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MASCULINITIES AND FEMININITIES IN THE SKY: THE GENDER PROJECT(S) OF FLIGHT ATTENDANTS' CAREERS

Masculinidades e feminilidades a bordo: Projeto(s) de gênero na carreira de comissárias e comissários de voo

Masculinidades y feminidades en el cielo: Proyecto(s) de género de la carrera de los/las auxiliares de vuelo

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ABSTRACT

This article resumes the interactionist bases of career studies to analyze the construction of gender project(s) regarding masculinities and femininities in the careers of flight attendants. We used a qualitative-oriented research methodology divided into five main stages: documentary and bibliographical research; 16 months of general immersion with field observation and journaling; specific immersion with field observation (participating in a flight attendants' training course); collection of 23 professionals' biographies; and construction and analysis of thematic narratives. The information was analyzed based on the perspective of collective narratives in three relational moments: training, joining an airline, and work routine. The discussions point to the necessity of constructing career projects as gender projects and the potential for personal metamorphosis by emphasizing and embodying masculinities and femininities, as well as trajectories negotiations in the field of possibilities – temporal, dynamic, and contextual dimensions. The research findings broaden the debate on gendered careers and bring an original methodological and theoretical contribution to collective careers.

Keywords: career, gender, masculinities, femininities, symbolic interactionism.

RESUMO

Este artigo retoma as bases interacionistas dos estudos de carreira com o objetivo de analisar a construção de projeto(s) de gênero, com referência a masculinidades e feminilidades, na carreira de comissárias(os) de voo. O percurso metodológico, de orientação qualitativa, ocorreu em cinco etapas principais: pesquisa bibliográfica e documental; imersão geral por 16 meses de observação do campo e registro de diários; imersão específica no campo com a participação em curso de formação para comissárias(os); coleta de biografias de 23 profissionais; e construção e análise temática de narrativas. O conjunto de informações foi analisado por narrativas coletivas em três momentos relacionais: formação, ingresso na companhia aérea e cotidiano da carreira. As discussões apontam para a construção do projeto de carreira como um projeto de gênero; o potencial de metamorfose individual ao enfatizar e corporificar masculinidades e feminilidades e as negociações das trajetórias no campo de possibilidades, dimensão temporal, dinâmica e contextual. As conclusões da pesquisa ampliam o debate de carreiras generalizadas e trazem uma contribuição metodológica e teórica original para carreiras de coletividades.

Palavras-chave: carreira, gênero, masculinidades, feminilidades, interacionismo simbólico.

RESUMEN

Este artículo retoma las bases interacionistas de los estudios de carrera con el objetivo de analizar la construcción de proyecto(s) de género, con referencia a masculinidades y feminidades, en la carrera de los/las auxiliares de vuelo. El diseño metodológico, con enfoque cualitativo, se desarrolló en cinco etapas principales: investigación bibliográfica y documental; inmersión general durante 16 meses de observación de campo y registro de diario; inmersión específica en el campo con participación en un curso de formación para auxiliares de vuelo; recopilación de biografías de 23 profesionales; y construcción y análisis temático de narrativas. El conjunto de informaciones fue analizado por narrativas colectivas en tres momentos relacionales: formación, ingreso en la aerolínea y día a día de la carrera. Las discusiones apuntan a la construcción del proyecto de carrera como un proyecto de género; el potencial de la metamorfosis individual al enfatizar y corporificar masculinidades y feminidades y las negociaciones de las trayectorias en el campo de posibilidades, dimensiones temporal, dinámica y contextual. Las conclusiones de la investigación amplían el debate de carreras generalizadas y aportan una contribución metodológica y teórica original a las carreras de colectividades.

Palabras clave: carrera, género, masculinidades, feminidades, interacionismo simbólico.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of career allows analyzing the dynamic relationship between people, organizations, and contexts (DeLuca, Rocha-de-Oliveira, & Chiesa, 2016; Gunz & Mayrhofer, 2018; Hughes, 1937). However, the interactions established between contextual elements, collective actions, and individual career paths are still little explored (Gunz, Mayrhofer, & Tolbert, 2011; Mayrhofer, Meyer, & Steyrer, 2007), even though these interactions are sources of significant tension between the characterization of professional types and the universal values – as observed in studies that address careers without appropriation of theoretical-scientific knowledge (Grangeiro, Barreto, & Silva, 2018). In this study, we consider that “careers are the product of social structures such as organizations or institutions and, in turn, produce and reproduce these structures” (Gunz et al., 2011, p. 1616).

The main career theories adopt gender neutrality (Fraga, Gemelli & Rocha-de-Oliveira, 2019; Mayrhofer et al., 2007) and the discussion on the influences of social structures in the context of work is still limited in the field of organizational studies. The limitation on discussing gender and social structures stems from both the dichotomy between male and female and the absence of cultural, social, economic, and political elements involved in the construction of careers and gender (Fraga & Rocha-de-Oliveira, 2020). The dominant understanding in Brazil is that research on women or studies comparing men and women are gender studies (Ceribeli & Silva, 2017; Hryniewicz & Vianna, 2018; Moreira & Silva, 2018; Pagnussatto & Lucas, 2017; Santos, Lima, Paiva, Marques, & Guimarães, 2021; Vieira, Monteiro, Carrieri, Guerra, & Brant, 2019).

Although the discussion about kaleidoscopic careers and the opt-out movement (Mainiero & Gibson, 2018; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005) highlights women's career paths, the international scenario adopts an understanding based on the difference between the female and male realms. When focusing on a specific and privileged group, these perspectives analyze the choice patterns that redirect (like a kaleidoscope) the careers of women in search of authenticity, balance, and challenge and the opt-out of highly qualified women from corporate careers, mainly due to the incompatibility with motherhood (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). In addition to universalizing women as a homogeneous group, this reinforces the idea that gender is equivalent to sex. Thus, male or female characteristics are acquired biologically, neglecting the sociocultural influences of the contexts (Fraga & Rocha-de-Oliveira, 2020; Mayrhofer et al., 2007).

This article assumes that gender builds social relationships and establishes power asymmetries between groups based on differences regarding sex (Connell & Pearse, 2015). The inclusion of masculinity and femininity (Connell, 2018) in this discussion provides an opportunity to advance the theory and corroborates the multiplicity of gender experiences. Thus, we recognize the need to adopt interdisciplinary theoretical bases in career studies (Arthur, 2008; Maanen, 2015; Parker, Khapova, & Arthur, 2009), and we use the symbolic interactionism (Barley, 1989; Mendonça, 2002) to propose a dialogue between such studies and gender. We observe that, as in the constitution of a profession (Barros, Cappelle, & Guerra, 2021; Barros, Cappelle, Souza, & Lobato, 2018; DeLuca

& Rocha-de-Oliveira, 2016; DeLuca et al., 2016; Hughes, 1937, 1958), gender is an individual and collective construction in socio-historical contexts.

A career is considered an individual and collective path built and modified over time through negotiating projects and within a specific field of possibilities (DeLuca et al., 2016). Thus, three elements stand out: time as a dimension that marks the career paths; dynamism in which people, groups, and organizations negotiate the construction of careers; and the expansion of the idea of a collective career (DeLuca et al., 2016). With these premises, we launch the theoretical basis to understand how the development of occupations occur, through internal and external negotiations, incorporating, adding, and modifying individual or group projects defined by social markers of difference, such as gender.

The theoretical-methodological approach proposed in this study considers that careers are lenses to glimpse collective social processes that occur in traditional and deviant professions. The field of aviation was chosen, with a traditional, normative, and masculine background and, specifically, the cabin crew career, initially reserved for a specific group of women, with diversion constructions. This context presents possibilities to think about gender as a central structure and a marker that crosses all the processes of professional construction.

The socially constructed feminine essence within the profession and the unusual mobility for women, especially in the 1920s when the profession emerged (Barry, 2007; Duffy, Hancock, & Tyler, 2017; Sangster & Smith, 2016; Tiemeyer, 2013; Whitelegg, 2007), activated a recursive process of memory relevant to career studies (DeLuca et al., 2016). The caring instinct and the aptitude for domestic activities, characteristics considered natural for women, represented what was expected from the service on the aircraft: “they got to fly, but in the process, airlines claimed proprietorship over their bodies and began to market their femininity” (Whitelegg, 2007, p. 35). This feminized place also provided an occupational refuge for gay men (Tiemeyer, 2013).

Based on the theoretical framework of Raewyn Connell (1987, 2016, 2018), it is considered that professional practice built in gendered spaces (Fraga & Rocha-de-Oliveira, 2020), such as aviation (Barry, 2007; Castellitti, 2019, 2020; Silva, Uziel, & Rotenberg, 2014; Tiemeyer, 2013; Whitelegg, 2007), is marked by the (re)production of masculinities and femininities that translate into gender projects (Connell; 2018; Schippers, 2007). This article resumes the interactionist bases of career studies to analyze the construction of gender project(s), concerning masculinities and femininities, in the career of flight attendants.

THE INTERACTIONIST CAREER CONSTRUCTION

Career theory has its own career (DeLuca et al., 2016), sometimes focused on individual paths, sometimes on paths in organizations (Bendassolli, 2009; Gunz & Mayrhofer, 2018). The first studies emerged in the field of sociology, in the North American context, especially from the work of Everett Hughes (1937, 1958), who highlighted the objective and subjective dimensions of a trajectory and the dynamic relationship between individual and context.

In the 1970s, research focused on understanding organizational careers (Hall, 1996, Maanen, 1978; Schein, 1978) and the particularity of intra-organizational mobility. From the 1990s, the individual perspective became central; the studies pointed to agency capacity and suggested less interest in organizational careers. In this scenario, Arthur's (1994) boundaryless career models and Hall's (1996) Protean career stand out, both of which have dominated the discussion in the field for more than a decade.

In the early 2000s, the number of studies indicating the need to resume an interdisciplinary analysis grew (Arthur, 2008; Maanen, 2015; Parker et al., 2009), and proposals emerged based on classic research, which considered the individual, organizational, and contextual dimensions in career development. Among the proposals in the Brazilian context, the neo-interactionist proposal presented by DeLuca et al. (2016) stood out. Internationally, it is worth highlighting the social chronology framework by Gunz and Mayrhofer (2018) and the sustainable careers model by Vos, Heijden, and Akkermans (2020).

Symbolic interactionism emerged in the Chicago School and has coined an influential position from a methodological and conceptual point of view. Between the 1920s and 1960s, the interactionist orientation proposed the study of paths and behaviors of individuals and collectives differently from the functionalist sociology adopted at that time (Barley, 1989; Mendonça, 2002). Herbert Blumer (creator of the concept and premises of interactionism), Everett Hughes (the first author to conceptualize career), and Howard Becker (a pioneer in the studies of deviant careers) are its best-known representatives. They contributed to understanding society as a process of interaction between people, their interpretations of the events they experience, and the actions derived from these interpretations. Continuously and dynamically, the senses are signified and (re)signified in time and space, as people and groups reciprocally see and experience reality. The interactionist approach brought the understanding of the profession as a form of socialization that accompanies the career, based on Hughes (1937). In this theoretical perspective, all people have careers. There are no breaks between jobs, trades, and professions. There is no possibility of analyzing careers by separating people and organizations (Hughes, 2003; Maanen, 2015).

The potential of the approach to management (Mendonça, 2002) has recently been explored in studies on non-traditional or deviant careers (Barros et al., 2018, 2021; DeLuca & Rocha-de-Oliveira, 2016). The proposal by DeLuca et al. (2016) aligned the interactionist approach with the concepts of the anthropologist Gilberto Velho for the analysis of complex societies, allowing a detachment from the dichotomous forms individual/organization, objective/subjective, man/woman – which intensify, legitimize and naturalize differences experienced in trajectories. Therefore, a career is, at the same time, “a retrospective and projected path, dynamic and changeable, of an individual or collectivity, revealing negotiations between objectivities and subjectivities” (DeLuca et al., 2016, p. 472). It should be noted that the concept adopts a relational and reflexive conception between people and contexts (Gunz et al., 2011; Mayrhofer et al., 2007) when understanding individual and collective careers as representative of the relationships circumscribed in a socio-historical time, as is also advocated in the social chronology framework (Gunz & Mayrhofer, 2018).

The concept considers the path simultaneously situated in the past, present, and future. The path is constituted amidst negotiation of individual and collective projects and metamorphoses. For Hughes (1937, 1958), it integrates the career's objective (status and positions) and subjective aspects (interpretations through individual and collective interactions), which can be experienced in a plural way due to gender. Dilemmas and conflicts (Hughes, 1937) resulting from objective and subjective interactions during a lifetime are influenced by historically constructed social roles and characteristics expected for certain professional positions.

The definition also explores the notions of project, metamorphosis, field of possibilities, and negotiation of reality (Velho, 2003). The projects represent objective behavior directed to reach goals that are also objective. At an individual level, they are related to “acts, explorations, performance, and options, anchored to assessments and definitions of reality” (Velho, 2003, p. 27). Projects are mutually influential throughout career building and can be individual or collective (DeLuca et al., 2016). It is important to say that collective projects are not homogeneous, as there is room for interpretations according to status, trajectory, generation, and gender, to name a few. Metamorphosis is the process of interaction and change experienced by people when transiting through different spheres of life (Velho, 2003). The field of possibilities represents the set of alternatives that manifests from the lived socio-historical context at the individual level. When faced with social organization, experienced through interactions, exchanges, and conflicts, people and groups negotiate differences and similarities through different symbolic meanings, sometimes unconsciously. This dynamic process is called reality negotiation (Velho, 2003).

Based on the concepts of project, field of possibilities, negotiation of reality, and metamorphosis, an integrative (individual-organizations-social context) and dynamic construction is possible. Each person can change and adjust their projects, accommodating other personal or collective projects, using the potential for metamorphosis. Therefore, it is possible to say that, in any means of socialization, gender specificities and other social markers are produced and are producers of negotiated symbolic interactions and influence both individual and collective projects and the field of possibilities available.

GENDER PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION: PROJECTED MASCULINITIES AND FEMININITIES AND CAREER RETROSPECTIVES

Like career studies, the concept of gender also has a path, or, one could say, “gender has gender.” The term is often used without theoretical discussion, as a fixed variable related to sex, or as a synonym for research on women and the feminine, especially in the field of administration (Fraga et al., 2019). The historical and contextual emergence of gender studies, the concept's origins and definitions, and the main feminist theoretical approaches took shape in the 1960s. In addition to the issue of women, gender brings with it a questioning of patterns of masculinity

defined in society since standardization, in general, reflects opposition to a model (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2013).

Gender can be understood as a central structure of social life that produces and reproduces roles, identities, discursive formations, and classifications of bodies (Connell, 2016). Such considerations are aligned with the understanding of gender beyond a unitary variable – a theoretical, methodological, and political perspective. The gender approach challenges career studies to look at the social and institutional structures that (re)produce normative patterns (Mayrhofer et al., 2007). Such patterns are primarily characterized by inequality between men and women and involve other elements of gender construction.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity is understood “as the pattern of practices (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2013, p. 245), presents new dynamics in gender relations, alerting to relations of power, dominance, and social hierarchy, which are not restricted to man-woman binarism. Hegemonic masculinity is aligned with a specific type of femininity – emphasized femininity – which is “defined around compliance with this subordination [to men] and is oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men” (Connell, 1987, p. 184). The approach proposed by Connell (1987) to understand gender hegemony also encompasses the asymmetries of relations between men. In addition to an emphasized femininity, subordinate masculinities (such as that of gay men) make up the gender order in the social landscape.

Revisiting the concept, Connell and Messerschmidt (2013) reflected on other critical points for research, such as the agency of subordinate masculinities. They discuss protest masculinities (from marginalized ethnic groups), gay masculinities, and the appropriation of hegemonic masculinity characteristics by elite women when building executive careers (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2013). Furthermore, they warned, “women are central in many of the processes constructing masculinities – as mothers, as schoolmates, as girlfriends, sexual partners and wives; as workers in the gender division of labor” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2013, p. 266).

Efforts to advance Connell’s theory have been made by other researchers (Duncanson, 2015; Ferree, 2018; Messerschmidt, Martin, & Messner, 2018; Schippers, 2007). Schippers (2007) proposed deepening the study of femininities, and the joint analysis of masculinities and femininities as gender projects (Connell, 2018; Schippers, 2007):

Masculinities and femininities can become “gender projects” in the lives of individuals, but they do not refer to features of or specific kinds of people. Instead of possessing or having masculinity, individuals move through and produce masculinity by engaging in masculine practices. In this way, masculinity is an identifiable set of practices that occur across space and over time and are taken up and enacted collectively by groups, communities, and societies (Schippers, 2007, p. 86).

Such gender projects can take different formats in each professional field. However, they always operate in relation to structures – to the gender order of society and institutional gender regimes (Messerschmidt et al., 2018) – insofar as men and women produce and hierarchize social relations based on gender. Duncanson (2015) considers that the challenge of balancing gender relations is in hegemonic masculinity maintaining its superior position through the feminization of other groups of men while reinforcing the understanding of femininities as hierarchically inferior.

It is considered that gendered professional fields, those constituted by a majority of men or women, present barriers for people who do not contemplate the expected gender project. Simpson (2005) carried out research with male nurses, flight attendants, librarians, and primary school teachers to understand how insertion and professional guidance occur and the possible existence of consequences attributed to the stereotype of working in a non-traditional occupation for men. The results showed that these professionals require presuppositions of femininity, such as sensitivity, beauty, and care.

Military careers are prominently traditional male fields of work. Häyrén (2016), in an ethnographic study of the fire department, highlights the interactions between contexts and people in the construction of masculinities and the gendering of all organizational processes. In research carried out with military men and women, Hale (2008) found the protected version of standard masculinity established in the British military organization. Interviewees emphasized that they “they do what they do and they are who they are simply because that is their job” (Hale, 2008, p. 327). Therefore, it is noted that masculinities and femininities are exacerbated and require objective and subjective practices of gender in the profession.

Civil aviation emerged in the military environment and is a workspace with particularities for studying gendered careers. The social-historical imaginary refers to a combination of impeccable safety and flight service, directly related to the professionalism of pilots and flight attendants. Although cabin crew work has been around since the 1920s, recognition of the profession began in the 1930s, when American Airlines began hiring female nurses as flight attendants and invested heavily in a standard of femininity that would attract passengers (Barry, 2007; Whitelegg, 2007). The best-known study on the career of flight attendants is the book by Hochschild (2003), originally published in 1983, which addresses the sociology of emotions inherent in the career (Santin & Kelly, 2017).

In the construction of careers in different professional fields, it is noted that masculinities and femininities are exacerbated and require objective and subjective practices of gender. Gender projects include the specificities of the gender social order, combined with masculinities and femininities, which influence individual and collective career projects, and the field of available possibilities.

METHODOLOGY

Following the path suggested by Connell and Messerschmidt (2013), this study analyzes the interactive construction of masculinities and femininities that occur at the local level – where face-to-face interactions occur, in immediate communities, for example – following symbolic interactionism as a methodological path (Mendonça, 2002). Data collection included participant observation in the course required by the National Civil Aviation Agency (ANAC, 2005) to be a cabin crew member and analysis of flight attendants' biographies (Riessman, 2013) at different times in their careers. All experiences during 16 months of immersion in the field, and seven months in which one of the researchers participated in the course, were recorded in field diaries, as indicated in ethnographic research (DeLuca & Rocha-de-Oliveira, 2016; Maanen, 2015). A writing notebook was used to record the researcher's observations during classes and events since the use of any electronic device is prohibited in aviation schools. The method is relevant to interactionist research (DeLuca & Rocha-de-Oliveira, 2016) and is commonly used in those related to gender discussion (Castelitti, 2020; Hirshfield, 2015). Exhibit 1 summarizes the five main methodological stages of the research.

Exhibit 1. Research methodological steps

Stages (32 months)	Activities
Bibliographic and documental research (From February 2017 to October 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading about the history of the flight attendant profession; - Analysis of legislation applied to aeronauts and requirements to work in Brazil and abroad; - Elaboration of the research's theoretical framework.
Immersion in the field (general) (From May 2017 to September 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact aviation schools; - Approaching and becoming a member of groups on social media, webpages, and online channels about aviation and the aeronaut career; - Participation in a flight safety training course and lectures on the aeronaut career in Brazil and abroad at aviation schools; - Observation of social media accounts specialized in promoting the career and aimed at aspiring professionals; - Recording each experience in field diaries.
Immersion in the field (specific) (From August 2017 to March 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One of the researchers concluded the Theoretical and Practical Instruction Program (flight attendant training course); - Participation in a regular class, including survival (jungle) and water survival, first aid, fire fighting, and seamanship; - Registration in field diaries during and after theoretical and practical lessons.
Collection of biographies (From May/2017 to April 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Search for potential participants, through publications using a personal account on social media, in groups on social media, recommendations from aviation schools, and personal contacts; - Online or in-person collection of biographies, according to the availability of each participant; - Registration of the interactions after the interviews.

continue

Exhibit 1. Research methodological steps

concludes

Stages (32 months)	Activities
Narrative construction and thematic analysis (From June 2017 to October 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transcription and prior analysis of individual biographies; - Theorization considering the theoretical framework. The activity emphasized how the stories were told (time), the productions and practices of masculinities and femininities as gender projects, the past-present-future dimensions of the career; - Identification of the main moments of individual negotiation within the field of possibilities; - Identification of the gender project as a local and collectively constructed career project; - Construction of the synthesis of the collective career and theoretical-empirical discussion.

A total of 50 people were contacted to collect biographies, and 23 flight attendants were interviewed. They work (or have worked) in national and international airline companies with varying ages and career times. The interviews were based on the provocation “tell me your story” (Connell, 2018), and participants spoke freely with as little interruption as possible. A second interview was carried out with six participants, and a third was conducted with one person, given the representativeness of their stories for the set of biographies. In all, 30 interviews were conducted, all recorded with consent and authorization. The interviews lasted between 60 and 240 minutes each, with an average time of 120 minutes, and were fully transcribed for analysis. In addition, the same notebook as the field diaries was used for notes after the interviews.

Neutral names (which could be either male or female) were used to identify the participants. The use of neutral names prevented any unintentionally masculine or feminine characteristics from being anticipated by the reader and made it possible to show that both men and women build career projects as gender projects. Of the 23 flight attendants interviewed, 15 were female and 8 were male. Table 1 identifies each participant, their level of education/training, approximate time of experience as a cabin crew member, age at entry into the first airline, and age at the time of the interview.

Table 1. Identification of participants

Name	Education	Flight time (years)	Age (when started)	Age (Current)
Alex*	Degree in pedagogy	20	42	63
Taylor*	Degree in law	20	21	52
Francis	Acting school	20	21	44
Dominique	Degree in international relations	15	18	35
Mica	Degree and technical education in nursing	12	27	39
Tainã	Acting school	12	21	33

continue

Table 1. Identification of participants

concludes

Name	Education	Flight time (years)	Age (when started)	Age (Current)
Angel	Degree in psychology	12	28	40
Muriel	Undergraduate student of pedagogy	11	19	31
Charlie*	Unfinished degree in language (English)	9	23	32
Dylan	Degree in Aeronautical sciences; private and commercial pilot; unfinished degree in business administration	9	22	31
Billy	Unfinished degree in gastronomy	9	28	36
Chris	Unfinished degree in tourism	8	22	31
Kelly*	Degree in public relations	8	25	33
Ariel	High school	8	22	30
Kim	Degree in physical education	7	25	33
Paris	Degree in fashion; private and commercial pilot	7	21	28
Sidney	High school	6	20	26
Alison	Studied gastronomy; student in a course to prepare technicians for events; unfinished degree in physiotherapy; unfinished degree in business management	5	31	36
Rene**	Degree and Post degree in Environmental Management; unfinished degree in chemistry	5	25	34
Gil**	Degree in law; unfinished degree in physiotherapy	5	24	33
Sam**	Unfinished degree in nursing; unfinished degree in cosmetics	5	29	38
Andrea	Undergraduate student of psychology; unfinished degrees in business administration, international relations, and hospitality	5	19	27
Sasha	Private and commercial pilot	2,5	21	23

Key:

*hired by international companies. These professionals were not trained in Brazil.

**former flight attendants. At the moment of the interview, they had left the industry for more than five years

The interactionist perspective was adopted in data collection, transcription, and analysis. According to this perspective, a career path includes a life story. The proposed biographical analysis assumes a historical and original perspective, which mobilizes memory and projects in the relationships between past, present, and future, as narrated by the participants (DeLuca et al., 2016). Biographies were collected and analyzed as thematic narratives (Riessman, 2005). Following Connell's (2016, 2018) methodological perspective, the stories are theorized with the theoretical contribution of gender, and there is an effort to understand each one prior to a collective synthesis. Thus, a collective narrative was elaborated, describing and analyzing how gender projects are constructed and constantly reaffirmed throughout the flight attendants' careers.

GENDERED CAREERS: GENDER PROJECTS OF FLIGHT ATTENDANTS

We chose to present a collective narrative as a thread that tells the story of the participants and is built in three moments: it starts with the training course, followed by joining the airline, and finally, the working routine in the flight attendant career. The narrative follows the notions of time, dynamism, and collectivity (DeLuca et al., 2016), and meets the reports and the interaction with the field, considering the temporal dimensions and the striking negotiations in the trajectories.

The training course: how flight attendants are prepared

In the first class, the instructor announces, “you either fit in, or you are out.” The more you “fit the mold,” a term frequently used in the course, the greater the chance of an airline hiring you. Fitting the mold has to do with how to dress, behave, communicate, and interact and is something strongly required during the course. Students even comment that they are mistaken for qualified flight attendants when they are on public transport on the way to school. At the beginning of the activities, a leader is chosen for the group, equivalent to the senior crew member in civil aviation. This person is responsible for making the extra-class study materials available, calling for the return to the room after break times, demanding proper posture in classes and the course facilities, monitoring the organization of the space at the end of each day, and resolving private or group issues with the instructors.

Uniform is mandatory and must always be perfect: suit, shirt, dress shoes, and tie for men; and standard dress, blazer, tights, and shoes for women. Women are required to paint their nails in red, light tones, or brownish tones. Makeup must be immaculate and striking, with the use of red lipstick. Hair must be tied at ear height; if tied in a ponytail, the maximum length is to the middle of the back. Short or medium cuts can be used, as long as they do not go beyond shoulder length. Men must have short hair, a clean beard, and hands without bitten nails. The entire organization of the course structure is based on the binary male or female, masculine or feminine. Control at all stages of each institutional process and the daily individual and collective reproduction of the gender order are a hallmark of the relational dimension between gendered agency and structure (Häyryén, 2016; Messerschmidt et al., 2018).

There is an intense adjustment process (fit the mold) for the future occupation, which is constantly crossed by gender. There is no reference in the ANAC manual (2005) on the distinction by sex in fulfilling the course hours. However, without explanation from the school or contestation from students, many movements trained to be performed in the hiring processes or when carrying out the working routine are distinctly normalized for men and women. Male and female flight attendants are taught differently how to take off and put on shoes and coats, sit and stand up, pick up objects on the floor, and appropriate positions for the arms or legs to stand or sit. Classes in personal marketing and good manners, interpersonal relationships, and professional etiquette are part of the content learned.

For women, the content also includes makeup classes: hygiene, tonic, hydration, concealer, foundation, face powder, eyebrow definition, shadows, eyeliner, eyelash mask, pencil, lip contour, lipstick, blush, illuminating powder, and makeup fixer. “Going to work without make-up looks like you could not finish getting ready,” says the only female instructor on the course. “Make-up is natural for women,” says one instructor. “I want you to be perfect,” points out another.

An imaginary world, or as Sidney says, “a fairy tale,” is built for the classes. When they start classes, students receive badges and wear uniforms that imitate airlines’. The badges display the word in Portuguese, “*comissário*” regardless of whether male or female students (in Portuguese, female flight attendant is *comissária* and the male flight attendant is *comissário*). It is part of the “10 commandments” to present themselves at school as if they were professionals and not students on a course – going to class is going to work. “It’s like you’re going to work,” says Sidney. Although the training is for commercial aviation, the origins are military and constantly show – everything is traditional and normative. There is a reinforcement of the gendered appearance, emphasizing the mandatory use of makeup, earrings, and painted nails for women.

During the course, sexuality is a topic emphasized for women, and heterosexuality is considered the norm (homosexuality is a subject little addressed). “Everything in a woman revolves around reproduction [...] and a man is a reproducing machine, a ram covers eight to ten sheep. If our society were like animals, it would keep only the best reproducers” (Excerpt from the field diary, transcribing the speech of a male instructor who was in the military reserve, December 2017).

The [male] instructor started quoting Freud in class, talking about the theory that a woman is only fulfilled when she has a son. So far, I have not heard any homophobic comments, but they are sexist all the time [...] later, the same instructor talks about gay activism in aviation, says that companies have always been ahead of their time thanks to international flights. ‘Most male flight attendants are gay’ (Excerpt from field diary, November 2017).

Although women are the majority in the classes, sexist speeches and stereotypes about gender roles are part of the instructors’ repertoire – even if none of the subjects have any relation to sex or gender. “That will never change: a woman has a micro-analysis to protect the nest. Man has the capacity for macro-vision, he provides and protects, it is the man who hunts and provides security” (Excerpt from the field diary, transcription of a speech from a male instructor who is a flight attendant, November 2017). This also includes the idea of occupational hierarchies related to the professional image with stereotypes of gender, sexuality, and class status that have accompanied the profession since the beginning (Castellitti, 2019, 2020; Duffy et al., 2017; Sangster & Smith, 2016; Tiemeyer, 2013):

[Student] Would you recommend that your son be a flight attendant?

[Instructor in silence... Thinks for a moment] No, to be a pilot.

[Student] But why? - showing surprise.

[Instructor] It's like asking if I want my child to be a nurse or a doctor. Doctor. Gastronomy or Law? Law. For me, it was worth it because I was from a very poor background, he is an only child, I can afford the pilot training (Excerpt from field diary, speech by a male instructor, former flight attendant, December 2017).

According to Good and Cooper (2016), dealing with sexual harassment is common in service professions. For Hochschild (2003) and Santin and Kelly (2017), addressing this issue is part of these professionals' emotional labor, which is particularly required from female flight attendants. Hochschild (2003) conducted pioneering research showing that the flight attendants' emotions are a product considered together with in-flight service. The recommendation in harassing situations is to remain "politically correct," to "suck it up," and "toughen" the facial expression since "it is part of your service to be friendly" (Good & Cooper, 2016).

The first manifestation of a student against this naturalized attitude in the relationship with passengers, narrated as natural by instructors, happened when she was already halfway through the course: the student said that neither she nor any woman would like to be harassed while working. Among comments about "compliments, catcalls, and invitations" received by flight attendants during flights, the instructor commented on a flight attendant who "has done well" by marrying a businessman and told stories of flight attendants who had "a second job" [prostitution]. The following dialogues summarize these moments:

[Instructor] Female flight attendants get many catcalls... you're going to leave the flight with lots of phone numbers!

[Student] Some catcalls are very vulgar; I would not like to hear that when I'm working.

[Instructor] Yes, it's true. But there are good ones. If you are a female flight attendant, you only stay single if you want to! [...] And there are flight attendants who have a second "job," they earn between fifteen and twenty thousand reais a month. I have an alumnus who earns three grand per session.

Silence. The explanation of the matter continues, and no one comments. (Excerpt from the field diary, February 2018)

It is observed that objective and subjective negotiations (DeLuca et al., 2016; Hughes, 1937) reflect in the bodies and attitudes of those who aspire to be flight attendants, people, usually young people, coming from the countryside, who adjust their individual projects to the collective project established for the career. This mold – built initially in the training courses and (re) built continuously in training activities offered by the airline companies – is required by the potential for individual metamorphosis (Velho, 2003) and reinforced by the field of possibilities experienced collectively.

Due to military heritage, marked by strict norms and rules, the field of civil aviation brings together some of the most regulated careers in the world (Instituto Brasileiro de Aviação, 2018).

Everything – the standards, the conduct, the posture – is justified by the need for security. At the same time that it fits students into a standard considered expected by the companies, the course serves as a kind of guarantee for approval in future selection processes. Training to be a flight attendant is the initial construction of gender projects in the career.

The production for the future career (lived as the present) is guided by the image of projects fitting a mold, with the constant reaffirmation of behaviors needed to enter and remain in the career. The idea of suitability for work in advance includes or excludes following culturally agreed rules, values, and conduct, similarly to what Häyrén (2016) observed in the research with the fire department. Because the number of professionals is much higher than the demand from companies, receiving the school's recommendation for a vacancy in selective processes is a facilitator.

The entrance to the airline (fitting the mold)

Those who are not trained as required in Brazil also have to fit the mold. Kelly tells about the training offered by the airline company, half dedicated to technical knowledge and the other half focused on physical appearance and posture, with great rigor in terms of professional image.

[...] this initial training is to mold and keep consistency, so everybody is at the same level. I like to say it is “McDonald's style,” you know? Every time you go to McDonald's, you know what you expect, you know how the service works, what types of food there is, and such; the training is more or less the same principle [...] (Kelly)

Direct hiring to foreign companies, as in the case of Alex, Taylor, Charlie, and Kelly highlighted the significant difference between those who took the course and those who did not, even though it was not required. “[...] The girls were even dressed as flight attendants, some girls worked in Brazilian airlines, so they were perfect, and I was dressed to go to the office, so to speak. Because I had no idea what it was like” (Charlie). The justification regarding the image that must be produced is given by the indication of greater mobility of the (thin) body and the safety that this represents in risky situations, although the appearance is linked to aspects of beauty at all times.

Another thing that I think counts a lot at the time of selection – today this policy is no longer so strong, but... – [the person] is blonde, tall, thin, [the person] speaks well, you know? Whether you like it or not, these physical aspects count a lot for working on the plane. It is important to be agile and tall to get things inside the plane, it's kind of a little lego game; it's all fitted together. (Muriel)

Although female flight attendants end up following the norm regarding the issue of appearance (because of tradition or because of a professional obligation), this requirement is

something that women especially dislike – since “in men there is not much to change” (Mica) – which can be understood as metamorphosis potential (DeLuca et al., 2016) established in different ways and based on gender difference.

Girls especially, men do not, because there's not much to change in men, right? [...] for women, I still always think that lipstick, basic makeup, is... I think it's a differential; people feel good. Today, people do not care anymore. Regarding weight, we see, you see people who are quite fat on flights today, so, I don't know, so the criteria have changed a lot [...] (Mica)

Regarding the metamorphoses and objective and subjective negotiations required during work activities, which mobilize the retrospective (gender) experience, depending on the future (gender) project, Tainã tells about a female colleague the interviewee met before becoming a flight attendant, reporting the change that occurred when starting the job.

[...] she refused to wear a skirt to work, she didn't work in a skirt, she looked and said: “I hate skirts, I only wear a skirt if I have to, if my pants rip” [...] she didn't want to wear makeup and the company required it [...] So, you see, the boys who would like to wear makeup, sometimes, on the flight, couldn't. And the girls who didn't want to were forced to (Tainã).

Despite the reinforcement of stereotypes in the standards observed for female flight attendants, emphasizing “feminine” qualities protected the profession and enabled unopposed growth from men (Barry, 2007; Whitelegg, 2007). Emphasized femininity and the notions of care, empathy, and other virtues considered feminine, are central to understanding gender power relations (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2013; Messerschmidt et al., 2018). In addition to the compulsoriness of makeup, the career – and its corresponding image – was built by white women, who should be and remain single, middle class, aged between 21 and 27, retirement scheduled at a maximum of 35 years, and pre-established weight and height (Tiemeyer, 2013; Whitelegg, 2007). It is worth mentioning that, until a few years ago, companies used the weight and height procedure in the selection processes, which was commented on in the course as a possibility of happening and, by the interviewees, as something common for those who are in the career for more than five years.

Although it represents the idea of nomadic life, due to the immediate mobility nature, in time and space of the profession, the intention of following an international career or flying abroad with national companies is not a common objective. Considering that the flights are longer and more exhausting, the students believe that it does not compensate for what they would earn. In addition to the possibility of traveling and discovering new places, the salary, which ranges from BRL 5,000.00 to BRL 7,000.00 (Instituto Brasileiro de Aviação, 2018), is considered one of the main attractions, especially for someone young who would not earn the same as a beginner in another career. Possible social mobility and the status associated with traveling

contribute to the normalizing effect of occupation. Young people from inland cities seeking entry into an occupation with signs of rapid return naturally accept the impositions required for the activity. Also, unlike the wage inequality between women and men, which is common in almost all careers in Brazil (Fraga & Rocha-de-Oliveira, 2020), for flight attendants, this does not happen, given that the salary is standardized.

The interviewees' profile corroborates the survey by the Instituto Brasileiro de Aviação (2018). The majority of professionals completed higher education and were aged between 25 and 34 years old. These professionals remain in the career for more than five years (the average length is seven years). The interviewees' responses reflected two main reasons for leaving the job: instability in aviation, which motivates the construction of other career options, and the harmful effects of pressurization on the body. The number of undergraduate courses started and not completed is noteworthy, justified by the difficulty of reconciling routine schedules with their shifting professional schedules.

The (gendered) working routine

Almost all narratives contain aspects directly or indirectly related to gender and image-imaginary and, consequently, to masculinities, femininities, elements that structure the career of flight attendants, even though, sometimes, they do not perceive or regard as something of the order of common knowledge. Thus, contradictions arise in the narratives, such as the perception of an equal number of men and women in the career, the indirect preference for one sex in hiring or cases of harassment and gender discrimination, and the hierarchical relationship between flight attendants and pilots.

The relationship with the pilots also has certain customs: "usually they give us a hand to get in the van, a courtesy, which, for me, honestly, makes no difference, but, you know, that folklore..." (Alison). Other rules, in the same sense, used to be followed in the career:

[...] when I joined, there was one position that one flight attendant held, assistant three, who is up-front with the boss, they always had to be a woman, always, it couldn't be a man, no matter if it was the oldest woman on the flight, she had to be there in front of the boss's side [...] (Ariel)

The hierarchy of the profession and between professions, built with segregation by sex and masculinity ideals (Connell, 2016, 2018; Häyrén, 2016), is a common report. Dominique says that pilots represent the highest authority and, protected by the position of power, they intimidate gay men in a homophobic way and women in a harassing way, who feel scared to report to the company despite the code of ethics being strict. The concept of hegemonic masculinity, in this sense, is observed in the relational perspective when it ranks non-hegemonic forms of masculinity (Messerschmidt & et al. 2018), as in the case of homosexual men. Alison reflected on the way these power dynamics go beyond the professional space when reporting that "in this

relationship, in which we work a lot with hierarchy, from the moment you get in the van to the airport, it is a very heavy hierarchy, and they take advantage of it sometimes. It is often abusive.”

The statements collected during the interviews addressing the current context are in line with what Alex reveals about why their family did not support them in working in aviation, in the mid-1980s, due to the negative and eroticized view of the relationship between flight attendants and pilots (Duffy et al., 2017). Alex also talks about the similarity between the profession and the hierarchy and the eroticization of the professional relationship between doctors and nurses: “it is not only this profession, the same thing happens with doctors, nurses, at that time, in Brazil, it was also said that there was a danger that women were with doctors.” The report corroborates Barry (2007) and Whitelegg (2007), who, when narrating the history of the profession, relate the proximity of the hospital dynamics to that of aviation since the position of flight attendants was initially occupied only by female nurses. Gender marking, therefore, is present in the division of the internal space of the aircraft and the attributions so that the cockpit and decision-making authority are reserved for pilots, while passenger service and care are the female flight attendants' responsibility.

The traditional references of the profession to attract, entertain, and reassure passengers – and the naturalized attributes of women – are present. It is noteworthy that the career experience configures a turning point in the gender project regarding appearance, indicating another individual metamorphosis, based on the collective reference of those who are already flight attendants. Mica criticizes the lack of concern with image and weight gain, which is also considered a reason for the profession's loss of prestige and glamor, linked to emphasized femininity (Connell, 2018; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2013; Messerschmidt et al., 2018). “Airlines only hired tall blondes, usually single, they had these criteria, most were women, men were few, right...because women always were, are...are loose change, women's beauty on a flight attracts passengers” (Mica).

Anchored, above all, by sexism and homophobia, the social construction of masculinities is directly linked to men's relationships with women and with other men (Connell, 2018; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2013; Duncanson, 2015). It was reported that situations of machismo and prejudice occur mainly in the relationship between cabin crew and pilots, despite the many homosexuals in the profession, most of them men.

They even say that there's a basis for it [preference for women or femininity] it's because in this pressurized environment, and sometimes when people are afraid or get very nervous, or they are heavily influenced by alcohol, you are better being served by this feminine touch. So, that's why sometimes, aviation has a preference even for effeminate men, regardless of whether they are gay or not, for more delicate men and for women too, the more delicate, the more girly she is, the more she goes, the more the airline will like her on its team (Tainã).

It is possible to notice that the social practices that involve the training and professional performance of the flight attendant reflect gender as a social embodiment (Connell, 2016). As

their professional training is based on fitting a mold and follows a gendered perspective, men and women mobilize their retrospective path, building the individual project in a dynamic of constant metamorphosis (DeLuca & Rocha-de-Oliveira, 2016). Thus, it is possible to perceive the relational character between people, organizations, and contexts in the career.

DISCUSSION: GENDER PROJECT(S) IN THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT CAREER

The research allowed us to understand that the construction of the flight attendant career since the training course points to the formulation of a gender project (Connell & Pearse, 2015; Schippers, 2007) that reveals a hierarchy of masculinities and femininities, reproduces institutionalized sexism with its own traits and reinforces hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity (Connell, 1987, 2018; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2013; Messerschmidt et al., 2018; Schippers, 2007). Anyone who does not fit (Häyrén, 2016) in the mold – an expression repeated in the training courses – culturally and socially constructed for this project is out of the career. There are multiple messages of exclusion (Häyrén, 2016), whether in failure in course subjects, in comments about inappropriate clothing or posture, in the results of selection processes, peer review of failures, or the evaluation of airlines.

The predominant project is codified and marked by sanctions and norms that define – in addition to appearance – rules on desires, emotions, and feelings, classifying them as proper or inappropriate to normalized and gendered standards. Thus, the production of gender (Connell, 1987, 2016, 2018), found locally and in a relational way (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2013; Messerschmidt et al., 2018), is supported by objective and subjective gender practices concerning hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities and emphasized femininities, agreed upon collectively. To this end, the potential for individual metamorphosis is mobilized (DeLuca et al., 2016; Velho, 2003) so that professionals move, build and/or transform, adapting to the field of career possibilities.

In aviation's highly gendered and military environment (Barry, 2007; Castelitti, 2020; Whitelegg, 2007), the career appears linked to mobility and freedom, characteristics historically linked to the males. However, under the protection of the normative order of femininity (Connell, 1987, 2016, 2018), a “female work” space is built – based on seduction, delicacy, and the unique ability to make the hours within the pressurized environment of the plane a pleasurable experience, enhancing emotional labor (Barry, 2007; Sangster & Smith, 2016). As it is a career marked by a significant female presence, the deconstruction of the space of freedom is present in the relations with the male occupation (pilots) also linked to aviation. In this context, masculinities and femininities are gender projects perceived in everyday, dynamic and relational processes and actions, not a static configuration. The analysis of the gender project(s) that mold(s) the career of flight attendants can be produced in different stages, added and, sometimes, superimposed, in four relational points, a continuous process of negotiation and metamorphosis of individual projects (Velho, 2003).

First, the career is desired by young people who initially see the glamor of the activity, allowing a change of life for the remuneration and the lifestyle made possible by the constant movement, providing freedom and access to places that perhaps they would not access or would have more difficulty accessing in a traditional career. In addition, for young homosexuals, moving away from the context of origin is reported as freedom for greater expression of their sexuality (Tiemeyer, 2013). Career construction is structured in gender binarism and is guided by intersections that involve elements, sometimes in contradiction: militarization and the idea of security, characteristics of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987, 2018), are structured in complementarity to a particular type of femininity, which harmonizes with the femininity/masculinity expected of the homosexual man. In the name of freedom, young people are willing to undergo individual metamorphoses that are, above all, regulated and directed behaviors to achieve objective purposes (DeLuca et al., 2016). When faced with conflicts and dilemmas (Hughes, 1937), the individual projects of aspiring professionals dialogue and negotiate the lived reality as they metamorphose projects inspired by the framework of gender projects that are collectively constructed.

Second, the field of possibilities for the career of flight attendants is mainly marked by the military heritage and the hierarchy of occupations. Training occurs by formatting flight attendants and pilots within this field. Homophobia is veiled but not absent, given that all aspects of the feminine are mentioned as subaltern, except for what serves as a complement to hegemonic masculinity – which is also the case with the acceptance of masculine gay men (Tiemeyer, 2013) in the career, but in a subordinate way, as pointed out in Connell's theory (2018). The discourse generated by the professional hierarchy requires adjustments in individual projects, which go through metamorphoses and negotiation and are compensated by the freedom and financial status provided. The field of action, which emerged as a space of labor freedom for women, was conditioned according to patterns of masculinity and femininity hierarchy (Barry, 2007; Sangster & Smith, 2016; Santin & Kelly, 2017; Whitelegg, 2007) throughout time, showing that gender practices involve dynamic relationships (Ferree, 2018) between people, occupations, and contexts. The activity that was initially predominantly female is now occupied by men who are subordinate to the hegemonic masculinity represented by the pilots. Even if a male flight attendant is not homosexual (which is the most frequent stereotype), his masculinity is subordinated to that of the pilots.

Third, the production of masculinities and femininities that represent the career is highlighted. The process is a gendered standardization or standardized gendering that starts in the training courses. Although the content has no relation to sex-gender, all learning is gendered. The movements are binary, indicating different ways of acting for men and women. The relationship with pilots is normalized in a hierarchy of masculinities and femininities: pilots (apparently, regardless of sexuality) represent the hegemonic masculinity and assume the top of the crew hierarchy. Other masculinities and femininities are subjugated to this one whenever they are in interaction, something that is constantly emphasized in the formation. In this sense, it is clear that there is a continuous movement between careers and contexts that approximate

the perspective of Mayrhofer et al. (2007) with the theoretical framework of Connell (1987, 2016, 2018), which considers the dynamics of the social structure and the possibility of expanding and restricting collective agency (Messerschmidt et al. 2018), going beyond the notion of gender as attributes or individual and fixed characteristics. However, it is observed that collective constructions require individual metamorphoses. The set formed by hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities and by the emphasized femininity and its variations – in the sense of cooperation with the dominant gender regime (Connell, 1987, 2018; Messerschmidt et al., 2018; Schippers, 2007) – is a reference in the formation and in the stereotypes that have marked the history of the profession and that remain in vogue, in particular: the issue of the body, weight, age, and sexuality.

However, the interviewees perceive that there is a transformation process, especially concerning image and personal appearance, since, in their career experience, the demand does not occur with the same rigidity of the training courses. A new metamorphosis may be underway (DeLuca et al., 2016), and the idea that gender relations are historical and dynamic, and can be modified, especially at the local level, is reinforced (Messerschmidt et al., 2018), as in the case of organizational spaces. Commercial aviation is at the forefront of transport for the insertion of women at work (Barry, 2007; Whitelegg, 2007), the construction of a safe space for gay men (Tiemeyer, 2013), codes of ethics, and, recently, valorization of diversity and inclusion.

Fourth, collectively, in addition to the groups directly involved – female and male students and flight attendants – there is a diversity of professionals who are part of career training and who set the tone on what is technically required and what must be the mold to be fit in, aesthetically. This group includes military reserve, instructors who were flight attendants and/or who worked in vanguard airlines such as the Brazilian Varig, pilots, flight mechanics, personal image consultants, coaches, and photographers specialists in the flight attendant career. It is also the people who teach what one should think about the profession, going beyond the determination of the specific practice by pointing out other external concepts. Preparing flight attendants goes beyond training to perform in-flight activities in that it dictates how to do such activities on a gender basis.

It is noted that there may be masculinities and/or femininities that collectively dominate a profession and strain the metamorphosis to adjust individual projects within an expected gender project through individual objective and subjective negotiations. DeLuca et al. (2016) highlighted that any project, even if individual, refers to others or the social environment. This construction arises from the formation, which emphasizes security as a central point and reinforces the servile character expected in the occupation. Understanding gender relations as dynamic and relational and the exercise of power by consent (Connell, 1987, 2018; Messerschmidt et al., 2018), ideas intrinsic to the concept of hegemonic masculinity show the potential for change over time. In the professional field, the expression of masculinity and femininity as products of social interactions is inscribed and reproduced from the training process and marks even the relationships established between colleagues outside the workspace.

From the construction of the career of flight attendants, the importance of understanding the relationship between individual production and the body as a social practice that explains

the social structure of relationships makes sense (Connell, 2016). Furthermore, it can be seen that, in addition to the objectively produced aspects, due to the professional requirement of a gendered mold, it is through appearance, attitudes, gestures, and symbolic elements that masculinities and femininities are arranged. Gender “is about the linking of other fields of social practice to the nodal practices of engendering, childbirth and parenting [...] gender in this connection is a process rather than a thing. [...] If we could use the word ‘gender’ as a verb [...] it would be better for our understanding” (Connell, 1987, p. 140). As warned by Connell and Pearse (2015, p.156), “our gender practice is powerfully shaped by the gender order in which we find ourselves.” Thus, gender structure crosses all the contexts in which careers are constructed.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study advances the discussion on gendered careers by bringing the notion of gender projects intertwined in professional fields, empirically exploring the career of flight attendants. There are gender projects associated with careers that direct and shape women and men, regardless of sexuality, for the individual binary construction is considered appropriate-natural or inappropriate-unnatural in normative opposition. The gender framework guides social and organizational relationships of the collective career, favoring traditional references about expected and/or permitted masculinities and femininities, which makes it possible to extend this analysis to other professions and occupational spaces. It is noteworthy that, although it was not the focus of this study, the notion of gender projects is experienced in the imbrication of gender and sexuality.

It is recalled that the theoretical approach by Hughes (1937) and Velho (2003) discussed by DeLuca et al. (2016) gains new dimensions in the discussion of gender studies and the notion of masculinities and femininities as gender projects (Connell, 2016; Schippers, 2007). Alignment takes place through the marking of gender in the field of possibilities, regarding the career’s objective and subjective aspects; in understanding the negotiation of reality and metamorphosis, linking conflicts and dilemmas faced on the way through different worlds; in the notion of project related to the recursion between person, group and institution, and in the notion of project related to memory.

Circulation in different worlds starts from the first day of entry of future flight attendants into the courses. Everyone must change how they dress, walk, sit, relate to their bodies, fix their hair, and take care of their skin and nails. The process does not deal with something individual because it includes the group; it presents “successful examples” of former students who were hired: “you either fit in, or you are out.” Sometimes experiencing dilemmas and conflicts, the negotiation of reality takes place as the personal metamorphosis is experienced in the collective of the class and the institution. Those who are outside will perceive it. Due to the connection with gender, it cannot be said that such metamorphoses do not cause damage. The price to be part of certain “worlds,” especially the “professional world,” is to build an accepted project according to the ideals of masculinity and femininity.

Therefore, the objective part of the career, in relation to status and positions, and, even more, the subjective part, the interpretations that occur in individual and collective interactions, can be experienced in a particular way according to gender. Dilemmas and conflicts arising from objective and subjective interactions during life are influenced by representations historically constructed for each professional place. If aspects related to gender are added to others, such as class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality, the objective and subjective possibilities give rise to other dilemmas and conflicts.

Gender specificities are present in the individual or collective career project and mark the field of available possibilities. The training of flight attendants goes beyond the limits of archaic standards of social order, emphasizing the differentiated demands of men and women on their bodies, translating hierarchy made up as security and a reference to tradition. Sex and biological determinism are expressed as a condition and limitation of the professional place to be occupied. Professionalizing, in this case, means fitting the mold. The exercise of masculinity and femininity is the basis for the construction of gender as a verb – as it is a process and action that can be attributed to any professional activity – and indicates social practices that can lead to career limitations for anyone. However, for experiences of gender and sexuality different from the heteronormative pattern, the strength of contexts and interactions between social markers of differences imply amplified challenges. Considering that the individual career is built through objective and subjective elements and that these elements are gendered, either by historical construction or by the individual interpretation itself, presenting the negotiated collective career and its potential for metamorphosis is another point of theoretical advance.

In a predominantly female career, the study in the field of aviation shows how the social construction of gender in different professional fields prioritizes hegemonic masculinity. For the field of Administration, the reflection brought in the study allows for a deeper discussion on gender inequality beyond the discussion of the wage gap and the man/woman binarism. Different masculinities and femininities permeate the organizational space and are hierarchized in workspaces and opportunities. Thus, we advance in the complexity of gender discussion in organizations, highlighting that it is impossible to adopt a single and binary view to understand how the barriers of inequality emerge.

A possibility for future studies is resuming pioneering research, such as that of West and Zimmerman (1987). They used the ethnomethodological approach to explore the constitution of gender in routine interaction and how people are made accountable for gendered behaviors in the most different spheres of social life. In line with interactionist research, which uses careers as a lens to glimpse collective social processes (Barley, 1989), such as institutions and societies, designing and metamorphosing into non-binary processes remains an individual challenge in the face of an institutionally and socially reinforced collective project. The sociological view with the lens of a career accompanied by gender allows us to transpose the neutrality of research in the area and move the social frameworks considering markers relevant to career and gender, which were shown to be intersected with the research results as sexuality and class.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Aline Mendonça Fraga worked on the conceptualization and theoretical-methodological approach. The theoretical review was conducted by Sidinei Rocha-de-Oliveira. Data collection was coordinated by Aline Mendonça Fraga. Data analysis was performed by Aline Mendonça Fraga and Sidinei Rocha-De-Oliveira. Aline Mendonça Fraga and Sidinei Rocha-De-Oliveira worked together in the article's writing and final revision.