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A Study of the Relation between Work and Family Life of Russian and American Flight Attendants

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Abstract. *Work and family life are a perennial dilemma facing women workers, and difficulties in reconciling family life and work remain a burning issue both in research and in life. It is particularly important for women employed in professions that can lead to chaos in family life, namely, professions implying inflexible work schedules, night shifts and frequent business trips. These aspects impose limits on the development of lives and communication with family members. The working practices of flight attendants clearly demonstrate the whole range of contradictions between family life and work. The article is based on the empirical research studies conducted in Russia (2016, according to E. Tarasova) and the USA (1979, according to Kanter R. Moss). A comparative analysis determined the degree to which the relation between work and family life remains a concern for women today compared to the situation forty years previously. The sexual revolution and changes in gender stereotypes have modified the character of women's employment and, consequently, the way in which the profession of a flight attendant is perceived today. Back in the 1970s, this profession imposed more restrictions on the flight attendants' family life than it does today. Resulting from the above-mentioned factors, changes were made in the social policies of air companies and the benefit system was introduced, which provided conditions that made it easier for workers to be involved in their family life without detriment to their career progress.*

Keywords: flight attendants, air hostess, family roles, role conflict, family, female profession, job satisfaction, satisfaction with family life.

Introduction

A modern Russian family is representative of a specific model of mutual relationships that has evolved for many decades. Unlike Western European or American family culture, the Russian family is a combination of various cultural models shaped by Christianity (mostly Orthodoxy with a dash of paganism), feudal serfdom, secular tsarism and influenced by national and territorial specificities. The Soviet period and the beginning of the postindustrial age also made adjustments to intrafamily interactions in such a way that now they have little in common with the traditional model. Most of these changes, however, have occurred in the distribution of economical and household roles among family members, both parents and children, rather than in the family value system or in the family structures and composition. At the same time, the weak point turned out to be the institution of marriage and, more specifically, its formal basis.

The number of Russian families, in which men assume the traditional female responsibilities (child rearing and the organization of family life) and women are actively involved in social and professional activities, increases every year. This is particularly pronounced in those families where women work in male professions. In this study, what is meant by 'male professions' are not the jobs traditionally associated with hard physical labor (miners, construction workers,

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movers, etc.), but rather those modern professions that are within the physical and intellectual capacity of women while imposing certain restrictions on women's fulfillment of family roles and responsibilities. Working in these professions implies overlapping between work and family life. This notion, which can also be called 'work absorption' (to be discussed later), provokes a conflict between professional and family roles.

To examine this role contradiction, we have chosen to investigate a group of professional female flight attendants. There is a gender asymmetry in the profession of a flight attendant: given that the vast majority of flight attendants are women, this occupation is commonly perceived as a female-dominated one, although all other characteristics make it possible to classify it as a male profession.

Consequently, the profession of a flight attendant has little in common with female professions despite the dominance of women. Initially, this occupation was a male one, although it has been performed predominantly by women since the 1930s.

A shift in gender priorities took place due to air companies' desire to create the home environment in airplanes. Passengers had to associate stewardesses with females at home such as mothers or wives. Female candidates for stewardess positions were expected to be attractive, young (up to 25 years old), single and childless.

In the late 1970s, the USA lifted these requirements, which resulted in the change of the job title from 'stewardess' to 'flight attendant'. In the late 1990s, international aviation decided to replace the term 'flight attendant' to 'cabin crew' with a view to enhance the role and status of these workers in terms of security on board the aircraft¹. In connection with these structural modifications made to the profession under discussion, flight attendants currently perceive their work as a career rather than a part-time job².

Historically, women were 'keepers of the household' and, as such, are an integral part of the home in which their family lives. Since ancient times, men were considered as procurers and, later, breadwinners. Consequently, this status implies leaving the threshold and searching for sources of livelihood for themselves and their families. The Industrial Age and the information era made adjustments to the division of roles along gender lines, making women equal to men in terms of subsistence activities and engagement in family work³. In the vast majority of Russian families, however, men retain their primacy in earning money⁴. Also,

¹ *Стюарды и стюардессы: история профессии и требования.* 2008. URL: <https://ria.ru/society/20081207/156681051.html> (date of access: 6.01.2018).

² D. Levy, G. Faulkner, R. Dixon, "Work and Family Interaction: The Dual Career Family of the Flight Attendant," *Humboldt Journal of social relations*, 1984, 11(2), 67-86.

³ A.-D. Manea, C. Baci, "Family interrelations caused by the technical-scientific revolution, in *Astra Salvensis*, V (2017), no. 9, p. 103-109; L. Badale, "Traditional and modern in Romanian family," in *Astra Salvensis*, V (2017), no. 9, p. 117-123.

⁴ Ж.В. Кравченко, А. Мотейонайте, Женщины и мужчины на работе и дома: гендерное разделение труда в России и Швеции. *Журнал исследований социальной политики*, VI (2008), no. 2, p. 177-200.

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'leaving the threshold' (frequent business trips, flexible work schedules, night shifts, etc.) are still more associated with men rather than women. Russian women tend to choose workplaces with standard working hours, no long business trips or unsociable hours, which is considered socially more acceptable. Of course, there are many exceptions to this rule, but we are talking about the majority of women here.

The profession of a flight attendant disregards all of the described stereotypes related to women's professional life, hence there is a shift in the distribution of gender roles within the family. In the female flight attendant's family, it is the man who becomes the 'keeper of the household', which makes the profession of a flight attendant to be of a special interest to researchers.

The second characteristic of the profession of a flight attendant (after that of gender asymmetry) has to do with irregular timetables and frequent night flights. The main responsibility of women in the family is to give birth to and bring up children. The flight attendants' work schedule prevents them from fulfilling these family responsibilities effectively. Even when the female flight attendant is around and is actively engaged in their development and education, the role of a 'good parent' is, nonetheless, affected by objective circumstances. Children's institutions, such as kindergartens, schools and hospitals, work to a fixed schedule, which prevents female flight attendants to attend major child-related events, pick up their children from school, go to parent-teacher meetings, etc.

The third characteristic of the profession discussed deals with health risks. For the purposes of this study, this issue is of interest in terms of demography, sociology and psychology rather than medicine. Health risks negatively affect the family planning and pregnancy of female flight attendants.

Although there is extensive research on flight attendants, sociological aspects of this profession remain essentially unstudied. In Russia, specialists in medicine and psychology carry out extensive research on the subject. Medical research studies mostly examine risk factors for the flight attendants' health. As an example, I. Vorotskaya and T. Filipyeva investigated the psychological issues in the professional identity of flight attendants and the psychological work content⁵. Z. Grinko's study dealt with the professional competence of flight attendants⁶.

Western and Asian scholars have conducted more in-depth research into various aspects of the profession of flight attendants. A number of scholars, including T. Haldorsen, J. Reitan and D. Gurwitz point out the risks of cancer and of miscarriages. Other profession-related problems are discussed in the studies by

⁵ И.Ю. Воротская, *Профессиональная идентичность бортпроводников: структура и особенности: дисс. канд. психологич. наук*, Москва, 2005. Т.В. Филиппева, *Психологическое содержание труда бортпроводника воздушного судна гражданской авиации: дисс. канд. психологич. наук*, Москва, 2006.

⁶ З.И. Гринько, *Формирование профессиональной компетенции бортпроводников: дисс. канд. психологич. наук*, Калининград, 2008.

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researchers such as B. Grajewski, E. Whelan, C. Lawson, M. Hein⁷, T. Ballard, P. Romito and L. Lauria⁸. As noted by N. Diaz, G. E. Horton, J. McIlveen, M. Weiner and D. Mullaney, female flight attendants are often under severe psychological stress which may result in their taking narcotic drugs⁹. Drew Whitelegg believes that the professional duties of the cabin crew have serious impact on women's health and, therefore, constant monitoring of the reproductive health of female flight attendants is highly recommended¹⁰.

K. Barry highlights the feminization of the discussed profession and related limitations and difficulties, P. Tiemeyer studies the sexual differentiation in aviation and R. Lessor stresses problems associated with career moves^{11,12,13}. At the same time, in A. Murphy's view, the feminized role of air hostesses allows them to keep calm in an emergency situation¹⁴.

J. Santino's research studies deal with job satisfaction, institutional commitment, staff turnover, cultural values in the professional sphere and job-related stereotypes¹⁵. Y.-K. Kim and K.-J. Back carried out research into the job burnout of flight attendants working for South Korean airlines and their job satisfaction¹⁶. Research conducted by S.-C. Liang and A.-T. Hsieh in Taiwan focuses on the same topic¹⁷.

⁷ B. Grajewski, E.A. Whelan, C.C. Lawson, M.J. Hein, M.A. Waters, J.L. Anderson, L.A. MacDonald, C.J. Mertens, C.-Y. Tseng, R.T. II Cassinelli and L. Luo, *Miscarriage among flight attendants*.

⁸ T.J. Ballard, P. Romito, L. Lauria, V. Vigiliano, M. Caldora, C. Mazzanti and Verdecchia, "A Self-Perceived Health and Mental Health among Women Flight Attendants," in *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 63 (2006), no. 1, p. 33-38.

⁹ N. Diaz, E. Gail, G.E. Horton, J. McIlveen, M. Michael Weiner and D. Mullaney, Comorbidity among Dysthymia, Substance Use, and Other Mental Health Disorders: Characteristics of Flight Attendants in Residential Substance Abuse Treatment in the United States. *Mental Health and Substance Use*, 2 (2009), no. 3, p. 212-225. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17523280903155281>, accessed 12. 05. 2018.

¹⁰ D. Whitelegg, "Places and Spaces I've Been: Geographies of Female Flight Attendants in the United States," in *Gender, Place & Culture*, 2005, 12(2), 251-266. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09663690500094955>, accessed 12. 07. 2018.

¹¹ K. Barry, *Femininity in Flight: A History of Flight Attendants*, Durham, N.C. Duke University Press, 2007.

¹² P. Tiemeyer, *Plane Queer: Labor, Sexuality, and AIDS in the History of Male Flight Attendants*, University of California Press, 2013.

¹³ R. Lessor, "Social Movements, the Occupational Arena and Changes in Career Consciousness: The Case of Women Flight Attendants," in *Journal of Occupational Behaviour*, V (1984), no. 1, p. 37-51.

¹⁴ A. Murphy, "The Flight Attendant Dilemma: An Analysis of Communication and Sense-making during In-flight Emergencies," in *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 29 (2001), no. 1, p. 30-53. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00909880128100>, accessed 12. 05. 2018.

¹⁵ J. A. Santino, "Servant and a Man, a Hostess or a Woman: A Study of Expressive Culture in Two Transportation Occupations," in *The Journal of American Folklore*, 99 (1986), no. 393, p. 304-319.

¹⁶ Y.-K. Kim and K.-J. Back, "Antecedents and Consequences of Flight Attendants' Job Satisfaction," in *The Service Industries Journal*, 32 (2012), no. 16, p. 2565-2584. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2011.593169>, accessed 11. 04. 2018.

¹⁷ S.-C. Liang and A.-T. Hsieh, "Individual's Perception of Career Development and Job Burnout Among Flight Attendants in Taiwan," in *The International Journal of Aviation Psychology*, 15 (2009), no. 2, p. 119-134. URL: https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327108ijap1502_1, accessed 11. 03. 2018.

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Methods

In 1979, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington undertook a sociological study on the flight attendants of one of the (then) largest American air companies, Skyway Airlines. The study examined the work-family relations in two career-oriented families, in which one of the spouses was a flight attendant. For many analyzed aspects, the results of this study are similar to those of a Russian research study carried out among the flight attendants of Russian air companies in 2016.

What has changed in the professional and family lives of flight attendants in 37 years? Despite the fact that the above-mentioned research studies were conducted in different countries, let us dare to compare the professional and family lives of American air hostesses some 40 years ago and those of present-day Russian female flight attendants. Such a comparison can be considered in terms of the theory of sexual revolution. W. Reich and A. Giddens believe that the active stage of the sexual revolution in Europe and the USA occurred in the 1960s and 1970s^{18,19}. In Russia, according to I. Kon, the sexual revolution took place in the 1980s and 1990s²⁰. Therefore, the space-time spread of the sexual revolution, which shares the same sexual and cultural origins, can provide identical models of sexual behavior. This is why this study will give the space-time analysis of the social and professional group of female flight attendants, taking into consideration both the consequences of the sexual revolution and the specific aspects of modern information space. The latter implies the shaping of similar patterns of family and marriage relationships and, consequently, of role contradictions in the work-family system. National, political and ethnic features, however, are not to be overlooked either.

In their research, American scholars identified four aspects of this traditionally female profession:

1. No vertical career paths.
2. Low requirements for education.
3. Employment structure allowing interruptions related to changes in personal life (for instance, childbirth).
4. Low expectancies related to the fact that professional duties left women little time to take care of their families.

This study was based on R. Kanter's methodology, exposed in his *Work and Family in the United States: A Critical Review and Agenda for Research and Policy* (1977)²¹. Kanter identified five aspects of the structure of professional life that influenced

¹⁸ В. Рейх, *Сексуальная революция* (перевод с немец.), Санкт-Петербург, Университетская книга, 1997.

¹⁹ А. Гидденс, *Трансформация интимности. Сексуальность, любовь и эротизм в современных обществах*, Санкт-Петербург, Питер, 2004.

²⁰ И.С. Кон, *Клубничка на берёзке. Сексуальная культура в России*, Москва, 2010.

²¹ R. Kanter, *Work and Family in the United States: A Critical Review and Agenda for Research and Policy*. New York, D. Van Nostrand, 1977.

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behaviors and attitudes in the family. The Russian researcher E. Tarasova reflected these aspects in a questionnaire to be filled out by Russian female flight attendants. Table 1 presents a comparative analysis of these methodologies.

Table 1. Comparison of the research methodologies proposed by R. Kanter and E. Tarasova

R. Kanter's methodology	E. Tarasova's methodology
<i>Work absorption</i>	
- Work constitutes a 'central life interest' for workers leading to changes in behavior of all family members, expressed as formal commitments or informal socio-emotional and practical support.	How does your spouse feel about your job? He is proud of me. He criticizes me. He takes my job for granted and leaves his thoughts for himself Other (please specify).
<i>Time and timing</i>	
- From the flight attendants' perspective, this aspect influences the agenda of all family members who have to adopt to their off-the-job life.	Do you think the time your spouse spends with you suffices him? I think, it does. I think, it does not, but not because of my working schedule. I think, it does not because of my working schedule.
<i>Remuneration and resources (money or high prestige)</i>	
- What matters here is the family's basic economic status that influences its consumption patterns and lifestyle.	Assess the degree of your income satisfaction: Extremely satisfied Satisfied Somewhat satisfied Not satisfied
<i>Corporate culture and worldview</i>	
- They affect the professional environment setting its own behavioral patterns for flight attendants and creating specific rules and values, consumer choices and parenting styles, which they then transfer to their family life.	What do you think are the advantages of your job? This is a prestigious occupation. This occupation required professional training. Only beautiful women are employed here. One needs to be in good health. One needs to have a good figure. One can meet a decent man. Proficiency in another language is a must. One can see the world. One can show oneself off. The flight attendant uniform makes women more sexually appealing and attractive. After leaving this job, one can find work in hotel or tourism business.
<i>Emotional climate</i>	
- It reflects the flight attendants' work attitudes and has direct impact on their family life. Job satisfaction, work performance and labor exclusion affect the extent of family tensions, connections and self-respect of every member of the flight attendant's family.	Assess the degree of your satisfaction with the quality of time spend with your spouse: Extremely satisfied Satisfied Somewhat satisfied Not satisfied

To conduct a comparative analysis of the work-family contradictions, E. Tarasova used the following questions from her questionnaire: "How do you feel about

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your job?” (possible answers: I like it a lot; I like it; Indifferent; I somewhat like it; I dislike it) and *“Have your feelings about the profession of a flight attendant changed after you started working as such?”* (the researchers used the answers provided to calculate the percentage of female flight attendants who answered “Different types of passengers are a source of high tension”),

Results

Table 2 shows the main social characteristics that are needed to reveal how representative the targets are.

Table 2. Comparative characteristics of the targets

Indicators	USA, 1979	Russia, 2016*
Air companies	Skyway Airlines	Nordstar, Rossiya, S7, Aeroflot and other Russian air companies
Sample	229	151
Gender distribution	Women (93.4%)	Women (100%) **
Age of respondents	Median age: 27.4 (20-51) Age distribution: below 25: 31% 26-29: 35% above 30: 25,8%	Median age: 26.3 (18-38) Age distribution: below 25: 46% 26-29: 38% above 30: 16%
Marital status of respondents***	Not married: 63,6% Married: 36,4%	Not married: 58% Married: 42%
Presence of children	91,7% have no children	81% have no children
Level of education of respondents	25% graduated from college	67% have university education
Work experience as a flight attendant	Median work experience: 2 years	Median work experience: 3.6 years

* The author carried out this survey in March and April 2016 for the purposes of a research study on marriage and family relationships of female flight attendants. A total of 151 female flight attendants working for Russia’s major air companies (Nordstar, Rossiya, S7 and Aeroflot, among others) participated in the questionnaire-based survey. SPSS was used to process the results of the survey.

** For the purposes of the study, male flight attendants were not surveyed.

*** For comparative purposes, the author combined groups by marital status in conformity with the study: those who were officially married or living with a partner at the time of the study were considered married and those who were single or divorced were considered not married.

An analysis of the sample requires some time-related comparisons. Despite an apparent data inconsistency, structural changes have indeed taken place among flight attendants over the past 37 years, and the present study accurately captures them.

The profession of a flight attendant has become somewhat ‘younger’. The number of flight attendants under 25 has risen by 1.5 times. On the contrary, the older group (above 30 years old) has decreased nearly twofold. More flight attendants are married and have children.

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The level of education of modern flight attendants is relatively high as compared to their 20th-century predecessors. The number of flight attendants with higher education has increased more than 2.5 times.

Flight attendants' median work experience has grown almost twofold, which suggests that this occupancy has become a long-term one.

In terms of marital status, flight attendants differ from each other by two criteria. In the American study, married flight attendants are older than single ones, their median age being 29 and 27, respectively, and have longer median work experience (6 and 3 years, respectively). The average age of married and single Russian air hostesses is 27 and 25.8 respectively, and their median work experience is 4.4 and 3.09 years, respectively. Our data confirm this trend, which suggests that female flight attendants' marriageable age is identical in any social, cultural, ethnic and political environment.

The studies conducted in the USA (1979) and in Russia (2016) cannot be regarded as representative and the obtained results cannot be applied to all flight attendants. At the same time, it should be noted that the American survey was undertaken in the midst of the sexual revolution, whereas the Russian one illustrates the consequences of the sexual revolution in Russia.

As mentioned above, however, this study can identify specificities, patterns and trends relating to the reconciliation between work and family life among flight attendants only if it takes into account the sexual revolution.

Having identified the main social and demographic changes among flight attendants, let us now move to the main substance of the present study, namely, an analysis of role contradictions (work/family life) in the lives of female flight attendants.

The results of this study confirmed the American researchers' assumptions that married female flight attendants showed higher level of role-related tension than single ones. According to the American study, 71.7% of flight attendants are extremely satisfied with their job and, as anticipated, the married ones show a considerably lower level of satisfaction than the single ones.

The Russian survey showed that 95% of flight attendants said they liked their job (41% of respondents liked it and 54% liked it a lot). However, considering that 'extremely satisfied' and 'satisfied' from the American survey are basically the same answers as 'like it' and 'like it a lot', it can be concluded that the level of job satisfaction among Russian flight attendants is slightly lower than that of their American counterparts. Unfortunately, since we do not have access to the toolkit used in the American study, it is hard for us to make sure that the data presented in the article are fully reliable. As for the correlation between the marital status and work attitudes, married air hostesses show significantly higher job satisfaction than the single ones. As a result, the two studies provide different data on the investigated issue.

Work-related stress is another indicator of flight attendants' overloads resulting from the discrepancy between the roles. American researchers pointed out that married flight attendants showed higher stress levels than the single ones, but the differences were not significant.

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Although the Russian study did not seek to measure stress levels, it did detect certain social and psychological tension among female flight attendants, with 44% of them indicating a high level of stress related to various types of passengers. Interestingly, 48% of single flight attendants pointed to it against 40% of married flight attendants. Moreover, single flight attendants highlighted more health issues than the married ones (28% against 25%).

The Russian study also revealed the married respondents' greater satisfaction with different work-related aspects (professional relationships and self-fulfillment, career opportunities, work content and income), as compared to single flight attendants. For all indicators, they had higher levels of satisfaction. The presence of children was another positive factor influencing flight attendants' attitudes towards their work.

What follows is a comparative analysis of the two research methodologies based on the data obtained by American and Russian researchers

1. Work absorption.

The American study examined this aspect from the perspective of the spouse's professional status. 63% of married air hostesses indicated that their husbands worked in management or in sales, whereas 31% had partners working in aviation, of which 2/3 were pilots.

Today, aviation marriages are also popular among flight attendants. The objective of this paper, however, was not to investigate where the respondents' husbands work, which is why a comparative analysis of the data obtained is not a matter of concern here.

An analysis of family relations revealed that 94% of American flight attendants answered their spouses had put up, to varying degrees, with their job. Russian air hostesses observed that their husbands were proud of them (41%); every third respondent said her husband took her job for granted and 24% of the respondents preferred to choose 'Other'. The latter answer allowed us to understand that 1/3 of those who had chosen this answer (8%) were married to people working in the same profession. Only 5% of the respondents said their husbands condemned their professional activities.

2. Time and timing.

According to the American study, the time and timing issue was a source of complaints from 2/3 of the husbands of married flight attendants. The Russian study revealed that 1/3 (32%) of married air hostesses thought their husbands did not spend enough time with them owing to their work schedules. At the same time, they showed sufficiently high levels of personal satisfaction with the time spent with their husbands: 71% of air hostesses were satisfied with the amount of time spend with their husbands and 1/4 of them were extremely satisfied.

3. Remuneration (including bonuses) and resources.

In the American study, 41% of married flight attendants pointed out that reduced airline ticket prices for their husbands were a huge advantage for their

"A Study of the Relation between Work and Family Life of Russian and American Flight Attendants," *Astra Salvensis*, VI (2018), no. 12, p. 221-232 families. Currently, flight attendants are still eligible for these benefits, which partially offsets family conflicts related to other professional limitations.

Speaking of the flight attendants' income, it should be emphasized that as many as 58% of air hostesses were dissatisfied with their income, despite common stereotypes about the well-paid flight attendant salary. Interestingly, single flight attendants were more dissatisfied with their income than married ones (64% and 48%, respectively).

4. Corporate culture and worldview.

A highly specific corporate culture in the field of aviation affects the worldview of flight attendants with its professional language, special benefits, values and tastes, which cannot but influence the family lives of flight attendants. No wonder many married couples work together in civil aviation. The American study quotes an excerpt from an interview, in which one air hostess complained that, because of her 'weird' timetable, she could get along only with people working in aviation, since others did not understand her.

Specific professional aspects also have an impact on the corporate culture of flight attendants, as they set it apart from other cultures and foster their sense of pride in their work. The Russian survey revealed these characteristics by asking respondents about their occupancy's advantages. Among these professional advantages, 82% of the female respondents indicated the possibility to see the world. Almost half of the respondents (46%) considered the mandatory professional training as a major advantage of their profession. When interviewed, female flight attendants often highlighted the pride they took in their profession, recognizing that not everyone could do this job. Specific requirements for professional training (46%), health (35%) and, in many cases, proficiency in English (28%) give flight attendants the impression of their profession's being significant, and it is hard to argue with this. Finally, 40% of the respondents indicated as professional advantages the benefits they obtained from their work in civil aviation, for instance, early retirement.

5. Emotional climate.

According to the American study, 41% of married flight attendants pointed out that the main advantage of having this job was that someone was always waiting for them back at home. Moreover, 24.5% of respondents said that short separations from their families due to business trips were highly useful for the husband-wife relationship. Another aspect of this profession, as stated by the authors, was the emotional climate in the family and the precise work-home segmentation, with the exception of moments when a flight attendant was at home but should be ready to leave for work at any time. When flight attendants are at work, they are completely absorbed in to their working routine, while being geographically separated from their home. Again, when at home, they are fully exempt from their job responsibilities and, thus, can relax.

Despite the above-mentioned job-related aspects that have a beneficial impact on the emotional climate within the family, one quarter of the flight attendants surveyed (25.6%), according to the American study, highlighted that their occupancy was often the cause of domestic disputes. As described before,

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these are due to reasons such as inconvenient schedules, nights spent away from home, impossibility to regularly do the cleaning at home, time restrictions, etc. This is what makes working conditions adversely affect family life.

The vast majority of present-day Russian air hostesses (91%) are satisfied with their marital relations and the only factor aggravating them is the presence of children, which leads to decreased job satisfaction, given that 93% of childless flight attendants against 83% of flight attendants with children are satisfied with their interspousal relations.

Conclusion

The key message of the American researchers is that the work-family conflict is more serious among married flight attendants, leading to their increased job dissatisfaction, stresses and readiness for a career shift, as compared to single flight attendants.

On the contrary, the Russian study presents certain discrepancies with the results of the American study: notably higher level of satisfaction among married flight attendants for all indicators. In general, they are more positive about both their job and family responsibilities, which is most likely due to changes in stereotypes about the profession of a flight attendant and in the job-related structure of employment, including various benefits directed at supporting married workers. In the 1970s, the work of a flight attendant was generally considered incompatible with the notions of marriage and family. A lot has changed in forty years and today flight attendants can combine all kinds of social roles.

Below are the main conclusions of the comparative analysis carried out in the present study, which is based on the research methodologies of R. Kanter and E. Tarasova.

Work absorption is still a major issue among flight attendants. Many contradictions, however, have been effectively eliminated in the past forty years and today the flight attendants' families take this occupancy for granted, despite its limitations, and are often proud for their spouses. Less family tensions arise in the widespread aviation marriages, as spouses tend to 'understand' all the difficulties their jobs imply.

The American study points out that the time constraints and the unconventional work schedule place certain limits on the flight attendants' off-the-job life. According to the results of the Russian study, the flight attendants' schedule has become more predictable than before, which allows people working in this profession to plan their family and personal lives. Our data also stress the fact that the flight attendants' work schedule affects their family members more than the flight attendants themselves.

Flight attendants usually have middle-income households, but their lifestyle covers a wider geographic area as compared to people with the same economic status but working in other professions. The Russian study showed that flight attendants were not satisfied with their incomes, and single air hostesses even more

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so. The possibility of travelling, however, tends to reduce their income dissatisfaction.

The profession of a flight attendant creates its own specific culture, which is often hardly understandable by members of other professions. Its benefits, however, attract people and make them choose this profession and be proud of it, despite its challenges and limitations.

As for the emotional climate in the flight attendants' families, J. Pleck and E. Douvan believe that temporary separations are an important factor behind long-term marital satisfaction²². Consequently, the flight attendants' job-related trips contribute, in no small way, to positive emotional climate within the family. In such families, couples do not communicate with each other to the point of oversaturation and are frequently separated long enough to start missing each other, thus upgrading their relationship every time they meet. The results of both studies confirm these conclusions.

It is equally noteworthy that clear division of professional and family responsibilities has favorable impact on the emotional climate within the family. Consequential adaptation to the situation, i.e. household chores are done at home and professional duties are performed at work, is more beneficial for family harmony than the simultaneous one, which is typical of the vast majority of professions when workers think about work when at home and vice versa.

To sum up, married Russian flight attendants are more satisfied with their jobs and are exposed to less stress than the single ones. This contradicts the outcomes of the American study and confirms our assumption that flight attendants' employment conditions have radically changed in the past forty years.

Therefore, it is a fact that the sexual revolution brought about changes in the cultural family-work paradigm and produced positive results, which have had positive impact on the attitudes of both the flight attendants and their family members towards this profession.

²² J. Pleck and E. Douvan, *Separation as support. Working couples*, New York, Harper and Row, 1978.