legislation to assist States in dealing with the legal aspects of the problem of unruly/disruptive passengers. During its 33rd Session held in 2001, the Assembly adopted Resolution A33-4, urging all Contracting States to enact, so far as practical, the model legislation developed by the Study Group which is set out in the Appendix to the Resolution. At the seventh meeting of its 164th Session of the Council on 30 November 2001, the Council decided to ascertain to what extent Contracting States had taken action to incorporate the model legislation into their national laws, and the requirements of such national laws in relation to those of the said model legislation, before convening another meeting of the Secretariat Study Group.

-- *Report on the Implementation of Resolution A33-4 concerning Unruly/Disruptive Passengers*. C-WP/12081, 18/11/03

This paper reports, for consideration of the Council, on the status of implementation of Resolution A33-4 concerning unruly/disruptive passengers.

-- *Guidance Material On The Legal Aspects Of Unruly/Disruptive Passengers*. ICAO CIRCULAR 288: 1 June 2002

International Air Transport Association (IATA)

IATA Initiatives on Disruptive Passengers: A Memorandum of Understanding and a set of IATA Guidelines have been adopted (March 2000) by the major airlines and airports authorities to address the problem of disruptive passengers. An IATA Seminar in Geneva on 23 March attracted 140 delegates from 64 airlines and other industry associations. Protocols adopted by Gatwick Airport's Disruptive Passenger Action Group were put to those attending as good practice. The UK and Canada have launched public awareness campaigns to make clear what type of behaviour will not be tolerated and the legal and other consequences for those who engage in it

International Federation of Airline Pilots' Associations (IFALPA). *Disruptive Passengers*

The safety of a perfectly normal flight may suddenly be in jeopardy because of possible violence or harassment from a passenger. Few statistics are available, but it would seem that frequency and level of abusiveness are rising. The current International Legislation of the Tokyo, Hague and Montreal Conventions do not provide sufficient legal protection. Jurisdiction to prosecute rests solely with the State of registration of the aircraft. National legislation to ensure full jurisdiction over all offences committed on aircraft operating to and from a State is required, as introduced by some countries such as Canada, the United States, Australia, and most recently the United Kingdom. Airlines must be committed to a programme of zero tolerance for disruptive passengers and provide adequate training and support for their employees.

A suitable form "Airline Passenger Disturbance Report" (see above), which in the event of any disturbance should be completed. A unified system for collecting information on incidents is required. The purpose of this system should be to provide standard categories of disruptive behaviour, to reveal underlying reasons for incidents, and to allow the exchange of information.

International Airline Passengers Association (IAPA):

- *Hang up! U.S. Congress moves to silence in-flight cell phone use* IAPA, 14 August 2008
- *American survey lists the most annoying things about flying*, IAPA, 7 May 2010. Here is how the rest of the annoyances (ranked on a scale from 1, least annoying to 10, most annoying):
 1. Luggage charges (8.4)
 2. Added fees (8.1)
 3. Rude or unhelpful staff (7.7)

4. Can't reach a live service rep (7.6)
5. Poor communication about delays (7.1)
6. Seatmates who hog your space (7.0)
7. Flight delays (6.8)
8. People who hog carry-on space (6.7)
9. Long waits at baggage claim (5.9)
10. Long lines for security or check-in (5.2)
11. Puny/no snacks (5.1)
12. Crying babies, unruly kids (4.9)

Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA). *Unruly Passengers*. 21 August 2006

Extreme misbehavior by unruly passengers, often called "air rage," can lead to anxious moments in the air and puts crew members and passengers at risk. While "unruly" passengers have been a problem within the airline industry for many years, they are just now coming to the attention of the public, the press and States.

Association for Airline Passenger Rights (AAPR). Provides a [video](#) (March 2011) discussing misbehaving children aboard flights [[transcript](#)]. In the segment, "*Growing Push for Kids-Free Flights*," it is acknowledged that for many misbehaving children are the biggest travel headache on airlines. Also discussed was calls for special seating reserved for disabled passengers, tall passengers and passengers of size.

UK Civil Aviation Authority. *Additional Current Guidance on Mandatory Occurrence Reporting: Disruptive Passengers*, 3 March 2010

India Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (Jose Philip, *Directorate-General of Civil Aviation, airlines seek new rules to check increasing in-flight passenger misconduct*, 13 January 2010):

Following frequent cases of passengers getting unruly on flights, India's Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) as well as India-based airlines are seeking new legislation to check in-flight misbehaviour. As many as four cases of passenger misconduct onboard have been reported within just one week... According to Dr Nasim Zaidi, Director-General of Civil Aviation, there are existing laws in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) to deal with misbehaviour on board flights. But still, the officials of the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation are engaged in the process of forming guidelines for specific laws regarding in-flight offences.

Travel industry media and commentary

Children on Flights - What would you prefer to Happen? [TravelExpertGuide](#): Recently I have been seeing requests to airlines about have "Family Sections" or "Adult Only Sections" On Aircraft. Some even mentioned, "Adult Only Flights". So, after hearing this I wonder. What would you prefer and why?

1. Adults Only Flights - No Children Allowed
2. Family Sections - Families sit together for Cheaper Prices or no Minors beyond a Certain Point
3. Adult Only Sections - No persons over 18 admitted into that Section
4. Prefer Air Travel to stay the same - Take Business or First Class if Children Annoy you
5. Whats wrong with Children?

Carl Unger, *Should Kids Have Their Own Section of the Plane?* [Smarter Travel](#), 21 June 2010: Our sister site, *Airfarewatchdog*, just published the outcome of a survey completed by some 2,100 of its readers, and the results are pretty interesting:

- 68 percent think there should be a separate section of the plane for passengers traveling with kids.
- Only 51 percent think pets should be allowed to fly in the cabin.
- 62 percent said they wouldn't bring a bag onboard if they had to pay a fee to do so.
- When asked their biggest fear about dealing with a potential seatmate, the number one answer was "sick or coughing" followed by "overweight."
- When asked how they'd stop a child seated behind them from kicking the seat, the vast majority said they'd politely ask the offender to stop. Complaining to the flight attendant was the number two answer. (We're not so sure if speaking directly to a child is the way to go, though).

Aviation Teamwork. *Disruptive Passenger - Diffusion* (Video AV13)

When faced with a disruptive passenger, the primary objective for crew is to calm the passenger and reduce the risk of violence. It is essential that crew communicate clearly with the passenger and apply diffusion techniques to resolve the situation. This video sets out to clearly identify the early warning signs exhibited by a potentially disruptive passenger and demonstrates how these will change to danger signs as the likelihood of violence increases. Clear guidance is provided for flight attendants. Recognise the warning and danger signs. Identify and resolve the problem. Apply diffusion techniques to reduce the risk of violence. Take self-protective measures. Keep the Commander informed and to log events as they occur. This programme is essential viewing for flight attendants.

BNET. [Disruptive Passengers Top List of Cabin Safety Concerns](#). 20 March 2000

Three out of four respondents to a recent cabin safety survey listed unruly, disruptive and aggressive passengers as one of their top three concerns. The results were culled from a poll taken by Transport Canada at the Southern California Safety Institute's recent cabin safety symposium. Of 300 registered attendees, 125 participated in the survey. Respondents were asked to list their top three cabin safety issues today in the industry. As shown, the unruly passenger issue was mentioned 95 times.

Ruth Belena. [Should airline passengers with children sit in a separate section?](#) *Helium: Air Travel and Airlines*, 29 August 2010

Angiemedia. [Disruptive Airline Passengers are Terrorists?](#) 30 January 2009

The USA PATRIOT Act has yielded a new class of terrorists "" disruptive airline passengers. Since the passage of that law after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, more than 200 airline passengers have been convicted of felony terrorism by such dangerous means as yelling or swearing at airline employees and swatting disobedient children.

Michael Hanisco. [Hong Kong Airlines Turns to Kung Fu to Deal With Disruptive Passengers](#). *OneTravel.com*, 20 April 2011

Hong Kong Airlines is asking its cabin crew to learn wing chun, a form of kung fu, as a way to deal with unruly passengers. On average, the airline deals with three disruptive passengers a week, according to a spokeswoman

Douglas Quenqua. [Passengers Push for Child-Free Flights](#). *The New York Times*, 12 November 2010 [354 comments]

FOR many people, it is the second biggest fear of flying: sitting next to a screaming, kicking, uncontrollable child. Particularly if that child isn't theirs. Next to landing hastily on something other than a runway, sharing the cabin with a fussy toddler is about the worst luck many travelers can imagine. And as the economy and security regulations conspire to squeeze the comforts out of air travel... the sound of a baby's wail can be the breaking point for already frayed nerves.

[World's first child-only airline launched](#). *Travelio.net*, 4 April 2011

With flight comparison site Skyscanner recently revealing that 59 percent of travellers support the idea of a "family only" section on planes, some commercial airlines are said to be "seriously considering" offering this option "" as well as the possibility of entirely kid-free flights.

[Obnoxious kids in Business Class](#) (many comments). *Business Traveller*, 22 December 2009

I fly between Asia and Europe almost on monthly basis, I have never been on a flight that had so many kids and toddlers in business class. I can understand the uncontrollable baby cries, but the most recent experience from Amsterdam to Bangkok was excruciating painful for me and all the other passengers flying on business. It appeared that the parents planned this family vacation for quite some time and let their kids loose, treating business class cabin as the sandbox. The traumatic experience began after dinner and the cabin turned off all the lights for passengers to rest. I do not need to go into details because these are just kids doing kids stuff. e.g. Running up and down the walk way, constantly switching on-off the reading light, slamming the table trays, kicking seats, laughing and talking loudly, etc. These kids also drove the cabin attendants nuts by pushing the service button repeatedly. I asked the little boy behind me not to play with the lights because it really bothered me seeing the flickering lights in the dark. The gentleman beside me also told the kid behind him not to kick his chair. All this time, the parents did nothing. I don't know if the cabin attendants should also provide intervention because at one point, the guy that sat across from me leaped up from his chair and screamed something in Dutch at the kids because they were laughing loudly watching a comedy. They were finally silenced for about 5 minutes before resuming their kid-like behavior.

[Screaming Kids - Seating Allocations](#) (discussion with 72 comments), *Australian Frequent Flyer*

Miyuru Sandaruwan. [Ryanair to Offer 'Child-free' Flights From Winter](#), *Flightglobal*, 1 April 2011

Ryanair, the world's love and hate airline, today announced that it will be introducing 'Child Free' flights from October 30th (winter) following a lengthy passenger survey which showed that over a half of the passengers would be willing to pay higher fares to avoid other people's children on a flight. The survey showed that a third of passengers (36%) have had flights 'ruined' by other people's noisy kids with one in five passengers (18%) urging Ryanair to restrict the number of children on flights. While the survey found that passengers would prefer to avoid other people's children, it placed 'blame' firmly with parents with top gripes being:

1. 50% Parents who expect 'special treatment' because they have children.
2. 25% Parents who allow children to annoy those in seats behind.
3. 15% Parents who board late and expect others to accommodate them.
4. 10% Parents who allow children to run in the aisles or kick seats.

Ryanair's Stephen McNamara said: "When it comes to children we all love our own but would clearly prefer to avoid other people's little monsters when travelling. While half our passengers would like us to divide our cabins up into 'adult' and 'family' areas it is not operationally possible due to our free seating policy, with optional priority boarding. However, with clear demand for 'child free' flights Ryanair will introduce child free flights on high frequency routes from the start of our winter schedule in October."

NB: Although widely cited, it has been suspected that this alleged initiative is an April Fool joke (David Parker Brown, *Ryanair to Offer Child-Free Flights: Real or April Fools Marketing Genius?* Reuters, 31 March 2011)

[Airline Cabin Crew -- Learn:travel](#). Stonebridge.uk.com

Cabin crew must be observant and pre-empt any issues including nervous passengers, those with babies and small children, those with disabilities, the elderly and groups who could be disruptive or unruly such as sports teams, hen parties and other social groups.

Charisse Jones. *Should airlines create separate sections for kids, larger fliers?* USA Today, 24 March 2011

Special flights or sections could help a carrier stand out from the crowd, some marketers suggest.

Commentary by/for parents

[Family Friendly airlines and travelling by air with children](#). Skytrax

The guide is designed to help travellers with young children find out which airlines offer the most "child-friendly" service. See what special amenities and facilities are available to make your trip more enjoyable and comfortable for all the family!

[The Guidance of Air Travelling with Baby](#). Babytipz.com, 25 December 2010

[Holiday with Baby -- by plane](#). Holidaywithbaby.com

[Does it upset you that some airlines kick unruly kids off of planes?](#) TravelExpertGuide.org.

LSbeth Wells-Pratt. *Babies on a plane drive airline passengers insane*. The Online Rocket, 12 September 2008

One of the things I think about most when planning a vacation that involves flying is the location of my seat on the airplane... Apparently some seats are suited for parents with infants, and if you sit in that seat, there is a larger chance of you encountering a screaming baby in a bassinet. So I avoid those seats, but somehow, children always wind up next to me or in front of me, howling back at me for the entire flight.

Did you know that a lot of the time parents aren't even paying for a seat for these little terrors? Babies younger than two can be held in a lap and scream on the flight for free. Don't let parents who use this option tell you that they're paying customers just like you are. That is only an excuse to try to make you think they have a "right" to let their child scream because of the purchase of a ticket. They only bought one ticket that is shared by two people, and one is liable to cause an in-flight disturbance.

[Flying with Kids: An Annoyance to Others?](#) urbanMamas, July 2007 [with comments]

Sarah Pascarella. *The Best Ways to Deal With Annoying Seatmates*. Smarter Travel, 30 November 2009 [plus comments]

John Tesh. *Should Parents of Misbehaving Children Be Banned From Flights?* tesh.com

According to a new report we found on MSNBC, most passengers blame the **parents** for bringing unruly kids on board, and not being able or **willing** to control or comfort them. Now, a growing number of psychologists would actually support **banning** those parents from flying.

Anya Clowers. *Air travel stress goes beyond misbehaving children (Jet With Kids)*:

I believe the call for child-free flights is merely a reflection of the stressful environment airports and airplanes have become. I believe instead it is a call for general respect.... Air travel is stressful and passengers resent the lack of control- stemming from hidden airline fees, ever-changing airport security, flight delays, long lines, waiting, lack of customer service, and a general lack of respect and kindness from others. Included is a frustration of misbehaving children with uninvolved parents who adversely affect passengers around them. But the frustration doesn't stop there.

As the recent *Wall Street Journal* article points out, airplane etiquette issues extend to arm rests, obese, tall/lanky, chatty, smelly, etc. Observing this stressful environment of the ticket counter area, the first step of air travel, it's no wonder travelers are tense by the time they board airplanes. I am not against family sections on airplanes. But while we are at it, why not find a special place for travelers with poor manners, bad perfume, stinky breath, and arrogant attitudes?

Joe Sharkey. *Kids on the Plane? Maybe I™ll Have That Drink*. *The New York Times*, 22 July 2007

"It really isn™t the kids™ faults, though... It™s the parents from hell who don™t have control of their kids.". As regular air travelers know all too well, it doesn™t take much to upset the fragile social equilibrium of a crowded airplane, perhaps just restless children toddling down the aisle or wailing (though wailing, it could be argued, is an entirely appropriate response to the hassles of air travel).

Maritz Research recently surveyed 1,000 people online who had flown in the last six months for feedback on how airlines could improve customer service. Nearly three-quarters suggested that airlines segregate families in their own section, away from other passengers. Though... misbehaving children were only a minority, the fear that one or more of them might be on board can loom large in the minds of travelers. And when an uncontrollable child happens to be on a flight, passengers may not have much sympathy for the parents, or the kid.

Rosetta Taylor. *Ways to deal with crying children on airplanes*, *Helium.com*, 3 July 2010

No-one can deny that crying children on airplanes are a problem. How much of a problem it is, and how best to deal with it, depends on whether you are the parent of the crying infant, a fellow passenger who also happens to be a parent, a traveler not blessed with children, or a policy-maker for the airline. Each one of these viewpoints needs to be considered.

Charlene Prince Birkeland. *Should disruptive kids be removed from flights?* *Parenting*, 28 April 2011

Susan Cody. *Child Free Flights and Restaurants* *Blogher.com*, 12 April 2011

Now that I have three young kids of my own who started taking long distance flights within weeks of being born, I see both sides. Our children love to travel, they enjoy watching a movie on the plane and love the whole excitement of it--stocking their backpacks, settling into their seats and the fun of ordering their own drinks when the cart comes around. They also know to only get up to go to the bathroom and stretch their legs every couple of hours. And yelling or screaming just doesn™t cut it with us nor most of the other families we see on planes. As for not kicking the seat in front of them? I™ll admit it took about two years for it finally to sink in that the chair in front belonged to someone else. Even still, they need quick reminders on the plane not to kick seats and then they are good to go. The kids are great but they™re not perfect!

But some people are calling for child-free flights or sections on airplanes that are for adults only. For parents with well-behaved children, this may not go down well. Why should their children be assumed as disruptive and be forced to sit with actual disruptive children that may ruin their flight? The assumption that all families are nightmares-in-waiting is wrong. Many agree but other commentators on various blogs have said they™d welcome a family section where they would feel less pressure to make sure their children behave perfectly. There™s certainly merit to having adult only flights, if people truly don™t want to be around children in any capacity.

Dory Devlin, *Message to parents getting louder: No screaming babies allowed!* *CafeMom*, September 2010

Up in the skies, a recent poll by *Skyscanner*, a fare-comparison website, found that almost 60 percent of travelers would love it if airlines demarcated a families-with-children section on airplanes, meaning they would love to sit in child-free zones. And, nearly 20 percent of travelers said they would rather fly on completely child-free flights, period. All of which begs the questions: Are people becoming more intolerant of kids, noisy or not, in public places? Or are more parents who bring their kids with them everywhere tuned out to how their sometimes noisy offspring may be affecting those around them

"Madam, next time you should fly economy" *FlyerTalk Forums*

Just got off a SYD-BKK flight, flying with my wife and our 15 month old infant. We flew in C, and overall I'd say the experience was "mixed", with a particular low point. Just before takeoff, after we'd settled into our seats the male FA on the upper deck decided to come over and offer his opinion about us bringing an infant into C. Addressing my wife, he suggested that next time we should fly Y because "it'd be better for the child as you'd all be closer together". He further suggested that business class was for "business people". I was so shocked (and frankly, sometimes my hearing ain't perfect) I asked my wife to confirm what he just said. She repeated it, and I'm still shocked. We can all agree or disagree about whether airlines should allow infants in C. Fact is, though, TG took my money and made me pay 10% of a full C fare for my son to be with us. So if the FA has a problem with infants in C, he should take it up with his management not us.

Adult only flights: Children banned? *ParentDish*, 2 February 2011

Children may soon be banned from some flights, after an airline industry survey discovered noisy children were the biggest annoyance for well-off passengers. Business class travellers said nothing annoyed them more than children running through their section or hearing their noise from economy class. The survey of 1000 business travellers has led to calls for long-haul airlines to offer either completely private compartments for grown-ups or a special 'over-18 only' service. Some 74 per cent of all business

class passengers get annoyed by children on flights, the research for the Business Travel and Meetings show taking place in London next week found. Airlines may follow the example of train companies which have introduced 'quiet zones' on services to stop passengers using mobile phones.

Documented research

Paul Barron. *Air Rage: An Emerging Challenge for the Airline Industry*

Robert Bor. Passenger Behaviour. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2003

Angela Dahlberg. *Air Rage: the underestimated safety risk*. Ashgate, 2001

Roy Humphreyson and Captain Nick Kotsapas. *Disruptive Passengers: an increasing hazard*. Royal Aeronautical Society, 22 October 1999

The problem of unruly passenger behaviour or air rage, has always been with us but in recent years the number and seriousness of cases has increased to an extent where airports, airlines, authorities and governments need to take action. Instances of sports teams or pop groups have occasionally been reported in the press in the past. More recently, cases of serious injury to aircrew and aircraft diversion have again brought the problem to the forefront in the media; however, the background to legal aspects of dealing with problems is less well understood. The aim of this article is to outline the laws dealing with disruptive passengers and how airports and airlines can help themselves to prevent incidents or, if they occur, ensure that the offenders are prosecuted in the courts.

Joyce A. Hunter. Anger in the Air: combating the air rage phenomenon. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2009

Capt. R. F. Kane. *Disruptive Passengers: some legal aspects*. 12 October 1999

In researching this paper I have been struck by the number of occasions, in conference presentations, articles, guidelines and operations manuals, where errors were made in interpreting the provisions of the Tokyo Convention of 1963. This multi-lateral treaty deals with "Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft" and has been adopted by some 170 countries. Since the "Certain Other Acts" are defined as : "acts which, whether or not they are offences, may or do jeopardise the safety of the aircraft or of persons or property therein or which jeopardise good order and discipline on board", the Convention is the base on which any discussion of the law in relation to disruptive and unruly behaviour on board aircraft must be founded. Furthermore, its provisions must be accurately and clearly understood when procedures for the guidance of aircrew and others are written. Therefore, while I have dealt before with its contents, and some of its shortcomings, in a paper of mine, written in 1993 and entitled "Time to put Teeth into Tokyo ?", it is perhaps worthwhile again briefly to outline its core content.

Peter Rolfe. *"Air Rage": Disruptive Passengers. The Causes and the Cures*, 2000.

Focuses primarily on violence, reviewing much relevant legislation, but makes no reference to children

Andrew R. Thomas. *Air Rage: crisis in the skies*. Prometheus Books, 2001

Clois Williams and Steven Waltrip. *Aircrew security: a practical guide*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2004 (Ch. 2: *Disruptive passengers and sky rage*)

In memory of a crying boy in the passenger cabin of a troop ship during World War II
-- informed by the chief purser that more crying would render the ship detectable by the sonar of enemy submarines with torpedos,
thereby endangering the lives of all.



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