

Special Issue Multi-locality studies:
Recent insights and future pathways

FUORI LUOGO

Journal of Sociology of Territory,
Tourism, Technology

Guest editors

Marco Alberio
Simone Caiello
Tino Schlinzig



Editor in chief: Fabio Corbisiero
Editorial manager: Carmine Urciuoli

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Multi-local Arrangements and Impact on Work-Life Balance. An International Research on Flight Attendants²

Introduction and problematic

Multi-locality and mobility issues are a recent research subject (Larsen *et al.* 2006, Shier *et al.*, 2015, Schmidt-Kallert, 2009). Even if the notion of mobility is ambiguous and polysemic (Montulet, 2005), a broad definition is useful: "the fact of changing one's position in a real or virtual space, which may be physical, social, axiological, cultural, affective, cognitive" (Bourdin, 2005a). The definition of mobility that interests us here is spatial mobility, which underlines that it is a movement involving at least a change of place of living (or working). Mobility is "the property or character of that which can move or be moved in space" (dictionary). Mobility thus encompasses many forms of spatio-temporal movement.

For a long time, the geographical mobility of people has remained relatively neglected in sociology, except for a few authors (Simmel, 1908; Urry, 1995, 2000; Allemand *et al.*, 2004; Bourdin, 2005a,b; Montulet, 1998, 2005), and this, even though states have always wished to regulate mobility across their borders (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980). Mobility is a strong feature of our modern societies (Allemand *et al.* 2004), 'movement' being an integral part of modernity, of which it is a consequence but also a producer of social activity participating in the dynamics of modernity. According to several authors, the organization of time and space is even central to the forms and transformations of societies (Giddens, 1994). Mobility also questions the articulation of distance and proximity in relationships (Bourdin, 2005).

Mobility in the context of work, linked to multi-locality, is still insufficiently analyzed and is a highly relevant subject for understanding the functioning of our contemporary societies and the world of work, particularly in terms of working conditions and interaction with time outside of work. We thus explore the dual dimension, spatial and temporal, of mobility in the context of multi-locality.

Multilocality is a complex social phenomenon. Residential multi-locality has garnered attention in various research studies through diverse approaches, portraying it as a highly complex social phenomenon.

The experience of dwelling in multiple habitual locations (primarily exemplified by 'second homes', or specific couples - and family - behaviors) represents a contemporary reality within our technologically advanced and urbanized societies. However, this multifaceted phenomenon remains incompletely explored, owing both to epistemological and empirical challenges. Consequently, a more comprehensive and refined framework is necessary to fully grasp its nuances and implications (Hilti, 2013; Weichhart, 2009; Weiske *et al.*, 2009).

The emergence of "multilocal living" as an emerging field of investigation is evident through an array of studies focused on residential multilocality (Bonnin and Villanova, 1999; Heisse and Scheiner, 2007; Hilti, 2013; Petzold, 2013; Reuschke, 2010; Schmidt-Kallert, 2009; Sturm and Weiske, 2009), despite its association with well-established practices (Duchêne-Lacroix and Mäder, 2013). The exploration of residential multilocality requires a reevaluation of familiar concepts such as, mobility, materiality, residentiality, household, and family.

Notably, a comprehensive social theory encompassing all aspects of residential multi-locality remains conspicuously absent. Researchers are diligently working to refine macro - and mi-

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cro-level theories, drawing from a diverse array of notions within demographic studies, time geography, spatial sociology, environmental psychology, new mobilities studies, livelihood approach, actor network theory - adopting an individualistic perspective. The overarching goal of these endeavors is to comprehend the social and political repercussions of multi-local living arrangements, shedding light on their influence over settlement structures as well as their broader impact on social, economic, and political contexts (Weichhart, 2015). In several research fields (e.g., Danielzyk *et al.*, 2020; Wood *et al.*, 2015) a discourse has emerged distinguishing multi-locality from daily commuting (circulation) and permanent relocation (migration), emphasizing that multi-locality inherently encompasses a distinct set of dynamics (Weichhart, 2009, p. 6). Within a considerable number of multi-local arrangements, a central point of departure typically exists (often where the remainder of the family resides or stays) and one or more secondary or subordinate locations (e.g., workplaces, second homes, etc.) (Greinke & Lange, 2022). For the purpose of our study, we adopt Rolshoven's (2006) insightful definition of multilocality as «'vita activa' manifesting in places: everyday life is distributed across different locations, practiced over various durations and used for different functional partition». While some professions have embraced a multi-locality perspective for an extended period, this has not necessarily attracted so much attention in research. Notably, flight attendants and civil aviation personnel emerge as prominent examples of professional groups deeply entwined with this phenomenon.

Mobility in civil aviation

In our comprehensive investigation into the work of flight attendants (authors, 2019, 2020, 2021), we delve into a distinct facet of their work that requires them to travel (mobility) and to stay (for varying lengths of time) in different places of residence (or places of rest as hostels during the stopover). This distinctiveness emerges from their need to operate away from their established domicile, often devoid of family presence, and further compounded by temporal disparities due to traversing multiple time zones (jetlag).

Within this intricate framework, we analyze the repercussions of professional mobility in this context of multi-locality. Mobility (in the sense of transport/ travel/movement) is the heart of the activity of the civil aviation personnel, whose mission is to transport passengers in complete security/safety. Mobility requires a personal organization (management of its private life planning and conciliation family-personal work / life), and multi-locality makes this organization both personal and professional more complex.

Undoubtedly, the airline industry stands as a prime exemplar of multi-locality activities with the intricacies of localization and spatial considerations exerting a profound influence on the competitive dynamics in the sector. Through its evolution, the industry has navigated through several critical crises, including the aftermath of 9/11 events, the repercussions of the 2008 financial crisis and the unprecedented challenges posed by the 2020-2022 Covid-19 pandemic.

Amidst the array of challenges it faces, the airline industry has shown a continuous propensity for adaptation, particularly in the realm of flight arrangements. This includes a large spectrum of adjustments, ranging from the calibration of flights frequencies and daily workload for flight attendants, the duration of layovers and other elements which reverberate not only on company finances, but also resonate within the lives of flight attendants and civil aviation personnel.

The duties of cabin crew are governed by a multitude of regulations including instructions, standardized work practices and procedural guidelines. These protocols are established by influential institutions such as the IATA (International Air Transport Association), ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization), EASA (European Union Aviation Safety Agency), national transport ministries and individual airlines through collective agreements. These regulations are enforced by a network of codes (of civil aviation in the transport code), international conventions, European regulations in Europe and at national level: the Ministry of Ecological Transition and Solidarity in France, the Ministry of Transport in Canada. These same governing bodies are also instrumental

in regulating working hours, ensuring compliance with international standards, while nuanced variations may arise due to negotiations between airlines and employee unions³.

The work schedule is atypical, imposing a specific temporal structure. Characterized by staggered and adaptable working hours, often orchestrated through specialized software (embedded within the company's internal system), the scheduling process is executed a month in advance. However, due to the dynamic structure of the industry, adjustments can occur, even up to a week before the start of each month. As a result, personnel must continually adapt to varying flight schedules and destinations on a monthly basis, with last-minute changes sometimes taking place. Even if there have been adjustments in policies and practices, work-family balance remains a challenge in this industry working 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week. Hence, our focus gravitated towards unraveling the influence of mobility and multilocality on work-family balance and working time organization, with a particular emphasis on the dynamic context of airline personnel, especially the commercial crew.

Mobility and work-family balance

Work-family balance is an important issue addressed in research over the last four decades or so, as women entered the labour market. Much of the research has dealt with work-family conflict, that is the conflicts in working times and working roles in particular. It has also dealt with measures which can lead to a better reconciliation of these working times and roles, if not to a 'balance' per se (Poelmans, Greenhaus, & Maestro, 2013; Tremblay, 2019). While the Canadian province of Québec is recognized for its family policy and good public support to work-life balance (Tremblay, 2014, 2008), the challenges are still important at the organizational level and in professions such as these, with multilocality and mobility issues. In this type of situation, workers and women in particular hope for or expect the support of their supervisors and employers (Fiksenbaum, 2014, Goh *et al.*, 2015).

Measures aimed at improving the work-family interface have an impact on work engagement and professional stress, which can in turn have an impact on how the personnel deal with their clients (Braunstein-Bercovitz, 2013). Organizational measures and policies aimed at helping workers reconcile work and family are thus very important, but research has shown that this is particularly essential in organizations functioning 24-7, as it is not always possible to benefit from flexible schedules or telework in such sectors (Tremblay, 2019). The objective of the measures is to reduce the negative effects of work-family conflict on work attitudes and organizational performance and results (Fiksenbaum, 2014). Some authors have also observed that the application of work-family measures depends on top management (Hammer *et al.*, 2009).

Organizational culture can also have an impact on work behaviours and results, and a non-supportive organizational context can have a negative impact on the offer of measures, as well as work attitudes and results (Kossek *et al.*, 2011; Allen, 2012).

Our research on mobility of flight attendants

In this paper, we will present results from a research conducted on flight attendants, from the point of view of multi-local arrangements and impact on work-life balance. Over the years, employees, including cabin crews in many companies, have given up many advantages and have seen their working conditions reduced or become more difficult over the years, from the point of view of multi-locality and work-life (Boyd & Bain, 1998; Gil, 1990; Whitelegg, 2007; Gillet & Tremblay, 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019).

Indeed, not only have their working times been ever more flexibilized and maximized (Shalla, 2004; Gillet & Tremblay, 2021), but also the fact that these hours are done often over many cities

3 Liberal pressures and competition from low-cost airlines, whose flight conditions are worse than others, make it difficult for unions to negotiate.

and even different continents, adds to the challenges for work-life balance in this profession. These challenges in multi-locality, and multiple layovers in the specific case of cabin crews, lead to many challenges as concerns workloads, working time and work-life balance, themes that we center to our research and will be discussed in this article.

The topic of work-related mobility is highly relevant and insufficiently analyzed, in particular in the perspective of multi-locality (variation of spaces).

Our article highlights the existence of several forms of cabin crew mobility through circulation in multiple locations (multi-destination). These multi-locational mobilities are defined by the strict rules of the civil and commercial aviation providing the framework for the work activity.

These multiple mobilities determine the working conditions and describe diverse professional practices in particular relationships to space-time. They influence (and are influenced by) family situations, couple relations and personal life in many ways. We analyze space and time together, while these two elements are usually studied separately. Indeed, in the case of cabin crew - with working conditions involving shifts and multiple workplaces - the spatial and temporal dimensions of work are very strongly intertwined, and interact in various ways with several dimensions of 'non-work' (i.e. domestic or parental work, leading to work life interaction). Moreover, cabin crew have certain resources (personal, familial and professional) which influence their experiences of these particular time-spaces and the ways in which they deal with the various constraints of their work.

This issue led us to opt for a comprehensive methodology based on people's experiences and the concrete characteristics of their working conditions.

1. Methodology and Portrait of Respondents

Our research is based both on quantitative and qualitative methods. In this article, we will concentrate on the results from the online questionnaire, although the interviews also contribute to our analysis on the elements presented here, and are referred to at times.

This article is based on the responses of 1664 flight attendants from France (720), Canada (504), and Germany (440) who responded to a questionnaire distributed to members through unions' listings. Participants were also invited to mention their willingness to take part in face-to-face or phone interviews, as a second phase for this research. Consequently, we have been able to carry out 100 in-depth interviews with cabin crew members from France (41), Canada (41) and Germany (18) in the following years. This article mainly focuses on the data from the questionnaires, which contributed to our better understanding of the context, and to the selection of most pertinent data for quantitative and also qualitative analysis (Patton, 1999).

As mentioned previously we solicited unions to participate in our research. We then developed a partnership research (Gillet & Tremblay, 2017) with the unions representing the Cabin Crew Members of various airlines from several countries and the European Cabin Crew Association, representing the cabin crew in Europe.

In Canada, there are two main national companies and their two unions participated in the research; smaller low-cost companies were not solicited as they are not very present in the Canadian market. There were two low cost companies oriented mainly towards the South and winter season, and we did not solicit them as they are less important and also service a very particular market. In France, we worked with one of France's largest national union and also for Europe, with the European Cabin Crew Association - European organisation representing 70% of all cabin crew in Europe. The association includes most of Europe's unions and airlines. In our paper, we concentrate on the two countries where there was a sufficient number of answers - France and Germany - as the other countries only present a limited number of respondents. In France, the respondents are from four main companies (national and low-costs). In Germany from a national and a low cost company.

Our questionnaire is very detailed, which made it possible to collect objective and subjective data on our research questions. The questions focus in particular on working time and its effects, work constraints, teamwork during flights, or during stopovers, work relationships, work-family and personal life integration, work-life measures. There were also questions on classic sociodemographic data such as sex, age, level of education, seniority and others related to family situation and work experience. It is difficult to obtain a representative sample of all airline companies and countries. However, we obtained an important number of respondents and a diversity of profiles, diverse situations and experiences (sex, family situation, age and seniority in the job) and also people working in different contexts (short, medium and long haul; low cost and "national" companies). We selected among the people who volunteered for an interview following their completion of the online questionnaire. The ratio of women to men is the same as that found in the occupation, that is 2/3 women and 1/3 men).

Women were a majority in the three countries. The French group is comprised of 440 women and 280 men; in Canada - 401 women and 103 men; 279 in Germany 279 women and 161 men, which does not come as a surprise in a traditionally feminized workforce. Canadian participants were quite evenly distributed within four age categories (between 20 and 30 years, between 41 and 40, between 41 to 50 and over 60), participants of 41 and over being slightly overrepresented. In the other countries, the French participants were rather between 31 and 50 years, with few respondents under 30 (4.2%) or over 60 (8.6%). In Germany, each age category was represented, with 14.3% under 30, 31.4% between 30 and 41, 39.5% between 41 and 50 and 14.8 % over 60. It is thus important to keep in mind that while our Canadian group was quite evenly distributed in terms of age, it was not the case in Germany and less so in France.

In Canada, 20.4% of participants, that is 25.5% of women and 10.7% of men, had at least one child under 12. Thus, less than one quarter of Canadian participants had childcare responsibilities, in similar proportions as Germany (20%) but less than in France where 46.1% of participants had at least one child under 12, the population being slightly older than in Canada (few between 20 and 30). It is thus interesting to compare Canada to France regarding perceptions of work-family or work-life balance, keeping in mind that the French participants had more family responsibilities than Canadian participants.

Also, several positions need to be distinguished: flight attendant, service director or "purser" and chief purser (for long haul flights). While they should all attend to passenger needs and keep the cabin safe, service directors have more responsibilities as they need to ensure that the flight is run according to company standards. They are also the ones flight attendants will reach out to if they feel unable to deal with a situation onboard, such as a disruptive passenger. Chief purser is a position found on long-haul flights with two service directors onboard. This person usually works in first class with elite passengers and works on customer retention, applying methods to retain customers. However, chief pursers should also normally take part in the service.

2. Results

In this section on results, we first present the issue of flight legs, which translates into multilocality, then we highlight the characteristics of the cabin crew's work in terms of working hours (FDP, flight duty period). We then delve on the effects of these working conditions on family and personal life: interference of work with family life, changes in planning, impacts of family on work. Leisure and social life is another aspect of the lives of cabin crew that is strongly influenced by the working conditions of mobility and shifts and which we studied, as social support (from the family or the partner in a couple) and cabin crew support. Finally, we highlight the measures developed, or not, by the airlines of the different countries.

2.1 Multi-locality and Flight Legs

Geographical displacement is of course a reality with each flight. Flight attendants work shifts or pairings of varying length depending on the destination or localities where they fly. For example, flight attendants may fly short range pairings which are characterized by many short "legs", that is flights from one point to another, with the possibility to go back to home base at the end of the day. Domestic flying may also imply a short layover at destination and then coming back to home base the next day. It may also imply many very short legs, sometimes up to 4 or 7 short flights, depending on the times and distances. Usually, domestic pairings will comprise more stops because the legs are shorter and allow for more trips in one FDP (flight duty period). Long distance rotations are characterized by longer flights and longer layover. Mobility to a distant destination requires a long stopover time used for various activities in different locations (sight-seeing, rest in hotels).

Moreover, particularly in Europe, cabin crew also engage in commuting mobility, not always living close to their assignment base of (their place of departure/final arrival). Some of them travel, sometimes rather far, (inter-regionally / inter-provincially or even internationally in Europe) to get to their base of assignment. This mobility is daily for short-haul flights (returning home every day) or occurs more or less frequently depending on the length of flights planned (long and medium-haul flights).

In our research (see table 1), the maximum flight legs reported in Canada was 7; however this was only mentioned by 4 respondents. Similarly, very few Canadian participants reported flying more than 6 legs (2.8%). A minority (9.1%) did fly up to 6 legs per FDP, which is a strikingly small proportion compared to the 73.4% of German participants who reported so (and 6.5% in France). The majority of Canadian participants reported flying maximum between 3 legs (44.2%), 4 legs (21.8%) and 5 legs (17.3%) per FDP; also the majority of French flight attendants (3 legs 56.7%; 4 legs 6.3%; 5 legs 27.1%).

Thus, it seems that French and Canadian participants were better off than their German counterparts in terms of work intensity, since they tended to fly less legs per FDP, in part due to the work rules, and in Canada to the size of the country and distance between some destinations. Consequently, they did not have to go through so many stops in different localities, which imply repeating the same procedures (boarding, greeting passengers, deboarding, saying goodbye, etc.) with little time to do it. This was reported as a source of stress by our German interviewees who stressed they did not have enough time between flights on domestic pairings, barely 45 minutes, thus hardly getting a chance to sit down before the next flight. However, the situation was not necessarily less tiring for French or Canadian participants: as one service director reported, she sometimes had to wait 3 hours at the airport between two flights which put her out of the "momentum". She qualified these 3 hours as "extremely draining".

Our qualitative findings also suggest that junior flight attendants often have to fly more legs, and visit more localities, and they also do more commuting between localities abroad, which is another draining aspect of the job. For instance, a Canadian flight attendant may fly from Montreal to Nantes, in France and then have to commute to Brussels to work on the next flight leg from Brussels to another destination. Thus, because the junior flight attendants are getting the least attractive pairings, they are prone to flying more legs in one FDP and to commute between localities, not always returning home from the same place.

2.2 Hours worked

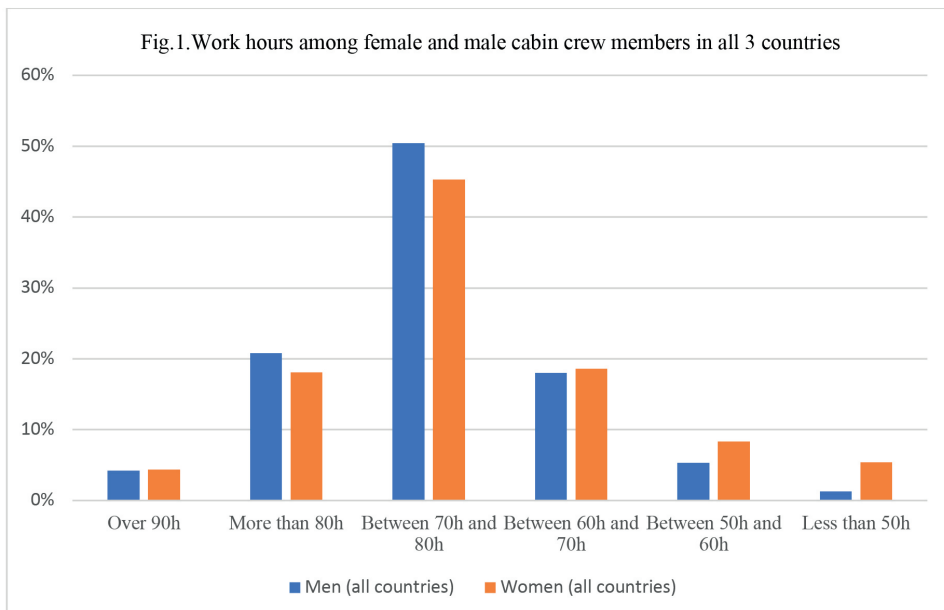
It is important to consider how the mobility and multilocality impact on flight attendants' working times and long hours, precisely because of this mobility. Indeed, the number and length of flights have an impact in terms of number of hours worked. There is a given maximum number of flight legs that cabin crews can fly in one flight duty period (FDP). A FDP is the time between

reporting for an assignment and release from that assignment. It comprises pre-flight duties such as boarding, flight time and post-flight duties such as cleaning the aircraft before the arrival of the next crew. If this occurs in many localities in one day, this of course impacts on the total working time. A "rotation" or "pairing" describes the whole pattern of flights from the moment cabin crews leave their home base until they return. Thus, a pairing usually includes several FDPs with a layover as recovery time in between. An important number of FDPs with a certain number of destinations or localities involved can impact working time and fatigue for cabin crew. We analyzed cabin crew working times, as well as the nature of their tasks onboard and the intensity of their workload.

In Canada, the greatest proportion of participants (47%) worked between 70 hours and 80 hours per month. A minority of Canadians (12%), that is 10.7 % of women and 16.5% of men, worked more than 90 hours per month. This may not appear to be such a high number of hours, but one needs to take into account the fact that flight attendants are sometimes waiting for a flight or in recovery time, but are not necessarily home to rest during those times. This is significantly more than their European counterparts, with 2.3% participants working such hours in Germany and only 0.3% in France. Few Canadian participants worked less than 70 hours (11.4%) when compared to Germany (26.4%) and France (44.6%). Our qualitative findings indicate that as much as 33 different part-time options were available in Germany, where participants found it easy to reduce their working time, which may account for a greater take-up of reduced working time in this country. Indeed, 46.6% German participants were using voluntary reduced working time, compared to 23.9% of French and only 15.7% of Canadians. Thus, Canadian flight attendants tend to work more hours than the French and German flight attendants (see table 2).

In fact, women of all countries were more likely than men to reduce their hours to the minimum, even in small proportion. Overall, there was a tendency for men to work more hours than women, without a big difference however.

It's important to note that the flight duty period (FDP) hours are more restricted compared to the actual monthly working hours, which encompass a longer duration. This includes the time from the briefing on arrival at the airport to the moment of return, to which can be added the hours during stopovers).



3. Work-life balance

In this section, we delve on how participants view their work-life balance. We analyze the way job demands in terms of working time, mobility and multi-locality, interfere with home and family, as well as how family demands can interfere with work. We also question participants' ability to engage in social and leisure activities, given the very specific characteristics of their work in terms of mobility and multi-locality.

3.1. Work-family interferences

In our research a majority of respondents indicated that their work requirements concerning mobility, working time and multilocality interfered with their home and family life. In Canada, it was the case of 63.3% of women and 54.4% of men for an Canadian average of 60.7. Similarly, participants with at least one child under 12 were 62.8% to report so. Among women, 38.4% strongly agreed with this view and 34% of men did as well. This was less in both France (89%) and Germany (76%); in these two countries almost 53% of respondents strongly agreed with this view (37.5% for Canada). Even though men were the least likely to report work-home interferences, they reported higher difficulty to fulfill family responsibilities because of work demands than women. In Canada while 23.9% of women strongly agreed with the idea, it was the case of 20.4% of men; in Germany (21.5%; 26.7%) and in France (36.4%; 36.8%). In all countries, female flight attendants perceived more interference between job demands and family life but felt somewhat more able to fulfill family responsibilities than male flight attendants in the face of time demands. In Canada, women were more likely than men to report difficulty fulfilling family responsibilities because of job-related strain (62% vs. 54.4 %). Among parents of children under 12, 42.4% reported having difficulty fulfilling family responsibilities because of their job's time requirements and an equal proportion reported that their job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties. An important group (39.8%) reported that things they want to do at home don't get done because of their job's requirements, i.e. mainly being often out of town and having long hours because of this. However, we observe that parents were not more likely than the average to report work-home related difficulties.

3.2. Work Schedule

A vast majority of flight attendants reported having to make changes to plans for family activities because of their work and its implications in terms of mobility, with no major difference between sexes. Even if there is a high percentage, in Canada (77.8%) it is less than in France (84.7%) and Germany (85.5%). These results undoubtedly reflect the fact that the schedule is usually unstable at the beginning of one's career. The work schedule also depends on the company's policies. A few respondents from a Canadian airline reported being on call (or on "stand-by" or "reserve") for many years, without the possibility to hold a "block" schedule that is a schedule, which can be determined one month in advance with some degree of choice. Being a parent while on reserve, especially as a single parent, was particularly difficult and participants had to bend over backwards to find child care solutions. While this does not imply mobility or multilocality per se, the flight attendants have to plan for a possible mobility and flight to an unknown locality, which can be quite complex. Without a partner with a compatible schedule, a lot of child care issues were reported. That being said, the more one advances in seniority, the more stable the schedule and/or the more choices one has over one's flights, mobility and schedule. However, airline operations are easily disturbed whether because of a mechanical reason or the weather. Anything can happen so that planes are often delayed and one may not be able to make it home as planned, no matter how senior they are, thus increasing the challenges related to multi-lo-

cality. Indeed, there always has to be a “plan B” in case the schedule is disrupted and one has to stay longer than planned in another locality. As opposed to the way Canadian airlines worked regarding keeping flight attendants on call to adjust to business needs, our qualitative findings showed that German and French airlines made it so that all flight attendants are assigned to one month of reserve time per year, irrespective of their seniority. This gave a chance to the most junior to have a better schedule and less challenges or surprises in multi-locality work. However, the need to make changes to family plans because of multi-locality work were still the highest in Germany and in France.

3.3. Family-work interferences

Regarding family-to-work interferences this time (impact of family issues on work), answers were more divided. Less than a quarter of Canadians mentioned that their family or partner interrupted their work one way or another, contrary to French (32%) and especially to Germans (more than 66%). Our qualitative findings reveal that spouse insecurity, jealousy or simply discomfort with the flight attendant partner’s multi-locality work and schedule made certain female participants feel like they often had to sacrifice preferred pairings and destinations so as to accommodate the partner or the family.

Our quantitative results reveal that male respondents found themselves even more disturbed by their families than women. In Canada 23.3% of male respondents strongly agreed that family interrupted work-related activities (France, 18.8%, Germany, 49.40%). It was the case of 14.4% of Canadian women, 17.6% of French women; 52.7 of German woman (possibly because they made compromises in advance, such as sacrificing some destinations).

However, it remains that a high proportion of participants disagreed that their family or partner interfered with work-related activities (in France 44 %; in Canada 42.6%; in Germany 12.9%). In comparison with France and Germany, Canadian participants were the least likely to complain about their families interfering with work. Only 10.5% suggested that their home life sometimes prevented them from getting to work on time, accomplishing certain tasks at work or working overtime or in various destinations, and even less (8.8%) that family-related strain interfered with their ability to perform job-related duties.

Our qualitative study evidences a strong tendency and ability to segment home and work frontiers among flight attendants, that is to leave family problems behind them - or rather try to deal with them beforehand as much as possible - upon transitioning toward the airport and moving to a new locality. Among Canadian parents of at least one child under 12, 30.1% reported family-to-work interferences; this is a bit more than the average. Less than a third (32.7%) reported having to put off things at work or refuse some multi-locality destinations because of home time demands. A small proportion (13.3%) reported that home life interfered with work responsibilities and mobilities. Thus, parents were not much more likely to report home to work interferences compared to the average.

4. Leisure and social life

Canadian cabin crew were more likely to find that their job allowed them enough time for leisure activities (41.6%) than the contrary (36.1%). The situation is opposite for French and German flight attendants who find that their job does not allow them enough time for leisure activities (French 63.9 %; German 52.4%), only a small percentage finding the contrary (French 14.9 %; German 23.1%).

Still, the latter represents a significant percentage. If we look at job categories in Canada, we observe that 36.4% flight attendants, 41.8% pursers and 34.2% chief pursers found they did not

have enough time for leisure activities because of the characteristics of their work, which brings them to other localities to perform their duties. The unpredictability of the distances, schedule and possibility to return home, especially during the first years of one's career and as a junior service director, may partially account for these differences. Regarding gender differences, 17.5 % of male participants strongly disagreed with the idea that they did not have enough time to do leisure activities because of their job, compared to 9.2 % of Canadian women. This suggests that men tend to find more leisure time or consider that job is not an undue hindrance to this. Compared to other countries, Canadian participants were by far the most likely to report having time for leisure activities since more than half of the respondents in France and Germany) reported that it was not the case for them. It thus seems that shorter flights and more multi-locality in Germany and France may hinder participation in leisure and social activities.

However, no matter how much time they actually had for activities outside of work, many respondents felt they did not have the energy for it due to spending so much energy at work, with mobility and travel to various destinations on top of the actual service work.

It was the case for 68.4% of German participants with 43.9% strongly agreeing; and as much as 83.2% of French participants with 45.8% strongly agreeing, possibly because many have short flights to various destinations. It was the case for 57.5% of Canadian participants, with 32.1% strongly agreeing. Compared to other countries however, Canadian participants were not the most afflicted by lack of energy to participate in leisure activities.

Indeed, our qualitative study as well as other empirical studies (Sonnetag & Natter, 2004) have revealed that after a few days' pairing, flight attendants need recovery time from all the emotional energy spent onboard with the passengers and few are directly up to socializing. Similarly, 22.14 % of Canadian participants indicated that they had never felt in a situation to participate in leisure activities because of their job characteristics (mobility and time requirements), while it was the case of 33.9% of German participants and 37.7% of French participants.

5. Social support

In Canada, 75.4% of participants had the feeling of being supported by their family in exercising their professional responsibilities and tasks, given the requirements of their jobs, mainly multi-locality and mobility, which sometimes imply not returning home. The majority of Canadians (67.9%) felt supported in accomplishing household responsibilities and tasks. Men (69.8%) were a bit more likely to think so than women (67.1%). Compared to other countries, Canadians felt a bit more supported by their families but there were no major differences with the two other countries. A minority of Canadians did indicate that their family was not so comfortable with their work situation, the mobility and hours it implied outside of the home locality (14.1%). This situation contrasts to that of France where an important group reported so (34.5%). Canadians were also the most likely to strongly agree that their family was comfortable with their work situations (18.3%) compared to France (6.1%) and Germany (8.4%). However, Canadian women (17.2%) were less inclined to strongly agreeing with this statement than men (22.3 %).

Our qualitative results as well as the literature indicate that tensions often arise with the partner, especially when child care is involved (Ballard *et al.*, 2006) and one of the parents has to work outside the home city, and even abroad. Some jealousies or insecurities can be triggered with the flight attendants' being away in various localities, especially for many days in a row, which contrasts with traditional views about marital lifestyle. Stereotypes associated to the flight attendant lifestyle, misunderstandings regarding the schedules and mobility, levels of fatigue flight attendants face because of this mobility and difficulty to engage in socializing behaviors after pairings are all challenges to flight attendants' family and marital lives.

We also asked whether the purser had a role in the issue of reconciling work and family, but it did not appear as central. Most participants neither agreed nor disagreed with this question. There is

not much service directors can actually do to support flight attendants' work-life balance since they aren't supervisors and since they too change crews all the time. They can only provide an ear in case of difficult situations, which some interviewees did according to our qualitative results. Also, German service directors were prone to referring flight attendants to various company resources depending on their problem. This leads us to examine what resources are made available by the airlines to support their employees.

6. Organizational support to work-life balance

We asked respondents whether there were measures supporting work-life balance in their workplace. In Canada, 38.5% of participants reported their existence. This percentage was higher than in France (19.5%) and Germany (22.2%). In Canada participants were more likely to report the existence of measures or not having an opinion on the question than disagreeing. This contrasts with Germany and France where there were more respondents indicating a lack of measures than the opposite. In Canada, women were a bit more inclined to report the existence of such measures than men (39.4% vs. 35%). It thus seems that airline companies do not necessarily take the work-life issue into account, especially in France and Germany, where support measures appear to be lacking for the great majority of workers. From the interviews, we can say that flight attendants themselves consider that it is usually up to them to adapt, given the fact that multi-locality and mobility are an intrinsic characteristic of the work. Within the Canadian landscape, and in Quebec in particular, the discourse surrounding work-family balance issues has gained significant prominence in recent decades. This ongoing debate is underscored by the administration of many annual surveys dedicated to this matter. As a direct consequence, businesses have increasingly recognized the paramount importance of this facet, particularly within the backdrop of a persistent labor shortage that has characterized recent years. The prevailing scenario has propelled enterprises to seek out competitive edges within the realm of working conditions, in order to attract and retain a competent workforce. (Mathieu *et al.* 2023)

Conclusion

Cabin crew live different forms of mobility, and spend various lengths of time in different localities. Their diverse professional practices thus have specific relationships to space and time. Their working conditions with these mobilities in different places influence their family, couple and personal life in many ways, depending on their situations of life and of their characteristics (sex, age, country). We studied how work and life, or time outside of work, interacted in this specific job where space and time have very particular meanings and relations. We studied how resources (personal, familial and professional) also influence their professional experiences and contribute to alleviate certain constraints.

The number of legs and localities involved in a given Flight Duty Period (FDP), can be an important challenge for cabin crews. While the majority of flight attendants agreed that layovers are opportunities to spend time with colleagues, the fatigue levels and shortness of layovers at destination combined with the number of legs can imply that respondents are often not in the mood to socialize with the crew and mainly focus on recovering for the next flight.

Regarding work-life balance, work demands were more likely to interfere with family life than the contrary. The flight attendants reported that the requirements of their work in terms of mobility and working time interfered with their home and family life, and this was also put forward by many in the interviews we conducted in the different countries. The unpredictability of the schedule in the first years of one's career brings along a lot of child care issues for parents. Even though the flight attendants' schedule is flexible *per se*, a minority of respondents reported hav-

ing a flexible schedule, indicating that the flexibility is rather employer-driven than employee-driven. With the mobility and multi-locality issue, which is characteristic of the flight attendants' work, this represents an important challenge for cabin crew.

However employees' psychological health or stress levels did not seem to be a priority for airlines in the view of our participants.

Some 60% of flight attendants felt stressed and almost 50% reported being stressed to a maximum level. An important majority reported that they did not feel respected by their employer, especially considering their efforts and achievements. The same applies to pay. As a matter of fact, almost 80% of flight attendants perceived that their working conditions had deteriorated in the recent years. Participants were almost as inclined to thinking that their employment security was poor than thinking it was good. What is more, almost 80% of participants reported suffering from physical pains.

Despite the constraints of the experience of mobility and multi-locality, schedules as well as stress, aches and several disadvantages, the majority of the flight assistants like their work. Of course they wonder about the future of their work, considering the degradation of their working conditions, sometimes the lack of consideration from some passengers, as well as the competition from other modes of transportation (train, etc.). However, their multilocal mobilities are part of their motivation at work, with the positive effects of travelling precisely to different places or countries, and discovering the world and other cultures - which their work allows them to do to some extent. This is often the reason for having chosen this job, so the mobilities and multilocalities also have a positive dimension, even if sometimes difficult.

In this context of multi-locality work, the airline industry has constantly been adapting its flight arrangements, including the modulation of flight frequencies and the daily workload assigned to flight attendants, the duration of layovers and various other elements. It is worth noting that while certain disparities exist between countries, a prevailing sense of uniformity emerges, attributable to the international standards governing the airline industry. These standards engender analogous work conditions among companies, albeit with certain nuanced variations, primarily centered around flexibility options. Evidently, the three aforementioned contexts shed light on disparities in flexibility and the provision of work-family initiatives. Notably, it becomes apparent that European airline companies (as observed in France and Germany) may not prioritize the work-life issue to the same degree as their Canadian counterparts. In contrast to Canada, a discernible dearth of supportive measure surfaces for a substantial majority of workers. Furthermore, comparative data reveals a pronounced contrast in leisure time allocation between Canadian workers and those in France and Germany, as previously discussed. This discrepancy is perhaps rooted not exclusively in established standards and regulations, but also in the specifics of negotiations undertaken within each respective nation.

In Canada, the matter of work-family balance occupies a prominent place on the agenda, particularly within the province of Québec, where unions advocate fervently on this front. This proactive stance likely exerts an influence on the gamut of measures extended to workers, a facet that warrants a more comprehensive exploration in subsequent research endeavors.

Certainly, companies meticulously evaluate the repercussions of work-family measures or flexibility initiatives, considering not only their financial implications, but also their profound impact on the lives of flight attendants and civil aviation personnel. Beyond mere financial concerns, the quality of service stands as a pivotal consideration, inherently intertwined with the working conditions of personnel. These conditions, in turn, play a pivotal role in ensuring that these dedicated professionals approach their flight duties well-rested and prepared, thus directly contributing to the delivery of good service.

Naturally, our research is not exempt from limitations, a commonality shared by all research endeavors. Foremost amongst these constraints is a reliance on voluntary responses from personnel, which, while yielding a substantial volume of data, may not encapsulate a fully representative sample. Despite this, the robustness of our responses serves to partially mitigate this

limitation, although we remain optimistic about garnering the active engagement of companies to facilitate a more comprehensively representative study. Moreover, while we have elicited responses from several other countries, such as Italy, Portugal, and the Netherlands, these responses were not numerous enough to be analyzed. To address this, our forthcoming research will try to foster collaboration with companies in these other nations, thereby broadening the scope of our study to encompass a more diverse and representative range of responses.

Moving forward, our future research endeavors aspire to secure the participation of a wider array of companies, thereby forging a more comprehensive sample. Additionally, we endeavor to amplify our data collection efforts from other countries, striving to obtain a more complete international picture. Furthermore, our research will systematically delve into the contrasting circumstances of personnel contending with substantial distances in their multi-locality roles, juxtaposed against those who can conveniently return home at the end of each flight duty day. This comparative analysis aims to unravel potential variations in work-life experiences, thereby augmenting our understanding of this intricate domain.

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Appendix - Tables

Table 1. Maximum flight legs per FDP (Flight duty period)

Gender	Country	3 legs	4 legs	5 legs	6 legs	More than 6 legs	Not applicable/ Don't know	7 legs
Female	France	58,6%	6,1%	25,7%	5,5%	1,4%	2,5%	0,2%
	Germany	4,3%	3,2%	16,1%	73,1%	3,2%	0,0%	0,0%
	Canada	45,4%	21,9%	16,0%	9,0%	2,2%	0,0%	0,0%
	Total	40,4%	11,1%	19,8%	23,6%	2,1%	2,6%	0,4%
Male	France	53,6%	6,4%	29,3%	8,2%	0,7%	1,4%	0,4%
	Germany	4,3%	2,5%	13,7%	73,9%	5,0%	0,0%	0,6%
	Canada	39,8%	21,4%	22,3%	27,9%	2,8%	1,1%	0,4%
	Total	36,4%	8,1%	23,3%	27,9%	2,8%	1,1%	0,4%
Total	France	56,7%	6,3%	27,1%	6,5%	1,1%	2,1%	0,3%
	Germany	4,3%	3,0%	15,2%	73,4%	3,9%	0,0%	0,2%
	Canada	44,2%	21,8%	17,3%	9,1%	2,8%	4,0%	0,8%
	Total	39,1%	10,1%	21,0%	25,0%	2,3%	2,1%	0,4%

Table 2. Number of hours usually worked in a month

Gender	Country	Over 90 hours	More than 80h	Between 70h and 80h	Between 60h and 70h	Between 50h and 60h	Less than 50 hours
Female	France	0,5%	6,1%	46,6%	33,6%	10,9%	2,3%
	Germany	1,4%	24,0%	37,6%	12,9%	14,3%	9,7%
	Canada	10,7%	27,2%	49,1%	6,0%	1,2%	5,7%
	Total	4,4%	18,1%	45,3%	18,6%	8,3%	5,4%
Male	France	0,0%	5,0%	53,6%	32,9%	7,1%	1,4%
	Germany	3,7%	36,0%	52,2%	3,1%	3,7%	1,2%
	Canada	16,5%	39,8%	38,8%	1,0%	2,9%	1,0%
	Total	4,2%	20,8%	50,4%	18,0%	5,3%	1,3%
Total	France	0,3%	5,7%	49,3%	33,3%	9,4%	1,9%
	Germany	2,3%	28,4%	43,0%	9,3%	10,5%	6,6%
	Canada	11,9%	29,8%	47,0%	5,0%	1,6%	4,8%
	Total	4,3%	19,0%	46,9%	18,4%	7,3%	4,0%

Table 3. The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life

Gender	Country	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Female	France	0,5%	3,4%	6,4%	36,4%	53,4%
	Germany	0,7%	5,7%	19,0%	21,5%	53,0%
	Canada	1,7%	15,5%	20,4%	23,9%	38,4%
	Total	1,0%	8,3%	14,6%	28,2%	47,9%
Male	France	1,1%	3,6%	8,2%	36,8%	50,4%
	Germany	3,1%	5,6%	13,7%	26,7%	50,9%
	Canada	4,9%	11,7%	29,1%	20,4%	34,0%
	Total	2,4%	5,7%	13,8%	30,7%	47,4%
Total	France	0,7%	3,5%	7,1%	36,5%	52,2%
	Germany	1,6%	5,7%	17,0%	23,4%	52,3%
	Canada	2,4%	14,7%	22,2%	23,2%	37,5%
	Total	1,4%	7,5%	14,3%	29,0%	47,8%

Table 4. The demands of my home and family life interfere with my work

Gender	Country	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Female	France	19.40	28.80	20.30	14.00	17.60
	Germany	2.80	10.00	21.00	13.50	52.70
	Canada	13.40	31.10	32.50	8.60	14.40
Male	France	17.10	22.60	28.60	12.90	18.80
	Germany	4.30	8.60	21.00	16.70	49.40
	Canada	18.40	22.30	29.10	6.80	23.30