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Tales of the sea: Seafarers' sense of place in the management of socialities and safety culture at sea

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Abstract
Workplaces can be tricky for migrant workers like seafarers to navigate, especially on board cargo ships which in recent times have become multi-ethnic in composition. Diverse cultures and individual differences can pose challenges to working relationships on board, which in turn can have negative implications on operational safety. In this context, the article highlights the role of seafarers' sense of place in enacting harmonious socialities and safety culture on board. Sense of place refers to marked positioning in space where seafarers conduct themselves in relation to others in terms of hierarchy. In turn, this helps fashion collective mind among seafarers as a way of dealing with the challenges of life at sea, including operational safety on board. This article draws from data gathered from fieldwork on board four ocean-going cargo ships and informal conversations with seafarers in seafarer centers in the UK between 2010 and 2020.

Keywords
collective mind**,** heedful interrelating, seafarers, sense of place, spatial practices

Introduction

On a daily basis, thousands of miles aways from home, seafarers work and live on board ocean-going cargo ships that have become more and more ethnically diverse in recent times (Alderton and Winchester, 2002; Sampson, 2013). A seafarer told me that he once worked on board a ship that had a crew complement of 10 nationalities. This situation poses challenges and complications in social relations which could negatively impact safety operations on board. For instance, the importance of bridge team management, proper coordination and good communication between and among crew is highlighted by a study that shows how communication failure is ranked second in the immediate causes of maritime accidents reported by the maritime administrations of the UK, Australia, USA, New Zealand, Germany and Denmark between 2002-2016 (Acejo et al., 2018).

In any given time, there are more than 50,000 cargo ships traversing the world's waterways (ICS, 2024), from the narrowest river channels to vast remote oceans, and the majority of these ships conduct their passage and business without any problems. There are many factors that underpin the generally safe working and living conditions on board cargo ships, such as advancement in technology that plays an important role in securing safe navigation at sea. For instance, the introduction of Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) provides seafarers with better and more accurate navigational information to plan their routes (Marine Insight, 2024). With the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW-95) Convention, the global shipping industry now has a clear set of requirements for the types of certificates that seafarers need and the procedures that maritime administrations must carry out (ILO, 2004: 83).[1] This helps regulate and standardize the education and training of seafarers prior to their deployment at sea.

The norms of socialization and interaction also dictate how the crew structures their daily lives and makes sense of their individual roles and responsibilities at sea. In the case of Filipino seafarers who attended maritime academies, for example, they undergo "a ritualistic socialization" (Abila, 2016) even before they find work at sea that centers around adherence to discipline and recognition of hierarchy. On board, seafarers learn the importance of heedful interrelating as they realize that in the context of life at sea where every day operational safety is paramount.

Heedful interrelating refers to the "deliberate efforts […] to constantly reconsider the effects of [workers'] actions in relation to the goals and actions of others and to the broader context" (Weick and Roberts, 1993, as cited in, Grote et al., 2010: 212). Heedful interrelating (Weick and Roberts, 1993) among seafarers is facilitated by the constitution of space on board and the attendant spatial practices that come with it. Embeddedness to the marked positioning in space—where everyone is placed in relation to others, and where emplacement and movement in space condition the conduct of life—helps secure safety management at sea. The acting out of proper placement of one's body in space, aiding seafarers to conduct themselves in relation to others in terms of hierarchy[2], is what I refer to as seafarers' sense of place.

The elucidation of how sense of place is experienced and performed by seafarers contributes to a more nuanced exposition of how workers make use of space, and are shaped and directed by space in the context of their working lives. While there have been numerous studies of workplaces and how their design and architecture "influence[s] behavior through the

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[1] The Convention was amended in 2010 in Manila, Philippines. The STCW Manila Amendments, as it is called, further strengthened measures aimed at improving training in relation to changing on board technology, combatting fraudulent practices associated with certificates of competency, etc. (IMO, 2024).

[2] In this article, hierarchy only pertains to rank and does not include race and ethnicity, which are also other layers to the experience of hierarchy on board (e.g. racialized hierarchy) (see, for example, McKay, 2021).

messages [they] send," (Baldry, 1999: 536) there is a gap in our understanding of the relationship between social norms and living/working spaces on board ships and how it plays a role in managing socialities at sea. Migrant workplaces are an interesting area to reflect on the role of space and spatial practices in the maintenance of hierarchy since they are populated by people coming from varying racial and ethnic backgrounds like cargo ships. McKay (2021) has shown how an intersectional and spatial reading of boundary-making alerts us to how "national differences [on board ships], segmented and gendered through the global labor market, also become racialized and reproduced" (McKay, 2021: 697). Following McKay (2021), this article highlights the importance of spatial approach to understanding socialities at sea. It is inspired by the schemata laid out by Garrido (2013) in his study of sense of place of villagers and squatters in Metro Manila through their segregating and integrating spatial practices. Focusing on the role of shipboard rank, this article elaborates on how spatial practices help secure the maintenance of hierarchy on board for the development of sense of place among seafarers. Thus, the call of Baldry et al. (1998) on the need for the reincorporation of the physical work environment into any analysis of the labor process (Dale, 2005: 661) was timely then as it is now, especially among workers in racially and ethnically diverse workplaces like cargo ships.

This article is a critical reflection on my decade-long engagement with seafarers and fieldwork experience at sea, in relation to how seafarers enact their sense of place on board and how this is sewn into social dynamics and culture of safety at sea. Focusing on seafarers' sense of place contributes to a more personal and intimate understanding of how migrants working in culturally diverse workplaces are positioned in both physical and mental spaces as a way to manage and practice discipline and hierarchy. In turn, how spaces are managed and practiced bear upon how safety culture is enacted in seafarers' everyday lives at sea. Theoretically, this article highlights the salience of workspace management and organizational space (Halford, 2004; Klotz, 2020; Waber et al., 2014) in understanding workers' lives and experiences and how this could be extended to migrant workers' experience in their workplaces and spaces of work (Chan and Latham, 2022; Ngai, 2009). Furthermore, this article endeavors to add a personal dimension to how collective mind (Weick and Roberts, 1993) works in organizations by implicating sense of place in the constitution of harmonious relations and safety culture at sea.

Research methodology

My interest in how seafarers from different backgrounds maintain harmonious relationships on board and, by extension, how culture of safety is managed at sea, started when I began my preparation for fieldwork in a seafarers' center back in 2010. Reading up, I realized how potentially challenging life at sea is primarily, in relation to intercultural interactions among seafarers of varying racial and ethnic backgrounds. During my fieldwork, seafarers explained to me how they navigate the crewing diversity in most ships that they were on. They told me that it is very important to get along well with the crew, and forging smooth relations on board means recognizing the importance of hierarchy on board and how one makes use of spaces on board. "Knowing one's place," is how one seafarer put it for me. This helped me navigate life on board once I embarked on my first shipboard ethnography in 2014, though as a novice, I had my fair share of challenges and difficulties. My successive voyages with seafarers furthered my understanding of how management and conduct of oneself in shipboard spaces matters in relation to socialities and safety management.

During my fieldwork on board and in seafarers' centers, I maintained two sets of fieldnotes: The first one contains data related to the topic of my research; the second one is all about my other observations in the field, including concerns extraneous to the purpose of my fieldwork. There were overlaps, of course, but what went into my second fieldnotes were

whatever piqued my personal interest, some random thoughts—such are ideas that could be pursued some other time—experience of time on board, personal problems confided to me by seafarers, social practices on board, etc. These were my tales of the field. Coupled with my earlier interest in how seafarers maintain harmonious socialities on board, these tales of the field provided me the impetus to reflect on the importance of sense of place among seafarers.

Ethnography, as the backbone of my research methodology, provided me with materials that I organized and made sense over the years. My fieldnotes included my thoughts and observations from my experiences on board and conversations with the crew, most of whom were ABs[3] and junior officers, during their free time. From time to time, when I was on the bridge[4] spending time with officers on watchkeeping duties, some senior seafarers would drop by either to kill time or consult operations manuals. I made use of their time and presence to discuss issues that interested me. Some conversation points included the lay-out of cabins on board, who get to use what and how ratings[5] conduct themselves in the presence of officers.

The fieldwork covered in this study was conducted in different sites—in seafarers' centers and on board ships over the course of 10 years. The multi-sited fieldwork (Marcus, 1995) undertaken allows for nuanced and layered rendering of spatial management and practices of seafarers. I sailed on four ships crewed with 98 seafarers in total, between 2014 and 2018. The ships that I sailed on included (1) a reefer container, (2) an oil tanker, (3) a bulk carrier and (4) a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) tanker. Each voyage took six weeks on average. I also undertook fieldwork in four seafarers' centers in the UK between 2010 and 2020, where I stayed an average of three to four weeks per visit. The seafarers that I met in these centers came from all over the world, whereas the seafarers that I sailed with mostly came from the Philippines, and the rest, mostly senior officers, were from Europe and the United States.

I asked the following questions which helped me come up with themes to focus on in the article:

1. What are the main features of the accommodation block on board and who gets what?
2. What are the forms of socialization on board?
3. Where does socialization take place and who participates where and why?
4. How do officers and ratings come together and avoid each other at the same time during working and rest hours?
5. How do discipline and hierarchy manifest in everyday life on board?

Fieldnotes where thematically organized and coded using NVivo 12. Following this, two main themes emerged which became the main data sections of the article: (1) the spatial lay-out of accommodation quarters and how the crew make use of the spaces on board, and (2) the segregating and integrating spatial practices that help instill discipline and deepen the recognition of hierarchy on board.

When I introduced myself to my research participants, on board ships and in seafarers' centers, I explicitly explained that my observations would not only cover issues related to the research that I was working on, but could also include other things of interest to me. All data

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[3] Able-Bodied (AB) seafarer is one of the ratings (collective term) in the deck department, the other being Ordinary Seafarer (OS). Together with OS, ABs are tasked to assist in the repair and maintenance of ship equipment and facilities, though they also perform specialised tasks, like watchkeeping duties during navigation.
[4] The bridge is the main control center of a vessel, from where officers on duty are able to man the entire operations of the vessel. It is generally located in a position with an unrestricted view and immediate access to the essential areas of a ship (MarineInsight, 2020).
[5] Ratings is a collective term for seafarers who perform support work for officers in relation to ship repair and maintenance. Ratings fall under three general categories; those forming part of a watch (deck or engine), undergoing training, and not assigned watch-keeping duties (Safety4sea, 2019).

in the article are pseudonymized. Access to seafarers' centers and on board ships was granted by seafarers' center managers and shipping management companies. My being a Filipino helped me foster rapport fast and easily with Filipino seafarers who constituted the majority of the crew of the ships that I sailed on. It was different though with other nationalities. While other nationalities welcomed my presence, there had also been instances of "rough sailing" on board (see, for instance, Turgo and Sampson, 2021). \

Ethics approval for the fieldwork from which data were used in this article was granted by the School Research Ethics Committee of the School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University.

Collective mind and heedful interrelating

Regardless of potential challenges to operational safety on board due to factors such as multi-ethnic crew composition and commercial pressure, seafaring exhibits organizational performance where continuous operational reliability prevails. Akin to aircraft carriers and other related organizations, seafaring "require[s] nearly effort-free operations all the time because otherwise they are capable of experiencing catastrophes" (Weick and Roberts, 1993: 357). Classic examples of such catastrophes when operational mishaps occurred include the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989 (NTSB, 1990) and, more recently in 2018, when all 32 crew on board "Sanchi" perished off the coast of Shanghai when it collided with a cargo ship (OCIMP, 2018).

Seafaring can be described as belonging to that umbrella of "organizations concerned with reliability enact[ing] aggregate mental processes that are more fully developed than those found in organizations concerned with efficiency (Weick and Roberts, 1993: 357)." While maritime accidents happen on a regular basis, these are mostly minor ones, which sadly at times claim lives. Major accidents, like the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, as previously mentioned, cause damage to lives, properties and the environment. It is for this reason that ship operations need to be flawlessly executed at all times, leaving little room for error as infractions have the potential to incur disastrous consequences, and thus, in so many ways, collective mind underpins everyday operations on board.

Weick and Roberts (1993: 357) defined collective mind as a "pattern of heedful interrelations of actions in a social system." "Mind" is referred to as a disposition or propensity to act in a certain manner or style, and "heedful" as applying one's mind and concentrating (Weick and Roberts, 1993: 357). In other words, collective mind refers to a team or an organization that acts intelligently as a collection of individuals (Solansky and Stringer, 2019: 61). An organization that exhibits a collective mind is a product of a working environment that supports and facilitates acting intelligently for the purpose of extracting the best and safest outcome for work done. At the heart of collective mind in organizations is heedful interrelating, where workers "look out for one another by subordinating their idiosyncratic intentions to the effective functioning of the system" (Druskat and Pescosolido, 2002, as cited in, Sia and Duari, 2018: 3227).

Examining collective mind at work and at sea invites us to reflect on the role of socialities on board in the maintenance of reliable operations, and safety at sea and in port. In relation to shipboard work dynamics, different departments of the ship and their crews (deck, engine and galley) coordinate clockwork plans and schedules of deliverables. Seafarers need to do what they are required to do because evasion or failure could mean endangering everyone's life. The crew are expected to act intelligently and perform their assigned work because they know they need each other at all times. Their expertise complements each other's. Teamwork defines life at sea.

As a collection of individuals from different countries working together for an extended period of time and in close proximity on a daily basis, seafarers are properly socialized upon their arrival, in the briefest period of time, to cooperate with one another. They practice heedful

interrelating, following rules and coordinating work with individuals they meet for the first time. Their minds are predisposed to recognizing cooperation, following rules and authority. Seafarers follow instructions, in close coordination with people they know and believe have the required expertise and skills; they are set to act in tandem with others.

Heedful interrelating underpinning collective mind offers us a good way to understand how proper and intelligent coordination at work takes place. However, in the case of seafaring, heedful interrelating does not fully capture how collective mind develops over time and is maintained in a working environment like in a ship. Sense of place plays the role in helping develop collective mind on board. Sense of place complements and provides materiality to heedful interrelating by considering the role and importance of space on board and its attendant spatial practices. Given the importance of occupational culture on board—where discipline and submission to hierarchy underpin everyday life (Sampson, 2013, 2021)—the consideration of sense of place allows for a better understanding of how collective mind frames the logic of work coordination and safety culture in an ethnically and culturally diverse working environment.

Sense of place
Site ontology asserts that social life is tied to a context (site) of which it is inherently a part of (Schatzki, 2005: 465). Every workplace, therefore, represents its own occupational culture with varying work practices, including forms of socialization in places. Site ontology is very important to seafaring in terms of the materiality of thought and information flow and processes. The physical structure of the ship—its layout—allows and designs the social interrelations of seafarers in space, creating a flow of shared system of knowledge that is passed on from one cargo ship to another. Site ontology embeds seafarers to an occupational spatial culture where discipline and the recognition of hierarchy play an important role in everyday life (Sampson, 2013). The choreography of space on board, most evident in how the living spaces are arranged, underpins the everyday performance of interactions among and between seafarers.

Sense of place is a multidimensional construct often used to encompass the concepts of place identity, place attachment and place dependence, which are frequently understood as representing cognitive, affective and conative dimensions (Urquhart and Acott, 2014: 5). For others, sense of place describes the mental, emotional and functional bonds that an individual or group develops toward a specific location (Mullendore et al., 2015: 68). It is that bond that draws one to a particular village, a town or a city. One's bond could be stronger than others based on a multiplex of factors. For instance, seafarers' strong sense of occupational identity (Sampson, 2013) could be attributed to their sense of place.

However, there are other ways to frame sense of place. Focusing on the material and cognitive dimension of sense of place could shed light on people's response to micro-specificities of places—like how spaces are organized and how the organization of space impacts on individuals' emplacement and status construction in places. The local environment sets boundaries and gives form to these constructions (Stedman, 2003: 671). In terms of cognitive maps that seafarers form on board, how they think of the ship as "representation of the environment and representing a form of spatial cognition" (Garrido, 2013: 1345) needs further consideration. One way to do it is to frame sense of place as an "attitude toward a spatial setting" (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2006: 317), especially as this attitude implicates the organization of space and how people position themselves in relation to it and the people who inhabit the same place.

There is a hierarchy to how spaces are arranged in places which serves as a reflection of hierarchy in people. Sense of place, as elaborated by Garrido (2013) in his study of segregating practices of villagers and squatters in Metro Manila, helps us frame the kind of

spatial (em)placement people commit themselves to as an act to differentiate and segregate. Following this, sense of place is therefore about "a commitment to the relative status positioning […] as expressed through separation in space" (Garrido, 2013: 1343). This underlines the kind of controlled and choreographed spatial co-existence that seafarers experience and practice on board. This then helps shape how collective mind develops overtime among seafarers.

There is a need to explorer how "space and place determine personal experience and social practice, and [how] architecture plays an active role in the microscale for channelling, moving, and impacting [up] on those in the space" (Woof and Skinns, 2018: 565). The sense of place undertaken by seafarers allows us to connect it to the performance of collective mind at sea where spatial practices play an important role. Looking at spatial practices as a way to status positioning (Garrido, 2013) allows us to engage more meaningfully with the conduct of workers in the workplace, in general, and seafarers, in particular.

Sense of place, socialities and safety management on board
The structure of space on board

Cargo vessels are divided into three workstations, namely, the deck (cargo section), the engine room and the galley (kitchen). The crew is divided into three groups: Those who work in the engine room, on the deck and in the galley. The captain is at the top of the pecking order and is directly responsible for the day-to-day running of the ship. The engine room is headed by the chief engineer, the deck by the chief mate (who drafts the job order for the deck crew on a daily basis in consultation with the captain) and the galley by the chief cook. Seafarers are further divided into two groups, ratings and officers, and within officers there are senior and junior officers. The senior officers, commonly referred to as the Big Four, include the captain, the chief engineer, the chief mate and the second engineer. Officers plan and manage the daily work on board, while ratings execute the work assigned to them by officers.

As both a place of work and residence, the separation and contiguity in space are both well-experienced and articulated on board ships where, regardless of rank and nationality, crew members work and live together for extended periods of time. Interacting with each other is almost always inevitable. They move around in a very constrained and limiting/limited space, and by the time the seafarers end their contract, some would be familiar with each other's life stories.[6]

The difference in rank is also marked by the difference in the distribution and occupation of space on board. Officers and ratings do not share spaces in some select facilities on board. The living quarters of officers occupy the upper deck, usually a floor below the bridge, while the ratings are consigned to the lower decks. In a way, proximity in space also occasions a well-pronounced and well-experienced separation of and in space, and as a result, as this article argues, a well-developed sense of place among seafarers. This sense of place helps seafarers navigate the politics of everyday life on board and socializes them to the demands and expectations of their rank. Concomitantly, sense of place helps in the preservation, normalization and maintenance of discipline, hierarchy and control on board, which are important elements in the management of people from varying ethnic backgrounds

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[6] It is often said by seafarers that they are at sea not to make friends, but to earn money. Thus, based on my experience, while everyone maintains very friendly interactions with everyone, socialities are often contractual, though there are cases where enduring friendships are created. One seafarer, for instance, told me how he made the chief mate on his previous ship a godfather to his firstborn. On one of the ships I sailed on, as I often spent time with the third mate during his watchkeeping duties, I was already familiar with most of his life stories by the time I left the ship.

and faiths, among many individual and collective differences found on cargo ships (Sampson, 2013).

All seafarers work at their designated workstations according to their job description and work allocation, allowing for a free-wheeling interaction of officers and ratings on a daily basis. However, outside of work and in their free time, there are designated facilities for the exclusive use of officers and ratings. For example, ships have dedicated mess halls and lounges for ratings and officers, and after work, ratings and officers socialize in their own designated spaces. This was evident in some of the ships I sailed on, where the crew were allowed to drink a can or bottle (or two) of beer every Saturday, and officers and ratings gathered in their respective lounge to socialize. Usually, there was no mixing of crew members, but sometimes, for a brief period, some senior officers would drop by the ratings' lounge and join in the fun. However, there was never a time when ratings visited the officers' lounge to do the same.

Crew members also rarely shared accommodation. On many cargo ships nowadays, each crew member has their own en suite cabin, and the officers' cabins are considerably larger than the ratings'. For example, the captain's and chief engineer's cabins would have their own day room, while other officers would also have a small reception room in their sleeping quarters. The rest of the crew have basic amenities: A bed, a side table, a sofa and their own en suite toilet. The ratings organize their own cabins, while the senior officers are usually serviced by the messman (a member of the galley staff).

All the ships I boarded, except the first one, had separate laundry facilities for ratings and officers. The ratings' laundry room was always busy, but they never used the officers' laundry room. As a guest on board, I had the rare privilege of using both, whichever was less busy or not in use. Senior officers' (usually captains and chief engineers) laundry, in most cases, was not done by themselves but by a designated messman.

Segregating spatial practices
The design of places and the division of places into spaces are never fair. As Baldry (1999: 536) puts it, a work building is never a passive container. Whether it is about the economy and productive use of space or about the rendition and articulation of certain beliefs, spatial arrangements symbolically convey rules of engagement and interaction. The sorting of spaces is also about status positioning in place and space, indicating where one belongs and the limits in engaging with others.

On board ships, the segregation of space allows for the smooth traffic of bodies and choreographed interaction among the crew. This reflects the hierarchical nature of the social body on board. Rank, therefore, is also expressed spatially, in accordance with how spaces are distributed and restricted to those who belong to the lower rank of the working order. Hierarchy according to rank is of course not unique on board. As Levy and Reiche (2018: 868) put it:

> Social hierarchies are prevalent across a range of social organization, including complex and diverse organizations. [...] They can be viewed as a mechanism – formal or informal – that ranks individuals and groups on the basis of socially valued dimensions or various forms of capital.

As seafarers move around in their own space in their free time, they become accustomed to staying in their own space and shunning the possibility of breaching others' designated space. For instance, I never witnessed any ratings coming into the officers' lounge unless they were asked to, usually for errand purposes. On my last ship, I was given permission by the captain to use the officers' lounge for my interviews with the crew. Compared to the ratings' lounge which was bare and quite smelly, as some ratings smoked in the room, the officer's lounge was

a pleasant room, tastefully decorated with reproduction copies of contemporary paintings and always immaculately maintained.

Like the officers, as a guest on board, I had the freedom to move around the accommodation area, from the officer's accommodation quarters down to the ratings', when I did my exercise routine. However, I observed that the ship's ratings who were doing the same exercise routine often restricted themselves to their accommodation area and the deck. Breaching of spaces, or spatial intrusions, are not taken lightly even when committed by officers, especially by junior officers, for a reason. There seems to be an unwritten rule that officers are not supposed to spend an extended period of time socializing with ratings, especially in the ratings' common areas. For example, a third officer spent his free time socializing with the ratings since it was his first contract as a junior officer. Wanting to foster good relationships with the ratings who were all much older than him, he joined them after meals playing cards or watching movies. Later on, I noticed his absence in some of the after-work-hour socialization of ratings. I asked him about it and he replied that he was advised by a senior officer to limit his attendance at these gatherings. He further explained that the senior officer thought that officers should maintain a measured distance from ratings to be respected.

Segregating practices impact how seafarers view themselves and their social behavior on board. For example, in the case of ratings, I noticed that they were usually in their element in their mess halls and lounges and in corridors of their living quarters: Loud and rambunctious. Many would have swagger in their movements and every Saturday night when they socialized with abandon in their lounge. In a sense, they were on their own turf. But when displaced from their own space, they were sheepish and silent. I remember occasions when in senior officers' presence, ratings hardly spoke except to answer questions thrown at them. I had numerous instances of observing these moments from the sidelines, and I was surprised by the highly choreographed ways by which ratings conducted themselves: They stood to attention, their bodies stiff and eyes downcast, and they were very attentive to every word said by the officers. This was most evident in the ship's office or any senior officer's office when junior officers, ratings and cadets were called for an errand or some queries to answer. They knew how to conduct their bodies in space and they were there to perform their role as subordinates. They had to speak the grammar of obedience and compliance.

Integrating spatial practices

While segregating practices permeate everyday life on board, there are times when both officers and ratings come together and hierarchical barriers are temporarily suspended. As Garrido (2013: 1357) puts it, "[i]ntegrating practices limited by a sense of place represent an exceptional suspension of spatial boundaries […]." In this case, the spatial divide between ratings and officers is not impervious to breaches and recalibrations. Segregation in space is violated and reversed from time to time as a way to taper off and manage the orchestrated difference between ratings and officers. These may be short, periodic and intentional breaches of spatial divide where the difference is temporarily suspended: An occasional visit of senior officers to the ratings' lounge, or paying for food and drinks (and serving them, too) by the senior and junior officers to ratings during shore leaves. As explained by Garrido (2013:1348) in relation to his study of integrating practices of homeowners and their domestics in Metro Manila, "[b]y reducing the spatial distance between themselves and members of the subordinate group, members of the dominant group enhance their legitimacy."

On one of the ships, ratings would usually spend their time in the coffee room or in the lounge after dinner. They either played cards or talked about mundane things, such as the latest domestic issues that they read on social media. On one of these nights, as some of the ratings were having fun (playing the guitar, etc.), a senior officer joined in and started to chat with the crew. They shared a good laugh together. Some minutes later, the senior officer left, and the

crew continued with what they were doing once he was gone. One of the ratings present told me that he liked the senior officer because he had time to drop by the coffee room to check in on them regularly. Other officers, he said, would only interact with them during working hours.

However, this practice of spatial intrusion does not happen all the time, and not all senior officers do it. They do it either unintentionally (they could be looking for somebody) or intentionally. The purpose was to break the barrier, to make the ratings feel that the atmosphere should be more relaxed after work and that officers are not much different from them. Spatial intrusion of officers, especially of senior officers, if done at the right time, helps in the recalibration and readjustment of social relations on board, where ratings would feel that their officers are no different from them and that they are ready and willing to share their space. These gestures, albeit short, are well-appreciated by the crew. They help deepen the importance of interrelating with one another regardless of rank. Ratings are made more aware of the need to respect hierarchy and to follow rules since their officers have shown kindness and magnanimity in reaching out to them. This then facilitates a better working relationship between the crew when following instructions, focusing on one's assigned work and not going beyond one's work remit frame everyday logic of work and safety culture on board.

Integrating practices do not undermine the status quo on board; in fact, these help strengthen it. Such practices enable the temporary suspension of the social divide between ratings and officers. With these spatial practices, the materiality of the space they inhabit becomes undifferentiated and common to all. However, such breaches in the barrier are never two-way; these can only be performed by officers. The powerful can play the role of a magnanimous being for a certain period of time, but not the powerless. The ratings are always expected to act their rank which translates to being meek and compliant. In performing integrating practices, officers allow for the temporary suspension of the demands of spatial division on board and, by doing so, further strengthen their hold and power over the ratings. This temporary suspension then allows for the integration of discipline in the conduct of daily life on board, including heedful interrelating with others.

Bend it like seafarers: Knowing one's place on board
As with most cargo ships, seafarers come from different cultural and faith backgrounds (ILO, 2004; Sampson, 2013). Misunderstanding and miscommunication are always a possibility, which could have a detrimental impact on social relationships on board and on the overall operation of the ship. However, the crew maintains a harmonious relationship on board regardless of the crew composition and the challenges posed by their working environment. This article argues that in addition to the use of modern technology, better education and training of seafarers and stringent implementation of maritime regulations, we need to consider the role of sense of place in the constitution of collective mind among seafarers and how it directs and shapes seafarers' recognition of hierarchy on board.

In the everyday life at sea, officers and ratings have their own place and space to occupy. They are expected to stay there and not step over the boundary, which may lead to potential work disruptions which could be disastrous, if not fatal. Nonetheless, officers have a better mastery and consumption of place and space, as they have more proprietary claim to all spaces and places on board compared to ratings. For instance, while officers might intrude into the ratings' lounge during social activities, ratings are more constrained to do the same in the officers' lounge; officers do not need to explain themselves why they are in the space of ratings when they have their own space. Ratings cannot do the same, and if they do, they have to explain themselves or should have the permission of officers to do so. It is for this reason that while everyone knows their proper use of place and space on board, ratings know well that they have more limitations than officers do. They know their place on board.

Sense of place on board is rooted in the cognitive mechanisms of hierarchy and managed socialities of life at sea. There is a predisposition among seafarers to believe that sense of place is very much needed and required in the context of the challenging and demanding life at sea. Toeing the line, following rules, respecting hierarchy—these are all needed for their own good and the good of the entire crew. Seafarers need to put the interests of everyone behind their own. Once seafarers are socialized to the spaces on board, and the division of space between working and resting, the difference between officers and ratings, and of public and private life, it becomes easy for them to understand and adapt to the social needs and demands of life at sea. How spaces are managed and lived-in on board help secure the development of collective mind among seafarers.

The internalization of compliance brought about by sense of place helps seafarers visualize their placement in space and how they conduct themselves in the presence of others: Ratings know that they are on board to follow orders and only speak when spoken to, whereas officers are there to lead and issue orders. The segregating and integrating practices aid in securing compliance and agreement to hierarchy, and for the further development of collective mind on board. Sense of place thus becomes a part of the everyday repertoire of conduct as everyone anticipates what needs to be done in respect of others' needs. A life of seafaring becomes one big exercise of collective mind at work.

Conclusion

Migrant workers face unprecedented challenges ranging from physical and verbal abuse in the workplace (Cheung et al., 2019) and precarious housing conditions (Ling, 2022) to curtailed mobilities during the COVID-19 pandemic (Banta and Pratt, 2023). In workplaces, when exploitation and abuse are mitigated, migrant workers face the challenges of mastering the rules of the production floor or navigating the daily politics of working alongside others. Migrant workers also need to learn the grammar of obedience and submission to effectively fashion themselves as productive subjects. In the case of seafarers, their contained mobilities (Markkula, 2021) and ever-diverse workplace necessitate the need to get attuned to how spaces are structured to secure smooth and trouble-free operations at sea. Mastering the use of space and acting accordingly allow for the production of seafarers who heed and recognize the need for and importance of discipline and hierarchy in the workplace. In turn, harmonious socialities at sea are maintained, and safety management at sea is effected.

Sense of place as experienced and performed by seafarers is highlighted by looking at how spaces are shared and segregated among seafarers, and how this enrolls seafarers to the institutionalization of discipline and hierarchy on board in pursuit of collective mind at work. This article shows how the spaces on board, and their concomitant segregating and integrating practices, help police conduct and role playing—aiding in securing compliance to well managed and smooth heedful interrelating among crews. As Baldry (1999: 536) explains "the environmental cues reinforce what is socially defined as being appropriate or inappropriate." Each has his own place and role to play on board. Sense of place normalizes role expectations among seafarers which in turn embeds them to the equation of hierarchy on board, "keeping apart people recognized as categorically unequal" (Garrido, 2013: 1344).

This article made a case on how sense of place plays an important role in the constitution of managed and well-orchestrated life of seafarers on board. Furthermore, sense of place helps in the ironing out of differences brought about by different nationalities found on cargo ships. The embodied articulation of sense of place through spatial practices enables seafarers to maintain a sense of normality and cooperative co-living regardless of crews' differences, aiding in the furthering of collective mind at sea. Seafarers have developed a sense of place that allows them to position themselves appropriately in the expected norms based on their rank and in the equation of power on board, adapting accordingly to the rhythm of suitable

and needed spatial practices. They bend to rules and their expected roles, and practice heedful interrelating as ships agilely and securely roll and pitch to waves in adverse weather conditions.

On board ships, the traffic of bodies and the articulation of everyday life tell us much about not only how our "experience of workplaces is built up not only through our habituated ways of engaging our bodies with a certain materiality […] but also how the experience is constructed spatially in certain ways" (Dale, 2005: 657). Through segregating and integrating practices, seafarers enter into the shipboard matrix of rules, heeding role expectations—allowing for their smooth transition from one ship to another, regardless of ship type, after every contract. Regardless of new social and physical environment (different crew composition and ship), seafarers submit themselves to harmonious socialities on board and safety management at sea. This allows for operations on board to proceed full speed ahead regardless of varying differences that structure everyday life at sea.

The spatial practices cited in this article are primarily based on cargo ships crewed with multi-ethnic crews. This needs to be emphasized, as there are also ships that are complemented by full crews, meaning all seafarers are of the same nationality. In this instance, there could be variations to how spatial practices are executed. On ships with all Filipino crew complement, I was told that some captains prefer to have both officers and ratings in the crew mess hall or lounge (for ratings) for their social activities (such as Saturday night karaoke sessions). On the ships I sailed in, as some senior and junior officers were Filipinos, they would instead spend time with Filipino ratings after evening meals in the crew lounge rather than the officers' lounge. While indeed rank plays an important role in how spatial practices—both segregating and integrating—are played out on board and how sense of place is performed and experience by seafarers, race and ethnicity also contribute to variations and permutations of how hierarchy manifests on board and its attendant spatial practices (see, for instance, McKay, 2021). Another factor to consider is the issue of gender. As I only sailed once with one woman seafarer (a junior officer), it is difficult to talk about how gender plays out in spatial practices in relation to sense of place on board. This could be pursued in another article by future researchers in the maritime field.

The experience of seafarers on board cargo ships alerts us to the various ways in which the complexities and challenges of everyday life among migrant workers is first and foremost about their interaction with people within their physical space, and how this physical space socializes their ways with others. In dealing with this, the author looked into his own experience, aided by fieldnotes and interview data from the field. The complexities of everyday life at sea and their ramifications on the much larger issues of hierarchy and discipline are viewed from the gaze of the author, who is an outsider in the maritime field, but had the fortune of seeing things up close and personal. There are different ways to read the data presented, however, this article provides a personal and intimate dimension to what we know about life at sea, primarily in how seafarers' sense of place helps develop collective mind on board in the service of safety culture. In this regard, the author's tales of the sea are more than just tales; they are stories of life and living worth writing about and sharing.

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