

**Navigating Seas, Negotiating Sex:
Exploring Risky Sexual Behaviours and
Relationships of Seafarers**

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This thesis is submitted to Cardiff University in fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the risky sexual behaviours and relationships of seafarers in the context of commercial sex relations with sex workers in ports. This study is designed to shed light on why seafarers engage in these risky activities while away from home working on board ships. The study was conceived in the context of the increased vulnerability of seafarers to STIs including HIV.

The study draws upon data collected from a qualitative study conducted in the city of Santos, Brazil. This location was chosen, as it is the largest port in Latin America and has a popular red light district to seafarers. In-depth interviews were conducted with sixty seafarers and non-seafarers. Ethnographic observations were carried out in the red light district and other places frequented by the seafarers such as the port, the seamen's mission and parts of the city.

This study shows how risk is represented, perceived, negotiated and experienced by seafarers through their behaviours and within their relationships with sex workers. The socio-cultural structures they are embedded in inform and contribute to their risk perception and predicaments. A major contributing element is a gendered maritime industry that perpetuates a hegemonic heterosexual masculine regime. The way seafarers negotiate risk is shown by the way they locate and reposition the body, sex and sexuality within various forms of commercial sex transactions including the practice of condom use.

Table of Contents

Declaration	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Abstract	vi
Table of Contents	vii
List of Figures	xii
Glossary of Abbreviations	xiii
<i>Prologue: A Bosun named Rudy</i>	xiv
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 Risk, Gender and Seafaring	5
1.1 Risk and Sexual Risk	6
1.1.1 Concepts of Risk and Risk Perception	6
1.1.2 Understanding Sexual Risk	10
1.1.3 Risk of Unprotected Sex	14
1.2 Gender, Sexuality and Body	17
1.2.1 Looking at Men and Masculinities	17
1.2.2 Rereading Body and Corporeality	23
1.3 Prostitutes and Paying Patrons	26
1.3.1 Understanding Prostitution	26
1.3.2 Patronizing Prostitutes	29
1.4 Seafarers, Seafaring and AIDS	32
1.4.1 Working Lives of Seafarers	32
1.4.2 Seafarers and HIV/AIDS	38
1.5 Conclusion	45
Chapter 2 Researching Sex and Relationships	47
2.1 Introduction: An Onboard Story	47
2.2 Exploring the Setting: The Port and the City	49

2.3	Fieldwork in the Mission	53
2.4	In-depth Interviews	60
2.4.1	Respondents	63
2.4.2	Sampling	63
2.4.3	Interview Guide	65
2.5	The Nightclubs: Non-Participant Observation	65
2.6	Analysis of Data	71
2.7	Ethics	74
2.8	Summary	78
Chapter 3	From Ship to Shore to Sex	79
3.1	Introduction	79
3.2	The Meanings of Shore Leave	80
3.2.1	Respite and Change	80
3.2.2	Rest and Relaxation	82
3.2.3	Freedom and Adventure	83
3.2.4	<i>Gintong Ala-ala</i>	84
3.3	Characterising Shore Leave	86
3.3.1	Characteristics	87
3.3.2	Connecting to Home	89
3.3.3	Social Events	92
3.4	Culminating in the Clubs	96
3.4.1	Meaning the Meaning	97
3.4.2	Role of Alcohol	98
3.4.3	Marketing the Nightclubs	101
3.5	Allure of the Nymphs	103
3.5.1	Longing, Need and Tradition	104
3.5.2	Fascination and Curiosity	106
3.5.3	Convenience	108
3.6	Discussion and Conclusion	110
Chapter 4	Barscape—Seductive Spaces, Risky Places	114

4.1	Introduction	114
4.2	Socioerotic Landscape of the Port	115
4.3	Place for All Needs	116
4.3.1	Seamen’s Store	117
4.3.2	Food Kiosks and Restaurants	118
4.3.3	Phone Peddlers	119
4.3.4	Motels and Hotels: Spaces of Sexual Acts	121
4.3.5	Transporting for Sex: The Taxi Drivers	122
4.4	<i>Boate</i>: Spaces of Leisure, Pleasure and Fantasy	123
4.5	Risky Places, Hazardous Spaces	128
4.5.1	A Treacherous Zone	128
4.5.2	Mafia Phenomenon	129
4.5.3	The Drug Menace	130
4.6	Positionality and Corporeality within the Barscape	131
4.7	Women in the Clubs: Alluring Nymphs and Green Girls ..	137
4.8	Discussion and Conclusion	143
Chapter 5	The Solicitation Process	147
5.1	My Socioerotic Experience	147
5.2	Phases of the Solicitation Process	150
5.2.1	Attracting Seafarers	150
5.2.2	Keeping the Man	156
5.2.3	Outcome of Solicitation	160
5.3	Dissecting the Elements of the Process	164
5.3.1	Temporal Element	164
5.3.2	Earning in the Process	166
5.3.3	Conversations	168
5.3.4	Cultural Knowledge	169
5.3.5	Kick of Alcohol	172
5.3.6	Emotion-Based Dynamics	173
5.4	Discussion and Conclusion: Intimacy and Commerce	175

Chapter 6	The Enterprise and Corporeality of Paid Relationships . . .	179
6.1	Simply a Client	179
6.2	Pricing the Pleasure	185
6.3	Paying for Sex	188
6.4	Value of Money: Spend or Save?	190
6.5	Discussion and Conclusion	196
Chapter 7	Moving on With Relationships	201
7.1	Companionship: Developing Friendships	202
7.2	Love and Romantic Relationships	206
7.3	Having Children	213
7.4	Trajectory of Relationships	217
7.5	Wives on Sex Workers	223
7.6	Discussion and Conclusion	227
Chapter 8	Navigating Risk: Bodies of Condoms	231
8.1	Attitude towards Condoms	232
8.2	Myths, Beliefs and Practices	235
8.2.1	Withdrawal as a Prevention Method	235
8.2.2	Withdrawal Causes Illness	236
8.2.3	Concept of ‘Suction Effect’	237
8.2.4	Sense of Invincibility	237
8.2.5	Differential Risks	239
8.3	Assessing Women	240
8.3.1	Physical Manifestations	241
8.3.2	Actuations and Actions	248
8.3.3	Engaging only with Clean Clients	249
8.3.4	Certified Clean	250
8.3.5	Woman Bringing Condoms	252

8.3.6	Women are not Prostitutes	254
8.4	Bargaining and Negotiations	256
8.4.1	Negotiating Early	256
8.4.2	Condom Negotiation and Pricing.	258
8.4.3	Cheating in Bed	261
8.5	Other Sexual Performance Determinants.	262
8.5.1	Physical and Performance Problems	262
8.5.2	Alcohol	263
8.6	Discussion and Conclusion	265
Chapter 9	Narratives of Risk, Masculinity and Body: Conclusions . . .	268
9.1	Understanding a Culture of Risk	269
9.2	Performance of Masculinity	276
9.3	Risky Sexual Relationships	281
9.4	Negotiated Safety: Navigating Unprotected Sex.	287
9.5	Boys, Buyers and Bodies.	292
9.6	Reflections and Future Directions	297
	<i>Epilogue: Rudy's Farewell to Seafaring.</i>	302
	Bibliography	303
	Appendices	335
	Appendix A: List of Interviewees	335
	Appendix B: Approval of Ethics Review Committee	337
	Appendix C: Visiting Scholar: Request for Brazil	338
	Appendix D: Visiting Scholar: University Approval	339
	Appendix E: Visiting Scholar: Department Approval	340
	Appendix F: Information Sheet and Consent Form	341
	Appendix G: Interview Guide	343

List of Figures

Figure	Title	Page
2.1	Busy port of Santos	49
2.2	Avenue along the port of Santos	50
2.3	Port city of Santos	51
2.4	Beach of the city of Santos	52
2.5	Seamen's mission staff and some seafarers	53
2.6	Seamen's mission building and church	54
2.7	Seafarers being ferried back to the port by the seamen's mission vehicle	55
2.8	Ships visited at the port of Santos	56
2.9	Busy seamen's mission with seafarers calling inside the booths	57
2.10	Playing pool with the seafarers	58
2.11	Seamen's mission's mini-grocery	59
2.12	Conducting the in-depth interview (1)	61
2.13	Conducting the in-depth interview (2)	62
3.1	Seafarers calling home from the seamen's mission's phone booths	89
3.2	Seafarers can make phone calls for hours	91
3.3	Seafarer using the computer/Internet at the seamen's mission	92
3.4	Seafarers playing basketball in the seamen's mission	94
3.5	Eating in a <i>churrascaria</i> with the seafarers	95
3.6	Drinking alcohol at the seamen's mission	96
3.7	Harmony Club pocket calendar	101
3.8	Front of Harmony Club pocket calendar	102
3.9	Flyer of Marino Bar	102
3.10	Flyer of Nightclub X	103
5.1	Busy dance floor of Harmony Club	153

Glossary of Abbreviations

AB	Able-Bodied Seaman
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency syndrome
ASSPE	Santos Association for Research and Intervention
BIMCO	Baltic and International Maritime Council
BRL	Brazilian Real
CODESP	Companhia Docas do Estado de Sao Paulo (Port Authority)
GBP	Great Britain Pound
GF	Girlfriend
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIV-1	Human Immunodeficiency Virus Subtype 1
ICONS	International Commission on Shipping
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISF	International Shipping Federation
ISPS	International Ship and Port Facility Security Code
ITF	International Transport Workers' Federation
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OFW	Overseas Filipino Worker
OS	Ordinary Seaman
PSAP	Philippine Seafarers Assistance Programme
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States Dollar
VD	Venereal Disease
WHO	World Health Organization

Prologue: A Bosun named Rudy

For 22 years, Rudy has been working as a seafarer. During one of his tours, he started to have problems with his family back home. He received a letter concerning marital and family issues. He was very worried. He had no physical contact with them. Phone calls were not sufficient. They could not resolve conflicts through phone conversations. Upon arrival in port, he tried to avoid thinking about these problems by drinking in the nightclubs. This was where he met one of the sex workers who provided him the much needed company. She became the 'good listener' to his problems. He poured all his emotions on her.

One meeting led to another. Rudy and his colleagues were on a general cargo ship ("liner") with regular routes between South America and Europe. Thus, the two could meet regularly for a number of months. She started to go onboard and would sometimes sleep over. A relationship ensued. The woman would always follow him whenever he goes to a port in Brazil. Rudy always saw to it that he was assigned to a ship going to that country. Whenever he goes back to his home country in between contracts, their communication continues through telephone or through letters.

Rudy never doubted the health status of the woman. He says she is very clean, she always looks fresh, has a nice body, and always showers. She has two children from seafarer fathers. He tolerates her job entertaining other seafarers. She has to earn money for her children and her lifestyle on top of the money she receives from Rudy. At times he feels jealous when he sees her with other seafarer clients; but she always reassures him that it is just plain work, nothing more.

After four years of having a relationship with the woman, Rudy was asked to renew his Panamanian license while he was in Singapore. He underwent a medical examination. Rudy turned positive for syphilis and HIV. He was repatriated back to his home country.

Introduction

The story of Rudy presents to us a number of realities global seafarers encounter. Many seafaring men share many facets of the events in the life of Rudy. Seafarers, a highly mobile and male-dominated occupational group, are known to be a high-risk population in the context of sexually transmitted infections (STI) including the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) (Nikolic, 2010; Suñas, 2003; Armstrong, 1999; Mulhall, 1996; Sesar *et al.*, 1995).

In the course of this thesis I examine the sexual risk-taking behaviour of seafarers within the context of commercial sex relations while they work away from home. In so doing, the study sheds light on discourses of gender and masculinity and the concept of body, particularly in how they inform and shape the social dynamics of sexual risk behaviours and relationships. I emphasize in this study the point of view of male clients rather than those of the sex providers, as there is a dearth of literature on this group. In undertaking this research the over-arching aim is to contribute to the understanding of the spread of HIV.

To explore and understand the social and sexual interactions between seafarers and sex workers, I employed a qualitative approach in my study, specifically in-depth interviews and observations. The setting is a notorious red light district in the port city of Santos in Brazil, well known to many seafarers globally. I documented the different events occurring during the shore leave of seafarers in the port and in the city, particularly within the nightclubs. Unlike most studies on commercial sex and sexual risk taking, I focus on the perspective of male clients rather than on that of the commercial sex workers.

This study is borne out of my interest in HIV/AIDS. I worked in this field prior to embarking on further studies. This led me to do my master thesis on seafarers and AIDS. Coming from the largest labour supplier of global seafarers, the seafaring sector got me interested, being one of the sectors most affected by AIDS in my country (the Philippines). I felt obligated to further explore the issue thus bringing me eventually to the academic world of seafaring. This PhD study builds on my master thesis as the latter spawned more questions than answers. I required more first-hand data to obtain a better understanding of the phenomenon. Literature continues to show that non-use of condom in the sector is rife and remains perplexing (Dulay, 2004; Lucero-Prisno, 2004). Despite the relatively high level of education of the seafarers, new HIV infections through sexual transmission continue to be detected.

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. The first chapter reviews literature on risk, gender, body, prostitution and seafaring. The broader area of this study is within the theme of risk. This chapter starts with the introduction of the sociological concepts of risk, sexual risk taking behaviour and unprotected sex. The non-use of condom is the ultimate behavioural manifestation of sexual risk in this study. A discussion on concepts of gender focusing on men and masculinities and bodies follows. Risk and gender are two major themes that are firmly grounded and established in various sociological traditions. They are dealt with separately.

As this study is within the context of prostitution, a review of this theme including the paying patrons is presented. I discuss here men's motives in sexual relationships with sex workers, infidelity, and sex tourism, to name a few. This will be followed by a discussion on the global maritime industry, its workers and their working lives. I elucidate the seafaring profession through discussions on their work at sea, trajectories of seafaring careers, predicaments of seafaring, and images of men at sea. The first chapter ends with a discussion on seafarers and HIV/AIDS to provide the empirical evidence of the real risk that seafarers face. This review of literature is not an attempt to provide a systematic review of studies done under the various themes. It is an attempt to piece together different works carried out to provide a better perspective as groundwork for the study conducted.

I employed a qualitative approach in this study to address my research inquiry using primarily in-depth interviews with the seafarers, and non-participant observation, mainly in the nightclubs of the port of Santos, Brazil. This is discussed in Chapter 2, which also sheds light on the different aspects of the methodology including the research population, sampling method, the setting, data gathering, data analysis, and ethical considerations. Ethics is a primary consideration in this study as prostitution and all the issues revolving around this theme, such as drug use, raise many concerns.

Chapters 3 to 8 are the empirical chapters of this study. These chapters are presented in a somewhat chronological order based on the way seafarers go through their shore leave. I start my empirical chapters with a discussion on the various concepts that revolve around shore leave during which sexual risk-taking and risky relationships occur. Chapter 3 examines the meaning of shore leave, how it is performed, how seafarers end up in the nightclubs and what roles the sex workers play during this period. Chapter 4 follows and discusses the main setting of the study—the nightclubs. This presents the functionality and utility of these socio-erotic spaces and how they fit in the whole landscape of the port. I relate my personal experiences within the red light district shedding light on my positionality within the research site. I end the chapter by discussing the lives of sex workers, including their backgrounds, their motivations to work as sex providers, and other issues related to their social and working lives.

In all the discussions of the different empirical chapters, I focus on the encompassing themes of risk, gender and body. I analyse the different experiences shared by seafarers and sex workers as they go through them by using these lenses. Chapter 5 dissects the different elements of the solicitation process, an important prelude to other sexual interactions and possible relationship outcomes. I characterize the solicitation process and analyse various determinants affecting its outcome. I touch on intimacy and commerce in the final discussion of the chapter including the concept of sexual script.

Chapter 6 discusses the most common form of relationship between the seafarers and sex workers—the paid relationship between the client and the provider of sex. This chapter looks at the elements of pricing and paying, how seafarers see the value of sex

and money, and motivations for paying sex. Included in the discussion are concepts of ‘rites of passage’ and ‘queer theory’ to explain some data presented. Bulk of the discussion is on how paying for sex becomes socially constructed and how it relates to risk.

Chapter 7 discusses the typologies of relationships formed between seafarers and sex workers, such as companionship/friendship, romantic relationships, and having children. It also discusses the trajectory of these relationships, the role of the wives, girlfriends and family back home in relation to these relationships. This chapter explains why these relationships vary, why they are fluid, how they are shaped and reshaped, and how they are framed within the societal concepts of relationships.

Chapter 8 is a presentation of the nuances of condom use as a manifestation in navigating sexual risk. It discusses the attitudes of seafarers towards condoms, how myths and beliefs shape its practice, how perception of risk is influenced by concepts of cleanliness and health, and how negotiations and bargaining on condom use transpire. The rich empirical data presented in this chapter is further analysed and discussed in the context of bodies and the way these clients navigate the risk HIV presents.

This thesis concludes with Chapter 9, presenting five main themes focusing on the following: (1) a sociological discussion on the culture of risk in the seafaring sector; (2) an analysis of the empirical data using the concepts of gender and masculinity; (3) a discussion on how sexual behaviours and relationships between sex workers and seafarers become risky; (4) the negotiated construct of unprotected sex; and (5) an attempt to link risk and gender by using the concept of the body as final summation of the thesis. I end this chapter by providing my reflections on the study and the implications of the findings to public health and the maritime industry, and I also discuss future directions to research.

Chapter 1

Risk, Gender and Seafaring

This research examines the risk-taking behaviour of seafarers in the context of commercial sex relations and focuses on the risk behaviour displayed in the nightclubs of a red-light district in Santos, Sao Paolo, Brazil. Sexual risk-taking behaviour has become a major theme of inquiry since the advent of HIV/AIDS. Many population groups particularly high-risk categories have been studied extensively. There are, however, some populations that warrant further attention such as the highly mobile seafarers who have been identified to be at very high risk of HIV infection. Studying seafarers, a group that is predominantly composed of men, provides an added advantage in that discourses of gender and masculinity could be examined particularly in how they inform and shape the social dynamics of sexual risk behaviour.

This chapter locates the study within risk and gender. This chapter is divided into four parts. The first introduces the sociological concept of risk, sexual risk taking behaviour and unprotected sex seen as the ultimate specific behavioural manifestation of sexual risk. The second discusses gender concepts with a focus on men and masculinities and bodies. Linking risk and gender is a major task to undertake, as these are two major themes that are firmly grounded and established in various sociological traditions. Thus, in this chapter, I deal with them separately. The third part discusses prostitution and patronizing prostitutes. The last part provides a discussion of the global maritime industry, its workers and their working lives. I further elucidate the seafaring profession through a discussion of work at sea, trajectories of seafaring careers, predicaments of seafaring, and images of men at sea. The chapter concludes with a discussion of seafarers and HIV/AIDS to provide the empirical evidence of the risk that seafarers face.

1.1 Risk and Sexual Risk

The broader area of this study is within the theme of risk. This study highlights the concept of risk in the context of relationships and unprotected sex. In particular, this study seeks to explore risky relationships between seafarers and sex workers in ports and the practice of unprotected sex within these relationships. In this section I will discuss intertwined bodies of literature covering the concepts of risk and risk perception, sexual risk, and unprotected sex or non-use of condom to contextualize and situate the study.

1.1.1 Concepts of Risk and Risk Perception

Risk is a concept that remains to be well defined despite people having a certain intuitive understanding of the concept. In terms of a working meaning, Bora (2001: 8480) defines it ‘as the probability of the occurrence of some event causing damage, multiplied by the amount of the damage anticipated’. Short (1984) defines it ‘as the likelihood that an individual will experience the effect of danger’. Lupton (2000: 205) proposes that risk is ‘associated with the notions of choice, responsibility and blame...becom[ing] a means by which institutions and authorities, as well as individuals, are held accountable and encouraged to regulate themselves’. This is exemplified in the various forms of risky behaviour many people engage in despite the fact that these are performed in a safe manner.

According to Moen and Rundmo (2005), ‘humans are remarkably optimistic about outcomes of events, and most of us remain firmly encased in the egocentric belief that negative life events are less likely to happen to us than to others’. Individuals act with a certain course of action normally guided by their judgment of the perceived risk, whether implicit or explicit, towards a certain situation or phenomenon (Rosa and Freudenburg, 2001). This is the reason why many studies in the field of risk and risk taking focus on risk perception. According to Weber (2001), this risk perception is ‘shaped by three classes of variables: the negative and positive outcomes of choice options and their likelihood; affective reactions such as dread or fear of the unknown; and the social and cultural variables that influence the perception and interpretation of the consequences of risky choice options’.

There has been a significant rise in scholarly work on risk due to the increasing interest on the subject as a result of many global events such as nuclear disasters and climate change. Sociological perspective in the understanding of risk perception provides a complex range of determinants. These studies are categorized according to different sociological levels—micro (social psychological), meso (organizational/ community), and macro (societal) (Rosa and Freudenburg, 2001). Examples of social psychological factors are attitude, control and personality factors (Moen and Rundmo, 2005), which are intertwined with gender, age and sexual identity that also play roles in structuring risk perceptions (Lupton and Tulloch, 2002).

Weber (2001) identified ‘sociocultural approach’ as one of the major paradigms¹ in studying risk perception wherein the effect of ‘group- and culture-level variables’ is scrutinized. Studies on risk perception in this approach try to understand how the public develops judgment about the risks they encounter by understanding the variables that influence the formation of these judgments (see Furedi, 2009; Kahlor et al., 2006; Durfee, 2006). In the sociocultural approach, risk perception is seen as a collective phenomenon and that different cultures focus on different forms of risk as a way of maintaining a particular way of life as explained by the cultural theory of Douglas and Wildavsky (1982). In this approach, social actors see risk as a collective construction and that this concept is moulded into a concrete form of a risk concept based on specific characteristics of the social arena (Bora, 2001: 8480).

Ulrich Beck and Mary Douglas are credited for elevating the sociological understanding of risk and risk perception. They explored the cultural meaning of risk to provide a perspective on the attributes of the current times. Beck’s *Risk Society* (1992) has made a major impact on the analysis of risk at the macro-social level. Beck proposes that society is in transition towards a second modernity instead of postmodernity characterized by socially produced risk together with industrial production and risk distribution (Hart and Carter, 2000). Society is shifting to a more

¹ Weber (2001) identifies the other two approaches: ‘axiomatic measurement’ paradigm which looks at ‘the way in which people combine objective risk information, that is, possible consequences of risky choice options’; ‘psychometric paradigm’ which identifies ‘people’s emotional reactions to risky situations that affect judgments of the riskiness of physical, environmental, and material risks in ways that go beyond their objective consequences’.

complex modernity (risk society) with emphasis on the distribution of risk and overproduction of harm.

The works of Beck and Douglas focused on the understanding and interpretation of the cultural significance of risk and the way perception of risks and hazards are formed and shaped by cultural dynamics, processes and social contexts. They have dissected and provided a solid theoretical knowledge of risk thus making their work crucial and valuable. Though the two may have shared some similarities on their writing on risk, they look at risk in contrasting sociological analysis. According to Wilkinson (2001):

Beck's thesis is essentially motivated by the hypothesis that an emergent 'risk consciousness' might give rise to a new critical rationality for the political reform for industrial societies. By contrast, Mary Douglas's is concerned to advance a structural-functionalist interpretation of risk perception, which proposes that what we conceive as the 'reality' of risk is determined by our prior commitments towards different types of social solidarity.

Beck (1994, 1997) proposes a way of thinking showing that we are nearing an 'ecological apocalypse'. He emphasizes on the uniqueness of the current situation with the presence of hazards putting us at risk of self-extinction. Using a historical perspective, he explores the gap between a 'risk society' and the earlier periods of modernity. This emergent 'risk society' negotiates with a bleak future that creates a cloud of threat of self-destruction. He also discusses the concept of 'reflexive modernization', which aims to radically change the way society thinks and governs technology with more responsibility and enlightenment.

Douglas (1978) follows a more Durkheimian tradition of epistemology. According to Wilkinson (2001), her works focused on 'the ways cultural categories express patterns of social organization and their corresponding commitments to particular forms of moral solidarity'. In scenarios that social solidarity is challenged with threats, the public present shared beliefs about the impending threat. Collective and shared meaning of risk is central in the uniting function to maintain the social solidarity. People form a common set of goals in a bid to guard themselves against a perceived threat. These collective representations of impending threats have a role in uniting

groups and avoiding disunity and fragmentation. When groups identify others as the source threats, they exhibit a collective behaviour of blaming these outsiders as harbingers of danger (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1982).

Unlike Beck, Douglas is more cautious on pronouncements of cataclysmic scenario and resorts to the professional thinking of experts. Beck is resolved to think that ill effects of industrial society are pushing us towards a new plane of cultural realization. Douglas proposes a form of thinking that is formed relative to the cultural background and the way hazard is perceived. She proposes a sociological understanding of the role of risk to provide the link between the present environment and that of the past. She feels that humans have always been inviting catastrophes in the context of uncertainties (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1982).

Douglas (1978) proposes a ‘grid-group’ theory to show the cultural relativity of risk perception wherein every individual can be categorized as *hierarchists*, *individualists*, *egalitarians* and *fatalists*. This matrix of social fields developed is on two dimensions—‘group’ which ‘describes the external boundaries between a social collective and the outside world, while ‘grid’ means all the other social distinctions determining how individuals behave towards one another’ (Bora, 2001: 8482). Douglas considers these as distinct cultural categories wherein their perspective towards society is hinged on their preferred social commitments and way of thinking.

Those who stick to traditions of institutional establishment are considered to be *hierarchists*. Within this high grid group scores are those who handle risks using a routine process and who would resort to legal approach to put in place the process. Among the low grid and low group scores, there is the inclusion of risk within the confines of the individual. There is a general acceptance of calculated risk and the law provides the environment for risky issues. Among *individualists*, personal acquisition is the preferred mode while adherence to redistributive justice is the preferred approach among the *egalitarians*. Those whose belief is the inability to influence events happening around them characterize the *fatalists*.

I close this section by quoting Wilkinson (2001) as follows: ‘Douglas and Beck use the epistemology of social constructionism not so much as means of exposing the

uncertain foundations of our convictions, but rather, as an opportunity to advance a political point of view on the cultural reality of risk perception?.

1.1.2 Understanding Sexual Risk

Risk is an established research theme in sociology. There have been many studies that have contributed to an understanding of the reasons why people take risks earning its own place in social inquiry and becoming an important discourse in the social sciences, particularly in contemporary sociology (Yates, 1992; Caplan, 2000). Concerning sexual risk behaviour, however, it is still a relatively new and continuing area of research and study that needs further attention. Sexual risk-taking of seafarers is a narrower field and is a less common discourse. In a general sense, scientists relate such risk to images of danger, safety, chance, luck, discrimination, fate or uncertainty (Caplan, 2000). Others believe that risk is an entity believed to be an invention of humans to help them understand and cope with dangers and uncertainties of life (Slovic, 2000). This makes the construction of risk as inherently subjective.

In the field of health, risk inquiry remains a staple especially with the advent of HIV/AIDS. The emergence of the problem into pandemic proportions resulted into numerous studies as researchers tried to grapple and understand the drivers of the epidemic. This resulted into a heightened interest among social scientists on the sociological approach towards HIV/AIDS. There was an emergence in the identification of determinants as new ideas were explored including sexual behaviour, gender, sexuality, stigma and discrimination to understand the epidemic better. These topics remained mainstreamed in the current discourses linking the problem to issues like power relations (Patton, 1985; Treichler 1992; Watney, 1987). Bloor (1995: 20) rationalized this need for sociological approaches as follows:

theories of risk behaviour which conceptualise risk behaviour as a volitional and individual act are inappropriate where risk behaviour involves two parties, not a lone individual, and where practice may be characterised by constraint, rather than by free choice. Sexual relationships self-evidently involve (at least) two parties and sexual risk behaviour is a social rather than an individual activity.

Many of these works on risk and HIV were led by social psychologists thus the dominance of the risk taker becoming central in the discourses. Mary Douglas for example provided the impetus on conceptualising risk behaviour as a cultural product though one of the criticisms on her work is the lack of practical influence on the design of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes (Bloor, 1995).

In this study, the assumption is that infection with HIV/AIDS is considered a risk because of the lack of cure and the impact on one's health and life. Thus the mode of transfer of HIV through unprotected sex becomes a risky act. Risk is placed into consideration when there is a possibility of 'loss' when one takes a 'risk' such as loss in the form of health, life, relationship, etc. Sexual behaviour becomes risky when done in risky situations. According to Kelly (1995: 9), the key behaviour practices that confer risk for HIV infection among heterosexual men and women are unprotected vaginal or anal intercourse and to some extent oral sex. Related factors are engaging with multiple sexual partners, not being loyal to one's partner, unprotected sex (non-use of condom) with high risk individuals, sex coupled with injecting drug use, and a few other possibilities.

Sociological contexts of the virus transmission provide compelling evidence of the problem. Though studies in this area may not be as extensive as the biomedical aspect of HIV/AIDS, there is a considerable body of knowledge produced to provide necessary explanations. A number of social models have been developed to guide research and understanding in this area (Adler, Kegeles and Genevro, 1992) such as the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980), Health Belief Model (Bloor, 1995: 20-21), the 'Situational Rationality Approach' (Bloor, 1995: 21-24), Douglas's 'Culture of Risk' Approach (Bloor, 1995: 24-25), Social Learning Theory, 'Precaution Adoption Process', and the AIDS Risk Reduction Model (Catania, Kegeles and Coates, 1990). These models try to explain why people engage in risky sexual behaviours or fail to take health-protecting actions. The importance of social models is the emphasis on social constraints. According to Bloor (1995, 21):

models [should emphasize]...the importance of social structure and cultural factors... Collectivity-orientated models of risk behaviour may be more appropriate models than individualistic models to understand group and dyadic behaviours.

For example, the use of social representations theory in looking at risky sexual behaviour enlightens us on the sociological dimension of virus transmission. Giami and Schiltz (1996) who reviewed the French literature on sexuality in the context of AIDS show that a particular social representation underpins unsafe sexual practices in all of the studies. They noticed that when people hold a representation that a partner is a 'good' one, they do not practise safer sex consistently. The 'good' partner is equated to somebody who is loved, a long-term one, known, comes from the same social network and/or appears pleasant. They found out that people are likely not to have sex or to practise safer sex with those who are 'bad'. According to Bloor (1995: 22):

Studies of HIV-related risk behaviour which have followed th[e] situated rationality approach . . . view [that] one's relationships and the meaning of sexual acts within one's relationships . . . patterns one's 'sexual risk behaviour'. The same point applies to heterosexual risk behaviour and to syringe sharing: syringe-sharing is no random activity, but is socially patterned. . .

Among the models, the AIDS Risk Reduction Model was specifically developed for AIDS prevention. It identifies three stages focusing on the recognition of sexual activities placing individuals at risk for HIV transmission, decisions that alter the high risk behaviour and the commitment to that decision, and ways to overcome barriers to enact these decisions (Adler *et al.*, 1992). The first stage is affected by three variables namely, knowledge of how HIV is transmitted, perceived personal susceptibility to AIDS, and social norms regarding risk. The second stage is affected by two variables namely, one's analyses of positive and negative consequences of either continuing or changing the behaviour, and the capability of doing it (such as access to condoms and the ability to use it); while the last stage is influenced by two variables—the ability to communicate intentions with sexual partners, and access to professional help and support from family and friends.

In this model, knowledge is seen as a predictor of sexual behaviour as noted by Caplan (2000: 4):

the extent to which people are endangered by these risks is to some extent dependent upon knowledge, a knowledge which frequently the victims themselves do not have.

In some population groups, however, HIV/AIDS knowledge does not seem to alter the epidemic trends because of the belief that they do not belong to one of the risk groups (known as optimistic bias). They feel that there is nothing risky because sexual activity is a normal human activity (especially among married individuals). This provides us a glimpse on how individual thoughts and behaviour is shaped by the social and cultural constructs.

This scenario of pervasive consciousness on whether to engage in risky sexual activities even in apparent non-risky situations keeps people vigilant of their own actions and activities. Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) termed this as *living reflexively*. Our motives and moves become guided by what possibly might happen even if there are no bases, are illogical and are irrational. Since risk is perceived differently by different individuals, and sometimes perceived wrongly, this becomes the reason why some people venture into risky activities. For example, among couples with one partner who is HIV positive, Bajos *et al.* (1997) noticed that regardless of what is known about the partner's HIV status, people who represent themselves to be 'in love' are less likely to protect themselves against infection. Numerous studies conducted within and outside of this 'social representations framework' observed similar phenomenon (Joffe, 1997).

In many HIV/AIDS programmes, prevention efforts are normally focused on high-risk groups or individuals at high risk. Experts refer to this as a subgroup of population showing a significantly high number of infections (termed as prevalence or incidence by epidemiology) or manifesting behaviourally high-risk sexual activities. Generally prostitutes or commercial sex workers, injecting drug users, men-having-sex-with-men, migrant population (includes seafarers, migrant workers and displaced individuals), and prisoners are included in this high-risk category. In countries where there is low prevalence, the focus of the prevention is on the highly vulnerable groups given the limited resources for interventions. The mere fact that these are social groups provides us a hint that HIV vulnerability is socially patterned and does not happen at random.

All these social determinants of sexual risk can be analyzed at different levels as earlier suggested namely, macro-, meso- and micro-social levels (Hart and Flowers, 1996). Analysis at the macro-social level states that the political economy of HIV risk directly structures the patterning of HIV infection. The role of socially organised opportunities for, and constraints on, risk behaviour are seen at the meso-social level. Sociological and organizational determinants of HIV risk behaviour, instead of individual persuasions, are scrutinized in this paradigm when looking at interventions. At the micro-social level, the role of social norms and the normative context of HIV risk related behaviours are seen. All these assist understanding and in exploring different reasons behind sexual risks and risky relationships.

1.1.3 Risk of Unprotected Sex

Unprotected sex between sex workers and their clients is considered to be a sexual behaviour highly correlated with the highest risk of HIV infection (Wee *et al.*, 2004; Thorpe *et al.*, 1997). Some sex workers who avoid high-risk behaviour meet resistance from their clients and ‘overcoming the pressures from a potential sex partner who does not want to use a condom may be difficult’ (O’keeffe, Nesselhof-Kendall and Baum, 1990: 177). This behaviour of many men is seen to be part of the stereotype of men being sexually adventurous (Campbell, Peplau and De Bro, 1992).

In understanding condom use it is imperative to understand what transpires between the seafarers and the sex workers by employing different perspectives as unprotected sex and condom use are determined by different factors. Sheeran, Abraham and Orbell (1999) identified attitude toward condoms, behavioural intentions, and communication about condoms as the most important predictors of condom use. Gomez and Marin (1996) observed that some of the predictors are: positive attitude about condom use, not using other forms of contraception, belief that friends use condoms, self-efficacy to use condoms, more sexual power, worry about contracting HIV, and reporting two or more partners in the year (prior to the interview).

There are those who recommend the use of gender-sensitive theoretical frameworks as a reaction to the reliance on psychological models to explain sexual behaviour and

disregarding the factors of culture, relationship and gender, which they believe exert considerable influence on their sexual decision-making process (Worth, 1990; Cochran and Mays, 1993). According to Wingood and DiClemente (1998) this framework provides the explanation that socioeconomic factors, power imbalances within relationships, and gender-specific cultural norms influence non-condom use. Power is fundamental in all human relationships especially with heterosexual relationships (Gillespie, 1971).

Relationship has been a major theme wherein which condom use has been scrutinized. Literature has shown us that relationship is an important factor in understanding condom use as the manifestation of risk behaviour (Pilkington *et al.*, 1994; Santelli *et al.*, 1996; Mgalla and Pool, 1997; Bauman and Berman, 2005). Pilkington *et al.* (1994) saw that individuals who felt more positively about their romantic partners are less likely to use condoms. Wong *et al.* (2003) showed us in his study that consistent condom use with the clients of sex workers is reported to be 78% as compared to 20% of their partners who do not pay. That they loved them (60.0%) was the most frequently reported reason for not using condoms with clients proving the role of relationship. Keo *et al.* (2006) showed that condom use varied by partner and frequency with use at last sex most frequently with commercial sex workers (99.8%), followed by sweethearts (82.8%) and spouses (17.2%).

Santelli *et al.* (1996) explained the factors in relationships, which include emotional closeness, partner support, cohabitation, belief that condom use builds trust, and having a regular partner. Bauman and Berman (2005) saw that use of condoms is directly and strongly related to type of relationship, and specifically to the degree of long-term commitment, love and trust. Most of these studies include both the romantic feeling equated as love and the perception of trust as central in not using condoms.

Within these discourses, some have used gender as a lens of scrutiny in understanding condom use. The current notion in this realm of socio-sexual dynamics tows the line of women as oppressed and men as oppressors. Literature presents to us that various differences between the social attributes of men and women provide the understanding of the dynamics of condom use. The issues of gender and power come

into play given the fact that gender roles according to Sikkema *et al.* (2000: 300) ‘guide how women and men relate to each other in interpersonal and sexual encounters and may consequently affect risk behaviours’.

Literature has emphasized these differences as determinants of condom use. For example, economic barriers have always been attributed to explain the inability of the sex workers to negotiate condom use (Wong *et al.*, 2003). Findings show that sex workers are not able to persuade their clients. This is the manifestation of the need for sex workers for money (Varga, 1997) and the ability of clients to pay. Women are normally projected as economically dependent on the men. This places the women in unfavourable situation because those who attempt to negotiate condom use may risk conflict, loss of partner, and partner anger and abuse (Amaro, 1995; Fullilove *et al.*, 1990; Gomez and Marin, 1996; and Mays and Cochran, 1988).

Condom use in these relationships between sex workers and clients and other male partners were found to be associated with different attitudes to self-cleansing, risk perception, preventive behaviour (Wolffers, 1999). These are related to the concept of multiple identities in understanding how sex workers negotiate their relationships with occasional role expectations and behaviours. I call this phenomenon as *negotiated risk*. This is exemplified by findings of many studies showing that women practiced safer sex with clients than with private sexual partners such as boyfriends (Day *et al.*, 1988). For a number of these women and prostitutes, perceptions of being dirty and not dirty influence sex workers’ behaviour with clients. In such transactions, there are complexities within these multiple identities and relationships that can provide input to intervention programmes with the acknowledgement that sex workers are human beings involved beyond sexual transactions.

Negotiating condom use is an important theme within these discourses. It is observed that strategies used when negotiating condoms vary among different individuals. According to Lam *et al.*, (2004), “both cultural and gender differences in communication styles suggest that individuals may negotiate condoms in ways that are not exclusively verbal and direct. They showed that there are typologies of condom negotiation strategies ranging within a scale of a combination of verbal and direct such as verbal-direct, verbal-indirect, nonverbal-direct, or nonverbal-indirect.

Such typology may come in other forms. For example, when men want to avoid using condoms, they would employ seduction, reward and information (De Bro, Campbell and Peplau, 1994). Seduction is a romantic act of men to persuade the woman to have unprotected sex. Informational strategy pertains to statements of the men like ‘I am not promiscuous’ or ‘I am clean’ or ‘I do not have sex with other women’ to assure the woman that he is safe and it is all right not to use a condom. This is similar to what Lam *et al.* (2004) observed that verbal-direct strategies are the most common effective strategies in negotiating condom use.

Negotiation, however, is not easy to understand, as it is a complex process. There is a consensus that there is a need to fathom the complex interpersonal processes where the individual is embedded and makes a decision whether to act on using or not using a condom in order to understand how couples negotiate (Miller *et al.*, 1993).

Adding to the determinants of condom use is alcohol. Alcohol has always been seen as a major factor in risky behaviours due to disturbed risk perception as part of its pharmacological effects (Corte and Sommers, 2005). Correlation studies have found an association between alcohol consumption and risky sexual behaviour, though the causal links are not well understood (Halpern-Felsher, Millstein, and Ellen, 1996). Alcohol is important in the discussion, as the nightclub is also a place where these men have access to it.

1.2 Gender, Sexuality and Body

In this section, I am going to introduce the concept of gender and sexuality, specifically looking at men and masculinities. Gender is central in the discussion as it underpins many aspects of the lives of seafarers—men who engage with women sex workers. This is to ground how gender works and how it connects with other forces that structure their social and sexual lives. This topic on gender and sexuality is followed by a discussion on the concept of the body and corporeality looking at embodiment and disembodiment and how it possibly relates to gender and sexuality.

1.2.1 Looking at Men and Masculinities

Gender, as a study area, has gone through rigorous scrutiny over time as it has become mainstream in sociological inquiry. According to Frank (1987), issues of gender and sexuality are ‘fundamental social processes affecting every member of society’ and ‘not simply individual issues’. In this area of study, it tries to differentiate how individuals are born (sex) and the process on how the society develops the individual (gender). Thus, masculinities and femininities pertain to what society has provided in terms of social roles, behaviours, and meanings to men and women—diverse identities ascribed to different groups among them.

Within the main topic of gender, masculinity studies have contributed much and have become an influencing factor in this endeavour. Masculinity has become a rich ground for research thus advancing different concepts (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Understanding has drastically shifted from heterosexuality and masculinity being determined as biological or seen as neutral (Frank, 1987) to other forms. The study of masculinity has evolved from a monolithic perspective where patriarchy was central in looking at issues such as the reason for the undermined status of women in the context of gender relations to the current notion of hegemonic masculinity and multiple masculinities. These notions of patriarchy have been challenged by feminism thus furthering the debate and scrutiny of masculinity.

According to Ford and Lyons (2012), studies on men and masculinities have attracted interest, as there is propulsion to ‘render masculinities visible’. This is fuelled by what scholars argue that men are not studied as men. The concentration of scholarly work is based on man as ‘male’ and not as gendered entities. Whenever gender is discussed, it is defined not within its confines as solely masculinity or femininity, but they are constructed in constant reference to each other, as gender is relational and not only plural (Kimmel, 2001).

Many studies on gender used to be focused on the lives of women. The discussion of masculinity was normally hinged on the way they interact with men. Gender-based research would scrutinize men and masculinity from findings of studies on women and femininities. This may contradict the argument that the rise of the creation of a body of feminist scholarship is a counteraction against writing focused on men (Ford

and Lyons, 2012). This is true as the first wave of studies is an accumulation from within the perspective of racially and economically privileged men through their way of thinking and worldview.

The resurgence of scholarship on studying men and masculinities, thus the emergence of ‘men’s studies’, is a way of recuperating from the shift in perspective that resulted in a lack of focus of ‘gendered’ men; though this is not to be seen as a parallel to feminist scholarship on women (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). This is to provide research on men and masculinities strong grounding in gender analysis as they have become theoretically weak when using previous approaches.

Most studies present heterosexuality and masculinity as concepts that are not seen to be neutral or determined biologically. According to Frank (1987):

they are social accomplishments of a political nature located within a larger set of political, economic, and social relations. Gender obedience to heterosexuality and masculinity is a human activity, a social product embodied by individual men in their everyday, routine set of social relations. As a collective process, gender obedience by men expresses themes of competition with other men, the exploitation and subordination of women and other men, violence toward women and other men, and homophobia.

This makes the concept of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity as socially constructed and imposed upon by the society. There is an affirmation to this form of masculinity among males by consenting consciously or unconsciously to such. The eventual outcome, which is hegemonic heterosexual masculinity—an array of behaviour—is produced by the process of changing meanings and messages among males.

Men become the embodiment of that socially created classification. They externalize this masculinity through their speech, their dress, their physical appearance and presence, and their relations with others. (Frank, 1987)

This overarching way of thinking of masculinity has been criticized as simplified categorization since gender relations are multidimensional and experienced in different ways by everyone. Wolpe (1988: 11) notes that these ‘differentiated forms

of male power can only be accounted for by analysis which takes into consideration the specific conditions that give rise to these situations’.

Further studies have shown the evolution of new notions of masculinity specifically the emergence of hegemonic masculinity and multiple masculinities (Brittan, 1989). This emergence of multiple masculinities and power relations called for ways of systematizing new perspectives of the male sex role. Works of Connell on hegemonic masculinity is considered to be very influential in this field. Hegemonic masculinity is described as a ‘pattern of practice (i.e. things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue’ (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). This concept provides an alternative perspective in describing the relationship between men and women and the way masculinity relates to power (Ford and Lyons, 2012). Gender order is shaped by two types of relationships namely: ‘hegemony, domination/subordination and complicity and marginalization/authorization’ (Connell, 1995: 81).

Hegemonic masculinity is seen as statistical outlier, thus not within the normal range, as not all men seem to practice it. It propels the notion of what it is to be a man, at the same time cajoling other men to position themselves within this context, and perpetuates an ideology of universal subordination of women. Those who do not enact this strong form of masculinity become complicit as they also reap the benefits of patriarchy. This makes hegemony as a concept more powerful as there is compliance among these non-actors and among heterosexual women. This does not mean however that hegemony is violence, though there might be an element of force. It is seen to be more of an ‘ascendancy achieved through culture institutions, and persuasion’ (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). The concept of hegemony is seen more to be abstract against being descriptive ‘defined in terms of the logic of a patriarchal gender system’. Furthermore, it was ‘assumed that gender relations were historical, so gender hierarchies were subject to change [thus] hegemonic masculinities therefore came into existence in specific circumstances and were open to historical change’.

Other forms of masculinities can be distinguished from hegemonic masculinity such as subordinated, complicit and marginalized masculinities (Ford and Lyons, 2012).

Gay men are categorized under subordinated masculinities as this form is defined as deviant. This deviant character has a tendency to transform into a protest as a form of challenge to the defining hegemonic principles. The marginalized form is shaped akin to the *authorization* of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group (Connell, 1995). They are situated around concepts of race, class and ethnicity (Howson, 2006: 23). Toned down forms of hegemonic masculinity describe complicit masculinity. These forms of masculinities are seen to be in constant interaction with each other and are not rigid definitions. They are produced within the context of structures in relationships that are fluid and changing.

The existence of multiple forms has been shown by research even in homogeneous organizations. This makes the workplace ‘a key arena in which masculinities are fashioned... , where central elements associated with hegemonic masculinity, such as competitiveness, autonomy, providership and risk-taking, are played out (McKay and Lucero-Prisno, 2012). This gives us a hint of the possible conflicting masculinities that transpires on board given the multinational crewing that exists in many ships. Unitary masculinity would make its way towards diversified forms because of existence of different classes and generations. Even in the military, diversity in masculinities can be found (Higate, 2003). It is emphasized however that these masculinities are different and are also subject to change.

In the discussion of masculinity, ‘male dominance’ becomes a central point. Male dominance describes the subordinate status of women in the public arena of economic opportunities and political discourse in many societies. It is seen as the imbalance of power between men and women wherein biological sex defines the social classes and the construction of power relations. There is emphasis on inclusion and priority of men in various spheres such as opportunities in economic, political and occupational areas. This pervasive dominance of men across history established his social dominance and made it normalized and desirable. This is akin to ‘patriarchy’ which is an old concept that has been in existence to allude to male tribal leaders. Patriarchalist approach shows that paternal and political power are identical thus explaining the concentration of power among men in societies and paternal rule in families (Pateman, 1988).

In understanding masculinity, it is necessary to take into account a wide range of theoretical perspectives such as those in the different fields of social sciences. These understanding can be scrutinized and localized in different divides such as how Giddens (1979) localized these dichotomies—whether it be structure or agency, or macro against micro, or society against the individual and social order or social change. Masculinity can thus be represented within these opposing locations and settings. Within these different sites we can see the production of masculinities as patriarchal structures seen to be pervasive in many parts of the society, for example, within the state, capitalist work, the family, and culture, as identified by Walby (1986). Within this patriarchal system, male domination thus becomes a way of explaining things as a common characteristic present in structures defining gender dynamics and power relations.

Gender is also seen to shape institutions and not merely attributes of individual identities. This is one reason why some institutions and social organizations have a pervasive and distinct gendered culture. As Kimmel (2001) explains:

We think of gendered individuals who bring with them all the attributes and behavioural characteristics of their gendered identity into gender-neutral institutional arenas. But because gender is plural and relational, it is also situational. What it means to be a man or a woman varies in different institutional contexts. Those different institutional contexts demand and produce different forms of masculinity and femininity.

In this case, gender is an array of behaviours that are products of specific social institutions, and not solely property owned by each person. It is in these gendered institutions that gendered individuals negotiate their identities. Consequently, these gendered institutions perpetuate the production of the differences among individuals that they assume to their own. In this case, the way men and women do their tasks differently produce the extent on the way they differ as individuals in terms of behaviour and character. The line of development and experience and the way they were structured produced the gender differences seen in their latter lives.

What explains men's and women's behaviour in organizations? According to the findings of Kanter (1977), the way men and women differ in their behaviours within organizations is not a product of their individual characteristics but may relate to the

position they carry. She also argues that these positions have specific characters called for and that individuals who should occupy them should possess those, thus she believes that guides for hiring or promotion for a position are gendered.

Organizations may be neutral institutions, however, masculinity may pervade as a dominant principle when it comes to authority culture. Within these organizations, the inequality between sexes becomes institutionalized and legitimized after they are reproduced through the experiences of the individuals within the organization and the interplay of gender and structure. As Kimmel (2001) pointed out, ‘institutions are like factories, and one of the things that they produce is gender difference’. In the long run, the total outcome of these gendered processes is a gender order within the institution.

When it comes to the global level, it has been observed that a sexual division of labour has become more common. According to Sprague (2001), ‘male-dominated multinational corporations collaborate with male-dominated governments’ and set in policies that undermine women in many countries and in many situations. Connell (1987) points out that this sexual division of labour perpetuates men’s dominance in political and economic power because of the seeming lesser responsibility to do domestic work enables them to have the luxury of time and resources to join institutions and participate in endeavours that contribute to their dominance. Thus it is common to see many of them controlling different institutions from the state, the industry and the market, the military, etc. This results into the concentration of wealth amongst them. This is because of their ability to manoeuvre institutional resources that provide them the armament in forging alliances with one another thus strengthening their solidarity and their resolve for domination. This makes gender a form of social organization and a means to reach this state of organizing.

1.2.2 Rereading Body and Corporeality

A related concept to gender that needs some discussion is the concept of body specifically in its cultural and social dimensions. The concept of body has already been in existence for a long time now starting with ideas of Descartes and Spinoza on the distinction between the material world and the world of thought and the strong held belief on the dichotomy of the soul and body (Danto, 1999). It has remained

traditionally in anthropological writing yet did not remain a major research interest until recently (Csordas, 2001). Merleau-Ponty (1962) introduced the concept of the 'habit body' arguing that the best way to learn the world is through the body. This allowed a deeper understanding on embodied actions by the body based on experiential knowledge. In this approach, all kinds of knowledge are seen as embodied, acquired via a 'corporeal schema' of the habit body. This schema is a wide range of skills learned allowing the individual to understand situations and experiences and act accordingly.

Later on, studies on the body used to a focus on the cultural process of communication and language (Benthall and Polhemus, 1975) in the context of the body as a medium for expression. It continued with the work of Douglas (1973) outlining her concept of two bodies—the physical and the social (or the self and society) where ones bodily state runs parallel with the state of social organization. Blacking (1977) contributed to these discussions placing forward his concept of the relationship between the biological and the cultural with body contributing to social processes making society a biological phenomenon.

These researches led to the emergence of body as an established topic including the inclusion of body and corporeality within the discussions of sexuality and gender (Waskul and Plante, 2010; Tanner, 2001). Concepts of the gendered body (Haraway, 1999; Martin, 1994) came into the fore, catapulting the body into the core of social policy. These included concepts of fleshy bodies, eroticism and sensuality as part of the sociological understanding of sex (Shilling and Mellor, 2010) further emphasizing the conceptual dualities of sex and gender, body and embodiment, subject and object, and mind and body (Harre, 2001). Feminist discourses on female body started to emerge explaining the narratives of 'decoupling', for example, between pleasure from sex and conception, or 'passivity' as an innate nature of the female body (Csordas, 2001). These studies paved the way for the changing concepts of the body including the transformation of boundaries of corporeality making it somewhat problematic to discern, as the human body has become an unbounded entity. This also led to revisions of concepts on culture and self taking on the standpoint of body and embodiment. As Csordas (2001: 1272) argues:

culture and self can be understood from the standpoint of embodiment as a existential condition in which the body is the subjective source or intersubjective ground of experience.

The use of body as a way of thinking has been further employed by studies on men's sexuality specifically on embodied heterosexual masculinities and the way they rationalize sex. It provides a good approach in explaining 'the complex ways in which masculine hegemony is reproduced, resisted, subverted or challenged' given the context of 'the embodiment of plural masculinities in a shifting relational and broader social, cultural, economic and political context' (Monaghan and Robertson, 2012). The kind of relations that exist between men, bodies and emotions has an effect on heterosexual relationships in modernity (Robertson and Monaghan, 2012).

Seidler (1994, 1997) emphasizes this point by arguing that the elevation of men to possess reason led them to underplay their feelings and emotions making themselves detached from their bodies. Bodies become only a medium to enact things in an independent manner. This translates to a way of thinking that pushes bodies to be under the control of rationality and reason and not to be under the whims of emotions thus providing us an understanding on how men navigate their embodied emotionality in the context of heterosexual relationships. Seidler (1994, 1997) thus emphasizes dualisms and mind/body separation around gender dimensions. Robertson and Monaghan (2012) illustrate this as emotional control vs. emotional expression; detachment vs. relationship; selfishness vs. selflessness; and aggressiveness vs. passivity.

Connell (2005) adds to this discussion by introducing the concept of 'body-reflexive practices' to illustrate the complex and intertwined linkages between relationships and bodies within a social system. This makes the body an agent and an object of practice. Thus, gender relations and emotions are enacted by bodily practices including oppression and domination. Monaghan and Robertson (2012: 146) further explains this as follows:

In all of this, we would stress that erotic pleasure and carnal sensuous embodiment must be viewed with an eye on the larger social and historical scene that gives modern heterosexual social relations their bitter-sweet flavours.

This makes men's lived bodies not to be considered as disembodied thinking and cognitive processes (Monaghan, 2002) because as what Gamson and Moon (2004: 56) argue '“the pleasures of the body” cannot be separated from the world outside'. This makes emotions emergent and embodied in social dynamics as elements of a wider structure of gendered corporeal arrangements.

1.3 Prostitutes and Paying Patrons

This study falls within the context of prostitution. Sexual transactions between seafaring men and the sex workers in ports are central in this study. This two-part section is written to provide us some background on this context. First is an introduction to prostitution which gives us information related to sex work, the providers and the different debates that exist. The second part is a discussion on the motivation of men to patronize prostitutes.

1.3.1 Understanding Prostitution

Women sex workers are central in this study as they play an important role in the sexual risk-taking of seafarers. These women are part of the prostitution industry in the port—the environment where all discourses on risk and AIDS transpire making prostitution an integral element within sexual networks and infection transmission. It is in this context that we look at prostitution as it plays a significant role in the HIV/AIDS transmission among seafarers. As Day *et al.* (1988) noted:

Prostitute women have been allotted a key role in models of heterosexual transmission of HIV. Prostitutes are assumed to be especially exposed to infection with HIV because they have a greater than average number of sexual partners, and infected prostitutes may then play an important part in spreading the virus.

Studies show that there is a general consensus that prostitution is “a form of ‘sex work’, as a business transaction: there must be a buyer and a seller, a commodity offered and a contracted price” (Scambler *et al.*, 1990). In this scenario, seafarers are

patrons and buyers and sex workers are sellers. Studies have shown that prostitution plays a role in lives of some people thus the continuity of sex trade. Hoigard and Finstad (1992: 365) present one of these roles as stated:

Prostitution can give the customer answers to totally conflicting desires. Prostitution can give both self-occupied pleasure, and the feeling of intimacy and warmth. The reason is that one of the most important things that the customer buys is the power to interpret what is sold—the power to live in his illusions.

This statement captures the sociological and psychological realities of patronizing the sex workers. Women sex workers in ports address a number of the needs of visiting seafarers. Thus, as these are services provided, a thread that comes out from studies shows that sex workers are working women. Sex workers provide the sexual services clients desire (Raymond, 2004; Ward *et al.*, 2005). As Perkins and Bennett (1985: 4) describe it:

one has to treat the exchange of sexual gratification for an established fee as a business deal, that is, without any pretence to affection, and continue to do this form of financial occupation, whether casual, part-time or full-time.

Prostitution has always had a negative connotation because of various reasons. In this study, I look at one of its inherent characteristic, which is its being risky. Harcourt and Donovan (2005) note that it is risky because ‘the boundaries of sex work are vague, ranging from erotic displays without physical contact with the client, through to high risk unprotected sexual intercourse with numerous clients’. Day (2000: 31) alluded to this by emphasizing that there is an association of the word risk with infectious disease, particularly HIV, as well as prostitution. The term ‘risk’ becomes more central when prostitution and disease are linked or have causal effect.

These types of sexual transactions give society the impression about these women (Agustin, 2005). When describing sex workers, public has developed different stereotypes. For some, like Scoular (2004) prostitution is viewed as ‘the *sine qua non* of the female condition under patriarchy’ where ‘the highly gendered nature of commercial sex appears to offer a graphic example of male domination, exercised through the medium of sexuality’. Sometimes, they are seen as either always having

stories of childhood abuse or as happy hookers; though these stereotypes have been challenged (Chudakov *et al.*,2002). Some of these sex workers may not be in their right state of mind because they may have been ‘trafficked’ and are not into voluntary sex work. This provides a riskier situation to their clients since their low self-esteem will not provide motivation for condom use. In their study, Do Espirito Santo and Etheredge (2004) noticed that women are vulnerable to HIV infection within the sexual transactions they have with men as these are salient ‘means to achieve social and economic status, and for some women they are necessary for survival’.

Other scholars defend that prostitution is a legitimate profession and job where women are aware of what they are into (Moffatt and Peters, 2004; van der Veen, 2001; Still, 2000; Bernstein, 1999). Women consciously practice the profession and in this job just like any other economic professions, it follows economic rules (Shrage, 1989). As Day (2000: 41) shows:

Not all prostitutes are slaves; some voluntarily choose their jobs in preference to alternatives, not just through economic motivations that lead many to jobs they would rather not do, but for positive reasons such as the apparently flexible hours, good money, and freelance or self-employed status.

These numerous ways sex workers feel and project their identities reflect on how they think about themselves and how they present themselves to others. These result in a number of implications towards the development of risk. As Harcourt and Donovan (2005) showed:

Individuals may occasionally and opportunistically exact a fee or gift for a sexual favour without perceiving themselves to be sex workers, or they may engage more or less full time in the explicitly commercial provision of sex services. This variability results in a spectrum of implications for public health and health service provision; yet sex work is typically stigmatised and often criminalised.

This study, however, is not about prostitution or prostitutes. Rather, it is about the social interaction between prostitutes and one of their clients—the seafarers. It is not the objective of this investigation to study prostitution in depth. However, it is deemed that many elements of prostitution need to be understood to cull the factors that create an environment of risk within the seafarer-sex worker social setting.

1.3.2 Patronizing Prostitutes

In this study, I am interested in another dimension—the reasons why seafarers engage in sexual relations with sex workers. As these relationships are outside marriage or outside the relationships with their girlfriends back in their home countries, these can be categorized as extramarital sex or relations or infidelity. These subject areas have received scholarly interest within the context of marriage and family relations (Macklin, 1980). As Thompson has (1984) noted, this area covers broad themes such as extramarital sex, extramarital affairs, cheating and infidelity. I am limiting, however, my interest in one specific group—seafarers with the women sex workers in ports.

The study of extramarital relations necessitates that the relevant aspects of the behavioural referent be identified (Thompson, 1984). According to Edwards (1973), these behaviours vary from simple flirtations to sexual intercourse. It has also been ascertained that sexual intercourse itself presents many variations, which would differ across individuals in terms of frequency and number of partners showing the variance of behavioural referent in extramarital relations (Thompson, 1982).

When it comes to extramarital sex through patronage of prostitutes, there are a number of discourses why men buy sex and derive pleasure from women. Central to the study of prostitution is to understand what sex clients buy and their motives and demand for sex workers. Based on the study by Mansson (2006) on clients of prostitutes, five major reasons were identified as motives for demands for prostitutes, namely: the whore fantasy (curiosity, excitement and contempt), ‘another kind’ of sex provided by sex workers, women as kind hearted comforter, images of sex as consumer product, and fantasies of another kind of woman. Mansson (2006) argues that these identified themes are manifestations of the dominant structures of the culture of sex and gender relations in a specific society.

Plumridge *et al.* (1997) showed that the commercial transaction is considered to be a mutual emotional and sexual relationship between the sex worker and her client, however clients believe that the money paid discharges them of all other obligations

associated with relationships. This is the reason why some individuals look at sexual intercourse as having no meaning—‘no social or emotional significance beyond a physical act that satisfies a male sexual need’ (Mooney-Somers and Ussher, 2010).

Sexuality literature would show different motives why these men engage with sex workers (Raymond, 2004). To structure male sexuality, Hollway (1984) identified three variants of their discourses on how men position themselves—‘male sex drive’ discourse which is the most widespread wherein dominant-positioned men seek women as a function of the biological need for heterosexual sex; ‘have/hold’ discourse which shows that sex should be within the confines of relationships (e.g. monogamy, marriage, family); and the ‘permissive’ discourse which is hinged on natural sex drive and lack of responsibility and commitment to the relationship. Men who engage in this activity are seen to be able to dissociate sex, love and marriage thus convenient for them to compartmentalize and perform (Weis and Slosnerick, 1981).

The hegemonic discourse can be further scrutinized within the context of power and gender, such as how Connell (1997: 183) described this behaviour as within the realm of hegemonic masculinity. Connell further opines that this is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities including the way men relates to the opposite sex. ‘[This] clearly places emphasis on the visible signs of male desire, arousal and performance, and women’s accommodation to these’ (Holland *et al.*, 2003:88) thus providing an explanation of patronising nightclubs.

Extending further this discourse through a feminist lens would show a focus on the physical body as a social site (Coveney *et al.*, 1984; Thompson, 1990; Hite, 1987). It is in this context that women’s bodies are seen as sites of male domination wherein these women consent and resist this institutionalized masculinity and male hegemony (Bordo, 1993; Bartky, 1990). In this context, women are alluded to as being disembodied and men being embodied—meaning ‘in his body’—as seen by the social construction of heterosexuality. According to Holland *et al.* (2003: 88) ‘the interdependence and interlocking of the two...dissolves the dualism of male/female in favour of the male’.

Other authors have shown that infidelity may have many determinants. Smith (2007) observed that this behaviour is shaped by factors such as economic inequality, aspirations for modern lifestyles, gender disparities, and contradictory moralities. Parikh (2007) identified social and economic contexts and the dynamics of marriage as determinants. Frank (2005) adds that this pleasure that they get with their engagement with the women is a product of their own fantasies of identity, their understanding of marriage, and to the type of monogamy they are committed to. Through the framework of equity theory (Walster, Walster and Berscheid, 1978), extramarital sex is viewed as a form of ‘equity restoration’ mechanism where the deprived partner uses it to achieve actual equity and “it may represent a desire to achieve equity in an alternative relationship(s) when inequity pervades the primary one (Hatfield, Traupmann, and Walster, 1978). Equity theory could arguably shed light on the situation of seafarers who are away from their wives deprived of sex for a long period of time. This theory, however, only focuses on the men and not on their wives, raising question on the theory itself.

The major concern of extramarital relations is the unprotected sex that occurs (Schensul *et al.*, 2006). This is because these unsafe extramarital sexual involvements place the person at risk for HIV/STI transmission. He also places his wife or girlfriend at risk on top of the impact on their relationship as a couple. This risk is further aggravated by the fact that extramarital sex is observed to be a sign of multiple concurrent sexual partnerships (Kongnyuy and Wiysonge, 2007), which exacerbates STI transmission.

As Smith (2007) observed, ‘it is men’s anxieties and ambivalence about masculinity, sexual morality, and social reputation in the context of seeking modern lifestyles—rather than immoral sexual behaviour and traditional culture—that exacerbate the risk of HIV/AIDS’. The wife receives the brunt of the problem as a double standard exists wherein there is a universal restriction upon extramarital sex for wives (Broude, 1980). This double standard is interpreted as a reflection of both male fears of sexual betrayal and male concern for sexual adequacy. In any case, it is argued that ‘men’s extramarital relationships are more sexual and women’s are more emotional’ (Glass and Wright, 1985).

Last thing that is relevant to this discussion is the understanding of the concept of sex tourism as seafarers are considered to be sex tourists. This theme shares similar approaches to the discussions on military men during their rest and recreation or deployment and men-in-transit (Kane, 1993). As Truong (1990) has alluded to, ‘the image of tourism and sex has usually been associated with male tourists who travel... with the purpose of having sex with prostitutes’. These transient individuals who are considered non-residential men in an area trigger an increase in demand for prostitution.

Research shows that looking at the sex provider and tourist client in the context of monetary exchange is analytically inadequate as these individuals and their interactions do not see it as such (Oppermann, 1999). Herold, Garcia and De Moya (2001) observed that romance and sex tourism are seen as concepts placed at the two ends of a continuum of motivations and are not supposed to be seen as distinct categories. There is a range of dimensions that needs to be included as parameters in understanding the concept such as *intention, opportunity, tourism, length of time, prostitute-tourist relationship, sexual encounter, and who travels* (Opperman, 1999). These concepts find relevance when discussing seafarers and their relationship with sex workers as they fit well in the discourses of travel, tourism and prostitution.

1.4 Seafarers, Seafaring and AIDS

The last section of this paper is an introduction to the group under study—the global seafarers. The first part is an overview of the working lives of seafarers to provide the different contexts by which sexual risk-taking behaviour occurs. The second part is a presentation of the vulnerability of seafarers to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections to provide the empirical evidence of the risk they face in the context of sexual relations.

1.4.1 Working Lives of Seafarers

Seafaring is one of the most international of all jobs of the world, employing some 1,384,000 seafarers aboard the world’s ships (BIMCO/ISF, 2010). A marked feature

of the industry is the global labour market for seafarers. From the 1980s onwards ship-owners have essentially gone offshore with their ships *en masse*, placing them under the regulatory jurisdiction of commercial ship registers, such as Panama and Liberia. For full details of this process see Carlisle (1981). The consequence of this flagging-out has been the dissolution of the requirement to crew ships with national workers. At the same time third party recruitment agencies sprang up in vast numbers around the globe to facilitate the provision of crews internationally, usually on the basis of cost. As a result, ships today are largely mixed nationality (Horck, 2005; Guo, Liang and Ye, 2005; Knudsen, 2004; Sampson and Zhao, 2003; Ostreng, 2000), and from developing countries such as the Philippines—the largest supplier of seafarers (BIMCO/ISF, 2010; Amante, 2004).

There are various reasons why individuals decide on a profession at sea (Hill, 1972; Fricke, 1974; Couper *et al.*, 1999; Lamvik, 2002; Borovnik, 2003; Thomas, Sampson and Zhao, 2003; Thomas, 2003; Wu, Shen and Li, 2007; McKay and Wright, 2007), but chief of which is the financial reward. The profession is seen as a quick way of achieving social mobility without too much investment. It does not necessarily discriminate those from the low economic background to enter the profession. Anyone holding an internationally recognised qualification can, by and large, serve on any ship anywhere in the world (Couper *et al.*, 1999; Leggate and McConville, 2002)

Traditionally, to see the world provided a common motivation to go to sea, however, today such sentiments tend to be limited to those new in the profession such as cadets and trainees. Due to technological developments aboard ship and in ports, crews today are typically much smaller than thirty years ago and ships spend far less time in port. As a consequence seafarers have little opportunity for shore leave and time in the port cities (Fricke, 1974; Kahveci, 1999).

Seafaring professions may follow different patterns. Normally, seafarers go through a ladder of positions. Those who start as messboy/messman become second cook or chef or chief cook. Able-bodied seaman (AB) and ordinary seafarers (OS) become bossman or bosun. Those in the engine room become chief engineers while those on deck become captains. This process normally takes a number of years per step and entails a number of requirements before qualifying for the next level.

Despite the good compensation and other positive attributes of seafaring, literature has always portrayed the profession as a sacrifice (Lamvik, 2002). A significant consequence of a seafaring life is that of being away from home and family (Thomas *et al.*, 2003; Parreñas, 2008). Extended periods of absence become a major source of stress. Thus it is not surprising that the most stressful part of seafarers' lives is the home/work interface (Espiritu and Lopez, 2006; Parker *et al.*, 1998). Family may also be the indirect reason why some seafarers retire at a younger age (Jensen *et al.*, 2003). Among those from developing countries, once their children finish their university degrees and once family houses are erected, many seafarers stop working on board.

In seafaring, there is a prolonged absence from the family and intermittent pattern of work has other undesirable consequences. They feel that they lose out on the performance of fathering resulting into emotional distance (Parreñas, 2008). Parenting becomes a major problem for many seafarers since they are usually abroad working while the children are growing up. It becomes difficult for the seafarer to help raise the children. Thomas and Bailey (2006) describe these leave periods (for European seafarers) or in-between contracts (for seafarers from developing countries) as a state similar to those who are unemployed as stated:

[T]hey experience considerable problems associated with loss of role during their leave period, and frequently experience a sense of 'role displacement' where they feel redundant, unnecessary and essentially 'outsiders' in relation to their families.

It is common for seafarers to miss their families as they are normally away from them. This is manifested by feelings of homesickness and loneliness. This feeling of loneliness is also heightened when they have been on board for a long period of time. Despite the fact that the seafarers are quite busy on board especially during the day, the thought of home pervades and with small numbers of crew on board it is reported that seafarers suffer from social isolation (Thomas, Sampson and Zhao, 2003; Sampson and Thomas, 2003a).

Other factors that contribute to the stressful lives of some seafarers working on board are the demands of work itself and sometimes from their superiors. It becomes a vicious cycle because the effect reflects on their work performance. Oldenburg *et al.* (2009) categorized this as ‘high work demand’ which also includes: time pressure, hectic activities, high volume of work, high responsibility for their own activities, pressure due to decision-making, monotony, and lack of independence.

One of the realities that seafarers face is the force of nature—from wind, sea, and climate on top of the workplace environment (Alderton *et al.*, 2004). Oldenburg *et al.* (2009) call these elements as physical stressors. The changing time zones and the movement of ship towards different parts of the world also expose the seafarers to changing temperatures from the hottest to the coldest. Other physical stressors include heat in workplaces, noise, ship movement and seasickness, and climatic changes during the voyage. Adding to the stress is the impact of changing time zones on the sleep and work cycle—an element that is beyond the control of seafarers. This makes their sleeping time either shorter or longer. This is one of the neglected human factors that is a consequence of the moving ship. Cook and Shipley (1980) assert that working irregular hours could have ‘adverse effects on maritime safety and individual health and well-being’. This has also been seen by the studies of Van Dongen (2006), Ferguson *et al.* (2008), and Gander *et al.* (2008). These are identified as psychosocial stressors, which include shifting work, long working times per day, irregular working times, and lack of sleep (Oldenburg *et al.*, 2009).

Some seafarers describe seafaring work as routine and cyclical. After some time, a number of them find the work boring, given the nature of repetitive work being done everyday. There are those who feel that they are unable to cope with technological advancement in the maritime industry especially among older seafarers. They go through a lot of training to adapt to the changing ship technology. Some find learning this new knowledge as stressful which is related to two stressors on board under high management tasks namely: insufficient qualification of subordinate crewmembers and high responsibility for the work of other crewmembers (Oldenburg *et al.*, 2009).

The nature of their work interacts with other factors such as being in confined and small spaces on board, long voyages, lack of entertainment, seeing the same people,

performance of difficult tasks, piracy, job uncertainty, problems with the family, and other conditions present in substandard ships, which add to the stressful situation on board. Many of these problems have been documented in the submissions to the final report of International Commission on Shipping (ICONS) in 2000.

Seafarers employ ways to adapt to their work environment. For example, they fight loneliness, homesickness and boredom by communicating with loved ones or by entertaining themselves on board. Access to technology for communicating and entertainment would, however, depend on the available technology provided by the shipping companies. Newer ships, larger companies, and shipping companies from more affluent countries would normally have better onboard conditions. Some companies nowadays try to invest on the working conditions of their workers to avoid having trouble with the labour union and with port authorities (Trotter, 2008; Fitzpatrick and Anderson, 2005; Couper *et al.*, 1999). These amenities include access to communication technology. However, these technologies are still expensive as they rely on satellite technology.

Movies are one of the most common forms of entertainment on board (Espiritu and Lopez, 2006). Seafarers watch movies together in the common room or they watch in their cabins using their laptops. However, there comes a point when they become bored and disinterested watching all the time. Many ships are equipped with sports facilities or gym which seafarers have the chance to make use of, though many seafarers tend not to use them because they feel that they get their exercise from the manual work they perform. Some feel that they are already tired at the end of a working day (Espiritu and Lopez, 2006).

Another form of entertainment on board is alcohol (Borovnik, 2003) and this is seen to promote social cohesion since the crew normally drink together. However, drinking alcohol is nowadays considered to be a contentious issue because of the changing policies on alcohol on board, which may result into accidents, injuries and death (Hansen, 1996). Some companies have implemented no-alcohol policy because of these reasons. Others try to limit the intake of the crew by limiting to two cans per day per person. The industry is somewhat divided on this issue because some believe

that alcohol is a part of the socialization process, which boosts the morale of workers (Sampson and Thomas, 2003a).

Social relationship on board is considered to be a very important element for the well being of seafarers (Knudsen, 2004; Swift, 2010). The social environment created within the ship has bearing on many aspects of the voyage including safety. This is one basic facet of the 'human element' that has been a byword in the shipping industry (Hetherington, Flin and Mearns, 2006; Dhillon, 2007; Macrae, 2009; and Wagenaar and Groeneweg, 1987). The ills of social relations on board are attributed to a number of factors, which includes the inherent nature of current shipping where one is confined together with the same individuals over a long period of time. Long voyages or long stay on board are a major complaint of many seafarers on ocean-going vessels. They experience the monotony of seeing the same thing—the open sea, the ship environment and the same faces. This is one reason why many seafarers place more premium, not on the kind of ship they work in, but on the people they work with (Knudsen, 2004). They would prefer having individuals on board who they can easily relate with and enjoy the company, especially since conflicts between crewmembers is a major stressor seen among seafarers (Oldenburg *et al.*, 2009).

The interaction with similar faces on board has repercussions on the social relations among the crew. These interactions include stories that are related by some seafarers repeatedly thus becoming an irritant to some (Espiritu and Lopez, 2006). The seemingly difficult circumstances when relating to other seafarers on board are further aggravated by multinational crewing. With different nationalities on board using different languages a certain social distance is developed among themselves (Knudsen, 2004; Sampson and Zhao, 2003). Despite the fact that English is the internationally recognised maritime language, some seafarers possess only Basic English, which they are not confident to use in communicating. Sometimes, some individuals who have no understanding of the English language aggravate it. Multicultural crewing also has a profound effect on the food on board. The differences in food preferences and needs aggravate the situation. The kitchen staff are pressured to address the taste of everyone (Espiritu and Lopez, 2006).

Despite the fact that ships are getting larger (McLellan, 1997), it does not follow that its social spaces are also enlarging. Ships enlarge to accommodate and to carry more cargo. In fact, even if ships get bigger, there is always the same number of crewmembers on board since many of the new ships have automated functions.

Against all the difficulties of seafaring, many remain determined to endure them just to provide for their families. Along the way, they develop ways to counteract these stresses. Their ability to mitigate stress allows them to remain at work and cope with the elements on board. Their conviction to provide for themselves and their families better lives prevail. This is one of the reasons why for example Filipino seafarers are dubbed *modern-day heroes* by their government (McKay, 2007a and 2007b). There are also those who leave the profession because of the same factors. They stop working when they have saved enough money to start a business (Lamvik, 2002). Among the British seafarers, many of them join land-based maritime offices such as ship management, maritime insurance, classification bodies or shipping company offices, cutting short their working life at sea (Gekara, 2008, 2009).

Over the years, many negative aspects of shipping have already been eliminated or diminished, making the seafarers' working lives better. Conditions have improved since the strict implementation of international labour conventions (Mouchtouri *et al.*, 2010; Carter, 2009). Technology has also improved the performance of ships despite the fact that they face similar weather conditions. Nowadays, many seafarers are better-educated manifesting lesser vices, are able to save money and are more focused on their jobs and careers. There is just one stereotype that seems to be pervasive—that seafarers are promiscuous and that they have sex with sex workers in different ports. This is the main theme of the study.

1.4.2 Seafarers and HIV/AIDS

This last section of the literature chapter provides the empirical evidence on the real risk seafarers face. Research shows that seafarers are at very high risk of HIV/AIDS (Nikolic, 2010; Suñas, 2003; Armstrong, 1999; Mulhall, 1996; Sesar *et al.*, 1995; Tomaszunas, 1994; Hansen *et al.*, 1994). This makes seafaring, already considered a risky profession, even more risky. It is known that sexually transmitted infections

have always been a scourge for centuries to the seafaring population (Arya and Plumb, 1992).

History provides many examples of their vulnerability (Mulhall, 1996). During the first voyage of Christopher Columbus to America in 1492, his seafarers had sex with Haitian women (Crosby, 1969). These seafarers got infected with syphilis, which they later brought to Europe. In the UK, history shows that as early as 1665 Admiralty laws gave a bonus to surgeons for any venereal disease treated while the seafarer was fined (Allison, 1943). During the third voyage (1776-9) of Captain James Cook, half of the ship's crew was infected with venereal diseases causing concern on the captain on its possible spread (Watt J. Lettsonian lectures, 1979).

In 1943, Hutchison found that 542 cases (10.1 percent) of merchant seafarers in the Clyde anchorages in a period of two years had venereal infections. In Finland, from 1946-1949, Putkonen (1951) found that seafarers comprise 10.5% of total male population with gonorrhoea, the incidence increased from 9.7% to 13.3%, incidence was 11 times (1947) and 16 times (1948) greater than the rest of the male population, 7% of female infection came from the seafarers, 27.8% of the cases were contracted abroad compared to 3% in the rest of the male population, and most of the cases were from paid intercourse.

In 1948, an article on merchant seafarers who were admitted for having primary and secondary syphilis was published in the Journal of Venereal Disease Information (Giacomo and Rion, 1948). This study showed evidence of the potential global spread of infection through a small number of individuals. The data showed that the group had possible exposures in every continent except Australia. In this study, the first 80 men were assessed in detail showing sexual intercourse with a total of 615 individuals spanning 112 different ports in 45 different countries.

There was an average of 1.3 contacts per port of call per seaman. In one instance, a seaman reported intercourse with 90 different individuals during the probable period of his infection. Another seaman reported intercourse with individuals in six different ports. The total group of 149 seamen reported having had sexual relations with 1,098 different persons, or an average of 7.3 contacts per seamen, during the period of possible incubation or infectiousness.

Further data shows that even as early as mid-20th century, there was already documentation of venereal diseases in ports such as in the UK (Willcox, 1954). Syphilis was prevalent in the ports of Liverpool and Merseyside, Manchester and district, Hull, Bristol, Tyneside and Southampton. These were busy ports as trade was at its peak during this period. The study reported 2,375 males and 1,336 females with syphilis in the ports compared to 1,010 males and 661 females in inland towns attesting to the vulnerability of port populations to STIs.

In 1955, Kornstad did a study on a total of 9,140 Norwegian seafarers (8,189 men and 951 women) who were serologically examined for syphilis. 132 men and 24 women showed positive reactions. Idsoe and Guthe (1963) published an important paper entitled 'The Frequency of Venereal Disease among Seafarers' providing a comprehensive picture of the workers' vulnerability to this group of diseases. They highlighted the rise in the incidence of venereal infections at the global level during and after the First World War. This rise led to the establishment of the Brussels Agreement of 1924 where seafarers can avail of free examination and treatment of venereal diseases in ports.

In an investigation by Schofield in 1965 (also presented by Cross and Harris, 1976), 429 seafarers presented symptoms of urethritis. These men attended two port clinics located in the north-east of England within a 3-year period.

Of these, 107 (25 percent) admitted to prior treatment, 84 having been treated on board ship. It was notable that by the end of the 3-year survey the number of mariners treated at sea had increased, and that 94 had received various doses of antitreponemal drugs. Another significant finding was that the younger the seafarer the more likely he was to have sought and obtained prior treatment.

These men showed that 124 of the men got infected within the UK and 71 got it outside Europe. He also described their vulnerability and some of the issues encountered by these seafarers who got infected by STIs.

It is purported that the first two identified AIDS cases in history were seafarers. They both got infected years prior to the identification of the virus among the gay

population in San Francisco in 1978 (National Institutes of Health, 1995). The very first was a 25 year-old former naval seafarer from Manchester, UK who died in 1959 (Williams *et al.*, 1960; Corbitt *et al.*, 1990). This fact for being the very first AIDS case in the world is, however, being contested by Connor (1995) and Hooper and Hamilton (1996) who argues that his exposure in Africa (which had supposedly the worst AIDS at that time) was unlikely because he only went to Morocco which had a very low HIV prevalence while his ship was docked in Gibraltar.

The second case was a Norwegian seafarer who contracted HIV in Cameroon between 1961-62 (Hooper, 1997). He visited several ports in Africa as a seafarer where he was diagnosed twice for gonorrhoea. He died in 1976 at the age of 29. His wife and youngest daughter born in 1967 also died. The blood specimen frozen was later identified positive for HIV in 1988 when laboratory tools were already available (Van, 1988). Before his death, this seafarer became a truck driver who travelled around Europe. Virus of the subtype he was infected with has been seen around his travel route providing early evidence of mobility as a factor of spread. It sheds light on the spread of the virus as it passed from one person to another and the impact of the disease on the immediate family.

Several studies emerged revealing more seafarers with HIV/AIDS such as that presented by Vuksanović *et al.* (1988), Van Damme and Van Damme (1989), Dhar and Timmins (1991) and Vuksanović and Low (1991). Seafaring countries started to unravel the epidemic in their own territories having documented positive cases of HIV among its seafaring population. The Philippines, the largest contributor of seafarers to the world has shown a high number of seropositive cases of Filipino seafarers out of the total of 15,774 Filipinos identified as of October 2013 (National Epidemiology Center – Department of Health Philippines) since its surveillance identified its first case of HIV in 1984. This high number of seafarers contracting HIV has alarmed the Philippine government (Guevara *et al.*, 2010; Sanial and de los Reyes, 2010). This number is believed to be a small percentage of the total seafarers who contracted HIV. Stigma and low reporting of clinics conducting the annual medical examination of seafarers (before signing a contract) contribute to a small percentage identified. Some manning agencies do not require HIV testing making some HIV carriers undetected until such a time they start developing AIDS symptoms (Lucero-Priso, 2004).

Other seafarers are identified positive while they are on board. They go back home without the authorities knowing thus evading count. There was one case of a Filipino seafarer who developed respiratory problems while on board (PSAP, 2003). He consulted at the port of Rotterdam and was diagnosed with advanced pulmonary tuberculosis and AIDS. He died three days later. He remained undetected for many years. During the early part of the epidemic, a study conducted by the Occupational Safety and Health Centre (1998) in the Philippines showed 59% of seafarer respondents confirmed to have contracted a sexually transmitted infection. The problem of increasing number of seafarers in the Philippines is captured by the media every now and then as the epidemic worsens. For example, a major daily newspaper, *The Manila Times*, in the Philippines bannered this news on July 29, 2002— ‘HIV/AIDS cases rising among seafarers, 40% of overseas Filipino workers (OFW) incidence’ (Cruz, 2002).

Half-a-million Filipino seafarers working all over the world is a large number of people possibly exposed to the virus (Guevara *et al.*, 2010; Saniel and de los Reyes, 2010). Their exposure in many different countries is one reason why there are many genetic subtypes of HIV-1 in the Philippines (Paladin *et al.*, 1998). The Philippine National AIDS Council (2005) has identified scaling-up and quality improvement of AIDS preventive interventions for seafarers, as a highly vulnerable group. They proclaimed it as one of the strategies in their long-term national AIDS plan.

In Denmark, seafarers were infected in high-endemic areas and were identified as a risk group carrying the infection into the heterosexual population in non-endemic areas (Hansen *et al.*, 1994). Croatia has been documenting HIV/AIDS among its seafarers (Sesar *et al.*, 1995). Between 1985-2009, out of 784 diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, 79 were seafarers (9.4%) making it 0.25% of the seafaring population (Mulić *et al.*, 2010). In Ethiopia, a study by Demissie *et al.* (1996) showed an alarming prevalence of HIV-1 infection at 9.6% and the prevalence was observed to decrease with increasing level of education. Fourteen percent of these studied Ethiopian sailors reported condom use but also showed irregularity in their use.

In Pakistan, the first AIDS case was an African seafarer who died in 1986 (Nanan *et al.*, 2000). At present, seafarers are surmised to make up a sizeable portion of recognized HIV/AIDS cases in Pakistan (Khawaja *et al.*, 1997). In the port city of Mumbai (India), a doctor reported 25-30 cases of seafarers infected with HIV under his treatment in 2001. In 2000, the city reported at least 10 to 12 new HIV infections among the seafarers (United News of India, 2001). South Korea used to have a prevalence of 0.007-0.071% among its seafarers, according to the WHO (1999) based on the report of the Centre for AIDS Research of the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

The link between seafarers and HIV was further drawn into international attention when HIV-positive Thai seafarers were reported in various islands of Indonesia in 1992 thus alarming the latter country (Ruj, 1995). In Vietnam, a rapid assessment of seafarer vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and drug abuse revealed seropositive individuals (Vietnam Seafarers Research Team, 2000). The study was conducted in the ports of Hai Phong, Da Nang, Rach Gia and Can Tho all along the coastline of the country. Similar findings were seen by Trang (2002) in Vietnam and by Pramulratana, Panakitsuwan and Veerasuksavat (2000) in Thailand.

In the South Pacific Region, Kiribati documented fifteen seafarers affected with HIV from 1999-2000 (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2003). It also noted five wives of seafarers who contracted the virus attesting to the vulnerability of the partners to the virus. Other countries which have documented seafarers infected with HIV are Mauritius (Indian Ocean Commission, 2010), Malaysia (Huang, 2002), Myanmar (UNICEF Myanmar, 2000), Poland (Tomaszunas, 1994), Bangladesh (Islam *et al.*, 1999) and Spain (Abellan Hervas *et al.*, 1999).

In the fishing sector, an occupation most related to seafaring, an increasing trend of HIV infection is also seen (Bailey, 2011; Setiawan and Patten, 2010; Kissling *et al.*, 2006, Entz *et al.*, 2000; Towianska, Dabrowski and Rozlucka, 1996). In Malaysia, 7.8% of AIDS cases with known occupations are fishermen (Huang, 2002).

The issue of HIV/AIDS and seafarers is not confined only among international seafarers. Regional or cross-border movement of seafarers has been seen as a problem (Agence France-Presse, 1999). This was shown by the movement of

seafarers in the Thailand-Myanmar region. Undocumented workers from Myanmar, of which 80% are seafarers, operate off the coast of Thailand. The report showed that these seafarers work dirty, dangerous, low-paid jobs. When they are in port, a combination of homesickness, isolation and a lack of AIDS awareness lead to high risk behavior. The port of Ranong which has 20% of sex workers positive for HIV is frequented by these seafarers thus risking their lives.

The world's seafarers have been tagged as a population at risk to the virus since the epidemic started. Studies show that seafarers are major clients of many commercial sex workers in the different ports of the world (Tansey *et al.*, 2010). Seafarers on the other hand are known to frequent red light districts when they go down in ports. In a study by Ross (1977), he recorded high frequency of sexual intercourse of 80 seafarers with prostitutes—615 women at 112 ports of 45 countries. Based on studies on HIV infection among Filipino seafarers, heterosexual transmission is still the predominant mode (National Epidemiology Center – Department of Health Philippines, 2013). In this context, we look at the engagement of seafarers with sex workers as risk behaviour in itself together with the non-use of condoms during the sexual encounters.

As a response to this increasing problem of HIV/AIDS among seafarers and in ports many interventions have already been proposed. As early as 1989, the World Health Organization convened a consultation on AIDS and seafarers in Geneva. Fitness examination was suggested in a published paper by Canals and Garrido in 1995. In 1997, there was an Inter-Agency consultation on 'HIV/AIDS Prevention in the Maritime Sector' convened by the Civil-Military Alliance to Combat HIV and AIDS and the UNAIDS and hosted by the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF). The Indian Ocean Commission (2010) has been conducting training of peer educators for seafarers among their member countries.

The International Organization of Migration (IOM) conducted the very first regional workshop on HIV responses among seafarers and port-based communities in southern Africa in 2009. In this workshop, they considered the ports of Durban (South Africa), Dar-es-salaam (Tanzania), Maputo and Beira (Mozambique) and Walvis Bay (Namibia). With ports recognized as 'entry points' for diseases to enter and spread,

the US government through its partner agencies implemented the Project Lighthouse in 12 of India's port cities to build awareness on HIV/AIDS, to promote safe sexual practices, and to mobilize behaviour change among individuals who are connected to the port including seafarers, truckers, sex workers, fishermen, etc. AIDS interventions in ports remain a major challenge.

There are recent developments in global programmes on HIV/AIDS for seafarers. One example is the "The Global Partnership on HIV and Mobile Workers in the Maritime Sector" launched in 2009 (Nikolic, 2010; Bell and Idnani, 2009). The project is aimed at reducing HIV risk behaviour among seafarers by increasing access to HIV-related services for seafarers. It tries to decrease vulnerability of seafarers to HIV through increased ownership of strategies to reduce HIV infection by key stakeholders, and to promote best practice in HIV voluntary counselling and testing in the context of seafarer recruitment/medical screening.

In summary, the facts and numbers presented by the studies indicate that there is a problem of HIV/AIDS in the seafaring sector, and that there is a dearth of, and thus a need for, sociological studies on HIV/AIDS and sexual risk among seafarers. The problem of sexually transmitted infections among the seafaring population has been in existence since shipping started to flourish. Most of the studies are epidemiologic and medical in nature and there is a lack of qualitative studies. This part of the literature impresses upon us the need to fill in some gaps in the literature such as the use of qualitative studies to this inquiry.

1.5 Conclusion

The goal of this review of literature is to look at what has been written in the different areas related to the study. I have introduced in this chapter the working lives of seafarers. Though this is not a comprehensive discussion, I have attempted to provide a background and overview of this population group in reference to the theme of the study—sexual-risk behaviours and relationships. I also provided the empirical data to contextualize the major risk of getting infected with HIV by showing the epidemic in

the maritime industry. Unfortunately, the data focused more on epidemiology as there is a dearth of sociological studies on HIV/AIDS among seafarers.

In this chapter, I also discussed sociological concepts of risk and risk perception, sexual risk, unprotected sex, gender, masculinities and bodies. I further described the world of prostitution and the clients who patronize them. Though they were discussed individually, these concepts are intertwined and interrelated. This is the challenge this thesis provides—how to qualify that risk is gendered, for example. How does a seafarer client-sex worker relationship, a highly gendered interaction, produce risk? Literature presented shows that men’s masculine desire for sex is highly gendered. Yet, it was also shown that within the context of one organization, there is the existence of multiple masculinities. How is this tension between hegemonic, subordinated and other forms of masculinities linked to seafarers’ masculinity, that which is made and practised in relationships with sex workers? Such questions foreshadow the study.

In this chapter, I also attempted to look at the gaps and the current understanding of the various themes discussed. For example, there is a lack of understanding why seafarers still contract STIs and HIV. What exactly happens in the different ports they visit? What are the roles of the sex workers? How do the seafarers and sex workers relate to each other? How do seafarers look at themselves in the context of bodies? How would a qualitative and sociological approach contribute in exploring the risk they perceive and experience? These are just some of the identified gaps in the literature presented. It is in this light that this thesis has been proposed, bringing us to the next chapter on the presentation and discussion of the methodology, and other issues concerning data gathering.

Chapter 2

Researching Sex and Relationships

2.1 Introduction: An Onboard Story

It was June 2004. Everyone was having a good laugh. They were all gathered in the 'day room', which is a common viewing room on the ship. It is known as the 'day room' as this is where they mingle during break periods and after a day's work before retiring to their respective quarters. It was night time just after dinner. The sea was calm and the weather was perfect. Conditions were fine and the ship was on schedule. Most of the seafarers were resting and having a good chat.

There was excitement in the air. We were now about to dock at Algeciras, Spain. This is normally the last port call in Europe before going to Africa or South America. A few hours back, the crew were told by the Danish captain that the ship was bound for Brazil. What triggered the excitement with the impending trip to Brazil was the thought of meeting women in South America. Ahhh women—this was the pervasive thought in their minds. It was a continuous discussion and bantering about the girlfriends they left in that region.

The discussion about the nightclubs in Santos, Brazil reached a crescendo. It was getting raucous. I thought I could almost see through their glittering eyes the flashing neon lights of the clubs. The 'mulheres' they bragged about provided me with a mental picture of them as nymphs luring these men to their enclaves. These seafarers could even name many of these women. They mentioned their beauty, talked about them being young and white-skinned, and discussed as if they had been in long-term relationships with these women. I learned that one of the nightclubs is the most popular in the region, if not in the world. How I wish I could capture and draw the images before their eyes as they laughed, giggled and flirted among each other while narrating their stories.

This is how my curiosity about the Brazilian port of Santos, the capital city of São Paulo, and its red light district started. I was on a container ship conducting health research. I and another Danish doctor went onboard in Bremerhaven, Germany to join the multinational crew of this huge European cargo ship with an all-male crew of Danish, Polish, Thai and Filipino seafarers. Through their stories, I created a vivid

image of the city, its nightclubs and its women. These were the men's representations of a seemingly exciting and enticing place. They stayed in my mind. Unbeknownst, this experience would become the link to my PhD study, both in my topic and fieldwork site.

A qualitative approach is recognized to have an important role in understanding the social context of the transmission of HIV (Power, 1998). Related studies in the field of health sociology and medical anthropology have provided significant knowledge of the social context of sexual behaviour, enabling a better understanding of the phenomenon of AIDS—see early works by Day (1988), Ford and Koetsawang (1991), Hart and Flowers (1996), Rhodes (1997), Craddock (2000) and Plumridge (2001). The HIV/AIDS pandemic cannot solely be explained by numbers (such as by new infections and deaths). Its transmission, for example, can be understood through cultural and social analysis. Such an analysis would focus on the social contexts of transmission or infection, an analysis that would bring in the social interactions and sexual transactions of people. Despite my interest in epidemiology and quantitative methods, I decided to undertake a qualitative study, prompted by the seeming inadequacy of quantitative data to provide a contextual and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Green and Thorogood, 2009; Flick, von Kardoff and Steinke, 2004; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). After all, the major mode of transmission is sexual which is, first and foremost, a social act best understood through qualitative methods.

In this chapter, I discuss how this study of the sexual risk-taking behaviours of seafarers was conducted. I start the discussion by introducing the setting of the study (Sections 2.2 and 2.3). I then discuss the qualitative methods I employed namely: in-depth interviews (Section 2.4) and participant observation (Section 2.5). Under the topic on in-depth interviews, I explain theoretical concepts of the methods and practical considerations in relation to the study. I also describe the respondents of the study and how sampling was done. A detailed discussion of the theory, use and issues of participant observation follows in Section 2.5. I discuss how I analyzed the qualitative data gathered in Section 2.6. Finally, Section 2.7 is a discussion on some theoretical concepts of ethics and its practical aspects with respect to the study conducted. All of these discussions are woven through a story as I went about with the fieldwork.

2.2 Exploring the Setting: The Port and the City

The curiosity I developed onboard that ship I joined at Bremerhaven was the major reason that led me to conduct an initial visit to the proposed research site, the port city of Santos in the State of São Paulo, Brazil. This was in 2005, a year after that onboard sojourn. I was walking in this port city, which a year before I had only imagined through images seafarers supplied. Because of its importance to my study and because of my long professional interaction with seafarers, I had an instinctive desire to check the port first.



Figure 2.1: Busy port of Santos
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

Because of its size, I managed to walk only a small portion of the port's expansive 7.7 million square meter area (Quintas, 2008). The port straddles a large portion of the city edges. As I walked along the cobbled streets outside the port, I could see many huge ships docked at its 64 berths, (Kopittke, 2008; Quintas, 2008). For the most part of the expanse of the port, the distance from the berthing place to the outside street is just a few meters. I thought that this would make it convenient for seafarers to go out of the port and to venture into the city. I saw taxis waiting outside the gates. Some of

them looked like private cars. It seemed that the presence of many gates due to the elongated layout of the port added to the convenience in port traffic including the movement of the seafarers who go in and out.

There is an average of forty vessels per day in the port and 50,000 seafarers come to Santos every year (Quintas, 2008). The multi-nationality of the seafarers disembarking at the port excited me as I thought that my study, in terms of respondent pool, would be able to reflect the fact that the maritime industry's crew is comprised by different nationalities.



Figure 2.2: Avenue along the port of Santos
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

Santos is considered to be the most modern port of Brazil. It is the leading container port in the country. Compared with other ports of the world such as Rotterdam and Bremerhaven, the port of Santos is more integrated into the city as it is relatively smaller, more compact and nearer to the city centre. In this port, 4,000 trucks arrive on a daily basis (Lacerda *et al.*, 1997). Many of them go in and out of the port gates after loading and unloading products. During my visit, many trucks were parked on the side streets. I could see the weary drivers dozing off; probably tired of the long hauls from the other parts of Brazil. Many of them wait in queues to unload their cargo after getting weighed. I wondered how long they stay in port waiting for products to be loaded or unloaded. At the back of my mind I was thinking how they relate to my study. Truck drivers are known to have a tendency to risky behaviour

with respect to sexually transmitted infections (Agha, 2000; Jackson *et al.*, 1997; Morris and Ferguson, 2006; Bryan *et al.*, 2000; Gibney *et al.*, 2002; Rakwar *et al.*, 1999). In fact, I have been thinking of the framework used in understanding their sexual risk-taking behaviour for the seafaring population.



Figure 2.3: Port city of Santos
Source: CODESP

During the loading and unloading of the ships, different products are handled in different ways. Liquids would be dealt with differently from grains or powder. Later on I would learn that the operation for these cargoes is sometimes affected by the weather (particularly for open ships) thus prolonging loading or unloading time. This in turn increases the waiting time for some ships since they have to wait for the use of the same port facility. These ships wait at anchor away from the port. According to some seafarers, the waiting time at sea sometimes takes a month. Nowadays, though, many shipping companies prefer to stay in port for a short while to pay lesser calling expenses.

The expansion and importance of the coffee trade are the main reasons for the growth of Santos and its port. Coffee is also one of the original reasons why the population of Brazil is multiracial. The population is composed of indigenous Brazilians, African, Caucasian, and Oriental people. This is because of the slavery that previously existed, and also due to the immigration of Europeans and Asians after the

abolition of slavery, many of whom worked in coffee plantations (Graham, 1966; Haberly, 1972; Levine, 2003). I thought this may be one reason why the locals seemed not to mind the presence of foreigners (including myself) given the diversity that already existed in the country. This diversity is also exemplified by the different ethnicities of women working in the nightclubs.



Figure 2.4: Bay of the city of Santos
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

During my initial trip to Santos, Brazil, I also visited and explored the red light district, which I had heard about onboard the ship. Its proximity to the port seemed to be significant. I also visited the seamen's mission in Santos, about which I will say more in the next section. The mission later on agreed to host me and to help me out with my research. All of these interactions and discoveries during this initial trip provided me with a sense of elation. After having walked on the streets of Santos, strolled on its beaches, eaten in the restaurants, drank the coconut juice sold by the vendors, mingled with the locals, and donned Brazilian colours, I felt I had somewhat known the city. I felt that I had interacted with the place and the people, the *Santistas*¹, and felt good about the exploratory exercise. This initial trip also made me

¹ *Santistas* are the how the residents of Santos are generally referred to.

feel adequate to write my first two chapters, which comprises the PhD project proposal.

2.3 Fieldwork in the Mission

Upon arrival in the field, there was one institution that I went straight to as it would play a crucial role in my study—the seamen’s mission in Santos.² This was another major consideration in the choice of the field site when I was mulling it over earlier. This is where I lived, conducted my interviews, observed and interacted with the seafarers. The seamen’s mission centre is a place where seafarers can go to in order to avail themselves of services specifically for them (Kahveci, 2007; Kverndal, 2008; Seamen’s Church Institute, 1999). The seamen’s mission in Santos is a relatively large one where two religious groups have decided to combine their services and work together.



Figure 2.5: Seamen’s mission staff and some seafarers
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

² Historically, the seamen’s mission centre evolved out of the religious organizations assisting seafarers discovering other parts and the world and in turn helping them spread their religion. This is the reason why many seamen’s mission centres are run by religious groups. They prefer to call them seamen’s mission. Nowadays, some want to call them seafarer’s welfare centre; dropping the word seamen since there are many women seafarers nowadays and adding the word ‘welfare’ since their main thrust is the provision of care and welfare to seafarers.

One of the seamen's missions is headed by a pastor with a staff composed of a foreign volunteer ship visitor, a psychologist, and three volunteers. The other is a larger group headed by a priest with around fifteen permanent staff and volunteers—ship visitors, drivers, secretaries, and storekeepers. These are the individuals I had daily interactions with. There is no demarcation of activities between the two as all the chores are shared. As the seamen's mission also houses a community church, there are several other resident priests.

The gatekeepers of the seamen's missions were the heads of the two groups—the priest and the pastor. I had already sought permission from them during my initial visit. They had allowed me to stay in the seamen's mission previously. This time, we discussed the details of my stay including the rent, the house rules, my responsibilities within the premises, what I needed to observe, what facilities I could use, and where I could do my work.



Figure 2.6: Seamen's mission building and church
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

Housed in an eight-storey building, the seamen's mission has a lot of contact with the seafarers as it tries to meet most of their needs in port. It is easy for the staff to describe and give directions to the seafarer-clients. My stay in the seamen's mission allowed me to understand more what seafarers do during their layover in Santos.

Though my interactions would seem fleeting, this is really not so because many seafarers tend to stay longer—sometimes for many weeks—than others though some indeed would stay for a few hours or a few days depending on a number of factors which I will discuss later.

One of the services of the mission is transporting seafarers. To be able to observe and mingle with them I was always on my toes whenever there was a call for transport. I accompanied the drivers who would ferry passengers from the port to the seamen's mission and back. This was an opportunity for me to initiate short talks with the seafarers. Seafarers rely on this service provided by the seamen's mission since they know that they can be trusted, unlike some of the taxis outside the port gates. I have heard many stories from seafarers of various bad incidents that happened to seafarers who had taken private taxis in the port. Many taxi drivers are also in cahoots with a number of nightclubs who ferry seafarers to these establishments and get money for it.



Figure 2.7: Seafarers being ferried back to the port by the seamen's mission vehicle

Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

During my first few days, I learned that the mission disapproved of seafarers going to the nightclubs. It had a policy of not ferrying them from the seamen's mission to the red light district. Being Christian religious organizations, by default, the mission does

not support seafarers having engagements with the sex workers. It sees this as against Christian morals. This ‘policy’ is known to the seafarers who are told that the seamen’s mission drivers will not bring them to the nightclubs. They are told to take the taxi instead, if they insist on going.

The seafarers, however, have a way of circumventing this rule. Instead of getting off at the nightclubs, they get off at the port gate and simply walk to the nightclubs. They are, technically, not ‘breaking’ the rule. I myself had to follow this policy. When I rode with the seafarers in the seamen’s mission vehicles, I was dropped off some distance away from the nightclubs³. Knowing that seafarers can never be stopped from frequenting the clubs, the seamen’s mission drivers have become accustomed to it and have just tolerated this ‘transport policy’.



Figure 2.8: Ships visited at the port of Santos
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

Ship visits are one of the major activities of the seamen’s mission. Unfortunately, I never had the opportunity to visit ships. The strict implementation by the Brazilian government authorities of the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS)

³ This was also to dissociate me from being labelled by the sex workers as a member of the staff of the seamen’s centre. The women should not see me all the time stepping out from the mission vehicles.

Code⁴ does not allow individuals such as myself to board the ships, as I had no business in the port to enter as also experienced by Trotter (2008: 31). During a ship visit, the seamen's mission staff provide various services to seafarers, such as handing out printed news materials about their home countries, providing spiritual services, selling telephone cards and transporting the seafarers to the seamen's mission or anywhere in the city (Kahveci, 2007; Lai, 2008: 335). Some are, however, enterprising individuals who conduct 'ship visits' that are not related to the seamen's missions. Several of them are ship chandlers from private companies. Others are the visitors from private commercial seafarer centres. Sometimes sex workers visit the ships as Lai (2008: 335) noted, 'for many years, the only women who boarded vessels were prostitutes'. The nature of the visits of these individuals is mostly commercial.



Figure 2.9: Busy seamen's mission with seafarers calling inside the booths
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Priso III

In the seamen's mission, I saw seafarers come and go. The seamen's mission is normally busy every day. Staff members bring the seafarers to the seamen's mission centre so that they can avail themselves of other services provided by the organization. As Couper *et al.* (1999: 133) have noted:

⁴ According to the IMO website, the ISPS Code is a comprehensive set of measures to enhance the security of ships and port facilities. This was developed in response to the perceived threats to ships and port facilities in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

The mission is often the first port of call for a seafarer going ashore. Frequently, the mission is established close to the port gate and offers a quiet place for seafarers to relax and obtain information about the port. They can also get personal advice, make telephone calls home and socialise.

The international telephone service is one of the popular services of the seamen's mission. Many seafarers go to the seamen's mission centre to call their families. They pay a very low rate for using the phones. Seafarers can also use the computers with Internet connection to communicate with their families and friends. The seamen's mission also provides money-changing services if they need to do some shopping or eat in the city.



Figure 2.10: Playing pool with the seafarers
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

Spiritual services are central to the activities of seamen's missions (Cockroft, 2008: 5; Couper *et al.*, 1999: 133), so there is a chapel where seafarers can pray. Though seamen's missions are mostly Christian, it is open to all seafarers of any religious background. The seamen's mission centre has a covered basketball court, which is also used for indoor football. There is a recreation room where the seafarers can play indoor games such as billiards and table tennis. A reading room houses some books which seafarers can borrow. The busiest areas of the seamen's mission are the small grocery and the reception area where seafarers can drink, smoke, chat and watch

television. The grocery sells a variety of items including alcohol, cigarettes, and souvenirs from Brazil. This is where I mingled with the seafarers to initiate talks and learn more about their lives.



Figure 2.11: Seamen's mission's mini-grocery
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

I would usually see the seafarers who visit the seamen's mission asking for favours and requests. It is therefore important for the staff to know the city well. Seafarers would ask where they could do grocery and shopping for personal items such as clothes, medicine, electronics, and food. They also looked for souvenir items. Sometimes, the staff accompanied them to the shops to provide translation. I occasionally assisted the staff. This was an opportunity for me to interact with the seafarers. There were numerous occasions that the staff and I directed or accompanied seafarers to the various places of Santos such as the beach, which the city is well known for. It was interesting to see how excited they become seeing women in swimsuits.

With the staff, I visited seafarers in the local hospitals, as this is one of the activities of the seamen's mission. We provided them with assistance while they were under medical care or hospitalized. We brought them clothes, bought them groceries, assisted them in calling their families, gave emotional or spiritual support, and

translated for them when they had to deal with hospital staff. I took some personal interest in doing this activity because of my medical background.

Living in the seamen's mission during the fieldwork made my life easier as a researcher. It became convenient for me to go down⁵ to the second level where the seafarers hang around in the reception area. I could easily take the elevator whenever I had to go down and conduct interviews or simply to have casual conversations. The structure of the setting made my work easy since I could mingle with the seafarers and interview them at any time. Living at the seamen's mission played an important role in the success of my fieldwork. The staff were always supportive of my work. I could easily ask for any information. They provided me all kinds of help. They helped me with personal needs too. They even taught me Portuguese. I was allowed to be a part of many of their activities. Most importantly, it was at the seamen's mission that I conducted my interviews.

2.4 In-depth Interviews

This brings me to a discussion of one of my research methods: in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are differentiated from informal interviews (casual conversations), which were carried out during participant observation, and which to some extent were also done within the seamen's mission and the city.

My interviews may be seen as conversations with a purpose. I engaged in what Neuman (2006: 305) described as 'a short-term, secondary social interaction between two strangers with the explicit purpose of one person's obtaining specific information from the other'. There may be a number of variants of interviewing as it has evolved into different distinct forms that are characterized by differing styles and goals. According to Gubrium and Holstein (2002), some of these may come in the form of survey interviewing, qualitative interviewing, life story interviewing, focus group interviewing, and in-depth interviews. They are often categorized as structured, semi-structured, unstructured/informal and group/focus group interviews (May, 2001). The

⁵ I lived in the fifth floor of the building.

terms key-informant interview or guided interview are also terms encountered in studies.

Specifically, I used in-depth interviewing for the possibility it offered in terms of enabling me to get very personal insights, knowledge and information from the interviewees (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). This was necessary to accomplish particularly because the topic of my research involves talking about sexual acts and the disclosure of very intimate details concerning relationships and encounters with sex workers. In-depth interviews allow for trust to be built within the interaction hence enabling the researcher to probe deeper and to get into the personal and even private space of the other person without causing too much anxiety.



Figure 2.12: Conducting the in-depth interview (1)
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

I had no difficulty interviewing the seafarers since they normally felt relaxed in the seamen's mission. I conducted the interviews in the dining area or in the office to keep us away from prying eyes and to have lesser noise when recording. When these rooms were not available, I interviewed them in the receiving area.

Establishing a rapport with the seafarers is a major challenge in the conduct of the in-depth interviews. There was a need for rapport to achieve a 'state of self-disclosure'.

My personal knowledge⁶ of the place, the seafaring community and the language (Filipino) helped in getting me identified as a member of the ‘in group’ and facilitated in establishing rapport.

Introducing oneself properly is salient to one’s entry to gather data in the field. As I stayed longer, I started to be seen by the seafarers as one of the staffers. Since some of them saw me as an insider, I had the privilege of becoming a listener to their stories. This is how I was able to share connections with their lives enabling me to establish not only rapport but also some more meaningful links with the seafarers. Whenever I wanted to interview a seafarer, even when he might have thought that I was a member of the staff, I was honest with him about my affiliation and intentions. I thought that the best approach is to be honest to the respondent and to discuss with him the study. For some issues, it was easy to elicit responses. For other topics though such as frequency of preferred sexual intercourse, things were more difficult,

Aside from seafarers, I was also able to formally interview several members of the seamen’s missions’ staff. They were important informants to my study, as they were able to observe the seafarers on board the ship, while they visited the city, and when they went back to their ships. As seafarers are enthusiastic to talk to others when on shore leave, the staff get to hear a lot of stories from the seafarers.



Figure 2.13: Conducting the in-depth interview (2)
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

⁶ I have previously worked for seafarer welfare organizations in the Netherlands.

2.4.1 Respondents. I conducted in-depth interviews with sixty (60) seafarers as well as with a handful of non-seafarer experts who provided background information to the study (see Appendix A for the list of interviewees). The seafarer respondents were chosen from among the seafarers who visited the seamen's mission and the clubs. The non-seafarers were seamen's mission staff, academic experts, and labour union and NGO workers. The nationalities of the respondents formally interviewed came from the following countries: India, Iran, Philippines, Brazil, Ecuador, Ghana, Kiribati, Norway, Poland, the Netherlands, Colombia, Chile, Russia, and Myanmar. I had numerous unrecorded informal interviews with notes written down on my research diary. These were with seafarers from Romania, Korea, Ireland, Germany, China, Indonesia, Thailand, Denmark, Malaysia, Egypt, and other countries.

2.4.2 Sampling. Sampling of respondents is an important concept and consideration in any study. According to Green and Thorogood (2009: 138), 'the aim of a sampling strategy is to maximize the opportunity of producing enough data to answer the research question'. This becomes a major challenge in in-depth interviewing as one searches and chooses interviewees. In choosing them, according to Johnson (2002: 111):

the best informants are those who have been thoroughly enculturated in the setting or community, have recent membership participation, have provisional interest in assisting the interviewer, and have adequate time and resources to take part in the interviews.

In this study, purposive or theoretical sampling was used. This process intentionally chooses a sample to achieve the research purpose. The researcher identifies a suitable population that would fulfil the data requirements. These samples are normally seen to provide optimum information relevant to the research question. According to Coyne (1997: 624), there are times that purposive samples can be pre-determined according to the goal of the research and the respondents identified.

The participants chosen consisted of seafarers who had sexual experiences with commercial sex workers in ports and/or who have knowledge on the topic. A majority of the respondents have knowledge about the subject matter. Many of them

have been hearing about this even during their training days. The sampling process went through a number of stages. The first stage involved mingling with many seafarers and initiating conversations with them. I engaged with the seafarers whether in the nightclubs, in port, in the seamen's mission or anywhere in the city. The purpose was to establish rapport and to identify individuals who could provide ample information for the study. Small conversations and initial questions allowed me to identify potential interviewees. I tried to cover as many seafarers as possible across nationality, age, rank, and civil status to avoid information coming from individuals who share similar backgrounds and to avoid collecting information from one group thus avoiding bias.

The second stage involved engaging further with the seafarer and going deeper in the screening process by asking for more information. If I felt that the person would be a good respondent based on observations, such as not being evasive and generally willing to engage with my questions, I would ask him if I could formally conduct an in-depth interview and audio record the process. If they agreed, I gave and read to them the information sheet and consent form (see Appendix F). Sometimes I also gave them the information sheet and scheduled the interview at a later time to allow them to think whether they would consent or not. The last stage was the finalization of the agreement to hold an interview. The whole process, from the engagement to the interview proper, may take a few hours to a number of days depending on a number of factors such as availability.

With this process of identifying, selecting, and inviting interviewees, I had a response rate of almost 65 to 75 percent. Those who refused to be interviewed cited constraints such as lack of time, finding the subject matter too personal, and language issues. Because of the sensitivity of the topic of my research which I suspected would cause seafarers some anxiety and discomfort and which I felt was another reason for their initial apprehensions towards my invitation for an interview, I emphasized that anonymity would be assured and that confidentiality would be observed to the highest standards as will be discussed in the ethics section. This also had the consequence of putting them at ease during the interview process and make them feel more relaxed, enabling them to respond more freely to my interview questions.

2.4.3 Interview Guide. I developed an interview guide (see Appendix G) that was pre-tested and revised accordingly. I pre-tested the interview guide with three seafarers of different nationalities, ages and ranks. The interview guide was developed in English, which is the second language of the majority of the interviewees. English was used for the interview guide because it is the official language of the sea (Sampson and Zhao, 2003; Horck, 2008). Interviews with seafarers from all other countries, except the Filipinos, were carried out in this language.

The interview guide was developed in such a way that it would allow for a high degree of flexibility to provide space for probing. It provided leeway for diversion to gain ample information from the respondent. Interviews were recorded with the consent of the research participants. The interviews conducted in Filipino⁷ were transcribed and translated into English. As soon as interviews were finished, transcription was done immediately. Notes and observations during the interview and thoughts about it were also written at once in my research diary.

2.5 The Nightclubs: Non-Participant Observation

The seamen's mission became the starting point for the observations conducted in the nightclubs. This is simply because the seafarers stayed here. The seamen's mission was hence the point of origin. For my nightclub observations, a variant of observation technique was employed to understand more the behaviour of individuals in their 'natural settings'—non-participant observation (Flick, von Kardorff and Steinke, 2004: 8). This observation technique is a form of 'fieldwork', which is a way of conducting qualitative research in the confines of anthropology, and which is to be distinguished from 'ethnography'—the writing up of that research (Moeran, 2007).

Based on the Gold's scale (Green and Thorogood, 2009: 151), non-participant observation is towards the other end of the observation method where the researcher may be a complete observer where s/he does not actively engage at all in the field. It

⁷ The interviewer speaks Filipino. Since many seafarers are Filipinos and they prefer to speak in their own language, interviews were conducted in this language in the Philippines.

may be referred to as simple observation or field observation categorized under unobtrusive methods in social research (Lee, 2000; Webb and Weick, 1983; Webb *et al.*, 1981). This form of observation is a compromise of the consequences of a number of issues such as identity problems surrounding the participant observer wherein the individual searches for a position that encourages the performance of both participation and observation. As Ashworth (1995) noted, the researcher juggles between being ‘attuned to the motivational and emotional concerns of the group just as much as it is a matter of adopting an unthreatened identity’.

Simple observation is ‘focused on situations in which the observer has no control over the behaviour or sign in question, and plays an unobserved, passive and non-intrusive role in the research situation’ (Webb *et al.*, 1966). Research inside nightclubs is one specific human activity that warrants the use of non-participant observation because of its nature, which normally cannot be disrupted (Weick, 1968). In this kind of observation Webb *et al.* (1966) suggest that the method can focus on aspects such as exterior physical signs, expressive movement, physical location, ‘*in situ* conversation’ (recording of randomly selected overheard conversations, and behaviour associated with time. One of the exterior physical signs may pertain to the way of dressing (which is significant in sex work). Expressive movement pertains to gestures during interactions. These are the non-verbal cues produced by individuals ‘interacting’ with each other. These are exemplified by nonverbal behaviours such as eye gaze, touching and verbal latency. Ridgeway *et al.* (1985) observed that non-verbal cues play in the status processes in face-to-face groups by acting as ‘task cues’ that give information about a group member’s actual or potential performance. These suggestions have been very helpful in the nightclub setting where I carried out my research.

Physical location pertains to distances, locations and use of space for purposes of interactions and social intercourse among individuals. In the nightclubs, the spatial dynamics of individuals, specifically among sex workers and client seafarers, provided an understanding of their interactions. ‘*In situ* conversation’ is the verbal interaction or exchange of individuals in the most natural situation or conditions whether it is in public or private places. The researcher is like an ordinary passer-by who randomly overhears the conversation of strangers.

Non-participant observation in nightclubs or red light districts becomes a challenging task to researchers particularly if the focus of study is sexual behaviour of the patrons or sex workers. As there is no ‘participation’ in the sex act, information is gathered through other means as shown in the following account of one study conducted in nightclubs and related venues:

Although we were not involved in sex work ourselves, we were “participant observers” in our approach in that we spent considerable time in the bars, hotels, and local business places . . . and observed local activity as well as interacted with people. For example, we had drinks in a bar and chatted with a bartender about his experiences with migrant sex workers; we observed sex workers having drinks/dinner with clients; we went to the hotels that sex workers were staying in and talked to them in their rooms; we talked to local sales people who had transactions with sex workers, etc. (Gulcur and Ilkkaracan, 2002)

In this ‘simple observation’, the researcher does not involve himself in the sexual act with the sex workers nor act as a sex worker if doing a study on them. Day *et al.* (1988, 1998) and Day (2000: 32) provide us with an example of an extensive work with sex workers doing a similar approach. Day's (2000) research on a cohort of London prostitutes used structured interviews and conversations, fieldwork, and other observational studies of working areas and other places (such as magistrates’ courts).

In this kind of observation, recording the events and actions in the form of field notes is imperative. My ‘recording’ came in many forms similar to the categories mentioned by Fielding (2008)—mental notes, jotted notes and full field notes. When I use mental notes, I focus on key words and phrases that would represent a bigger observation that later on would aid me in reconstructing my observations. This was necessary as I had to deal with lengthy observations inside the nightclubs. I could not do jotted notes, as I did not want people to see me writing in front of them though there were occasions that I would go to the toilet and scribble a few notes.

Observations were all reflected in the output in the form of full field notes. These field notes in the form of texts become the data in many qualitative studies (Flick, von Kardorff and Steinke, 2004: 8). I tried my best to be disciplined when writing my field notes as suggested by Fielding (2008: 152):

First, it is essential to write up observations promptly. It should be delayed no later than the morning after observation. Most people lose good recall of conversation sufficient to enable quotation is lost within a couple of hours. Secondly, writing field notes requires discipline; you should expect to spend as much time writing field notes as in the observation.

The use of a recording device was a helpful tool in this study, as explained well by (Silverman, 2001: 161). It was not a matter of choice between recording and writing as they were both used. Since most of the observations were done at the latter part of the evening, it was important that the observations were recorded at once. Sometimes recording the observations would last for hours until early morning before I went to sleep. During the day, I would continue writing the field notes and also transfer the recorded accounts to a written format.

My field notes complemented my research diary, which is my reflective account as a researcher. The use of a research diary is also imperative in the research whether it is for jotting down observations or one's thoughts. Reflections are important in the process of writing an ethnographic account. According to Fielding (2008: 153):

The process of writing field notes... [includes], not just of description but of first reflections on connections between processes, sequences and elements of interaction.... [I]t is essential to record your personal impressions and feelings. Doing fieldwork has emotional costs, and one needs data on one's own attitude to document one's evolving relationship to others in the setting.

For example, based on the accounts of Dulay (2004: 14) who did ethnographic studies on seafarers:

Throughout the fieldwork, I kept a journal to record my day-to-day experiences with the seafarers. It included thoughts, opinions, reflections, personal feelings, concerns and plans. The journal helped in the learning process of doing a fieldwork, a guide which made me look back and go forward, an introspection. The notes provided what could be sometimes the missing links along the line.

In terms of the content of field notes, it was important that I maximized my running description of the events, the people in the setting and the conversations that I heard. The data gathering was done systematically so as not to miss out on many details.

Most of the observations for this study were conducted at Harmony Club. This is the oldest, largest and the most popular of all the nightclubs in the port's red light district of Santos. In this study, whenever I would mention nightclub or club I would refer to Harmony Club, unless specified otherwise. A significant amount of time was spent here, and a large part of the data was collected. Occasionally I will point to other clubs and their immediate environs, since I also observed in several other places. The other clubs would be considered more of a restaurant or places to drink and sing karaoke.

These clubs are in the red light district located at the fringes of the old town and the port. It is a mere 50 meters away from the nearest port gate. Some would not necessarily refer to the area as a red light district since it does not occupy a large geographical area. It is a conglomeration of only a few clubs and related establishments. Its proximity to the port makes it convenient and safe for the seafarers because they just walk to their ships or take a short taxi ride to and from most of the berthing places. The names of the clubs have a maritime reference (like Marino Bar) or named for a particular city (e.g. Manila Club or Hamburg Bar)—which are similar to many clubs in other ports that I have visited. These clubs have wide open doors (except Harmony Club), which made women and foreign men inside visible from the outside, and are not replete with decorations such as sketches of women or ship anchors.

Entering the club did not pose any difficulty. I started to research about the red light district as soon as I heard about it. I asked seafarers and the locals about the area and the clubs. I also researched online. I went there for the first time just to observe during my first visit to Santos. The mere fact that I was an official visiting research student at a local university facilitated my entry as I always introduced myself as one. I always had my local university ID to show. From then on I entered freely.

During the actual fieldwork when I was ready to negotiate access to conduct observational work in the club, I went during the day as this was the time when the owners were present. I asked permission that I be allowed to conduct my study in the confines of the club. At first the owners wondered why I was going to do

observations. They asked a number of questions about my background and what I will do with the results of the study. It took me some time to explain. After I presented documents about my research and after they learned that I come from the Philippines, they felt assured about me being in the premises for a certain period of time. They agreed to my request. They endorsed me to the managers who handled the day-to-day management of the club.

In this study, the owners are the gatekeepers. I was ready to face that reality on the role of gatekeepers as written by Fielding (2008: 150):

...access is accomplished through an explicit negotiation with a 'gatekeeper'. The gatekeeper will be interested in what your research can do to help—or harm—the organization. Be prepared to have to sketch in some likely findings, and to offer feedback. If access is promised, remember that the organization may have an interest in letting you in. This needs to be taken into account in deciding what information to provide. You should avoid promising too through gratitude.

Thus, I was particularly careful during the entire observation. Every time I encountered someone new, I always introduced myself as a student conducting a study as Fielding (2008: 150) advises that: 'you should allow for the possibility that the gatekeeper's permission may be given without the knowledge or consent of the others being studied'.

It terms of the population observed, there was a focus on the sex workers and the seafarers. Since sex workers were more permanently fixed within the confines of the clubs, they were more consistently observed compared to the seafarers. However, not all seafarers can be considered to have fleeting interactions with the researcher. There were those who stayed for a few hours, but there were also many who stayed for weeks or even months thus providing richer data gathered. This is lamented by Lee (2000) who has taken cognizance of the neglect of time, as a variable in social research. He argues that time durations, behaviour related to perceptions of time and the patterning of activities over time, are all amenable to observational study. Bruyn (1966) includes time as one of his indexes for subjective adequacy of qualitative data—the longer the researcher stays with the observed, the increased likelihood of adequacy of the observations.

Furthermore, there was an attempt to understand the continuity of the lives of seafarers by observing them on board a ship⁸. In the original project proposal approved, part of the study was to observe them on board an ocean-going ship preferably from Europe to Brazil. The crew would be followed as they go through shore leaves and while they patronize the nightclubs. Unfortunately, there was difficulty in getting access on board hence the reason to let go of this part of the study. This will become one of the limitations and weaknesses of the study.

2.6 Analysis of Data

Another major challenge in qualitative inquiry is the analysis of the data. It is not sufficient just to plainly present what has been observed and written, similar to mirroring, but it is important as well to ‘gain insight from comparing the participant observer’s normal and specific self, appreciating the difference in such a way as to understand on what separate assumptions alone about reality are founded’ (Fielding, 2008: 154). Approach to analysis is confounded by ‘the personal background of the researcher, who speaks from a particular class, gender, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 18) since ‘every researcher speaks from within a distinct interpretive community that configures, in its special way, the multicultural, gendered components of the research act’.

According to Green and Thorogood (2009: 195), ‘there has traditionally been little emphasis on techniques for the analysis of qualitative data’. They say that analysis in this approach ‘relies on both rigour and imagination’. In data analysis of qualitative data, there are a few common approaches depending on the outcomes, such as developing conceptual definitions, developing typologies and classifications, and exploring associations between attitudes, behaviours and experiences (Green and Thorogood, 2009: 198). It may also include developing explanations of phenomena and generating new ideas and theories. Fielding (2008: 158) aptly states it as follows:

⁸ For a good discussion of life on board see Chapters 5 and 6 of ‘International seafarers and transnationalism in the twenty-first century’ by Sampson (2013).

The essence of the procedure is that one works up from the data, rather than selecting some theory by convenience, whim or prejudice and then dipping into the data for fragments that support it.

Fine (2003) further proposes a concept called ‘peopled ethnography’. He insinuates that there are more beyond the text and ‘verbal pictures’ that need further discussion as explained:

A peopled ethnography calls for these pictures and for these explanations. These pictures are to be found where people talk and act in ways that permit us to gain an understanding of concepts on which we wish to build explanations of the possibility of social order. An emphasis on the power of group dynamics can justify the use of ethnographic detail for social theory, not moving too far from the detail or the theory, and in recognizing that our data are action and interaction.

In this study, I employed thematic content analysis as an approach. I chose this method from among possible approaches commonly used in health research such as grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), framework analysis (Green and Thorogood, 2009: 208), and narrative analysis (Neuman, 2006: 474). This is a common type of analysis that uses categories of the recurrent themes; thus, frequency of its recurrence is normally noted. Responses were treated as descriptions to some ‘external reality’ (treated as events or facts) or descriptions of ‘internal experience’ (treated as feelings or meanings) (Silverman, 2005).

Using this approach, I looked at the salient issues that came out from the data. I identified typical responses to the different questions posed. Using the different data transcripts from in-depth interviews, research notes and diaries, I looked at specific accounts in a manner that can be systematically summarized. The various accounts were compared with each other and scrutinized for emergent themes and I noted their recurrence. Accounts were compared with other accounts and I noted how similar or dissimilar they are based on an emerging theme in mind. These accounts come in unit of words (for example, how they termed the women—girlfriend, love, sweetheart, *amor*, etc.), phrases, sentences, or a combination of these units. They are seen to emphasize a certain meaning. They thus become a ‘unit’ or ‘segment’ of analysis that is easy to manage and categorize.

A coding scheme was developed that used codes or labels that represented the key themes identified from the empirical data. According to Neuman (2006: 460), ‘coding is two simultaneous activities: mechanical data reduction and analytic categorization of data’. I went through the two types of coding—open and axial—as described by Neuman (2006: 461) as follows:

Open coding [is the] first coding of qualitative data in which a researcher examines the data to condense them into preliminary analytic categories or codes [while] axial coding [is] a second stage of qualitative data in which a researcher organizes codes, links them, and discovers key analytic categories.

In this study, some of the codes were predetermined based on the questions asked and some emerged from the responses. The analysis of the data went beyond developing simple categories and looking at possible relationships. In my analysis, I wanted to go beyond what Fielding (2008: 160) suggests as good and bad analysis as follows:

Good analysis is able to document its claim to reflect some of the truth of a phenomenon by reference to systematically gathered data. Poor qualitative analysis is anecdotal, unreflective, descriptive without being focused on a coherent line of enquiry.

For example, the reasons for the choice of women in the nightclub are related to the reasons for unprotected sex with these women despite the fact that they were elicited by two different questions posed at two different times during the interview process. The volume of data produced allowed developing multiple relationships of different themes and variables showing the interrelatedness of determinants and factors behind the phenomenon being studied. This placed the analysis into a higher plane and with more sophistication, paving the way for answering more complex questions. It was, however, important to emphasize the context by which each code was said so as not to deviate from the meaning of the data, as its examination is based on the nature and frame of explanation used by the interviewee (Silverman, 2005). In this context, it seems that thematic analysis was an appropriate method since one of the main objectives can be answered by descriptions of the key issues of concern to a particular group of people (Green and Thorogood, 2009: 198; Neuman, 2006: 461).

2.7 Ethics

Ethics remains a very important consideration in any research study (Haimes, 2002; Green and Thorogood, 2009: 63; Parker, 2007; Neuman, 2006: 129). This study acknowledges the important role of ethics and their practice. The activity was guided by the principle of doing the least harm to anybody including the researched and the researcher. The nature of this study added to the salient issues that the study encountered. Muthuswamy (2005) outlines some of the areas of saliency in sexual behaviour studies:

Globally, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has presented unique health challenges to populations, including a host of ethical and moral issues to human life and dignity. . . The ethical issues mainly revolve around. . . informed consent across cultures, privacy and confidentiality, . . . protection of vulnerable groups, community consultation, ethical review mechanisms, . . . [and] socio-behavioural studies on HIV/AIDS.

The major areas of ethical concern that this research acknowledges are informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, and accuracy. These areas are generally shared by many codes of ethics of professional and academic associations.

Informed consent pertains to the right of the research participants to be informed about the nature and consequences of the studies, which they are involved in (Green and Thorogood, 2009: 68; Neuman, 2006: 135). This was emphasized in the interviews with seafarers who voluntarily participated in the research. A detailed explanation of the study was provided to the participants, which included the purpose of the study, methods, duration, and possible risks. Extra care was taken as the study asked for details about personal sexual experiences. Such questions have the potential to cause embarrassment. The informed consent form (see Appendix F) was properly written to allow immediate understanding of the study without compromising the participant.

There are those (such as Punch, 1994) who view informed consent as more of a guideline so as not to influence the responses of participants. This understanding is framed within a means-ends model. According to Denscombe (2002), it is possible to place in some 'deception' at the start but there is a need to debrief interviewees at the

end. Related to informed consent is the principle of not deceiving the participants. Researchers are advised to adapt their methodologies instead rather than deceive people to maximize participation and gather the needed information. To deliberately misrepresent, use ambiguity, and deception by omission are forbidden and are professionally unacceptable. In my study, I saw to it that the participants fully understood what I wanted to convey to them.

Privacy refers to an individual's right to control personal information such as beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (Neuman, 2006: 138). It also includes the participant's control over his/her bodily integrity as well as personal space. Confidentiality is the protection against the unauthorized disclosure of personal information (Green and Thorogood, 2009: 70). The researcher must ensure its use for research purposes and prevent redisclosure if disclosed. These terms also pertain to the protection of research locations. Disclosure of private knowledge considered damaging would cause harm not only to the informant but to other people as well, including the researcher. According to Christians (2000: 139):

Confidentiality must be assured as the primary safeguard against unwanted exposure. All personal data ought to be secured or concealed and made public only behind a shield of anonymity. Professional etiquette uniformly concurs that no one deserves harm or embarrassment as a result of insensitive research practices. . . In the logic of social science inquiry revolving around the same autonomy inscribed in being, invading persons' fragile but distinctive privacy is intolerable.

Seafarers who engage in high risk behaviours by going to sex workers are not welcome news to wives or partners—more so with the non-use of condoms with sex workers or the knowledge that more than a client-provider relationship is occurring between the two. In fact, this came out as the main concern of the respondents who voiced their fear of their names coming out in reports and in the media and that their wives could learn about what they would share with me.

Prostitution is still considered illegal in many countries (Bennett, 2010; Adriaenssens and Hendrickx, 2010; Jakobsson and Kotsadam, 2009). Stigma and discrimination towards sex workers is still a prevalent behaviour in many societies. Knowledge of others on the sex work activities of any individual will compromise the integrity of

the person. Seafarers and sex workers who might have been infected with HIV is another salient issue. In fact there were seafarers and sex workers interviewed who had the virus. The fact that governments monitor anybody who has been infected, in the guise of containing epidemics, may infringe on the privacy of the individuals. This is the reason why pseudonyms are used and locations are disguised. Christians (2000: 139) however raised a possible dilemma in this approach:

Despite the signature status of privacy protection, watertight confidentiality has proved to be impossible. Pseudonyms and disguised locations are often recognized by insiders. What researchers consider innocent is perceived by participants as misleading or betrayal.

I did a similar study of seafarers and HIV in my previous work (Lucero-Prisno, 2004) about which I was interviewed by the media. A few days later, there were complaints that I was promoting the idea in public that seafarers bring HIV to their wives and partners. Based on this experience, I became more conscious of the ethical implications of my study. Ethics remained a tightrope to balance.

The last general ethical concern that I was very conscious of was the accuracy of the data as emphasized in a number of papers such as Morse et al. (2002), Cohen and Crabtree (2008) and Mays and Pope (2000). Anything beyond truth in social science is wrong and unethical. Data that has value judgments and omissions is considered to be inaccurate. The use of fabrications and fraudulent materials are also unethical. Validity, reliability, accuracy of the results is the basis for moral acceptance of both the findings and the research process in the long run.

Many ethical guidelines have been established to assist in AIDS investigations. One main concern is the conduct of behavioural (and social researches). For example, the code promulgated in the Philippines recognizes the complexity of this disease and its link with societal issues. It reminds investigators that they should keep in mind the fact that participants in social and behavioural research may be placed at psychological, social or legal risk through participation in a study. Some of the specific recommendations of the guidelines are: (1) data collection should conform to the conditions set forth in the consent form, (2) the relationship between the investigators and subject should never influence the [study], (3) the study must be

transparent and the investigator should not withhold information felt to be of negative nature in formal presentations, (4) the investigator should not use terms that stigmatize or demean groups or class of persons to be recruited as subjects, and (5) all investigators and their personnel involved in investigations using human subjects should undergo training courses in methodology and ethical aspects. (Philippine Council for Health Research and Development, 2006)

The study was cleared and approved by the Social Research Ethics Committee of the School of Social Sciences of Cardiff University. Ethical approval was sought in Brazil and agreed on the basis of Cardiff University's approval. In the field, I was aware that research conducted outside one's own country (cross-national research) raises special ethical and political issues as raised by various British social science associations. This is with respect to personal and national disparities in wealth, power, and legal status of the researcher, political interest and national political systems. As an investigator I bore in mind these differences. I was aware of the interests of local scholars and researchers because of the disparity of resources and access to publications.

Another major issue related to research ethics was my personal safety as a researcher. The environment posed a major concern, as the red light district is located in an old part of the city known for crime. The area is surrounded by a cemetery, dark streets and alleys, and abandoned buildings which made it impossible for me to walk around at night. The nightclubs were also venues for drug dealing and smuggling. Various precautionary measures were discussed with my supervisors and observed to minimize the risk. This included regularly informing the seamen's mission of my whereabouts, not bringing valuables and cash when going to the field, bringing a working mobile phone, avoiding trouble inside the clubs, taking the bus right by the clubs, etc.

The last concern emphasized in this study was the continuous adherence to the ethical principles during the duration of the fieldwork. This was done through the following—weekly report submitted to the supervisors at Cardiff University to allow continuous monitoring of ethics and my safety, attachment to a local university to have a legal researcher/student status in the country and the procurement of an

appropriate visa to be able to conduct the study, and supervision by a locally assigned supervisor. Being attached to a local university provided a legal entity to my work in case I encounter untoward incidents in the field in the context of being in a place where prostitution and drugs crimes happen and frequently monitored by the police. Should I ever be involved in legal problems, my visiting scholar status would legitimize my presence in the field.

2.8 Summary

In this study, the port city of Santos, Brazil became my macro research site and the seamen's mission and the nightclubs were my micro research sites. A big part of the observational data was gathered from the nightclubs, though the seamen's mission also played a major role particularly with the in-depth interviews. It was important to look at the location from various perspectives as they provide the social context for the phenomenon I am investigating. My discussion on the various aspects of the location of the study from its history to its geography and culture provide a holistic picture so as to situate the events happening within. It was imperative that all aspects from a general perspective to the local perspective are woven together as we distil the various elements to make them understandable units.

All issues were placed into consideration when the methodology was contemplated and executed. Ethics became a primary consideration, as the area of study is rife with testy issues. I was always faced with ethical dilemmas when I was in the field, which was remedied by a number of safeguards by my university, my supervisors and by logical thinking. Positionality in the field became fluid as I had to take on many roles that had to do with my gender, nationality, being a resident of the seamen's mission and with the impact of the friendships I built with the sex workers and seafarers. Despite all these issues I had to face, my reflexive account would show a productive, fulfilling and somewhat enjoyable fieldwork.

Chapter 3

From Ship to Shore to Sex

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the various activities seafarers perform as they venture into the port during the shore leave. It will walk us through the different events from the time they leave the ship until they are back on board. The narration of these events within the geographical setting will provide some context on their sexual risk-taking behaviour and relationships. I will begin this chapter by exploring aspects and issues revolving around shore leave. I argue that they are tightly related to seafarers' ship-board experiences. I will refer to descriptions of life on board from the literature when necessary. The first part is a discussion on the meanings seafarers attribute to shore leave. This will be followed by a discussion of their activities and of how they perform them during the shore visit.

Shore leave is a routine process, a collective activity that has its own cycle. Most shore leaves are spent in the nightclubs where the seafarers meet women. I will argue in the last section that in ports like Santos where women are known to be easily available, they become central in the shore leave forays and that they play a major role in the risk-taking behaviour of these men. My objective in this last section is to examine the role of the women who are central in the risky behaviours and relationships. I argue that the role of women in the clubs addresses some of the issues seafarers have within these social spaces centred on leisure, pleasure and fantasy. This is one major reason why women become central figures in seafarers' patronage of the nightclubs. These women cater exclusively to seafarers and are accorded forms of representation defined by the desires of seafarers and fulfilled and satisfied by sex workers.

3.2 The Meanings of Shore Leave

The idea that there are various meanings of shore leave emerges from the daily interactions with the seafarers I met in different venues in Santos. Responses were elicited through informal interviews and casual conversations and through observations as they went about their various activities in the city. For these seafarers, there was a clear-cut demarcation between life on board and life during shore leave. As one seafarer said:

“There are only two things which a seafarer does in his working life—work onboard and enjoy the shore leave.” (Second Mate 40)

Another observation is that their responses to the meaning of shore leave can be viewed as a function of their outlook towards life on board as the two are intertwined. In the following sections I discuss the main themes that emerged from these encounters.

3.2.1 Respite and Change

For many seafarers shore leave meant a much-needed respite from the monotony of onboard life. Respite not only in the sense of rest but also as a change in the routine and as an escape from the ship environment. From the discussions/interviews it was apparent that even prior to the actual shore leave, seafarers begin to anticipate the impending change as the following comments demonstrate:

When the ship is about to go near a port I feel some joy because I know we will be on land and you are near to it. (Ordinary Seaman 25)

In my mind when we are nearing the port, of course we think that we are going to go out [on shore leave]. Everyone thinks about this—I am sure. We have to go out to change the environment. You have to see new faces. Not the same faces onboard. For example, our trip...would be sixteen to seventeen days. Of course [shore leave is] a psychological need. First of all we want to change what we see. We do not want to see the same faces¹ for seventeen to twenty days. (Second Engineer 16)

¹ Later on we will see that although seafarers say they grow tired of being with the same individuals onboard, they end up going with the same people when they are on shore leave.

With this sense of anticipation, seafarers report that their behaviour also change before a port call, with increased interaction among them. They describe the atmosphere on board as more jovial and observe that individuals become more talkative and restless. This is more marked when the current journey has been very long. In effect, 'change' also emerged as a common theme. One of these desired changes was with their work environment.

Third Officer 34: *Just to change the environment. You have a different environment on board... It is lonely. Just imagine you are on board for 45 days. You are the passenger. What about if you are not a passenger? You work on board.*

Interviewer: *I have been on board a ship for one week. I wanted to leave the ship at once...I was really bored...*

Third Officer 34: *See! You were even a passenger then. What if you were a worker [having a contract for months]?*

Interviewer: *Isn't it you are busy and you don't think about these things anymore?*

Third Officer 34: *No.*

Seafarers know very well that whatever is happening on board cannot be altered. Thus the only way they can change the onboard environment is to take oneself out of it. As change is a concept that encompasses space and time (Campbell and Converse, 1972), moving away from fixed elements on board would equate to the change they yearn for.

Interviewer: *OK, ...a few days before you know that you will reach the port. What do you feel?*

Third Mate 8: *Of course excited.*

Interviewer: *Why?*

Third Mate 8: *We will see people. We will see the port.*

Interviewer: *Why do you feel that way? Why do you feel excited?*

Third Mate 8: *Of course, it is because it is lonely on board.*

Interviewer: *Even if there are people on board?*

Third Mate 8: *You get fed up with the faces on board. You see the same faces. When you step into the port you will see new faces. You will be excited when you step into the port.*

Change means many things to them: a change in the physical surroundings (from ship to port; and from open and endless sea to a land which provides varied stimuli), a break from routine work, being able to once more communicate with the family,

seeing new faces, as well as having new people to talk to. As an effect of temporarily being away from the workplace one is able to indulge in other activities, deemed relaxing.

3.2.2 Rest and Relaxation

The notions of rest and relaxation are related to the concept of change. This is shifting the state of being at work to a situation away from the workplace. Some would attribute respite from the ship environment as a form of rest making them enthusiastic to go on shore leave. These may also come in the form of recreation as many ships now have recreation facilities (Lodde *et al.*, 2008).

[We spend some] good time [during shore leave]. [We] relax. We have to relax our minds. It is necessary to refresh our minds. It is very important in life. It is bad to continue working on board. It is boring. We can actually relax [on board]. However, it is a different kind of relaxation if you are on shore and you are out [of the ship]. We feel like we are better when we are out... [Shore leave] is necessary because it is a way to refresh our minds because we are already bored on board and we are also far from our families. (Chief Engineer 38)

Shore leave is important to the crew on board because they are tired from work... Shore leave is rest; rest of the body. Though, you can also rest on the ship. You can also go on shopping. Shopping is included in the shore leave. Shore leave is a form of mental rest. You also buy things. You can call the family. (Bosun 54)

Their concept of relaxation obviously does not pertain solely to physical aspects (Kahveci, 2007). There is a major psychological connotation in the relaxation process. It is to get rid of the stress caused by the different elements at work mentioned earlier. It is a form of freshening up one's mind. As the seafaring profession has always been described to be stressful (Bridger, Brasher and Dew, 2010; Oldenburg *et al.*, 2009; Lodde *et al.*, 2008; Agterberg and Passchier, 1998) resulting in fatigue (Allen, Wadsworth and Smith, 2007 and 2008), workers go down to mitigate the situation.

When we go down to the port we just freshen up our mind. Fresh air may also be present at sea. When you reach the port we also have fresh air. We call it

'fresh air'. Well yeah, it is not necessarily fresh air. It is because we want to change the environment. Yes. (Motorman 28)

Freshening up one's mind is equated with mental rest where one does not have to do major decision-making done at work. Normally one would dwell on activities that provide more pleasure and are psychologically gratifying. These are activities that keep the person away from the mental stressors on board. Being away from work and far from stress are felt to be a form of freedom, which is another meaning ascribed to shore leaves.

3.2.3 Freedom and Adventure

The prolonged confinement of seafarers in a ship's very limited space have led seafarers to compare ships with a cage or prison (Kahveci, 2007). Despite the fact that ships are getting bigger, the crew area remains the same. It is not surprising that many feel that going out of the ship to go on shore leave evokes some sense of freedom.

When the ship arrives in port I feel like what they call 'just came out from the cage'. (Chief Cook 6)

I...change the environment. I do not want the ship environment for the meantime. I go down. It helps in addressing stress. When I go down from the ship ahhh the feeling is I have freedom. (Electrician 19)

Aside from escape from the physical environment, this sense of freedom also pertains to being free from the grinding and monotonous work on board which they want to get away from and forget even for just a short period of time.

Cadet 13: *Yes I forget the work...It's not a good thing [if] you become a slave of your work. For this, me, I try to find the freedom of my life. For this, when I go out from the ship, I go to this place and I try to forget—to become free from my job. I don't like to become a slave of my work.*

Interviewer: *Ah so it's like you let go of yourself and become 'free'?*

Cadet 13: *Free, exactly. I don't like to become a slave of my work.*

The terms 'free' and 'freedom' are best described when we think of the opposite terms such as being fixed, attached, confined, and restrained (Knight, 1941). These

are better descriptions of the way seafarers look at themselves on board. Freedom thus means breaking their social isolation, which has been described by Thomas (2003) and Sampson and Thomas (2003b), as when they meet other individuals in port. Thus it is not surprising to see many of them raring to leave the ship as soon as it arrives at a port. They feel excited leaving their work space even just for a short while to achieve the state of change and the feeling of freedom they want.

With freedom, seafarers are also given the chance for ‘adventure’, another meaning they attach to shore leaves. Since many seafarers thought of joining the profession because they wanted to see the world, it is quite possible that this sense of adventure (Dulay, 2004) remains among some of them. They think of the port as an ‘unknown’ place to discover. Since many things are new to them it becomes a challenge to explore and discover. Some of them go beyond what is not normally done by many seafarers.

I feel happy when I go to the port because I told you it is an adventure. One of my ideas is to find out what I am coming to discover. Like for example, in the summer, I go to the beach and swim alone. Yeah I went swimming. I am a good swimmer. I went swimming alone. Normally, you must know the beach that you swim. In another place, for example I am in Chile. I went to the capital which is far away from the port. I go to the museum. One seaman, I told him, I am going to the museum. He said, what? I have been coming here for twenty years but I have never been to this place. What happened to you? Even if it was one and a half hours to the capital I still went. There were dictionaries in Español in the museum [and not English]. <laughs> (Third Mate 31)

Such words exemplify a sense of adventure. It is in this context of freedom and adventure that other activities are done such as sexual risk-taking behaviour which is one of its forms. This sense of venturing into perilous undertakings works in tandem with the longing for change, relaxation and recreation. This is an array of cherished activities as part of this longing. These events are treasured and seafarers have various ways of documenting them being significant memories that need to be etched permanently, as discussed in the next section.

3.2.4 Gintong Ala-ala

I was introduced to the concept of ‘golden memories’ or what many Filipino seafarers call *gintong ala-ala*. Shore leave is always a cherished event for many of them. Many expressed feelings of psychological changes within themselves—changes towards happier dispositions after every shore leave. ‘Golden memories’ are interesting stories about their experiences when they are in port and the city. They are immortalized in a number of ways such as the use of cameras or mobile phones. They refer to these photographic mementos as ‘golden memories’ that are used to portray their experiences and become part of their narratives.

[W]hen we arrive back in the ship, we bring back with us videos taken on our cellphones while others really love taking photos. (Second Engineer 16)

More than posterity is their ability to use it to prove what they did, where they went or who they met particularly the women. It becomes an evidence for them when they exaggerate stories or when boasting. As Becker (1998) noted, photographs *help to ‘illustrate’ the story* (emphasis added).

Everyone brought their camera. They have their mobile phone cameras. They will show it. You know, the stories are like this once they are back. ‘...I have heard that you have many stories. What is your story? What did you bring? Yes...I brought many home. What did you bring? All stories.... <laughing> All stories; but non-sense stories. Even a seafarer who just got on board for one month will boast of a lot of stories. It is all boasting. (Second Cook 29)

Such stories can be interpreted in a number of ways. It maybe a form of pride or it can be construed as boasting which is a way of exaggerating stories. As these events are unique (given a monotonous ship life) seafarers tend to overemphasize and brag about their conquests. These stories provide the fuel for a ‘better’ atmosphere on board the ship particularly right after a port call. It changes the stories that have been repeatedly told thus providing a respite from monotony of narratives they normally complain of. ‘New stories’ renew the social atmosphere and keep their spirits and camaraderie in a heightened mode and mood.

After shore leave, stories on board change. Why? Because some people went out. If somebody goes out, for example me, of course something will happen outside, and when he comes back to the ship he will tell stories. Then that’s it. There will be new stories especially those ‘good stories’ on board which is about women and ‘ilaw ilaw’ (referring to the lights of nightclubs). They call

that 'gintong ala-ala' ... There are lots of stories. Gintong ala-ala (golden memories). (Second Cook 29)

These stories they 'capture' and brought back are ways of fending off a monotonous (Lodde *et al.*, 2008) and dreary environment on board that they have been describing. This finding is similar to the 'story-telling' mentioned by Kahveci, Lane and Sampson (2002), which plays an important role in the social integration on board. The sharing of experiences fuels social exchanges among the crew, as old stories are dislodged and replaced by fresh ones. Thus, shore leaves can also be viewed as stimulus that instigates changes in the narratives on board.

All these meanings which they ascribe to shore leave are significant when discussing sexual risk-taking as it is within these contexts that risky behaviours and relationships occur. It is always a possibility that there could be a correlation between longing for change, experience of freedom and sense of adventure with their risky behaviours. It is possible that risk-taking is part of the freedom they experience and an element of their adventurous nature.

3.3 Characterising Shore Leave

Seafarers generally spend their shore leaves through visits to the seamen's mission to make phone calls and use the Internet; trips to grocery stores and shopping malls to buy food, personal items, and souvenirs; and trips to clubs to cap the night.

[We] drink alcohol outside. Do some shopping here and there. Just roaming around. Make phone calls. These are the things we do... This is to change the atmosphere. (Chief Engineer 38)

Fourth Engineer 11: *Normally when we are able to go down in the port we do [go on shore leave].*

Interviewer: *Why do you want to go down?*

Fourth Engineer 11: *So that we can relax. The first thing is to call home.*

Interviewer: *Where do you usually call? What else do you do?*

Fourth Engineer 11: *At the seamen's club or those selling phone cards. Like this (referring to his stay in the centre), we relax. We go around the city.*

Interviewer: *You said you want to relax, why not relax in the ship?*

Fourth Engineer 11: *No because on board the ship is sometimes monotonous.*

These findings are consistent with many studies such as those by Dulay (2004), Knudsen (2003), Thomas (2003), and Kahveci (2007). The above activities are the actual manifestation of change and relaxation that they meant. These were the observations in Santos, at least. This may differ from port to port as facilities vary. Seeing similar activities being done cyclically makes the enactment of the activities somewhat routine. These activities are limited to the said places because of the time limitations of the ship in port as a result of the fast turn-around time (McKay and Wright, 2007; Kahveci, 1999) restricting seafarers to a limited number of activities.

3.3.1 Characteristics

Shore leave activities are characterised sometimes by doing other activities when necessary such as visiting the medical clinics, buying medicine from the pharmacy or procuring computer parts or software. There are times when these would include directionless activities such as when they say that they are ‘just roaming around’. This would mean walking around the city and sightseeing. Since Santos is known for its beach, they normally ask for the direction and go there. This is associated with conversations of seeing beautiful women in bikinis having heard of such from previous seafarers.

‘Roaming around’ happens during the day when they are done with their phone calls at the seamen’s mission. This does not happen in the evening. No seafarer was observed visiting disco houses (other than those by the port’s red light district) or local museums. They were observed not go to the hill to do paragliding², a popular local attraction, or watch movies or shows at local theatres³.

Despite their ability to think of various activities to do in port, shore leave becomes restricted because of time constraints, financial resources and the limited knowledge of the city. They can have many plans but reality dictates upon them limited choices.

² There were many occasions seafarers were invited to go paragliding on a hill in the city. They were enthusiastic about the idea, however, some were afraid that something might happen to them. This would not be covered by insurance since it would not be work-related. This is interesting to note because it is a form of risk that they perceive as risky. This is an activity not commonly done by seafarers compared to risky sexual activities and relationships.

³ This perceived interest of the seafarers is seen by the seamen’s mission.

For example, one seafarer points out financial consideration as a limiting factor:

Seafarers expect to go out of the ship because it is boring on board. Sometimes we make phone calls to our families. That's our priority. Other activities are just secondary or tertiary. It depends if we have money. (Able-Bodied Seaman 36)

It is surprising to see, despite their expressed desire to be with others, seafarers end up being with their crewmates during the shore leave. It becomes a collective behaviour (though there are some adventurous ones who go alone). This is a bit puzzling because in many interviews they mentioned that they are 'tired' of seeing each others' faces, yet they still seem to enjoy each other's company when they go on shore leave. Everywhere they go the group is always intact.

I noticed that when seafarers leave their ships for shore leave, they always come in groups. They arrive in the centre in droves. They also leave together as a group. They go around the city also as a group. They normally group together by nationality. Every group definitely comes from the same ship. I also noticed that the Chinese are always the biggest group all the time when they arrive in the mission. (Fieldnotes: Seamen's Mission, 20 December 2007)

This group behaviour allays various fears seafarers feel in a foreign land—going astray and getting lost, being left by the ship, and being mugged and held up. Being in a group also provides an advantage. For some who have difficulties with the local and the English language, a companion would always be of help in translating when doing transactions. Somebody would always be around to help when one is in trouble.

Activities done seem to be in a happier tone when they are enjoying each other's company. These make all their endeavours a collective activity making them a 'community of practice' as described by Lave & Wenger (1991). Seafarers are a group of people who are confined within a professional workplace. They share information and experiences among themselves and gain knowledge from each other providing them the environment to develop themselves personally and professionally. We will see more of these group interactions as they foray into the clubs of the ports.

3.3.2 Connecting to Home

I mentioned earlier about the feelings of seafarers of longing for their families. Calling home is the only way these feelings are addressed thus “maintaining an emotional closeness during their separation” (Thomas, 2003). Communicating with the family during the shore leave is probably the most important thing seafarers do as part of the shore leave routine (Kahveci, 2007) as it is a way of reconnecting with them to deal with physical distance. For many, it is the essence of the shore leave.

With me, upon arrival in port I look for a telephone to call. I have to call because that is the number one way of releasing the homesickness on board. Once you have talked to your family you will feel lighter and better on board. (Able-Bodied Seaman 13)

For me I make phone calls, that is number one, and do some shopping. My priority is to call my family. Of course, because I miss their voices especially that of my wife. That's how it is. On board we can make phone calls, unfortunately it is very expensive there. (Second Engineer 16)

They normally make phone calls when they are in port, though there are also ships which provide telephone services but for a high fee. Because of this exorbitant price



Figure 3.1: Seafarers calling home from the seamen's mission's phone booths

Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

they prefer calling on land particularly at the seamen's mission. The cost is lower and allows them a longer time to call. When they use the phone cards provided by the

seamen's mission, it allows them longer conversations with their families. However, there still is time limit thus seafarers would prioritize whom to call.

Most of the time the seafarers would talk to their wives first, or their parents if unmarried. Then it would be conversations with children, siblings and other relatives and friends. They say that the latter are secondary. A big portion of the time is the conversation with the wife or parents. Conversations would be about anything and everything. It would be about updates at home.

Interviewer: *So usually what do you talk about?*

Chief Cook 6: *Updates. Of course, after 30 days at sea, you have no news from home. Of course you ask how they are. After narrating how they are they will talk about problems. You have been away for thirty days so there are problems; first the tuition (school fees). Sometimes they finish consuming the allotment⁴. You know back home products are expensive. So the budget is not enough. Then I have to send money.*

They normally end conversations with a happy feeling. I would see them relaxed and refreshed right after. News about things at home makes them exuberant. Some say that it is not merely the news that changes their mood; it is also hearing the voice of their loved ones that heartens them as many seafarers related to me:

Interviewer: *What do you feel after calling?*

Chief Cook 6: *Ah, very fresh. I feel like you have just newly joined a ship because your mind has been refreshed.*

Interviewer: *What do you feel when you have talked to them?*

Chief Engineer 17: *OK. Your apprehensions about how they are will be gone because you have talked to them. I am at ease now. Because you are now at ease, you can now relax and drink beer.*

Anticipating that they would be making phone calls in the seamen's mission, it is noticed that upon their arrival they are in a good mood and are generally happy. They rush to the store and buy phone cards. There were a few occasions that the seamen's mission ran out of phone cards because of the number of buyers. One phone card costs twelve US dollars. This would normally allow one to two hours of call

⁴ Allotment is the apportioned money given to the family derived from the income of the seafarer which is deposited in the bank by the shipping company or manning agency and withdrawn by the family.

depending on the country being called.



Figure 3.2: Seafarers can make phone calls for hours
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

Seafarers feel exasperated when they are unable to connect particularly at times when the lines at the seamen's mission are going haywire or when the persons they are calling cannot be contacted due to switched-off phones or when they do not answer. The seamen's mission becomes noisy when many of them would shout to be heard at the other end of the line. They even go to the extent of calling their neighbours and waking them up just to inform them of the incoming call. They also become impatient when their families are still asleep back home due to time difference. I would observe them act impatiently as they wait for the right time. Many seafarers give importance to this responsibility to communicate as their families incessantly need to be updated of their working lives to put them at ease as observed by Tang (2008).

Calling home can also be done in other places. For those who are not able to go to the seamen's mission, they can avail of phone services in the red light district either from the public phones, seamen's stores and phone peddlers, which I will explain in Chapter 4.

Seafarers can also use the computers with Internet connection⁵ to communicate with

⁵ Many seafarers also use the Internet as a major source of information such as news from home.

their families and friends as observed also by Thomas (2003). While at the seamen's mission many of these seafarers are on the net. There are many computer units that seafarers can use for a fee. They use the Internet in the same manner as the phones to



Figure 3.3: Seafarer using the computer/Internet at the seamen's mission

Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

communicate with their families and friends which include the use of social networking sites. Internet technology has been a major tool for many seafarers to communicate with their families and friends. Being able to reconnect gives them a good sense of feeling ending their sense of social isolation (Sampson and Thomas, 2003b).

3.3.3 Social Events

Aside from calling home, seafarers also perform a number of activities while in the

They also use it to browse through many websites such as pornography sites. I had numerous occasions that I assisted many of the seafarers as they engaged with the technology during the fieldwork. I would help them trouble shoot technical problems such as connecting their laptops to the Internet, getting the microphone and camera working, opening websites or logging in, understanding Portuguese websites, and even searching names that they have to add on social networking sites (mostly names of women).

seamen's mission or in the city. These activities address the issues they raise on board. These activities play certain functions psychologically, socially or practically. Let us look at some of these commonly done activities.

Socializing with the Seamen's Mission Staff. Workers at the seamen's mission are the first individuals seafarers encounter outside the ship. Seafarers normally socialize with them, answering the need to meet new faces. Staff members are trained to talk to seafarers since this is one of the identified needs. Some seafarers voiced out to me their liking for some of the women in the mission. Aside from numerous interactions with them, some of the seafarers went beyond the norm by trying to kiss the women for example. One Colombian staff was surprised with the act of an Indian seafarer who tried to kiss her lips when he was saying good-bye. Another Brazilian staff went ahead with the kiss when somebody wanted to kiss her by the lips.

There are always many amorous propositions by the seafarers to these women to the amusement of the staff. Seafarers would normally ask me if this or that woman was married or not. They would ask me if they had a boyfriend. I was inundated by such questions all the time. I would hear many conversations with this theme when they are talking to the women. They would normally buy the drinks and food to accompany them on their seats for some chat. These incidents are seen to be their initial engagements with the women during shore leave.

Sports. For seafarers interested in sports, the seamen's mission has a number of sports facilities which many seafarers use. It is not difficult for them to gather players since they normally come as a group when they visit. The longer they stay in Santos, the longer they use the sports facilities. Some say that they miss playing sports on board, as many ships do not have facilities. Some also say that they have fitness gyms but they do not use them as they are already tired from their work.



Figure 3.4: Seafarers playing basketball in the seamen's mission
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

Religious Activities. According to the study by Kahveci (2007), seafarers regard their spiritual welfare important. Some seafarers practice their religion thus it is important for them to be able to worship on board and on land. This is particularly true among religions that need a place of worship, such as that offered by the seamen's mission.

Third Officer 34: *The first place I go to is the church. I have a conviction to go all the time.*

Interviewer: *When you go to church what do you do?*

Third Officer 34: *I pray a bit. I give thanks. [I ask for forgiveness] because I was not able to go to church for a number of days [being on board the ship]. Then I ask for my wishes.*

For some Christian seafarers it is more convenient for them to visit the church or to meet a priest or pastor as there are many Christian missions who would cater to their religion such as the Apostleship of the Sea, the German Seamen's Mission, or the Mission to Seafarers. Despite the Christian nature of most missions, they are also open to all seafarers of all denominations such as Moslem or Hindu or to seafarers without religions. Christian religious services are provided only to those who wish to avail of them such as holy masses and confessions for the Catholics.

Search for New Taste. Seafarers normally crave for local food. This is not necessarily to try local cuisine but more of disrupting the food routine on board. This is part of the changes some seafarers want. As one seafarer said:

[R]estaurants are what I want. Eating is the first thing I do in port. I prioritize it. When I am in China, it's seafood which is what I like. (Chief Engineer 17)

There were a few times that the seamen's mission staff brought seafarers to a *churrascaria* (barbecue restaurant) when they requested to eat in a local place. This is something new to the seafarers when they are in Brazil. Others prefer the Brazilian pizza which is sold beside the seamen's mission. Some of them would even buy local delicacies and bring them back to the ship. Normally they would invite the staff to join them.



Figure 3.5: Eating in a *churrascaria* with the seafarers
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

Shopping. Buying personal and souvenir items is another important activity. With supplies running out on board, seafarers would ask directions to the shopping malls and grocery stores. Similar to the findings of Lamvik (2002), this is also an opportunity for them to buy gift items for their families back home and for themselves. Sometimes they would buy medicines thus ask the help of the staff to allow them to buy since they do not have local prescriptions from a doctor.

Alcohol Drinking. Drinking alcohol is allowed in the seamen's mission. It is readily available. Seafarers who wait to call their families or who had finished calling start to

drink while chatting with their friends. Sometimes they chat with the crew from other ships. Others drink alcohol while watching television, chatting and surfing on the Internet. There were many occasions that I observed seafarers who drank alone. Seafarers normally drink beer. There were only a few times that I saw them drink hard liquor. They do not get inebriated when they drink at the seamen's mission. They restrain themselves. Some would buy a number of bottles and bring them back to the ship. In one occasion, I saw a group of Ukrainian seafarers who bought twenty bottles of hard liquor and brought them on board. This behaviour of drinking alcohol drags on until the seamen's mission closes by midnight. Or they continue drinking as they move on to the next venue—the nightclubs.



Figure 3.6: Drinking alcohol at the seamen's mission
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

3.4 Culminating in the Clubs

As the seamen's mission closes late in the evening⁶, seafarers start heading back to their ship or move on to another venue to continue their fun. During my entire stay in the field, there was only one place that they go to—the red light district by the port. I came to see a pattern in the activities of the seafarers where visiting the nightclub becomes a culmination of their shore leave. Movement to the clubs happen early in

⁶ The seamen's mission closes invariably. Though they announce that they are open until midnight, sometimes they close earlier when there are no seafarers coming particularly during bad weather. They can also close after midnight while waiting for the drivers who would come from the ports. It takes time for drivers to come back due to bad traffic, the distance of some ports, and the time they leave the seamen's mission for the port.

the evening when the clubs open for business and when the seafarers are done with their activities in the seamen's mission and in the city during the day.

These observations made me conclude why frequenting the nightclubs has been a part of the normalized routine of shore leave for many seafarers. The same has been observed by Trotter (2008), Sanial and De Los Reyes (2010), and McKay (2007a and 2007b). As many seafarers interviewed would say, it has been a part of the practice of the trade of seafaring and an element of the normal shore leave routine.

When we go down to the port we go to the seamen's centre like today. We buy personal items for ourselves. Normal [activity] is going to the nightclub.
(Oiler 39)

It is not surprising that seafarers believe that nightclubs in ports cater mostly to them as majority of the clients are seafarers. For new entrants to seafaring, it does not come as a surprise when they encounter the ubiquitous presence of red light districts in many ports of the world having been regaled with stories since they were cadets in maritime schools. Many seafarers have the notion that nightclubs are accepted fixtures of many ports. This is when I started to probe their motives in frequenting these places.

3.4.1 Meaning the Meaning

Frequenting the nightclubs is tied to the way seafarers give meaning to shore leave. It answers their quest for change, their need to address stress at work, and the need to be away from the ship environment for a certain period of time. Some seafarers specifically provided the link between their onboard conditions and their visit to the nightclubs. In fact, this has turned into a usual justification for their frequent visit as stated by the following seafarers:

You see, when you have been at sea for a long time, temptation is there. Everybody wants to go outside. And sailors, they get bored and go outside. Mostly the sailors go to the red light areas. I think it is because of the frustration, because of the loneliness, because they spent a lot of time at sea.
(Second Officer 26)

Many seafarers like to go to bars because it is lonely onboard. The bar is a place to spend time. That's how I look at it. (Able-Bodied Seaman 36)

Through word of mouth, seafarers develop ideas of what to expect from the nightclubs of port red light districts. As these places are common knowledge to many seafarers, they are aware of the services provided. They know that the place will give them the fun that they look for based on the services offered by the nightclubs.

Night in and night out the red light district always has seafaring customers. Their visits are not affected even by weather conditions such as rainy days or cold nights. Of all the places they visit during the shore leave, the nightclub would be a unique place that offers them the needed atmosphere providing them the relaxation and recreation they seek. This would include alcohol, entertainment and women as I will explain further in the following sections. In Chapter 4, I will also discuss the availability of various services (telephones, restaurants and grocery) in the red light district allowing seafarers to bypass the city centre or the seamen's mission. This is another reason of going directly to the club area.

3.4.2 Role of Alcohol

The nightclub provides the right venue to allow seafarers to continue the drinking that has been started at the seamen's mission. Some seafarers go directly to the nightclub from their ships to drink for purposes of relaxation and to address the need for alcohol. This surge of alcohol consumption in port is probably reflective of the deprivation of alcohol on board the ship particularly among ships with zero-alcohol policy as observed also by Borovnik (2003), Kalinin and Sidorov (1999), and Carel, Carmil and Keinan (1990). This is one reason why seafarers patronize the nightclubs as there is easy access to alcohol. They offer local beers, hard liquor and mixed drinks. Prices are very affordable which are taken advantage of by many seafarers who enjoy the atmosphere.

For me, my favourite is always to go to a bar. For me it makes me relax having some beer. A bar is important for me because I want to drink. I always need a drink. I used to drink a lot of hard drinks. But now my favourite is beer. (Motorman 28)

Aside from the reason for alcohol deprivation onboard, many seafarers drink in a nightclub as it is the only place where they can express the alcohol culture they are used to. Obviously ethnicity and tradition of seafarers are determinants of their drinking behaviour on shore as expressed by the same seafarer:

Kiribati people drink a lot. Polish and Ukrainian seafarers drink a lot—breakfast, lunch and dinner. For Kiribati, it is not like that. They finish the work and then they drink and have a party. It is normal for Kiribati to drink. It is part of the culture. (Motorman 28)

Aside from access to alcohol, the nightclub also provides the atmosphere for drinking which addresses the social isolation that they feel onboard given the more relaxed atmosphere. Social distance commonly observed in the workplace is somewhat diminished thus increasing interactions among crewmates.

Going to the nightclub is also a result of not having confident knowledge of other places on shore (aside from the seamen's mission where alcohol is offered). Some of these nightclub patrons go purely for reasons to drink. They have no intention of meeting or engaging with the sex workers. Some of them simply tag along with their crewmates to enjoy their company while drinking.

[S]ome crew members also go to the girly bar [and] the purpose only is for drinking... [T]here are some proofs that they also go there for drinks only and not for women. This situation on what to do when they are in the girly bar will depend also on the person who is there. I mean, you are only responsible for your actions. (Third Mate 41)

It can be seen therefore that the enticement of alcohol is an initial process towards the entry to the nightclubs and the string of events that would transpire as drinking goes on. The use of alcohol is seen as a major factor in the various dynamics that would culminate later on in risky behaviours. Thus, to some extent the amount and manner (whether socially or until intoxication) of alcohol consumption matters as this will have consequences on their behaviour given the effect of alcohol on one's cognitive and rational thinking.

A seafarer I interviewed drank alcohol because of problems back home. He received news from home about a major family problem. His only way to deal with the

problem was to go to the nightclub and drink as he is very far away from home to be able to do something.

[Seafarers] feel homesick. Just like me I received a letter which discussed problems at home which I got worried about. Of course, upon arrival in port I want to drink and try to let the thoughts about the problem go. That's why I didn't know I was already drunk. (Bosun 54)

The same thing happened with the story of Rudy who I introduced in the prelude. He had family problems he could not deal with as he was away from home. This portrays how emotionally and psychologically vulnerable some seafarers are as family and personal problems aggravate their already vulnerable situations as they experience homesickness. According to Parker *et al.* (1997), problems with the family increases levels of occupational stress at sea. The lack of support system onboard disables individuals from coping effectively (Cutrona and Russell, 1987 and 1990). As they remain helpless, being unable to do anything because of the distance, alcohol becomes a coping mechanism for some of them.

Feeling happy and having fun are reasons for celebrating in which drinking is a main feature. Being able to make phone calls to families, plus the fact that they are able to go out from their ships, provides such collective euphoric feeling for many of them. This feeling of fun and happiness is continued in the only place where they can do it which is the nightclub. Normally seafarers experience good feelings after fulfilling their 'paternal' obligations and duties towards their family through the phone calls done at the seamen's mission. There is a generalized feeling of happiness when they are able to hear the voice of their loved ones and having been in touch with them. This results in feelings of satisfaction and contentment.

This change of behaviour after the phone call is observable as they venture into the city such as at the beach area, the shopping centre, the grocery, and the restaurants. Sometimes they simply walk around and enjoy the sights. This is a manifestation of celebratory actions—feeling good and relieved after being updated of news at home. This feeling of contentment can also be construed as being able to fulfil the responsibility towards his family termed as 'transnational fathering' by Parreñas (2008). This makes some of them feel justified in heading towards the nightclubs.

3.4.3 Marketing the Nightclubs

Information about the red light district is crucial in maintaining the nightclubs as a lucrative business for the owners. Normally, information flow is through word of mouth. As seafarers move from one ship to another there is a dynamic exchange of information among them of which the red light district in Santos is one that has developed a certain reputation among them.

An additional factor that increases the awareness of seafarers about the nightclubs is through the unique marketing strategy of these establishments. Many of the sex workers and other women working in the clubs also work as ship chandlers who visit the ships during the day. Sometimes these ship chandlers pick them up direct from their ships and bring them to the clubs. While doing their work, they also give the seafarers promotional materials advertising their establishments. Some of these are shown by Figures 3.7 to 3.10.



Figure 3.7: Harmony Club pocket calendar
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III



Figure 3.8: Front of Harmony Club pocket calendar
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III



Figure 3.9: Flyer of Marino Bar
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III



Figure 3.10: Flyer of Nightclub X
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

The seafarers' lack of knowledge of the city makes going to these clubs an enticing choice.

Well in reality there are those who provide business cards [promotional items and directions to the bars] when we go out. They have promotional marketing. Even if we think of going to another place, we eventually decide, 'we just better come here to this place [on this card]'. (Second Engineer 16)

Many of these promotional materials are designed to attract them, thus featuring beautiful women⁷ in provocative poses. Thus it is not surprising that women would also be a major reason for frequenting the clubs as I explain next.

3.5 Allure of the Nymphs

Women play a significant role in seafarers' visits to the nightclubs. They enable the seafarers to enact their various fantasies and desires within the social spaces of the

⁷ The women on the promotional materials are not those from the clubs, which is tantamount to deception to the clientele.

clubs (Ratliff, 2003). In this section, I will look at how these women are represented and portrayed by the seafarers. This will be my initial discussion of the commercial sex workers who we will encounter throughout the rest of the dissertation.

3.5.1 Longing, Need and Tradition

Many seafarers were not shy to talk about their desire to go to the nightclubs to meet women. They were quite open in expressing this desire to see them in these places. This seafarer emphasized what he wanted after having done his activities during the shore leave.

Chief Engineer 22: *When I am able to call [my family] I am happy.*

Interviewer: *What else do you do during shore leave?*

Chief Engineer 22: *Of course I go womanizing. <laughs>*

Interviewer: *I thought you were going to say shopping first before women?*

Chief Engineer 22: *No, women first.*

Similar responses were heard from many seafarers alluding to the possible pattern that emerges in the sequence of events and the prioritization of activities of the seafarers during shore leaves. As I probed further the importance of women in their activities, these are some of their responses:

Men love women, of course, that's true. Men cannot live without women. Well, of course, you are a person on board a ship and then fifteen to twenty days sailing time you don't see anything in the middle of the ocean. So when you arrive in port it is just like you are ignorant of a woman. (Third Mate 41)

It is the culture of the seamen to look for women... We long for the embrace of a woman... Of course it feels good I can meet a woman especially that she is beside me. I do not know why the happiness is like that. <laughs> (Chief Engineer 22)

Based on their comments, the presence (and absence) of women is significant. They are central to what the seafarers referred to as the satisfaction of desire or need which may be linked to the desire for a life that is different from that on board. Thus, seafarers feel that one way of addressing the need for change is the ability to meet women after staying with an all-male crew. It is only during shore leaves that they get this very chance. Their ability to address this reflects on the changes to their

behaviour which creates a good atmosphere onboard (also mentioned in 6.2.4).

[Y]ou see the same faces of about six to twenty-two people and talking to the same. And you want some change... That is why they look for the women, to sit together. And you see, when the ship stay at anchor, the people become bored and start fighting if the ship stay for a long time... And I observe soon after the ship comes to port, they go to one nightclub or a bar and they spend one night. When they come back, they are happy, they are laughing. (Second Officer 26)

You know men. Their weakness is women, right? If one talks to a woman, he has a different feeling. It is because we are all men in the ship. It will be a different atmosphere because we don't want that we always talk to men. You always talk about the ship. You will always talk with seamen. It should change a bit, right? The view should change a bit. (Second Cook 29)

Many of these comments of seafarers always took issue with being an all-male crew. They feel that the absence of females on board makes the atmosphere different to what they are used to. Understandably, the absence of women is one element that differs from their normal environment. This longing justifies their desire to meet women in ports. As this is consistently enacted it creates the perception that this practice is acceptable thus perpetuated. It is in this manner that it becomes normalized as part of the routine.

[T]his has been a tradition ever since. Since we have been going on board, this has been practiced even before. This is part of nature plus the fact that there are women available. (Chief Mate 57)

You know, I can say that eighty percent or ninety percent of those who study this kind of degree (bachelors degree in maritime science or engineering) at the very start even if they have not seen the sea they think of 'every woman in every port'. (Chief Mate 1)

'Every woman in every port' has become an interesting motto for many seafarers (Dulay, 2004: 4). This is a variation to a similar saying 'for every port [seafarers] report' alluding to the fact that they have a woman in every port and that they report to each one of them every time they visit. This is similar to the concept of seafarers 'tasting' every woman from every port (or nationality) as explained in the next section.

3.5.2 Fascination and Curiosity

Fascination with, attraction to and curiosity for women from abroad came out to be another theme that emerged from the interviews with seafarers. Women who are foreign to seafarers arouse some interest among them as they are thought to be exotic and thus more interesting and appealing. As one seafarer summed up the fascination for Brazilian women:

I have wished especially when I was younger I wanted to have sex with Brazilian women. Even just for a short while, I want to have an experience.
(Second Engineer 16)

When I asked seafarers about this particular interest, one of their frequent answers is because of the beauty and physical attractiveness of the women.

Well, you get attracted to women especially in these places that have a lot of beautiful women so we cannot say that you don't get attracted to them. Now, you are in a case to decide whether you take the women or not take the women like the prostitutes. **(Third Mate 41)**

Their concept of beauty however differs from one another. For example, based on my observations and on casual conversations, European seafarers tended to prefer coloured women while Asian seafarers appeared to prefer white women. Generally, Filipino seafarers share a similar notion of beauty that encompasses a pretty face, light skin colour, and good body.

[T]he first feature that they look for is beauty. They really look for beautiful faces. Filipinos do not like dark women. Maybe mulato (brown) may be alright. Normally they look at the face. Of course, the skin should be clean. That's how it is. Especially when they have been drinking and they start looking for women. 'Hey that woman is nice. She has no tummy.' **(Second Engineer 16)**

The fascination for foreign women is rooted in a number of factors. Many Asian seafarers, for example, think that white women are beautiful because they are like the movie stars that they see in films thus arousing their fascination and interest.

Brazil is still the best place to go to a bar not only because it is cheap but because the women are beautiful. The women look like movie stars. (Oiler 39)

As sex workers learn about this, they try to project themselves with such an identity. They capitalize on this factor to gain more customers. Thus I was not surprised to see some attractive women having as many as eight clients in one evening!

It is really like that (having many clients) because they look like movie stars. Fabiana says that she looks like Donita Rose or Rosanna Roces⁸. (Field Notes: Harmony Club, 17 September 2007)

Their curiosity towards these women is also instigated not only by physical attributes but also by their personal characteristics. Brazilian women are known for some attributes on top of their being physically attractive which are appreciated by a number of seafarers.

Brazilian women are quite exceptional... in terms of looks, they are more beautiful, in terms of attitude and behaviour, and the way they love and play romance. I have experienced with a Brazilian woman who is very loyal and it will just be me as long as I am in port. (Second Cook 29)

Seafarers develop different stereotypes of commercial sex workers of different nationalities as they meet them in different red light districts of the world. As different seafarers interact and exchange notes when they move from one ship to another, these stereotypes are strengthened allowing them to compare and develop preferences and favourites fuelling the interest of other seafarers.

You know what I like...I think [is that] they remember me. When I was in Thailand...you know Asian women are more romantic than European women. Sometimes they will cry, 'don't leave me'. They will say, 'please don't forget me'. They [make you] feel like a friend. (Second Mate 40)

Interviewer: *Many seafarers talk about Brazilian women as the most beautiful. Do you find them the most attractive?*

Second Engineer 16: *I do not agree. I had sex with many women here but Brazilian women are not necessarily the most beautiful for me. For me the Chileans, Venezuelans and Cubans are also beautiful.*

⁸ Famous movie stars in the Philippines.

The exposure and interaction of seafarers to different red light districts as they visit the different ports provide them the familiarity with different women of various nationalities. This is on top of the knowledge they gain from other seafarers. The dynamics of information exchange is one reason for the continuity of interest and curiosity. This is one avenue that keeps men patronize red light districts. In fact some of them go further by ‘collecting’ and ‘tasting’ women of different nationalities—a game some seafarers dare to play and risk.

3.5.3 Convenience

Frequenting the red light district to meet women is also attributed to the convenience presented by these establishments. The fact that women are in the nightclubs leads seafarers to these places. Within the clubs, there is no difficulty in meeting women.

[B]ecause of the desire [to meet women], the answer is the nightclub. If you are in the club you can easily go inside by just saying hi and hello. Upon entering the club, the women will already say ‘mi amor, mi amor’. <laughs> It is straightforward. You can get women at once. (Chief Cook 6)

Seafarers however are not deterred from looking at women in different venues. There were a few occasions when some walked to the beach to ogle at women—specifically women wearing swimsuits knowing that Santos is famous for its busy and sprawling beach. However, they were just there to look. The only interactions they had with women before going to the clubs were with the staff of the seamen’s mission. However, all these interactions did not answer their desires and fantasies. The clubs remain as the only place left for them.

The convenience of meeting women in the clubs is not surprising. Neither was it a surprise if I never observed seafarers look for women in nearby public places, malls, or restaurants. As one seafarer defended:

We can also go to the malls or parks. We also do that. However, we feel that there is something lacking... [I]f you go to the mall you will also see women. However, you cannot talk to them. Like here in Brazil. They do not speak English. It is awkward to say hi and hello. <laughs> That is not modest. You

might be slapped on the face. (Chief Cook 6)

Another reason why it is easy for seafarers to meet women in the clubs is the convenience of language (in the context of Brazil ports). Language has always been a barrier for many seafarers to communicate with the locals since English is not spoken. Women in the clubs have some facility of the English language allowing them some form of interactions.

Well, because when you go to the shopping mall, first of all, there is a language difficulty⁹ like in any port, of course. And then when these men who work at sea, go ashore and try to talk or court some women, there is a problem with language. These men will never get this style so they refrain from going, you know, from going to malls to meet some women, or make girlfriends and so on. [In the clubs], well of course, because the women there take men, so I say that by doing this, going to the nightclub is more convenient. (Third Mate 41)

The ability to talk to the women using a common language addresses the need to talk to new faces. The presence of women who are ready to engage with them adds to the convenience. In fact some of them simply go to the club to talk to women without the intention of engaging sexually as shown by these seafarers:

I go to the bar to talk to somebody and exchange ideas. Just like that. There they speak English and in other sites they don't speak English. I don't go to the bars to get women for sex. No sex. No. (Cadet 31)

Even if I have no intentions of getting women, I am sure that I have somebody to talk to in an instant. I do not have to pursue them anymore [since they are readily handy]. (Second Engineer 16)

Convenience can also be shown using the perspective of time when seafarers go on shore leave. As seafarers have limited time to be in the port plus the fact that some are busy onboard, they prioritize their activities. If one of their priorities is to engage with women, they can easily go to the clubs and meet them.

⁹ Brazilian Portuguese is difficult for foreign seafarers to understand except those who speak Spanish. This is a major handicap for seafarers to communicate with the locals. Even with the use of the computers, they always ask for assistance when websites and programmes in Portuguese come out automatically. Going around the city centre is also frustrating to many of them since they cannot communicate with the locals. They cannot ask for directions. They are not able to find places.

Seafarers have no time to pursue women [outside the nightclubs] because of the nature of our work... [T]here are limitations. The limitation of the Bosun is limited time. You have no time to pursue women [anywhere else]. So the option is the beerhouse... [It] is the most convenient to go to... [It] is the best option. Not the malls but the beerhouse. Seafarers know that that is the direct service of the beerhouse. They know that their needs will be met at the beerhouse instead of going to the malls and start to look for friends and make friends. It's a long process. (Bosun 18)

These are the narratives of many seafarers interviewed and observed in this study. All the elements the seafarers mentioned and the researcher observed seem to facilitate the engagement of seafarers with commercial sex workers.

3.6 Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed shore leave as an overarching topic to set the tone and to provide the setting of the bigger discussion on gender and sexual risk-taking behaviour of seafarers. As the high-risk behaviour occurs during this period and within the geographical space of the port city of call, it was incumbent that a presentation about shore leave be an initial data chapter. I approached my discussion on shore leave by dissecting its elements to allow me to argue a number of points in the context of the topic of risk.

One of the arguments that I presented is that shore leave is a cyclical event with a number of predictable activities—from the time seafarers leave the ship until the time they go back. The activities are done by the seafarers do not normally deviate from the usual routine making many activities certain and normalized—almost becoming ritualistic. They go to the seamen's mission to make phone calls and use the Internet, they go to the city centre to do some shopping and grocery, and they end up in the nightclubs. They get accepted as traditional and habitual exercise by most seafarers. This routine nature of the shore leave is not affected by the length of time allowing them to do similar activities whether for a short period or longer.

The predictability of their activity is brought about by a number of factors that provide the limitations that constrain their movement and restrict their activities.

Some of these limitations are handicaps with respect to the language and knowledge of the city. Their routine on shore is guided by those they know such as the seamen's mission staff, ship chandlers and sex workers and from the exchange of information among seafarers. Despite the fact that seafarers are not keen on being with the same people on board, they end up to be together. According to Coates (2003) such male friendships emphasize sociability. Robertson (2007) however finds this sociability a form of intimacy for men such as being in a club and 'having a laugh' with friends which he describes a form of a pleasant and emotionally embodied experience. Robertson and Monaghan (2012) argue that "finding space with male peers specifically without the need for 'personal sharing' about work and other anxieties can create a safe, enjoyable, emotionally relaxed (rather than emotionally bereft) environment for many men".

Another point I highlighted in this chapter is that the meanings seafarers give to shore leave, how they characterize it and how it is spent address the issue of stress and monotony of their life onboard the ship. The various meanings they provide revolve around the need for change within their working environment. These various changes are manifested in their wanting to see new faces, visit new scenes to disrupt monotony of ship and sea, reduce social isolation, do different activities in port, see women rather than men, connect with the family, and satisfy longings, to name a few.

Shore leave is observed to end most of the time in nightclubs being the final destination. This may be attributed to a number of factors, which includes knowledge of the place, alcohol, and women—all within the context of addressing change. Furthermore, the club becomes a social space where their desires and fantasies are fulfilled, where they meet new faces and also because they have no choice of destination within the city during the evening until early morning. Within the confines of the clubs are the women sex workers who play a significant role in the exercise of shore leaves in the clubs.

In this chapter, I also aimed at elucidating a number of possible determinants of seafarers' risk activities particularly on how it relates to their experiences onboard thus providing a link to their lives on the ship, to the greater maritime industry and to the social and economic milieu the industry is embedded in. Cultural theory of risk

(Douglas and Wildavsky, 1982) would argue that the array of events the seafarer goes through during his shore leave is not necessarily guided by individual choice but is shaped by broader structures taking into account social and economic factors. I tried to explicate in this chapter how the structures shape the possibilities for sexual risk behaviours and extra-marital relations among seafarers.

For example, labour migration, which is the nature of the work of seafarers, initiates men into a certain masculine subculture leading them into forays into clubs to engage with women. The gendered nature of seafaring composed generally of men confers a certain male peer group pattern of socializing that heightens the propensity for sexual risk taking. This migration of male workers is sometimes an offshoot of want for better economic opportunities, which can be addressed by working away from home far from their families. This subculture in a distanced work site manifests with extramarital sexuality seen as both normal and an important means for enacting modern masculinity (Wardlow, 2007).

The eventual interaction of seafarers with the sex workers is played in the context of seafarers being away from their wives and girlfriends. It is by no accident that many shore leaves end up inevitably in the nightclubs. Neither is it a coincidence that most ports of the world have nightclubs catering to seafarers, as this has become part of the social structure of seafaring. There is a social pressure on local port communities to establish red light districts as visiting foreign seafarers establish a demand. State policies on prostitution of port countries and the local economic conditions where these women are embedded provide the enabling factors for sex services to flourish. Based on the data and analysis in this chapter, the contributing risk factors that shape seafarers' risky sexual behaviour are those related to their occupation and their workplace and the factors within the port and the city where the shore leave happens.

The eventual outcome of seafarers engaging in sexual trysts with sex workers should not be seen in a simplistic manner as the socio-sexual relations between them are nuanced, as we will see in the next chapters. The way seafarers portray these women varies and this has significant bearing on the social dynamics that will transpire which would eventually help contextualize their behaviours and relationships. These extramarital trysts put the lives of those involved in the sexual soiree at risk including

the seafarers, their wives and the sex workers as they are all exposed to the hazards brought about by these sexual liaisons and activities. In the end, the dynamics of HIV transmission should be delineated according to economic, social and cultural factors that propel, shape and structure the sexual risk behaviour of seafarers.

Chapter 4

Barscape—Seductive Spaces, Risky Places

4.1 Introduction

The bar is there because it serves a purpose for the seaman, fulfil certain needs that are for the most part psychological.... A seamen's bar...is actually an integral part of many a seamen's life ashore. Many times it not only serves as the bridge between ship and shore, but frequently as the continuing bridge between bar and home. It is not simply a place where one goes to "get a drink", nor is it a place where one meets friends by appointment... The bar is a place to come to after a long voyage at sea... To the lonely seaman it is symbolic of home, and to those without families it becomes the substitute for wife, family, children, or home... The bar, might be likened to a haven or refuge. One of its functions is that of providing a seaman with primary relationships.

In this description, Sherar (1973:19-20) shows us a number of facets of the nightclubs for seafarers in port red light districts. He highlights the different roles and functions it plays in the social and personal lives of seafarers. This will be the main discussion of this chapter.

In the previous chapter I started out with introducing the nightclubs and the women sex workers within the context of shore leave and within the framework of risk behaviour and gender. I discussed the motives and reasons why seafarers patronize these places and discussed some of the correlates and determinants of their behaviour. Prostitution including studies on red light districts and go-go clubs has received much attention as a research inquiry for many decades now. It has become a popular and progressive research field that has provided a better understanding of the players involved in the practice of sexual commerce and the social spaces where trade occurs.

Findings of prostitution research continue to inform debate and discussion specifically in the areas of legal and moral discourses, labour issues, trafficking, human rights, right to body, etc. Research methods to provide a critically informed public have also

advanced including ethnographic observations in nightclubs such those done by Parreñas (2011), Cheng (2010), Trotter (2008), Frank (2002) Ratliff (1999) as these social spaces become central in the discourses of sex and risk research. This will be the central focus of the discussion in this chapter.

This chapter builds on the discussions and data presented earlier. In this chapter, I will introduce and discuss in more detail the various elements of the red light district, the nightclubs, and the people within. This is a continuation of the discussion of the location of the study as part of the setting I discussed in Chapter 2 to situate the risk-taking behaviour of seafarers. I will usher in the readers and guide them through the daily routine within the nightclubs. First I will discuss how the club is situated in the bigger picture of the city and the port. Then, I will discuss why the red light district is frequented by the seafarers by discussing all the practical elements that seafarers need and what enables their visit, other than the women. These are the different economic activities that surround the nightclubs as they play important roles during the shore leave of the seafarers. This will be followed by a discussion of the physical structure of the club and what this means to the patrons and the women. Then I will devote a discussion on how the area is perceived focusing on forms of risks that exist other than HIV/AIDS making the seafarers feel a sense of fear. The sources of this imagined risk are the criminality within the area and the people and smuggling of drugs. I will continue my discussion of my accounts of the place based on my being a researcher and my changing roles within the setting thus providing the perspective of positionality, corporeality and embeddedness with regards to my being within the site. The final discussion will be about the women sex workers who play a significant role in the dynamics of risk and gender.

4.2 The Socioerotic Landscape of the Port

The red light district of any port may be seen as an atypical element of the landscape. The majority of the features in the port area are components for production and labour. A port is generally a site for productive work thus isolates nightclubs (or *boate* in Brazilian Portuguese) and beerhouses as distinct and separate element in such a work space. I echo these observations seen by a number of studies such as those by

Trotter (2008), and Keulder and Lebeau (2006). This makes many seafarers feel that the presence of these nightclubs (and prostitution) is part of the port scene.

Nightclubs become social spaces where desires of men and women (the sex workers) are fulfilled and fantasies enacted. It is a geographical entity where social dynamics have bearing on the production and consumption of leisure and pleasure. The allusion is derived from their construction based on infatuation and fascination.

The way the nightclubs are presented to passersby provides a way of distinguishing itself from the rest of the landscape of the port. The red light district projects a place to be distinct and distant from the cityscape. It gives a sense of meaning that it is a different social space. As the patrons are transient seafarers from other countries and not locals, there is no conscious attempt to provide the needed visibility using visual cues in disclosing their presence to the city folks. There are no flickering lights or ostentatious presentation of the venue typical of local nightclubs. As I mentioned in Chapter 3 the clubs have a different way of marketing as the seafarers are fleeting clients.

The city has its own known red light district. Compared to it, the port red light district is much smaller. However, many seafarers still refer to this place as a red light district. The local perception of the establishment is a uniquely different area and a bit isolated from the mainstream city landscape. Many locals know about its existence; however they do not patronize the place. It is the continuous influx of seafarers that allowed its existence through the ravages of time. The dynamics that existed between a captive clientele and the elements of the red light district moulded the present state of the place. Unbeknownst to the general public, the red light district has evolved into a social system which provides not only erotic services but also a range of other products and amenities which pull the seafaring clientele towards the location.

4.3 Place for All Needs

There are a number of reasons why the red light district is a logical destination for many seafarers, on top of those mentioned in Chapters 2 and 3. For seafarers who

have very limited time to go to the city, those inconvenienced to request for transport from the seamen's mission, those who have no patience to wait for the seamen's mission drivers, and those who have no time during the day to go on shore leave, the red light district is an alternative destination which addresses all their needs.

Seafarers need not go downtown or the seamen's mission since similar services are available and accessible within the red light district making it an attractive and viable alternative destination. The availability of these services until early morning provides another enticing factor to these patrons.

These various services in the red light district co-exist with the nightclubs comprising a bigger social structure within the port red light district. The clubs remain central in this social setting, however, the other establishments, which complete the social organization, are also observed to be important. These services, which are also business entities in themselves, thrive in the presence of the nightclubs. As these establishments also attract seafarers to go to the red light district, they become enabling factors that lead them to engage in risky behaviours.

4.3.1 Seamen's Store

Across the clubs towards the other block is a store called Mykonos. This is a shop exclusively for seafarers. Such stores meant for the seafarers are normally called seamen's store in most ports. In this store, they can buy various products like groceries, personal items, souvenirs, clothes, shoes, and pornographic materials. Some of the products particularly the food items come from the countries where these seafarers come from (Chinese ingredients, Polish and Filipino food items, etc.). They can also make international calls. They have phone booths inside the shop. Though not meant to be a nightclub, they can sit, drink, and watch television while their colleagues finish their phone calls or do their groceries.

Not everyone can easily enter the store since it is always locked from inside. Somebody who wants to enter has to press the doorbell. I understood that this was a way to discriminate locals from entering the store. This was also a safeguard to protect the commercial activity since the exchange of US dollars is regulated by the government. US dollars and Brazilian Reais are both accepted. The store is normally

manned by the owners. It is closed late in the evenings and during the day hence seafarers are not able to use its phones during these periods.

4.3.2 Food Kiosks and Restaurants

There are a number of food establishments outside the clubs. There are three makeshift barbecue and snack kiosks by the street across. There were many occasions during the fieldwork that I would hang out here since many seafarers and sex workers lingered around to eat and drink. This was my entry to the lives of these individuals since it was part of their social space. It was easy for me to strike a conversation out here since there is no loud music and the setting is quite loose and informal.

Normally, patrons would share tables since seating space is quite limited. While seated outside the club, it was easy for me to see who goes in and out of the clubs and think for further actions. I literally had a view of the 'terrain' since I had a panoramic shot of the area from here. I am also able to talk to seafarers while they eat dinner or snack since I would normally share a table with them or vice versa. It was convenient for sex workers to introduce new seafarers to me thus allowing me to initiate conversations and observation for the study.

Eric, now in his late 30s, is an owner of one of the kiosks outside Harmony Club. He was born and raised in Santos. He became a major source of much information about the port, the nightclubs and its people. He has a friendly personality and became a good friend. As I was a loyal customer of his small restaurant, he accorded me especial attention. He had been working in the red light district for more than two decades already doing different kinds of jobs. He was once a ship chandler and worked for Harmony Club until he established his own business. His exposure to foreigners honed his English.

Having seen the development of the area for a long time now makes Eric a reliable source of information for my study. Of the numerous things that he told me was one which intrigued me most. He said that during his entire married life, his wife and children have not set foot in the red light district and that this will never ever happen. He confided that he does not want his family to be exposed to the 'evils' of the place despite the fact that the place is his major source of income.

Aside from these kiosks there are smaller restaurants where customers drink beer or eat at a cheaper price. Sometimes Harmony Club patrons order here, which is allowed by the owners, since they have a different kind of service and not a source of competition. Many sex workers and seafarers also come here if they just want to have a chat and drink since the place has no noisy music, it is not dark, and the prices are lower. This is why women also come here to hook up with seafarers.

There is another small restaurant owned by a group of sex workers beside the nightclubs, which also opened while I was carrying out my fieldwork. This is where many women converge to eat and drink. They normally bring seafarers here when they want a less noisy atmosphere to discuss business or personal matters. They also come here to eat a proper meal, have snacks, or continue drinking when Harmony Club is about to close. Since the owners are sex workers, many of the women feel more relaxed here. The place is an open space except for the kitchen so everyone can be seen from the street. Some seafarers have access to the kitchen where they can help in the cooking. These are men who are considered boyfriends by the sex worker owners.

There is a dilapidated pornographic movie theatre at the back of Harmony Club, which can be accessed through the side street. This theatre was converted into a club during my research period. It is owned by a group of women sex workers who banded together and put up the business. To avoid friction with Harmony Club (since the sex worker-owners still ply their trade inside), they advertise their own club to cater solely to locals. In reality, it was also meant to lure seafarers¹.

4.3.3 Phone Peddlers

Numerous individuals hang out at Eric's kiosk. Some of them are telephone peddlers who stay and wait for seafarers to use their services. These are women who have mobile phones through which seafarers can call their families back home. This

¹ I have been befriended by one of the sex workers who is part owner of this new club. She told me to bring seafarers here. For every four seafarers I can bring I can go in for free. They charge an entrance fee of ten Reais, which will include barbecue and unlimited drinks.

service is provided at a cheaper price than standard calls². This is an interesting service that developed with the advent of mobile phones and modern communication. It emerged as a demand from seafarers who wish to call their families. This is convenient for many seafarers since they just go down the ship and look for these women. This is good for the seafarers raring to call their families in an instant. The lack of wall phones³ within the port keeps this business thriving. If they cannot go to the seamen's mission to call, this is the best alternative.

Many sex workers are familiar with this phone service. They would refer seafarer clients inside the club to the phone peddlers when they need to call their families. I would usually see many seafarers being accompanied by the sex workers going out of the clubs looking for these women. These telephone call peddlers seem to have a good relationship with the sex workers. Sometimes they would sit with them inside the club and engage in conversations (though most of the time they stay outside). This is one way of getting many customers to make use of the telephone service.

All the phone peddlers are women in their late 40s. They are accorded more respect because they are older and they are seen as community elders. They can be regarded as gatekeepers in the study since they have been around for a longer time, they are more senior, they have knowledge of the establishments and the people, and they do not compete with sex workers for clients. I had this notion that by virtue of my close relationship with these gatekeepers I felt more secure in the fieldsite.

Paula is probably the youngest among the phone peddlers. She is in her early 30s. It was quite obvious that she was pregnant. She said she is carrying the child of a Filipino seafarer. I asked myself if she was a commercial sex worker. I thought that she did not look like one. With constant interaction with Paula it was confirmed that she was not indeed a sex worker and never became one. There were many occasions that she asked me to translate Portuguese into Tagalog and for me to write these on her mobile phone to send to a number of Filipino seafarers outside the country.

² Many people say that these are illegal phone lines. That is why seafarers are charged at a lower price for every call. The mobile phone is connected to a certain gadget at the houses of these women. These gadgets are illegally connected.

³ The phone cards sold at the seamen's mission can be used in other public phones anywhere in the city.

Despite the fact that she was not a sex worker, she had numerous encounters with seafarers because of phone peddling. This is where she developed a relationship with one of the Filipino seafarers hence getting pregnant. I will expound more on this kind of relationship in Chapter 7.

4.3.4 Motels and Hotels: Spaces of Sexual Acts

These establishments provide the convenience of consummating the sexual act. Thus they benefit from the port sex industry. Within the area are a number of these businesses available for a few hours use. This is where some of the sex workers bring their seafarer clients for sexual encounters. There is one that is just above Harmony Club with the entrance door beside the club. It is not owned by the club. Prices of these establishments range from ten US dollars to as much as fifty US dollars.

If the sex worker does not want to walk to nearby hotels with their clients, there are taxis providing transportation that would bring them to the house of the commercial sex worker, or to other hotels farther away. Furthermore, many sex workers rent rooms near the nightclubs. This is also used as a venue for some sexual encounters and probably the most convenient of all for quick and cheaper sex sans the amenities of a hotel—shower, towels, air-conditioned rooms, etc. Though going out for sex may occur anytime in the night, many of them head to the hotels before midnight. When women bring their men to their houses, sometimes they stay until early morning. They wake up early and take the taxi as these seafarers have to be onboard the ship at six in the morning because of the shifting schedule. The cook and the steward have to start preparing food for the crew at this time.

Trotter (2007) alludes to these venues as spaces of sexual act. There is significance of these places because these are the venues, which the sex workers know best.

Seafarers normally trust the sex workers when they allow them to decide where to go to fulfil the sexual act after the negotiations that occur beforehand in the nightclubs.

The fact that sex workers have the knowledge of the place more than the seafarers, there is a change in the perceived risk as the seafarers are moved away from the familiar nightclub area. This apparent shift may make the seafarer vulnerable and trusting of the woman which then endears her to the seafarer. This becomes

conducive to the development of a relationship. On the other hand, being away from the nightclub, some sex workers do not feel protected and secure when they are within the confines of the bedroom. There is a lowered power status because of the need to satisfy the customer so as to pay the agreed amount and to continue with a relationship with the seafarer.

There are many instances where some seafarers need not go to the nightclubs but instead go straight to the sex venues. According to some stories of seafarers, some officers go straight to the hotels and hire sex workers from there. They say that they do not want to be seen by their lower rank crew. Instead of getting the women from the nightclubs, they prefer to get women through other contacts such as ship chandlers. Sometimes the shipping agents are the ones who contact the sex workers for these officers.

4.3.5 Transporting for Sex: The Taxi Drivers

The last enabling element, which has an important role within the red light district, is the private taxi drivers. The taxi is part of this local economic system. They have an economic ‘relationship’ with the sex workers. These taxis are not registered as such but rather are all private vehicles that cater only to seafarers. The drivers queue up outside the Harmony Club. They seem to be good friends among themselves and have an organized system. Sex workers are ‘obligated’ by the drivers to make use of these taxis instead of letting them hail normal cabs. Everyone is compelled to follow the unwritten taxi rules. These taxis provide transport for seafarers when they go back to their ships, even to port Cubatão, the farthest port. They normally charge in US dollars, which is much higher than the local taxi fare.

The exclusivity of the business of the taxi drivers is shown by the rift between them and the drivers of the seamen’s mission. These drivers feel that the free transport offered by the seamen’s mission competes with their business. I did not make much contact with the drivers during my fieldwork except during the occasion that I took their taxi home⁴. It felt quite uncomfortable to engage with them. They had their own

⁴ I talked to some of them when I was riding in their taxi. They always thought that I was a Filipino seafarer.

‘social group’, which I felt was difficult to ‘penetrate’. I was never an ‘insider’ in their group simply because my objectives did not fit theirs. I do not see the drivers enter the clubs. They just stay outside and play cards among themselves while they wait for the seafarer customers. I surmise that it was a good decision not to get myself involved with them. I had a hunch that they have a notion that I am a part of the seamen’s mission. I thought, however, that they could have provided information for my research based on their interactions with seafarers as they brought them to their ships or to hotels and motels.

4.4 *Boate: Spaces of Leisure, Pleasure and Fantasy*

The nightclub is structured in a manner similar to other entertainment establishments of similar type such as go-go bars or strip clubs (Trautner, 2005; Ratliff, 2003). Upon entry, one is greeted by a spacious main area. There are many tables and chairs. More than enough number of chairs surrounds the tables to fit a group of seafarers as going to the club is normally a collective behaviour. There remain many unoccupied places with only an average of thirty to seventy sex workers per night and fifty to two hundred seafarer patrons on the average.

On two connected sides of the club are long bars with an array of drinks on shelves mounted on the wall. A cashier stays at the corner of these bars. There is a row of stools on one side. These stools emphasize an individual sojourn to the club for those who prefer to go alone. This is also one way for some individuals not be bothered by the women. It provides an affirmation of being alone unless otherwise caught gazing by the women.

The club has a straightforward arrangement. There is a dance floor in the middle, a karaoke room towards the rear, toilets for men and women, and a kitchen where food orders are prepared. Only the bars and kitchen are the areas where patrons are not allowed access. By the dance floor is the stereo system with big speakers where a disk jockey plays the music. It is only Harmony Club that has a dance floor and is quite sprawling compared with other clubs in the red light district. Other clubs are quite understated in the way they position themselves within the red light district.

They seem to project that they have their own turf and their own patrons and would not compete with the biggest club.

Unlike a typical nightclub, Harmony Club has no private room for women where they can prepare themselves for work, keep their things, and change their clothes. This is a manifestation of the policy of the club where no sex workers are employed by the establishment consistent with the state policy of Brazil where sex work is not professionally managed. Managing women is seen as falling under the definition of illegal prostitution, sex slavery and women trafficking. The same rationale is used for the noticeable absence of dancers and stage inside the club as there are no shows or performances like in many go-go bars in other countries. Technically, all sex workers in the club are freelancers.

Inside the nightclub it is a bit dim. Many clubs are fashioned in a similar way as this creates intimate social spaces conducive for socioerotic behaviour away from the visibility of the public. There is the constant presence of a male guard in civilian uniform who opens and closes the door for everyone thus providing the 'partition' and 'controlling' the entry with a degree of limitation. This separates those who are insiders and within the fraternity of patrons from outsiders. The subdued lighting inside keeps its private atmosphere from outside onlookers.

There are no private rooms, couches, and very dark areas within the club. The absence of these private spaces discourages patrons and women from engaging in illicit sexual activities. Even the karaoke room is enclosed only with glass allowing others to see from outside keeping it less private.

[Harmony Club] has one room for singing karaoke... it is enclosed in glass so as not to let the noise outside be heard. You still can see the bigger part of the club from inside. A karaoke bar in Brazil is quite interesting. I thought that this was really meant for Filipino seafarers being karaoke lovers. The program they use for karaoke is actually from the Philippines. When we entered, there were women at the karaoke room together with seafarers who were all Filipinos (probably only Filipinos enter this room). (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 12 September 2007)

The room is well-lit compared to the main area as they have to read song lyrics.

Seafarer patrons and women can belt out their songs in this room. This is another facility of the nightclub which provides pleasure and fun to the patrons who love singing.

On one of the tables, there was one woman who was a good singer. She looked like she was 22 years old. She was singing some English songs. She sang one Tagalog song to the amusement of the seafarers. After a good song, the men clapped for her good rendition. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)

In structuring the room and other areas of the club, there is a sense of transparency and deliberate attempt by the owners to discourage sexual activities at least within its confines. They simply want patrons to enjoy the place together with the women. This is to play safe with the law and not to have the club known to be a sex den.

As the dance area is in the centre of the club, they become the central focus of everyone inside. The dance floor takes the place of a stage with dancers as performers. Sometimes men would show off their dancing skills to an amused audience. The dance floor becomes a public space for personal expression. There were groups of women swaying to the music, performing dance moves that were sexually charged and suggestive. It was as if they were drawing the attention of men. It was an initiation towards the production of pleasure and feeding their audience a sense of consumable fantasy.

The popular Harmony Club maybe referred to as an institution among many seafarers. Even prior to my research, everywhere I went I would hear about the nightclub from many seafarers I met. Its fame is attributed to its existence for more than forty years now⁵. Its having survived for a considerable period of time provides a good name recall to many seafarers.

Second Engineer 16: *[Harmony Club] has been there for a long time. Ever since I have been travelling to Brazil I already heard about it. Ever since I have been coming here, it was already called [Harmony Club].*

Interviewer: *So even before you became a seaman you have heard of [Harmony Club]?*

⁵ Harmony Bar has outlived many other clubs in the area catering to seafarers. Some of these clubs according to many seafarers were called Manila Bar, Love Story, etc.

Second Engineer 16: *Even before I haven't been to South America I have been hearing about Harmony [Club] already. It is famous for a long time now.*

Seafarers start going to the nightclub in the middle of the night after they have finished their duties. Daytime workers, such as the cook and the steward, go to the club much earlier. The establishment starts to be busy after eight in the evening. Seafarers start drinking at ten, and then negotiations start. Negotiations peak and end at midnight, although they can go to the hotels anytime. At four the nightclub closes. The seafarers then move to the small club-restaurants beside or the food stalls to eat. Others stay at these places because they wait for their crew members who went out with women. Before six in the morning they are on their way back to their ships.

Let me give a general description of these clients. The distribution in terms of nationality somewhat follows the global population of seafarers. Many clients are Filipino seafarers comprising more or less fifty-percent every night. This is followed by Eastern Europeans (such as Polish, Ukrainians, Romanians, etc.), Greeks, Chinese, Germans, and Indians. There were a number of Chileans and Brazilians. The presence of Germans is high because of the many German ships visiting the port. It was quite rare to encounter British, Japanese, Koreans, Irish, and American seafarers though I met some of them in the seamen's mission.

The distribution would be skewed if ships crewed by the same nationality visited such as a few times by ships with a crew of all Kiribati, all Iranians, all Indonesians and all Burmese. Many of these seafarers would come from the seamen's mission except for Indians, Chinese and those from the Middle East Moslem countries. In general, I learned during casual conversations that Chinese avoid the nightclub because of the expense, Indians because they look at the place as immoral and Moslem seafarers because of alcohol.

In terms of position, there are more ratings frequenting the club than officers. As ranks go higher, there is a lesser likelihood to encounter them. There are three practical reasons why. One is many of these ratings are daytime workers so during the evening they are free to go on shore leave. The other is that officers are busy doing paperwork thus they are obliged to stay onboard to do their work. This holds

true with engaging with women and having sex with them. Lastly, this might be a function of number as there are substantially more ratings than officers.

There are some aspects of the nightclubs that are somewhat out of synch with that of the locally observed culture. It is open the whole year round even during the Christian and Moslem holidays. It is the only establishment that opens for business everyday unlike the rest of the city which follows a Christian week. During the day, the area is quiet. Women sex workers and other nightclub staff rest at daytime having worked until early morning or sometimes even after the sun has risen. There are no clients during the day because seafarers are busy working onboard. Ship work follows daytime work cycle when berthed at port.

While the rest of the clubs are closed, Harmony Club starts to open in the afternoon without the presence of sex workers. It runs a limited business for regular drinking and eating. It is open to be a work hub for sex workers and other employees who work as ship chandlers during the day. The three Portuguese owners are in the premises during the day. They leave before the club officially opens at eight in the evening. This is when the women come in and the disco music starts. As the night gets deeper, the music in the club also gets louder. Its social distance from the other parts of the city allows the establishment to continue its merriment as it would not be a nuisance to the residents.

Nightclubs are legitimate businesses in Brazil. Locally, the city government takes a positive approach in letting these types of businesses thrive by providing social services such as a social hygiene clinic for the sex workers and police patrol for the vicinity. By virtue of these city services, the city recognizes these establishments regardless of the reputation it sometimes brings. According to locals I met, it is a gesture of the local administration to welcome foreigners to their city. Realizing that the city and country earn a lot of revenue from the port, allowing this social space for leisure and pleasure for foreign seafarers shows their hospitality. To some extent, these venues are not a source of nuisance for the city compared to the other red light district. There is minimal violence occurring in these clubs due to the professional nature of the seafaring patrons.

4.5 Risky Places, Hazardous Spaces

After a considerable number of visits to the nightclubs, I started to see various patterns of how the red light district is perceived by the seafarers. Their experience and the stories they heard provided them with a certain way of thinking of the area. One of these is the idea that the red light district is risky. I emphasize this understanding in this section, as I will argue later on that this perception has a bearing on their risk taking behaviour. I will discuss the three main points gathered under this theme.

4.5.1 A Treacherous Zone

The neighbourhood where the red light district is located may be characterised as unsafe. One will have an impression of danger when walking around the area given the seeming neglect of the locals. It is part of the old city centre and commercial district. It used to be the business area when the port was in its heyday. Now, the centre of the city has moved and left the area to disarray and decay with the infrastructures run-down and dilapidated. Buildings are abandoned and left without maintenance. Some seem to be occupied and used as decrepit residences. The development of Santos moved away from this area leaving behind only businesses related to the port. The infrastructures where the clubs are located are former shipping and trading offices of which have become derelict.

To provide a bleaker picture of the area, a block away from the nightclubs is a cemetery. There is a big old grain storage facility nearby. Most of the alleys towards the direction of the city away from the port are dark. I have heard many stories about seafarers and seamen's mission staff being mugged in the darker and inner streets. All incidents involved assaults by two or more persons. During the entire fieldwork, one of the drivers of the seamen's mission was mugged and two seafarers were held up. I never dared to wander around simply because the place looked treacherous particularly at night. Fortunately, there was a bus stop right in front of the clubs where I can get off or hop on to go home anytime of the night. The presence of the headquarters of port police near the clubs provided me a sense of security particularly

at night and early morning. By the clubs is a weighing facility for cargo trucks. This is the reason why there are many trucks parked within the vicinity as they wait for their turn to get weighed.

I have noticed and heard that seafarers never venture away from the red light district. They are even discouraged to go to nearby back alleys. They are forewarned about the place by colleagues and the women. The sex workers capitalize on the bad reputation of the place by using it to threaten seafarers they do not like. I have heard angry women telling seafarers that they will ask their criminal friends lurking at the dark alleys to assault them. This is one approach used by sex workers to make their seafarer clients loyal to them.

I myself had one occasion when I was threatened in a similar manner when I had a misunderstanding with one of the sex workers. It will be gleaned further that this socially constructed 'fear' will bear on the 'relationship' between the seafarers and the sex workers where the latter will take on the role of 'protector'. Such bad portrayal of the area makes the clubs the only safe enclave for the seafarers. It is one spot outside the port where they are safe. Thus the safest option is sometimes the only option.

Since the red light district is just across the port and the main road, it is easy for seafarers to walk to the clubs from their ships. The main road which is parallel to the port provides a safe way to go to the nightclubs. The immediate area is also well-lit making it safe for seafarers to navigate their way back to their ships. The only downside with walking is that there are few people in the area making one feel unsafe.

4.5.2 Mafia Phenomenon

Related to the stories about the area are the stories inside the nightclub. The word *mafia* is a word often heard from both seafarers and sex workers within. This would pertain to any illegal and unacceptable organized activities carried out in the club to the disadvantage of the seafarers. They will call the organization of private taxis as a *mafia* since everyone has to get the queuing taxi outside. These taxis ask for a higher tariff. Some tag the clubs as another *mafia* since they apparently bribe the police with protection money to allow nude dancing once in a while.

I introduced the word *mafia* in the light of seafarers avoiding trouble and conflict. They have a perception of *risk* of the area, which affects their behaviour in port. This *risk aversion* or *conflict avoidance* makes seafarers quite submissive to the demands of the women. This was mentioned many times in the interviews.

[T]hey want to avoid conflicts and trouble [in port] especially when there are those who request for such favours (sex workers who try to be romantic to get customers). Seafarers think—I will just give [money] and give in so that there will be no trouble. If I get into trouble it will affect my work. If something wrong or not good happens, I might be picked up by the authorities. (Second Engineer 16)

This is one reason why seafarers act with extreme caution when in port particularly if they engage in drinking and getting women. They have this belief that everyone in port is involved in some organized criminality.

Everyone uses the term *mafia* to refer to the generalized perception of organized offensive activity. Seafarers avoid getting into trouble because they do not want to be interrogated by the police once reported. This will delay their ship, which their company will not like. They can also be left behind which is not an acceptable predicament. The only way out once one is caught is by paying bribe, which is what they believe the police are waiting for in cahoots with the women. Once they cause trouble to the schedule of the ship it will be written on record and will jeopardize their ability to get another job in the future.

4.5.3 The Drug Menace

Another problem that seafarers encounter which makes them think that they have to be careful in the port and the red light district is drugs. Santos, being the biggest port in the region, is being used as take off point for drugs to be smuggled to other countries through ships (Dominguez, 2010; Gillespie and McBride, 1997). It was not surprising that one of my findings while inside the club is the presence of drug dealers and pushers befriending seafarers who patronize the club. Many seafarers are also befriended by some sex workers and local men cooperating with illegal drug distributors who persuade them to become drug mules and bring cocaine to Europe or

North America onboard their ships. They are provided monetary incentives to do this. Since the clubs are the only places where one can find many seafarers and can mingle with them, this is the most logical place for this operation.

I interviewed a number of seafarers who were provided drugs in the club for their personal consumption. Some sex workers are rumored to be drug users which explain unusual behaviors when I see them every now and then. Sometimes sex workers provide the drugs to the seafarers either for money or for them to agree to smuggle drugs onboard. This drug smuggling is known to the police, thus the regular monitoring of the place. I myself have been befriended by a sex worker and a Filipino who have been living in Brazil for decades now. They alluded to some assistance from me to persuade seafarers to do 'something' for them. I was promised cash if I introduce individuals to them. What I heard from stories is that they have contacts in other ports like in Europe and the USA who will pick the drugs up from the seafarer mules.

It can be surmised that all the risk presented, that apparently springs from a number of elements from within the nightclub, create a scenario that moulds the behaviour of the seafarers while patronizing the place. These risks become a bargaining element used by the sex workers in the power dynamics with their clients providing us a unique insight into the relations. The behaviour of the seafarers towards these risks is hinged on taking good care of their jobs and not jeopardizing their future. Despite the notions of leisure, pleasure and fantasy, everyone within the social space is cognizant of the risk that hovers around. This is on top of the risk created by HIV/AIDS. It thus becomes interesting to place within the equation the increasing importance of real risk and how it affects the satisfaction of bottled-up sexual desires and longings for physical and emotional intimacy of workingmen onboard. Later on we will learn that even their sexual and risk-taking behaviour are products of this perception of risk. This will be explored further as I discuss the different social dynamics that would transpire within the confines of the nightclub and the hotel rooms in the succeeding chapters.

4.6 Positionality and Corporeality within the Barscape

Understanding the barscape from the position of a researcher embedded within is a perspective that needs critical scrutiny. Positionality of the researcher has a bearing on the outcome of the accounts in the field (Chavez, 2008; Sultana, 2007) thus it is necessary to provide this discussion to complement the perspectives presented in the previous sections.

Conducting research on the sexual behaviour of a group of clients and their interactions with sex workers is one of the most challenging studies one can venture into particularly within the confines of nightclubs. Prostitution is a controversial human activity since it involves many debatable issues such as rights, agency, will, choice, power, etc. (Scoular, 2004; Harcourt and Donovan, 2005; Outshoorn, 2005). Similar to other studies, mine encountered similar concerns. I faced a lot of challenges as I went through my data gathering as alluded to in Chapter 2 and further explained in Chapter 9. To some extent it was exciting, yet in hindsight it was dangerous and risky. Thus, any study that would involve prostitution, drugs and marginalized groups in a foreign country would always be treated with caution. There are many safety concerns that one has to face on a daily basis. The issues I faced as a researcher were predominantly relational. I would categorize these into interactions according to the various players I came into contact with in the nightclubs—the seafarers, sex workers, and nightclub staff, and the local population.

I always came off as a puzzle surprise to any seafarer I met during the fieldwork. I always introduced myself as a student conducting research on seafarers. Since I was affiliated to the local university as a visiting scholar, I also wore the feather of a local student in my cap. Based on what I heard, it always dawned on the seafarers—‘what on Earth is this Filipino student doing in Brazil?’ Is he really a student or is he a seafarer? This preliminary impression of seafarers sometimes becomes an issue in the study. Thus, it takes some time before I can talk sensibly to any seafarer as doubt lingers for a while. I take time to provide an impression and to gain their trust. In the nightclub, they show some distance initially.

One of the challenges of doing observations in the club is the fast turnover of seafarers. Unlike in other ethnographies where the population is permanent, in my

field setting seafarers come and go. This required a faster pace of gaining trust because most of these seafarers will leave for their ships later on. On the other hand, the sex workers remain thus I was able to establish more stable friendship with the women.

Distrust of the seafarers on me as a person is always marked during the initial meeting. They always have a notion that I am a Filipino seafarer who jumped ship. Sometimes they 'force' me to tell them the 'truth' that I am a seafarer. There are others who remain sceptical. Fortunately, many would accord me their trust later on. Others who learn that I am a medical doctor would wonder further. They get confused what exactly I am doing in the nightclubs at night. Some seafarers thought of me as a journalist. In fact, some of them begged that I do not write their life stories discussed during conversations because friends and family might get to read them alluding to the notion that patronizing the clubs and engaging with the women is not good for their reputation and their relationships back home. Sometimes I became a convenient victim such as when one seafarer who was seated beside me (and a sex worker on his other side) started to make passes on me getting me confused of his sexual preference.

Sex workers would probably be the most difficult group I had to deal with within the barscape. Since a majority of them are freelancers and are not employed by the clubs, and many of them just come and go, I had no opportunity to either introduce myself to everyone or mingle with them. Though the word spread around to most of the women that I am a local research student conducting research because my permanence in the clubs was very obvious. I ended up hanging around with the same crowd of sex workers who are regulars since there seems to be cliques among them. Sticking to one group normally means being unable to join the other groups. This would result in jealousy and trouble to myself in the long run.

My first few days elicited curiosity among the sex workers particularly among those who keep on seeing me around. They had these questioning looks whenever they saw me. Everyone learned about me since I told the women I was hanging around with. These quizzical looks stem from the fact that I am a Filipino, yet I am not a seafarer. Neither did they expect a Filipino student studying in Brazil and 'researching' in the

clubs.

Bia asked me what exactly my name is. I told her my long full name. She said that I should show her my ID. I said that I do not have an ID because I did not want to lose it whenever I go out⁶. She insisted and asked what would happen if I have no ID and I meet an accident. I said that would be alright I suppose. I told her that I do not see any problem with that as long as I have with me the address of the house where I live. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 17 September 2007)

Having a number of friends among the sex workers and staff of the club was quite handy. It made the fieldwork convenient because I felt more confident in approaching them as I wrote on my fieldnotes:

There is now ease for me to enter the club since many of them know me. I do not feel like an outsider anymore. I can just easily laugh with them. Whenever I enter the club, it just comes naturally. I can easily say hi... There is this woman Erica who I know. Whenever I go in I normally greet with kissing the cheek which shows that I am already a permanent fixture. Some who are not close to me probably recognize my face. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 17 September 2007)

Having close friendships with the women is helpful as they would assist me in many different ways with the study. They would invite me to the tables of the seafarers so I can talk to them and listen to their stories. Bia was specifically helpful as she did this to me many times:

Bia has been helpful during the fieldwork because she would introduce me to her seafarer friends or ask me to join her on the table with the seafarers. This is one way of getting to converse with them. It normally becomes a tandem act and mutual relationship approach—if I am already in a group of seafarers I would introduce her to them thus getting potential clients. If she is already in a group she would call me. She learned my spiel that I am Filipino and a student studying seafarers. She also tells them that I am her bestfriend. Sometimes she would do the recruitment of seafarers for me to talk to. She would even encourage me to stay with the seafarer until I get a lot of information. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 17 September 2007)

This convenience however sometimes soured for a number of reasons. There were

⁶ Whenever I go to the nightclub in the evenings I normally do not bring many things particularly valuables. I just bring some money for food, drinks and transportation and my recorder to orally record my observations for the night upon stepping inside the bus on my way home.

sex workers who thought of me as a potential client. There were many insinuations that I should have sex with them. Others even went to offer themselves for free. Some hinted at relationships. I did not really ask the motivation behind this interest. What I felt however was that they looked at me being similar to a seafarer. Some of them would be very touchy too.

Jealousy among the women sometimes got in the way. Since I was supposed to be the bestfriend of Bia, she would not like it that I mingled with other women that she did not know. It was not because she was interested with me romantically, but because of her interest in using me for other purposes. Since she started another nightclub she wanted me to bring seafarers there knowing that I come from the seamen's mission where I go with seafarers to the red light district. To keep me away from the other women, she would advice me that I should not have any relationship with any woman because I am educated and that they are not. When I do not give attention to her, she would get angry and treat me coldly. This is what I was trying to avoid since my fieldwork would be jeopardized if such things happened. As Bia had the strongest personality in the club she normally would shield me from others who wanted to introduce me to some forms of business, like a separate club or drug smuggling, or from other women who want to use me as a means to get clients.

As I stayed longer in the nightclub the owners and staff thought that I would be a good asset for them. Eventually, they could not resist offering me a job.

There were many stories circulating around that people know me. I was a bit surprised with it. Then eventually a woman came. She said, "Hi! How are you? Where are you from?" I said, "Oh I'm from the Philippines." "You live in Santos?" "I'm a student at the Catholic University of Santos". And I said, "yeah". "The owner would like to talk to you if you want a job." "Why do you ask?" "What kind of job?" It was public relations with the seafarers. I had to bring seafarers and assist them in the club. Well it was not really like I was looking for a job. I felt a little bit uneasy about it. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 19 September 2007)

Actually, the offer made me think. I told myself that I just cannot do that. I would be in a precarious situation because I am not supposed to be working in Brazil. The offer made me think harder as I did not want to offend people. I thought:

It came to a point that...it becomes very difficult to understand knowing that all these people are interested in getting me doing something for them. Probably I should just establish that I do not want. I'm getting out of the focus of my research. I don't want to be affected by these since I don't want things to be compromised in the long run. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 19 September 2007)

Such predicaments provided additional burden and stress on top of the ethical issues I had to grapple with on a daily basis. Another example of a dilemma was with money and resources as my generosity was sometimes abused. Some sex workers would sometimes borrow money from me from small to big amounts depicting some of my social dynamics with the sex workers.

I ...[was by] the dance floor when Bia came to me...to ask for 10 Reais...I was looking for money and there was no 10. I had 20 and eventually I had an inkling to give her 10 so I told her to give me change. Good that she gave me 5 dollars and one Reais back and then she tenderly hit my head after that as a gesture of thanks. Hopefully I pacified her as she was angry at me the past days. Did it pacify her? Uhm I don't know? I thought that probably wasting money is part of the job. I hope this is not a permanent thing in the long run like borrowing and everything. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 19 September 2007)

It was not really a problem for me to treat sex workers to a few snacks or drinks once in awhile as I would do to keep conversations. However, I felt like some of them were already taking advantage. It was difficult because I did not want to offend them if I said no. Yet I wanted to keep the friendships going. All these problems that come on a daily basis keep me on my toes. As I told myself one time:

I just have to continue working probably more with caution. How the hell should I stop rumours? I think the best is just to be consistent in everything that I do. That it's nothing more. I make friends. If they want to make business, fine. So that's basically the dilemma currently. These are...the glitches of ethnography wherein one becomes embroiled in. You are in a situation where you are not an insider but you are very much involved...which I don't understand. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 19 September 2007)

When it comes to my positionality in terms of relating with the other individuals within the red light district, the kind of interactions I developed with the people within the peripheral community of the clubs is reflected by the degree of my involvement in their activities. There were occasions where I felt I was part of their group when I

was invited to join the regular *churrasco* they organized. As a Brazilian tradition, barbecues are held during the weekends where everyone working within the community was invited. They collected 10 Brazilian Reais to cover the food expenses. I considered such occasions as gauges towards my state of being 'within' the group and my continued acceptance as an 'insider'. I thought that my physical features, which I share with many seafarers mattered a lot in developing rapport with the group thus my being accepted. This has been elucidated by Feldman, Bell and Berger (2003: 39) on the issue of identity of the researcher wherein one's similarity and familiarity get the researcher more accepted, accorded more trust, and provided more information.

In conclusion, defining the barscape from the vantage point of a researcher adds a different perspective towards the place. As there is fluidity of the positionality of the researcher a better understanding of the site was achieved. This is how the various dynamics were understood as I experienced many aspects of the daily life within the clubs. I was also able to confirm my objective observations as I wore different hats allowing me to grasp the reality presented by the different situations as an insider rather than just being an outsider alluding to the debate of insider/outsider positionality (Chavez, 2008). I experienced with a deeper sense of feeling and meaning what the seafarers went through when they patronize the clubs and become clients such as risk and fear, fun with the women, sexual expression and freedom, hassling of women, etc. I will discuss this further in the next chapter through 'my socioerotic experience'.

4.7 Women in the Clubs: Alluring Nymphs and Green Girls

This study is about men who are clients of commercial sex workers. This is not a study about prostitution or about the women sex providers. However, as sexual risk taking involves these women who are part of the club, they warrant a critical discussion in this thesis.

Women sex workers in the port of Santos grew around the visits of international seafarers to the port. These sex workers address the socio-sexual needs of the

seafarers. As Trotter (2007) has noted about the prostitution in the port of Durban, “local women have been at the forefront of catering to the social, recreational, and sexual needs of these transients”. The same has happened in Santos, Brazil. The sex workers play the role in making the seafarers' stay in the city a pleasant experience.

There are an estimated two hundred sex workers in the area where I conducted my fieldwork. These women are all *Brazilieras* (Brazilian women). There were 1200 documented commercial sex workers in the City of Santos in 1994 although this number declined to 517 in 2006 due to the dwindling number of customers in port⁷. Mechanization of port work and containerization made dockworkers redundant (Beth, 1985). Many nightclubs closed down, although Harmony Club remained. The variety of women in terms of skin colour is one attraction of the club as it addresses the different interests of many of its patrons who come from different corners of the world and whose preferences vary.

Many of the sex workers come from poor family backgrounds and difficult living circumstances. Because of this, they gloss their present lives with successful stories and wonderful plans for the future. They project that this present situation is their choice and they are just waiting to earn and save and move on with other careers or businesses.

Most of the women are migrants from the other parts of Brazil mostly from the interior or rural areas. Some of these women come from other port cities where there are red light districts too. This establishes interconnected port-based social networks due to the mobility of the seafarers. The women become knowledgeable of other ports through information facilitating easy movement. Since many of them work in Santos they would maintain a room within the port area or the city. For convenience, even those from the city would rent rooms across the Harmony Club. The availability of these rooms makes the women's lives and work more convenient as they would just bring their clients to their rooms for sexual encounters.

This mobility of sex workers is not surprising since the reason for moving is the

⁷ These figures were derived from the data by a local NGO, *Associação Santista de Pesquisa, Prevenção e Educação* (ASSPE) – Santos Association for Research, Prevention and Education (2006).

search for economic opportunities. This demonstrates the changing pattern of sex work since many of the women are internal migrants and many of them seem to move to country borders including ports (Castillo, Gomez and Delgado, 1999) as part of the trend in prostitution. Many of them pointed out that opportunities to earn and the attraction to seafarer-patrons were the major motivations. Mobility of sex workers becomes an important factor in their ability to get seafarer clients and maintain them. They are quite adaptable in following the ships of their seafarers. They can easily adapt to the nature of the work of their customers. They have their own place near the port where they can also easily bring their clients for sex.

The women range in age from 18 to more than 35 years old according to the data of the Santos Association for Research, Prevention and Education (2006). Many women fall between ages 18 and 30 but still a significant percentage also come from the age range 30 to 35, and several are 36 or more until beyond 40s. There is a general perception that the quality of the women has deteriorated particularly among those who have frequented the nightclubs before. This wide age range is the reason for a number of complaints from many seafarers because of the observable presence of older women. There is also a general feeling that they have no choice in terms of nightclubs to visit and women to engage with.

The primary reason why many of these women venture into prostitution⁸ is because of economic reasons—mainly to earn good money. Other reasons become secondary—such as finding a boyfriend or husband or having children. Though some of them derive fun and pleasure from doing it, this fun is related more to the economic benefits that come with the job. Thus this relates to the term ‘libidinal economy’ referred to by Bennett (2010) which pertains to the intimate relationship between libido and money.

This economic dimension is one reason why they are referred to locally as ‘green girls’. This term alludes to the preference of the women to US dollars⁸ or green

⁸ Most transactions in the nightclub are in US dollars being the major currency brought by the international seafarers. As it has high acceptability and value, plus the convenience of not exchanging currencies, it became accepted as the currency in the port. Though the club also accept Brazilian Reais, all products and services offered by the nightclub and the sex workers are quoted in US dollars. This currency is what most seafarers carry as personal money wherever they go.

money. This currency enables the women to receive more than their counterpart sex workers catering to the local clientele who receive their pay in Brazilian Reais. Sex workers in Harmony Club receive more than other women in other jobs with the same or better educational background. Given their economic situation, it becomes an attractive proposition to work as commercial sex workers. As US dollars have higher value and there is constant flow of seafarer clients whole year round it is favourable to many women to work here.

Given that sex work is a profession, it maintains the lifestyle that some of the women have. At least ten women drive their own cars, which they normally park outside the clubs. They sometimes use these to ferry their seafarer-clients to the hotels or bring them to their ships. They would also use the cars to bring seafarers to other parts of the city. Some of them do not charge the seafarer for the transport.

The income⁹ that women get from their work enables them to buy nice clothes, have braces for their teeth, and buy make-up, perfumes and bling-blings. It is a means for them to manifest upward mobility in a society where sex work is derided. These tangible outward elements also project to their clients that they are successful women (not lowly prostitutes) and therefore clean. These elements give them pride and shape a certain form of identity.

Brazilian law does not look at sex work as illegal if the woman does it on her own volition. If there is coercion involved, the law sees it as a crime. This is when they term it *prostituição* (prostitution)¹⁰. Thus employment of sex workers by nightclubs can be seen as against the law since it can be construed as coercion. As women are

This is the currency they receive on board probably because of it being considered a universal currency (Mundell, 2005) and in turn became a norm in many ports of the world. US dollar provides a strong symbolism in the transactions as pointed out by Zelizer (1997). Given the higher value of the money, it is more favoured than transacting in local currency.

⁹ This income may also come from their businesses or other jobs such as being ship chandlers. There were rumours that some of them are into drug pushing. The differences in the success of the sex workers pushes some of the women to get into the drug business by encouraging some seafarers to become drug mules and bring illegal drugs to other countries thus putting the lives of some seafarers at risk.

¹⁰ Commercial sex work is legal in Brazil. It is keeping a brothel and receiving money from prostitution which is illegal. This is one reason why the clubs do not employ sex workers as purely sex workers. Sex workers can now receive pension from the government. Brazil protects the rights of sex workers thus providing them more visibility and respect. Stigma and prejudice still exist though (Crago, 2008: 25-26).

seen to do the job on their own will, they can simply come and go. The nature of their work is freelance. This is one reason why anybody can go in and out of the club.

Many among the sex workers have other jobs. Some of them work as ship chandlers in the port thus having two incomes from two different yet complementary jobs. Others would have multiple job combinations such as being bartenders or waitresses and sex work. Other sex workers would have daytime jobs within the city. Some enterprising sex workers who banded together have their own clubs and restaurants within the area; normally with assistance from their seafarer boyfriends. The number of women varies with the day of the week because a number of them have other jobs. More women come to the red light district during the weekends because of these other activities and preoccupations during weekdays.

The women I met almost everyday are those who work as ship chandlers or who work full time in the nightclub. The nightclubs are quite strategic in having a business hiring these ship chandlers. This allows them to advertise the nightclub as explained thus the continuous flow of customers. This becomes strategic because the women earn money from the business they have with the ships and earn income from sex work. This also translates into good income for the nightclubs.

There is exclusivity of sex workers to the seafaring clients within the port nightclubs. Martin (2003) categorised the local sex workers into four groups— (i) those who work in the clubs, (ii) those who ply their trade on the streets, (iii) those who work in prostitution houses, and (iv) those who provide sexual services from home. Those who work from home normally advertise through local papers or by word of mouth. They thus cater mostly to local clients though some seafarers tend to reach them too as information is passed on to them by former clients and since some of these women work as ship chandlers.

The differences in clientele evolved into niches of two distinct red light districts located in two different places—the one by the port catering to seafarers and the other one for locals. The women by the roads of the port can be considered a distinct entity too as they have a specific clientele of lorry drivers. I heard from many sex workers saying that the sex workers on the street are ‘dirty’ and ‘unhealthy’. True enough,

Santos Association for Research, Prevention and Education (2006) confirmed this through their data showing a higher proportion of women living with HIV/AIDS on the streets as compared to those in the nightclubs.

If sex workers would earn more from seafarers, why are majority of Santos sex workers not in the port nightclubs? This is because of some demands in catering to seafarers. One important factor is the ability to communicate with seafarers in the English language. This is difficult for the uneducated *Brazileiras* who speak only Portuguese. There is also the demand to know the seafaring culture; thus the more a sex worker is able to adapt to the seafarers the more successful she is in her profession. This makes the assimilation of the foreign cultures of the seafarers easier as women imbibe them faster and with interest making the nightclub a truly cosmopolitan environment.

Within the nightclub, friendship exists among some sex workers despite the fact that everyone competes with each other for customers. There are also pockets of friendships that exist. As I progressed with my observations I got to know some of these cliques. These women would normally sit together when waiting for customers to while away the time before the club officially declares itself open for the night. Some of these women share houses. One group is under the 'care' of a 'retired' sex worker who seems to be good in marketing her women.

There is an advantage having cliques within the club. It would mean taking care of each other and having a good business relationship within the workplace. A good friendship means not getting another woman's customer. It also means sharing of information about customers or boyfriends. They also refer their friends to other seafarers or invite them to her table and introduce them to her clients. It is also a form of security making one safe when there are rivalries and fights within the nightclub. Due to customer rivalry, it is common to have conflicts. Differences and falling out of friendships happen when there is transgression of unwritten rules such as getting the clients of a woman without her knowledge and consent.

It is common to hear sex workers having arguments about issues such as cheating on money, spreading rumours, misunderstandings, and many personal issues among

them. These result in animosity among the women as these cause rifts and divisions. Sometimes this would mean having verbal disagreements. It is also within this rivalry that women talk bad about the other women. They would say derogatory words about lack of manners, lack of education, bad breath or body odor or having many children. The worst that one can say about these women is that they have HIV. This is a way of turning off the seafaring client.

In general however, most of the women do not necessarily know each other, as there is no employer that binds them together. Even if they stay in one workplace their interactions would not be friendly because of the competition their work presents. Those without friends often sit alone while waiting for clients.

4.8 Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, I wanted to provide an over-all image of the red light district and the nightclubs by dissecting them into their smaller elements. Embedded in this description is a presentation of the social context of the phenomenon of sexual risk-taking. I wanted to scrutinize and understand the different fluid features that form the representation that I wanted my readers to understand, thus a *scape* (such as in seascape or landscape)—a *barscape* in particular. The red light district that I studied occupies a certain socio-political position within the bigger social organization of the port and the *urbanscape* of the city. The fact that it caters to foreigners over locals provides a distinct status thus its unique geographical setting.

The nightclubs are distinct social spaces within the context of the port as a bigger space for labour and production. These socioerotic spaces are built and established in alignment with the notions of sexuality and inconspicuousness of both the men and women placing into consideration morality and the demands for enactment of fantasies and the fulfilment of pleasure and leisure. Thus, these clubs are specific geographical entities with inherent uniqueness within the urban landscape where production and consumption of leisure and fantasy are central activities.

Dynamics within the red light district revolve around clubs being spaces of erotic

performance, consumption of leisure and pleasure, and enactment of fantasy. Despite the fact that the clubs remain within the ideological framework of prostitution and the political economy of nightclubs there are various nuances that exist beyond the simplified approach of economic transactions. It is a place where ‘strangers’ congregate, thus becoming a free place away from the shackles of social morality and mainstream sexual decorum. Its seeming separation from the larger society of the city makes performance of such behaviour unacceptable to others.

The port red light district is a self-contained economic community where the demands of the seafarer patrons are fully met without them going far away from the place during the shore leave. These elements present in the area are subsumed in making the port a fulfilling destination for global seafarers on break from work making it a unique and exclusive place adapted to their physical, personal, and social needs. The fact that all the needs of the seafarers are met in this zone, many seafarers are contented just to come here instead of going to the seamen’s mission or the city centre. As the place is sufficient, the seafarers may bypass the city and the seamen’s mission making the link to the source of risk narrowed and targeted. Sometimes, due to lack of time this is the best place to spend their shore leave.

The dynamic interplay of the different establishments surrounding the clubs creates the economic community that exists. It has made different forms of work viable making them thrive because of the regularity of ships docking at the port keeping the economic system stable and sustainable. A form of interdependence is developed among the different elements whose economic viability relies on the presence of the port and seafarers from abroad. This is one reason for the sustainability of the red light district, which has existed for many decades.

One of the unique functions of the economic zone cum red light district is being an information exchange hub. These port workers such as ship chandlers (and port sex workers) get their knowledge of the presence of ships by word of mouth. The seafarers who go to the clubs provide the information about their ships and the neighbouring ships. Ship chandlers also learn whether there are business opportunities on board such as being able to buy scrap or sell items onboard. Ship chandlers also provide information of the ships berthed at the port. Knowledge of

ships helps the sex workers monitor the presence of their friends, customers and boyfriends working in these ships. This is one aspect of the communication flow within this organization making the elements socially integrated. This plays an important role in the social dynamics of the sex workers and seafarers.

The red light district in the port did not germinate by itself. Seafarers and many of their needs created a demand upon the local society thus creating this social space in the port. These demands are products of many aspects of the working lives of seafarers from the forms of entertainment that they want, to the food that they long for and other personal wants that need to be addressed including sexual desires. The local society is able to adapt and address these needs which they are able to commodify and ascribe relatively better values thus one reason why catering solely for the seafaring sector becomes lucrative. As there is a steady stream of seafarers all the time, it sustains this localized economy which keeps them thriving. It is within this context that I try to understand the risk in the context of this study by linking my findings in this chapter to the macro-social and structural factors that shape the sex industry based on the analysis espoused by Hart and Carter (2000). The needs created by seafarers are effects dictated by the bigger structures of a global maritime industry and the global society it serves.

For example, globalisation, which plays a major part in shaping the maritime industry, casts a big shadow on the strong presence of red light districts in many ports of the world. These port red light districts have seafarers as exclusive clients and have histories of being created by the demand of the maritime workers. This reflects what Ward and Aral (2006) note that global changes such as in labour migration including those in the maritime sector have a major impact on the sex industry. They point out that the ‘economic, demographic, ideological, and technological’ developments are the ‘major drivers of change in the sex industry’ as manifested for example by increased global trade, product specializations of countries, efficiency and advancement in shipping technology and labour movement and migration. These processes increase opportunities and demand for commercial sex as individuals become highly mobile and travel more frequently. The details and processes of this demand were explicated from the data presented in this chapter as shown by the different needs expressed by the seafarers and the response of the local host

community of the red light district.

Economic and demographic factors also helped shape the social institution of prostitution presented in this chapter. As shown by the data, the motivations for many of the women observed and encountered in this study to move and to do sex work is hinged on an economic need based on poverty and inequality brought about by the position of local women and their lack of opportunities. There is a need for women to earn and their seafarer clients have disposable income that they can spend alluding to a gender dimension in the unequal transactions. Though the women in this study may not have been coerced or trafficked into sex work or may seem to be deprived, their general predicaments and the relative deprivation brought about by inequality led them to join this informal and unregulated emotional labour. Thus, we saw women using sex work as their secondary source of income. This demand is created on top of the demand created by men who are capable of paying.

Lastly, the desire industry presented in this chapter shows a dimension of class relations brought about by what Scambler (2007) described as ‘disorganized or global capitalism’ that fuels sex work given the desire of the women to avail of ‘fast cash’ (Agathangelou, 2004). Even if the women in the red light district of Santos have materially gained, as a manifestation of their desire to elevate themselves into the middle class, they remain as sex workers and continue to be exploited within a framework and ideology of capitalism and consumption. Within this gendered class divide, capitalism fuels this desire for wealth and property among women sex workers and invigorates consumption among men clients who can afford commodified sex and ‘detraditionalized intimacy’ as explained by Gross (2005).

In this chapter, though I focused mainly on the events in the barscape, it can be argued that social dynamics that transpired within are facets of a nexus of social structures that throw light of varying degrees of causal importance in shaping sex work. The next chapter will further dwell and will shed more light on how these social structures manifest in detailed socio-sexual interactions between the seafarers and sex workers.

Chapter 5

The Solicitation Process

In the nightclub, there are observable rule-governed practices that pertain to scheming for clients. In this research the solicitation process is the initial interaction that occurs between the seafarers and the sex workers in the nightclub. This is the preliminary step in the social-sexual interaction that becomes the basis for potential relationships that may occur (Oppermann, 1999), usually with an offer of sexual services in return for money (van der Veen, 2001; Frey and Schneider, 2000; Moffatt and Peters, 2004). In this chapter I will discuss solicitation process with the objective of identifying the elements that would contextualize the risks that seafarers face. I argue in this chapter that risk pervades in all the phases of the cycle of shore leave including the solicitation process. I will explicate these risks associated with the solicitation process and see how they are represented, perceived, negotiated and experienced. I will also identify and analyse possible factors that determine them. This chapter presents a prelude to other sexual interactions and possible relationship outcomes that will be the subject of succeeding chapters.

5.1 My Socioerotic Experience

I will preface my discussion of the solicitation process by relating my own experience of it inside the nightclub. I wish to relate it as this was the only moment when I was treated as a customer, which to some extent is seen as an advantage in an ethnographic approach (Labaree, 2002). It was the very first time I entered the club and hence I only had a vague idea of what the place was like. This was during my initial check of the fieldsite. Despite the fact that I was not yet on official fieldwork, on hindsight I was already observing. I was accompanied by two Brazilian friends inside.

When I was in the nightclub, I was conscious of the men and women surrounding me. I remember the club to be very busy when we entered. It was a bit dim. We sat on one of the tables and ordered *cerveza*. As I glanced around, there were many women and men. I had no idea who these people were though I made an assumption based on the known clientele of the establishment that most of the men are seafarers. Despite the loud music, my Brazilian friends and I still carried on with our animated conversation. They were talking mostly about the sex workers and prostitution in Brazil. Alcohol was starting to kick in our system.

There was one woman who kept on glancing at us. Despite the fact that her back was towards us she would deliberately face us and glance with a seductive smile. She kept on focusing on me—though I was avoiding her as I was interested more in observing the crowd. At first it was just simply glancing. Then she started throwing peanuts at me. After a while it was followed by tissue paper. Although she was with some men on her table, she seemed to be desperate in getting my attention. It looked like she had been with them for a long time now.

As she was not able to catch me glance back or smile at her, she started getting the attention of my two friends and started talking to them. After a few exchanges, she asked if we could fill her glass with beer from our table. We obliged to her request. Apparently she was interested for us to get her to sit with us. This was a signal for my friends to invite her and pull a joke on me—much to her delight. They told the woman that I was interested in her.

Without any hesitation she manoeuvred her chair and faced us. Then she placed her attention on me thinking that my friends were serious with what they said. They encouraged her to kiss me. I was quite hesitant despite her placing her lips near my face. I could smell alcohol. It was obvious that she was a bit drunk. She further tried to place her arms around me and got her protruding breasts to touch my body. I did not make it quite obvious that I was becoming uneasy and was trying to avoid her. The only thing she did which I did not say no to was when she asked me to dance with her. It was a good break from her aggressive advances.

On the dance floor she started to be inquisitive and touchy. I would admit that I was

surprised when she knew that I was a Filipino and started to speak to me with a mix of Tagalog and English words. She thought I was a seafarer and started asking me what ship I was with, how long we will be in the port, what my rank was, etc. She insisted that I take her for the night as my ‘girlfriend’ (exactly the word she used). Though I was not being affirmative, I did not say no so as not to offend her. I put up with this for the whole three minutes while the song was being played.

While we were on the dance floor, my friends decided to phone a close friend of theirs. This coloured Brazilian guy, Rodrigo, happens to work in the nearby port at this time of night. He is a security manager who is on a night shift to check on their men. He eventually came and sat with us. We exchanged pleasantries and introductions. I asked a few questions about his work and about the port. Rodrigo can be characterized as a typical Brazilian who can handle women with *gusto*. He made advances on the sex worker at our table when he noticed that I was already getting annoyed with her. Rodrigo came to my rescue as the willing customer. If I was being devoured earlier by the woman, this time it was him devouring her.

He played the game well. He kissed her passionately. He touched her breasts with both hands—to the shock of the woman. This time she was now pushing him away to no avail. Later on he started groping her in between her legs. This made the woman stand up and walk away. João and Luis had a hearty laugh. I just kept quiet. Disappointed, the sex worker left knowing that she is not getting the customer she wanted—not me at least who she had been eyeing earlier. She did not even get free drinks from us. The boys had their fun. They knew they put up a good show for me. After a few hours we left.

These events commenced my unusual entry to the nightclub. It presented a number of nuances and certain dynamics in the games played within this socioerotic space. It reminded me of Silverman (2005), who noted that there are two issues that a researcher should not neglect when he/she is physically present during data gathering—the things that one sees and hear and how the researcher is behaving and being treated. This brings me to a point raised by my supervisors who said that, since I am a male and I come from a seafaring country, there is a possibility that commercial sex workers might consider me as a potential client. This firsthand

experience of being a client provided me different insights into how women solicited customers. Obviously the sex worker was interested with me since she thought I was a seafarer and not a local—thus the reason for shunning away my Brazilian friends—not because they cannot pay but because as I explained in the previous chapters, the nightclub is a turf of the seafarers who are sought-after patrons.

In this situation, the woman provides an illustration of the early part of the solicitation process. She showed how she eyes a number of customers and tries to get their attention. This is the preliminary activity when eyeing for possible clients. We can already glean some aspects of gender and power relations within the dynamics. We can also see some elements of vulnerabilities among the sex workers and the seafarers which place them at risk. I will discuss these further as we go along.

5.2 Phases of the Solicitation Process

The solicitation process can be seen as a number of phases. Trotter (2009) sees this as a four-step process namely: attracting the attention of seafarers, maintaining it, solidifying a claim upon him, and negotiating a sexual contract. The solicitation process is characterized by manoeuvres to get the men to join the women, and eventually to be able to take them out to be their clients for the night. I borrow the same concept of Trotter (2009) and simplified this process into three phases: attracting seafarers, keeping the man, and outcome of solicitations.

5.2.1 Attracting Seafarers

Attracting seafarers comes in practically many ways and means. First it would be with how the women themselves dress, fix their hair, put on make up or spray on perfume. They project their image to look fresh. Either they put on heavy make up, colourful shades or bright colours on their faces. This helps in hiding the age for some of the more mature ones. They take time to fix their hair; sometimes with a wet-look to show how fresh they are. Dressing up is one of the most important features—normally short skirts and body-hugging and tight dresses with matching high-heeled shoes and shiny accessories. Some of them would have braces or

retainers on their teeth. These provide a certain social status in Brazil and thus would be seen as more impressive as they would not look to come from a poor background. The same is true with some women carrying car keys. As some of them own and drive cars, they would brandish their rattling bunch of keys to project a certain economic status to the customers. All these elements have the main objective of getting the attention of the seafaring clients by overemphasizing and sexualizing femininity, freshness and hygiene.

The sex workers would be dispersed all over the nightclub claiming specific spaces as their own for the night. The same space is normally occupied by the sex workers as these are places where they can easily catch clients since they are easily seen or they could easily have physical contact with. This is probably what Massey (1994: 168) refers to as the spatial organization of social relations or at least in this case the initiation of one. These women normally prioritize the tables by the bars where seafarers would frequent and those that lead towards the men's toilet. As Harmony Club is quite spacious with many tables around the place, there are pockets of unoccupied areas. There is always movement among these women from one area to another in different evenings as attendance differs. Since I have come to befriend a number of them, I also moved from one place to another. Normally these women would drink beer or just chat while waiting for customers. Waiting is not a passive activity but an active one.

Attracting seafarers may also come through various actions. The most common is throwing peanuts or tissue paper as happened to me. Dulay (2004: 34) also noted this in his study. This would make a seafarer turn his back and look at the woman. One time during my first few days in the nightclub when I was in the karaoke room one woman kept on looking at me. While I was singing she got hold of the microphone wire.

[S]he started pulling the wire of the microphone trying to tease me to go nearer to her. I just gave her a smile. She later kept on telling me in Tagalog words that I was 'suplado' and 'mayabang' (I think she meant snobbish) since I was not approaching her as I was singing. Eventually after my two songs I approached her and said hi. She introduced herself as Julianne. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)

Others would try to get one's attention on the dance floor. This happened to me several times while I was dancing with sex workers or with seafarers. The dance floor is a space where emotive and seductive actions can be easily expressed for purposes of attracting seafarers.

When I was on the dance floor, there was this woman who was dancing... She was...trying to tell me to dance with her. She said, "no it's only dance, no sex". It's either she [is really] inviting me to dance with her because she knew I [like] dancing nightly or she was initiating something else... But anyway I just didn't mind. I just kept on smiling and showing that I was enjoying.

(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 10 April 2008)

During desperate times when there are more women who have not met any customer for the night, touching and tapping the back of the men or asking for favours from the women and men in other tables would be more frequent. Sometimes they would ask their women friends to invite them to join their table. Or they would go to the table and pretend to ask questions from their friends as an entry manoeuvre to join the group.

[T]here were...women going to our table, starting some chats with their female friends, trying to ask for beer, or trying to ask for cigarette. These sex workers are doing all kinds of actions to attract attention.

(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 24 January 2008)

Asking for beer is commonly done by these women as a form of catching attention. Through this they also are able to get free drinks to while away the time while waiting for a customer. It also conveys the point that the reason why they ask for beer is because they are in the nightclub for business of which money is central in the economic transaction.

Whenever a woman catches the attention of a seafarer, she would follow it up by asking for beer. She will go near the seafarer and ask, "can I have one beer, please?" The seafarer would normally say, "why will I give you beer? I do not even know you?"...The...seafarers [know] how to say no to these women...[F]or example, Elisa came to ask one of the seafarers for a beer and he replied, "I do not have money for one beer. I have just been invited by these guys to come here. So I can't give you beer. If you want you can ask from them." So again, this woman...replied "you are stingy. You do not give me even just one beer".

(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 7 April 2008)

Whenever men would walk towards the toilet or pass by their tables, women would deliberately get their bodies to touch the passing men, or give them a flirtatious smile or wink. Sometimes they go directly to the seafarer and ask, ‘what ship are you from?’ as if asking a serious question with a serious face. This is a very typical (and important) question I hear from them which I will explain in a while.

The dance floor is another space inside the nightclub utilized by the women to attract men. They would normally dance alone or with their women friends projecting to the men that they are available thus they are not with someone of the opposite sex. They would show expressive movements trying to convey their sexual capabilities to the men. The dance floor is not typical of a go-go bar where women perform for the pleasure of the audience though there is some semblance with the use of the social space for a socio-erotic performance as shown by Ratliff (2003).



Figure 5.1: Busy dance floor of Harmony Club
Source: Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

There are also occasions when the *mamasan* (floor manager) does the entry manoeuvres to initiate conversation after which she would call on her sex worker to go to the table. This is the role of the mature Monica, the pimp inside the club. As she is conversant in a few languages such as Tagalog, she always manages a

conversation with the seafarers particularly the Filipinos.

I see at [Harmony Club] this woman who is [Monica]. She will ask you, 'Pare what is your ship?' She is a big woman and she is called Mommy by everyone. She is already old and she speaks Tagalog. She would ask, 'Pare where are you from?' 'I am from Batangas', she would answer and say she is also from there. (Second Cook 29)

Some women would resort to using bluffs to catch seafarers. It is common to hear them say, 'hey I know you, you were here before'. One time I caught one sex worker who assumed that she knows one seafarer which I found out later on that it was untrue.

[T]here was this woman who was looking for the Indonesian seafarer. She said that she is his girlfriend. We asked her if they already met and where they met. She did not answer but said that she is a girlfriend. When I asked the Indonesian seafarer, if she was his girlfriend, he said no since it is his first time in the nightclub. I believed the Indonesian as he was really serious that it was his first time and that he has not met anybody [yet]. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 24 January 2008)

Of course, it can also be said that these sex workers say these things either to catch attention of the man or due to that fact that they have met many men that she finds some of them similar.

During the fieldwork, I also became a means to attract the attention of the seafarers. As I have made many friends from among the sex workers and since I accompany seafarers from the seamen's mission, many of the women would ask me to ask the seafarers to allow them to join at their table. This happens when I sit with seafarers I know who I met at the seamen's mission or those I accompanied from the seamen's mission to the nightclub.

Sex workers would have a number of ways of scheming for prospective clients, from deliberately asking seafarers to become clients, from asking me for assistance, or from asking seafarers themselves to help them find a client as shown by the following situation:

[Karen and I] were discussing how we can approach this group of seafarers

so that she will have a boyfriend for the night. She specifically said that she is desperate to have one. This word 'boyfriend' actually means having a customer. Karen was trying to get the attention of this electrician. And so she kept calling him, "hey come here! electrician come here!" But the electrician was always gesturing and saying, "no, no, I am okay." He did not approach. So we just waited. After a while I said to him "hi, how are you?" He was not reacting to me. Probably he was thinking that I was a seafarer from another ship and that Karen was my girlfriend. Later on Karen got busy attracting the attention of another seafarer who passed by. He is a Second Mate. Karen told him, "hey, please find a boyfriend for me for tonight." He replied, "oh everyone is busy with their own women". (Actually there were only two women with them.) Karen said, "Oh I want to have a boyfriend from your group. Who would it be?" "Oh it is up to them," according to him.
(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 4 March 2008)

The ways to attract may vary, but the objective is the same—to get customers. In this process, as there are many men inside the club, attracting attention is not only towards one man. The sex worker would normally eye a number of seafarers until she catches one of them or one becomes receptive to her moves. This is one of the attributes of the job of these women as they are delimited by those who react to their moves. This would translate to lesser power as they are the ones who are chosen by the men and not the other way around.

On the part of the seafarers, normally they are not impervious to the enticing acts of the sex workers. They also try to observe the women within the club. They are aware of their gestures. As they have the last say in choosing a woman for the night, they can take time to search for the one that they like. The process of choosing starts upon entry to the club by observing the women inside.

Interviewer: *How do you choose the woman you are interested in the nightclub?*

Second Officer 13: *Upon entry [into the nightclub] you already know who you are interested in.*

These seafarers normally do not respond at once to any woman. They continue to assess them and would choose the one that catches their fancy. The assessment process, based on attractiveness, of choosing the sex worker they like is fully discussed in the Chapter 6. This assessment process goes hand in hand with assessing the cleanliness of the woman as explained in Chapter 8.

5.2.2 Keeping the Man

After a sex worker has caught the attention of a seafarer, maintaining that connection follows until it leads her to sit with the customer. While beside the seafarer there occurs another round of interactions with different goals—make the most money out of him, get him for the night for paid sex, or befriend the man so that he would go back to the club for her.

To keep the man under her spell, the woman executes a lot of physical contact as the length time of being together increases. There is touching, leaning of bodies or placing ones arm on the shoulder of the other. Every now and then kissing will be observed from among the couples.

Interviewer: *Do the women allow to be kissed?*

Oiler 39: *More than kissing. They even allow torrid French kissing.*

Interviewer: *With any customer?*

Oiler 39: *Yes, just with anybody.*

Mostly it is the woman who is more proactive. There is a lot of projection and expression of romantic innuendos. The actions of the women may or may not be reciprocated by the seafarers. They would do so when interested with the woman.

[S]he was busy with one seafarer... She would caress his head. Embrace him. Pat him. I think the seafarer felt a bit awkward with [the actions]. They seem to have been drinking for some time now. There were lots of beer glasses on the table. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)

While the woman is seated with the seafarers, there is an understanding that the woman can drink the beer or other alcohol that the seafarer orders. She is also allowed to share with the food on the table. Sometimes the woman asks permission or is offered if she can order her lady's drink or any other drinks and her own food. Once a woman has stayed with the seafarers on the table, they feel that she can ask for more. I would see women sharing her drinks and food with her friends in other tables. This enables the woman to declare her ownership of the man. This sense of ownership is continued with consistently talking to him, bringing him to the dance floor and showing romantic dance steps for the crowd to notice. She joins him in the

drinks and tries to be romantic with him through touches and caresses.

Women would make their presence amiable and pleasant. They would laugh at the jokes of the seafarers, constantly smile, and listen to the seafarers' stories with some embrace, pat and touch every now and then. When she has to order food or cigarettes outside, she would ask money from the seafarers.

One time, a beggar came by to ask for alms. The sex worker asked for money from the seafarer and she gave it to the beggar. These actions try to concretize a relationship between the two to show that the woman already has some influence on the man. The following incidents show other forms of expression of 'ownership':

Fabiana asked...one of the shoeshine boys who passed by to clean her shoes. She just ordinarily asked for it from the seafarer and he...gave 2 Reais to the boy to clean her shoes. Later on Fabiana ordered food. She also started feeding a stray dog from the food on the table. This happened even if there was no understanding that she would be sitting with us...outside the club.
(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 4 September 2007)

Sex workers try to seal an agreement that they have ties and are connected. As there is an allusion to a formation of a relationship this brings the interaction to a plane away from a purely economically-determined interaction. This elevation of the relationship to a level that goes beyond pure economic transaction puts the woman in a more advantageous position with respect to money later on.

When this whole process drags on and the woman has sat with the man for a number of hours she has to be aware of other women interested in him. There are other sex workers who are quite active in looking for clients who are already linked to some men. Normally, it is observed that one does not deal with somebody who is already linked to a man. Doing this would result in fights among women particularly if these women are not able to guard their men.

[This woman] is really proactive. She will be the one who would ...approach seafarers. This caused a problem with other women...because she would get other women's customers. And so this woman had a big fight... [T]hey had like a brawl—a physical fight happened. So she [became] a bit [un]popular [in the club] ... She would introduce herself and sit down without being invited

by the seafarers which other women apparently didn't like. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 24 January 2008)

Thus women try to keep a seafarer's focus away from the other women, talk bad about the women he glances at, and increase the frequency of caressing, touching and kissing. This makes body language an important element in the dynamics. Body movement are expressed in numerous ways showing how the interest toward each other is manifested. Close proximity with a lot of body contact would signify interest. Gaps would mean avoidance. With others, eye contact is an important way of communicating particularly in countries where there is no common language.

In Ukraine...[many] women [don't] speak English. Once you have an eye contact with the woman that's it. There is already an understanding. (Oiler 39)

She presents some authority and ownership by ordering the food and drinks for the group, beckons the waiters and waitresses in an overbearing manner and gives the payment and tips to the club staff to show her claim over the man. When she has to go to the toilet, she makes sure that her presence is felt and the space is occupied by leaving her things on the table or chair such as keys, beer bottle or cigarettes. She would always be guarding him like a property and a resource as shown by this incident with a generous captain:

This captain bought lady's drinks for the waitresses. He was showing off his generosity. [However,]...the woman with him, Racquel, learned about it. She was angry. She asked why he bought drinks for them. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 10 April 2008)

During these interactions, once a seafarer reciprocates to the acts of the woman, she starts to think that he likes her. This is what some of them assume. When seafarers buy them beer or lady's drink and even when singing with a woman during karaoke, they look at this as forms of interest. This gives her the idea that the seafarer likes her though of course this is not always the case thus resulting in misunderstandings later on.

Ines got irritated and angry at me simply because I sang with her in the videoke and gave her beer. Her expectation is that I will get her [which I did

not]. (**Chief Engineer 38**)

This expectation that a woman will be taken to provide sexual services for the night when a seafarer starts interacting with her is common.

When a woman remembers that she had had sex with a seafarer before (though many of them would forget because of the numerous customers they had) she would go right into keeping the man as a form renewal of their previous experience as shown by the following:

When she remembered that she had sex with this seafarer, she sat with him and started to be sweet to him. She [was]embracing him. She would kiss him and then they would kiss each other on the lips. This happened for a long time. They would even expose their tongues while kissing each other. Then it was easy for this woman to order drinks. It looked like it was convenient and easy for her to order food and drinks even without asking permission from the seafarers. There seems to be an understanding if a woman has sat for a long time. The seafarers would pay for the bills of the seafarers and the women.
(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 4 September 2007)

The fact that something happened to them before (whether she recalls or not) provides her extra sense of ownership of the man, thus cutting the time for the solicitation process. For other sex workers, they deliberately go at once to seducing the seafarer without too much inhibition as shown by the following words:

She was saying a lot of jokes—‘you wanna try having sex with me? I have a pussy’, and all such things...The [woman] was so open with many things. She would talk about jiggy-jiggy which is their word for sex. **(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 4 September 2007)**

The most blatant of all are the expressions and actions of some sex workers. They go far to keep their man through many sexual gestures with them as shown:

There were...Burmese [seafarers--] ...chief engineer,...OS and AB...in a mini makeshift restaurant. A woman approached them—apparently another sex worker [and] sat with them. [After a while] I saw that she was...trying to open her top [dress] thus exposing her breasts. She was sitting on top of the chief engineer and trying to put her ass on...his crotch. (Well he was not naked.) The men were attempting to open her blouse and trying to expose her breasts while the other man was trying to kiss her breasts. They were having a ‘trip’. That was an interesting part. Everything here is interesting.

(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 4 September 2007)

These events happened in an open place where many could see. The actions of the woman show how far some of them would go to keep the men. Obviously, alcohol played a role in diminishing the inhibitions of both men and the woman.

5.2.3 Outcome of Solicitation

Different results would come out from the solicitation process. As the sex worker continues to sit with the seafarer, there are many possibilities that could happen. The first of course is having sex with the seafarer which I will discuss extensively as this is the main point of the study. Let us first focus on the other expected outcomes.

Along the way the interest of the seafarer may wane as he learns many things about the woman. This will be shown by not responding to her questions, by gazing away from her, and by not reciprocating to her advances. When this happens, women would react unfavourably. She may shout at him or call him a snob. After a few attempts, the woman will not continue trying to get his attention and would just leave as this will be a waste of time for her.

One of the seafarers (OS) invited one woman to join us on our table. After a few minutes she left. So we asked him why she left. The OS said that, "Well she looks like she was getting bored. I thought she was the one I knew before that's why I invited her. But I was not sure if it was her that I met before. So I was not a bit conversant with her until she felt it and she left." **(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)**

It is not normally appealing to a sex worker when a seafarer becomes disinterested with her when she has been sitting with him for a long time. Even if she gets free drinks, food, and some money from the lady's drink, this will not be enough for a night's income. She would prefer getting money from sex with the seafarer. This is the reason why they are sometimes vocal in asking about the intentions of the seafarers so that they can move on to another man who would be more willing to be a customer. Though some sex workers would be very persistent as shown below:

As the night dragged on...[she] was joking more with them. I understood that

she wanted him to take her out. She wanted to have sex with him for a fee. But the seafarer was not in the mood to go with her. He was showing actions that he was not interested. He keeps on saying that he has to do his duty at 12 midnight. She insisted that her house is just outside. They do not have to go to a hotel [anymore]. And that it will be quick. The seafarer does not seem to be convinced. All the other friends were [pushing]him ... [H]e was not into it despite all the actions of the woman. She was kissing, embracing him all the time. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 30 January 2008)

Another possibility is that the sex worker will end up with another seafarer from the same table. Sex workers however are quite knowledgeable of their trade. She may continue to stay on the same table because she knows that, even at first seafarers are not interested; the effect of alcohol would change their decision. The role of alcohol and how it hampers the thinking process remains central in the risk-taking behaviour of seafarers.

One other reason why the solicitation process does not end in consummation of a sexual act is that the seafarer has to return to the ship to report for duty or use it as an alibi to excuse himself from having sexual transactions if he does not like the woman. This is an acceptable reason as sex workers are knowledgeable of the nature of the work of the seafarers. In this case, since a woman has stayed for some time with the seafarer he just gives her 10 to 20 USD to appease her. This is a smaller amount compared to the price for a sexual act. For some sex workers, this is not acceptable making them angry at the seafarer for not taking her to bed. This is how trouble ensues sometimes which normally involves badmouthing the seafarer to other women and to other seafarers.

Not being able to get the seafarer to bed during the first meeting is not the end of the encounter for those seafarers who stay longer in port. Normally sex workers coax the man to go back to the nightclub thus allowing continuity of their interactions the following day/s. As I have said a few times, the first woman who interacted with a seafarer has already placed a stamp of ownership. In this example, keeping the man continues:

This is the second night of the seafarer. Last night they were also there. He was just talking with Bia. He said he is shy. She was again doing those things to incite him to have sex with her like holding hands, touching and trying to

show him her house. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 17 September 2007)

The most positive of all the possible outcomes of the solicitation process is when seafarers agree to have sex. The woman can have one or more customers in one night thus providing her more income. Sex workers can manage to have sex with as many as four to eight men in one night, of course, at different periods. They can manage dealing with multiple clients in a night. The more clients, the more income they will get. It is amusing to see how seafarers react when the woman they just had sex with goes out with another man right after.

When there is an agreement that the seafarer is willing to pay the sex worker for the sexual act, she normally makes the suggestion or decision as to where to go since she knows the city quite well. It would either be in a per-hour hotel or the house of the sex worker. Payment normally comes after though it is not an easy discussion all the time as will be explained in Chapter 6. Sex workers do not normally ask for the money right away within the nightclub. They just assume that the seafarer has money to cover all the expenses from the taxi ride, to the room and the sexual act. In this nightclub there is no 'penalty fee' or 'bar fine' for the owner to take a woman out as practiced in other countries as the sex workers are not employees of the nightclub.

During occasions when seafarers do not agree to have sex with the sex workers, women employ different strategies to get what they want. For example, a woman deceived seafarers by asking them to accompany her to her rented room across the nightclub with the seafarer thinking that this is just an innocent walk. Unknowingly, seafarers do not know that this non-malicious walk becomes a trap for them to consent to have sex once inside the room.

[Sex workers] always invite these men to go to their 'cabinas'...[T]hat's what they normally do to lure them into sex...inside the cabin. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 5 April 2008)

I asked [the seafarer], "did you...have sex with [her] the other week when your ship came?" He said that she actually brought him to her house where they had sex for around 1 to 2 hours. He paid 50 USD. He was unaware that this was going to happen. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 4 September 2007)

In this situation, we see the various strategies employed by women and how far they will go, alluding to the power dynamics that animate their interaction. The situation also shows that the act of a man and a woman going out of the door of the club shows that the woman has an ownership of the man since everyone gets the idea that the reason why they are going out is that they already agreed to have sex. From then on other women are discouraged to pursue the man.

During the transactions, it came as a surprise for me when some women declined to have sex with some seafarers. This showed a certain dimension in the exercise of choice and power among sex workers. In this situation, the sex worker did not want to have sex as the man was drunk and also linked to another woman in the club.

Christiani is a sex worker who has been at the Harmony Club for a long time now. She was with a First Mate. They were negotiating whether to have sex or not. Christiani was not really interested because the seafarer is linked to a woman. He was also very, very drunk. She did not want to have sex with him. (Field Notes: Harmony Club, 1 April 2008)

Despite the fact that they are vendors understood to be selling goods regardless of the customers, there were a number of occasions I heard from these vendors (sex workers) wherein they declined to provide or sell services. Understandably, this would be more true within the economic system of a nightclub since the situation shows some rules observed by the service providers on top of the personal (bodily) dimension of the goods being sold.

Another reason for not being receptive to some offers is the choice of clients for some sex workers. Some of them seem to have preferences as exemplified by the following:

Today there were Iranian seafarers. They (sex workers) say that Iranian seafarers are stingy because they only pay \$30 for a number of days. So normally, they do not want to get these seafarers. They like [other nationalities] because they would pay more and are not stingy. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club: 17 September 2007)

Interviewer: *I noticed that Filipino seafarers are the favourite of the women here in Brazil. Why?*

Second Engineer 16: *Just like what everyone says, Filipino seafarers are gullible. Filipinos are different. They are very caring. That is what the women want especially in Brazil. That is what they want. They do not do that to Chinese seafarers; only to the Filipinos. Once the Brazilian women become romantic to them, the Filipinos easily fall.*

This shows, as mentioned a few times in this thesis, that women have preferences too on some occasions, though not necessarily practiced most of the time, providing us a glimpse of some of the nuances of the power dynamics between them and their seafarer clients. They know they are more popular with certain seafaring nationalities based on their skin colour—Asians prefer white women while some Europeans prefer the coloured ones. The same phenomenon was observed by Trotter (2009) in his study in the ports of Durban and Cape Town.

5.3 Dissecting the Elements of the Process

The outcome of the solicitation process is a function of various elements that come into play. The end result is a consequence of a number of these significant factors that were identified from the observations and interviews. I categorized them into a number of themes and I will discuss the five most common ones.

5.3.1 Temporal Element

During the early part of the solicitation process there are observed differences in the temporal manner women perform it. The tempo by which the process is done is based on the stay of seafarers in port. The quick pattern of solicitation is done for those whose ships stay for a short period of time. A faster tempo means getting the man to bed as quickly as possible and making the most money within that short time frame before he goes back to the ship and leaves the port. There is no expectation of any long-term relationship for this kind of ships.

This is to differentiate the other pattern meant for those who come from ships that

stay longer in port. There is more investment with time where the seafarer is not rushed. Earlier I mentioned that they are coaxed to come back the following day. Trotter (2009) made a distinct separation of this in his study by emphasizing that the time seafarers are in port determines what solicitation technique sex workers use. Thus it is important for the sex workers to know which ships the seafarers normally come from. For many of these sex workers, of who some are ship chandlers, familiarity with the ships is salient. This is what I meant by the importance of knowing the kind of ship the seafarers are in.

Having these two distinct patterns provides us an insight into the temporal dimension of the social and sexual transactions between the seafarers and the sex workers. This temporal aspect also determines the eventuality of possible relationships that would develop and the risk that comes with it. For sex workers, what is important with those who stay in port for a short while is to make the most money out of the seafarer in the context of a purely client-provider relationship and for those who stay longer to maximize benefit in the context of a romantic relationship.

For the seafarers, they are also cognizant of the temporal element of their stay in port. They know that if they do not have much time they go and get directly what they want as shown by the following conversation:

Interviewer: *How long do you spend time with a woman?*

Second Officer 13: *It depends whether I need to hurry or not.*

Interviewer: *What if you do not need to go home?*

Second Officer 13: *When you need to go back to the ship [it] would be fast.*

In another interesting incident in the seamen's mission, I met one rating who only had a few hours in port. He was very persistent to ask me if I know any woman he can have sex with.

This young rating was pushing me to introduce to him one woman in port he can engage sexually. Simply because I was inquisitive of his sexual behaviour he thought that I could introduce one to him. There was urgency in his demand. He said—"Do you know any woman I can have sex with? Please do give me one. I have a friend here. She is from San Francisco. But I cannot contact her. How can I make a phone call? I have to hurry up. We have very limited time. We are a cargo ship. We have to be back at 6pm. Can I use this

phone card to call locally?” (Fieldnotes: Seamen’s Mission, 5 September 2007)

I was inundated by many questions. He was persistent. As this was early in the mid-afternoon, there was no way that we could find a sex worker at this time. We took our chance at Harmony Club. It was open but only for the ship chandlers and for some staff who were preparing the club for the night’s business. This rating was quite pushy. He asked the manager if there was a woman available for sex. There was none. After staying for sometime over beer, the club eventually volunteered their day-time waitress. However, the rating had to pay a ‘penalty fee’ to bring the woman out of the club for sex. This is not normally practiced but since the woman was working during that time and she agreed to have sex with him with the consent of her managers, the seafarer had to pay the time that she would be out. He paid and they left to a nearby hotel. They came back after one hour. Satisfied and happy, the rating went back to his ship before six. He got what he wanted though in a very quick manner.

This incident is another illustration how solicitations adapt to the temporal changes within the industry. Behaviours tend to be influenced by different developments showing the adaptability of the individuals directly involved. This shows what Brown (1998) suggests that ‘values of time depend not only on their absolute length but on the nature and intensity of their qualities’.

5.3.2 Earning in the Process

While a woman is at a seafarers’ table, this is also her opportunity to earn some money in the process. Ordering lady’s drink is one. Since it is not the policy of the nightclub to employ sex workers normally they do not get income from the nightclub. They earn from the drinks that they order and get paid by the seafarers.

[T]he lady’s drink costs 13 BRL (Brazilian Reais). When the woman orders, she is given a coupon which she will reimburse later on. She will get 5 BRL from the 13 BRL paid. The club gets 8 BRL. (I thought that this was a rip-off because the drink is just a small glass of orange juice and these women do not get these drinks every 15 minutes but probably every hour or so. The club should give more to the women.) (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September

2007)

The more coupons (piece of paper) she receives the more cash equivalent she will get from Harmony Club. The longer she stays with the seafarers, there is a higher probability that she will receive more drinks. This is one reason why they normally avoid drinking beer offered by the seafarers. Aside from not earning from the beer, they also get drunk and so distracted from their focus: earning.

The OS (ordinary seaman) was asking her to have some beer. But she wouldn't drink from the beer ordered. I told them that usually you have to order lady's drinks for them. That is how it works. With that, the woman earns something from the drinks since it is expensive and you do not have to pay for her time being with her. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)

Lady's drinks, however, are not a major objective of the sex workers because income from it is very minimal compared to a paid sexual encounter with a seafarer. Their main goal in the constant interaction is to get seafarers to have sex with them. It is imperative for her to 'hook' the seafarer she sits with to get him to have sex with her. Other than lady's drinks, women also earn from pocketing the change from the ordered food, hassling money from the seafarers, and getting tips for staying by their side when sex does not occur.

She sat with us for like two hours or more that he felt obliged to give her money. He had a number of bills. There were a hundred dollars, new single dollars and two ten dollars. She was demanding that she be given one dollar and another one dollar until she ended up with three dollars. Then he gave ten USD. When she saw another 10 dollars she demanded that she get that 10 USD. Eventually she was given 20 USD. She was showing some anger. She said that, "oh you said you don't have money that is why you don't want to have sex with me. I think you just want to give your money to your girlfriend in Argentina that is why you are keeping your dollars. So you just keep it for her." She was pretending that she was angry. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 4 September 2007)

He eventually gave her money which is 20 dollars because they have been together on the table...flirting. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 10 April 2008)

In this occasion, sex workers push their luck in hassling for money. They are not normally shy particularly when they deal with Asian seafarers who are seen more as mild-mannered, approachable, and probably gullible.

5.3.3 Conversations

Conversations between the seafarers and sex workers during the solicitation process vary and cover many topics. They literally can talk about anything. I sat through and patiently listened to and joined conversations. Conversations are normally full of fun where everyone seems to enjoy particularly when under the influence of alcohol. It is easy for them to discuss work, family and other experiences. Conversations become animated and sometimes raucous when a number of seafarers share experiences. Whether women understand what the seafarers talk about, they perform the role of attentive listeners and audience. Their role is to make the seafarers feel that there is a sincere interest in them rather than just for money. The women know that these men need new faces to interact with.

You may only sit there and buy them a drink and they (women) will sit beside you, ...chit-chat, ...[and] talk. (Third Mate 41)

Stories are not normally centred on the sex worker. I did not hear many stories about the lives of sex workers being discussed except for a few occasions. When women are asked something about their lives, they would concoct stories about their past or why they are into sex work. Normally they would present a story where the men could sympathize at the same time balance it with stories of being a career woman with ambitions. They normally tell the seafarers that this is just a part-time job. According to some seafarers conversations about the personal lives of the seafarers are treated more as private conversations during intimate situations (which I unfortunately had no opportunity to join).

One topic that makes sex workers uneasy is when they talk about other women of the seafarers in other clubs and ports. They try to let the seafarer know that they want some form of loyalty from them. They look at other women of other clubs as competitors. They normally discourage seafarers from going to these other places. I

myself had an experience with this:

Last night we discussed about an issue with the sex workers. I told them that I wanted to go to [Sirena] (another club) to see the place. The women were really angry and they said, "Why do you have to go to [Sirena]? That is a rival organization." I joked, "because I heard that the women there are prettier than here." And they said, "No! Do not go to [Sirena] because they are different." (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 17 September 2007)

When it comes to conversations about the seafarers' wives and children, sex workers seem to encourage these stories. They become more inquisitive. Sometimes they ask for photos. This shows a form of acceptance making the seafarers feel more at ease when they can discuss their families freely to these women. It is a way for seafarers to get reassured that any relationship that may transpire between him and the sex worker will not interfere with his marriage or with his girlfriend back home making it easier for the seafarer to pull out anytime. The woman tries to show that she understands and accepts the situation making them more appealing thus facilitating a sexual transaction faster. This is another facet of the relationship between the two where reality is placed into consideration thus not necessarily affecting any transaction transpiring within the club because the men become less conscientious about their family lives given the way sex workers handle the matter.

5.3.4 Cultural Knowledge

As language is an integral part in the conversation between seafarers and sex workers, it is amazing how these women could carry conversations with the seafarers in the English language despite the fact that it is not commonly spoken in this country. Their mother tongue is Portuguese¹. Many of these Brazilian sex workers are not highly educated. English language seep into this localized group through their daily conversations with the seafarers. As these are adult learners, there is an extra effort exerted to learn it which Trotter (2009) calls a linguistic investment.

The facility of the language is however not on a fluent level making this cultural form

¹ Portuguese in Brazil is slightly different from that in Portugal. There are many words which are not shared and so as pronunciations. Many seafarers think that Portuguese is similar to Spanish thus many of them attempt to converse in Spanish with the women.

of exchange somewhat superficial. Thus there were many occasions that I had to translate discussions. The Portuguese I learned from my daily lessons helped in facilitating communication. Other languages used in the solicitation and communication were Tagalog and Chinese.

It seems that a lot of them speak Tagalog. They would once in a while say words in Tagalog. She would say, 'kumusta na kayo (how are you)?' She was desperate in trying to get the seafarers. Sometimes she would butt in the conversations. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)

We sat ourselves by one of the tables. Three tables were now occupied by mostly Filipinos. There were women on every table. When the women would talk to each other, they would speak Portuguese. But when they talk to their Filipino clients they speak English or a little Tagalog. In this room, I could hear a bit of the conversations from the other tables. The women would often talk to each other in a loud voice. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)

The sheer number of Filipino and Chinese seafarers who visit the port of Santos explains the knowledge of the language of these people. The ability to speak their languages becomes appealing because it is something seafarers consider very personal. It gives them a sense of home. It entices them too to the sex workers as it fascinates them. Together with language, the sex workers are able to make use of some cultural knowledge that goes with it. Here are some examples of jokes that women blurt out to Filipino seafarers to endear them:

'Ikaw silahis, ikaw silahis, ikaw bakla' (you are bisexual, you are bisexual and you are gay.) while pointing at the different seafarers. They usually joke about the masculinity of the Filipino seafarers in their own language. This is probably a reaction on some men who do not want to get any woman just to avoid her. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 30 January 2008)

'Ilokano ka ano?' (Are you Ilokano?) Alluding to the stereotype that Ilokano (people of the northern part of the Philippines) are stingy and are not generous with their money. This is related to those seafarers who do not buy drinks and bring the sex workers out for sex. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 30 January 2008)

Supot ka ano? ('Supot' means bag.) This means that the penis is not circumcised) Hindi ka tuli. (You are not circumcised.) It is common for Filipinos to be circumcised. This is a common knowledge among sex workers.

They know that being uncircumcised is to be laughed at in the Philippines. This is why the women joke about it in the nightclub. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 30 January 2008)

These examples show how extensive the cultural knowledge of some of the sex workers that they are even able to be precise with jokes that would make the men laugh and enjoy and eventually get their attention. This alludes to why Scambler (2007) describes sex work as a form of emotional labour. Another way to appeal to the seafarers is to understand the music and dance culture of these seafarers. These women know the cultures of the men enabling them to interact within using their own cultural cues. As the nightclub is a venue for these activities it becomes central in the solicitation process of the sex workers.

During my observations I felt that the dance floor is a social space which bears an important meaning to both seafarers and sex workers as they express themselves through movements in time to music. This makes dancing an important ritual within the club. It is important for sex workers to understand that dancing is a period of letting go for seafarers and be able to release them away from the bondage of work. It is also used as a vehicle to reconnect with their culture by performing their dances. This allows sex workers to interact with the men by inviting them to the dance floor and do the way their men do it. This further shows the knowledge of these women of the cultural backgrounds of the men.

Dancing was going on all the time. They change the kind of music played every now and then. It seemed to me that the music had to suit the different nationalities in the nightclub. When it is Turkish/Middle Eastern/Persian music, seafarers from these countries start dancing. The women would dance with them and they seem to know how to dance with the music. It was actually interesting to see. Sometimes the music would be changed to more pop disco. Eventually you will see that the Filipinos would rush to the floor and dance. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)

A professional disk jockey plays the music. He seems to be knowledgeable with songs seafarers are interested in regardless of nationality. Music can be requested from him. Sometimes I see seafarers hand over a CD containing their country's music. Even Indian music can be played to suit the taste of the South Asian seafarers.

When Greek music is played, expect that there will be smashing of plates on the dance floor. The Greek seafarers would make a circle on the dance floor together with the women from the same table. These women know how to dance to Greek music. Somebody would stay in the middle and perform with melodramatic actions. One will see how entrenched the dancers are in the song. It can be seen from their facial expressions. The ones in the circle will clap with the rhythm. It will culminate with the breaking of plates to the amazement of the people watching. This is allowed by the management. They are charged for the broken plates though.

Language and dancing are just two of the numerous examples of the knowledge of the women about their clients. These factors facilitate in the solicitation process as the seafarers are enamoured of the knowledge of the sex workers of their culture and the knowledge itself facilitates in the solicitation process.

5.3.5 Kick of Alcohol

As we have been seeing in this study the ubiquitous alcohol has been receiving much attention. It plays a major role in many aspects of the activities of the seafarers in port. With the same mechanism on how it influences other aspects of the shore leave, it also impacts on the solicitation process which more or less facilitates the outcome. The main effect of alcohol is the reduction of inhibitions of both the sex workers and the seafarers.

One example I can provide is the story of one sex worker, Raquel. Raquel has a daughter with a seafarer. The good thing with her is that she does not normally force seafarers to be a customer. Probably because she has a regular flow of support from a seafarer boyfriend. There was one awkward situation when a seafarer was left by our table with me and Raquel. All the rest of the friends of the seafarer left with their women to go to their respective hotels. Raquel was not interested to get a customer that night. The seafarer was not interested to get a woman. Raquel politely said to him because she felt that he was obligated to stay:

You don't have to stay with me...If you want to go, [you have] the... freedom to [stay] or to go back to your ship. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 3 April

2008)

The seafarer decided to stay. We kept talking and talking. I learned that he was actually a 30-35 year old seafarer though he looked young for his age. He has a wife. Eventually after the three of us have been talking and drinking I was surprised with what happened next:

[T]hey decided to go out and have sex. So they went outside and left me... I noticed that when the people drink they would eventually get into action or say yes to a situation which would allow sex or agree to have sex. It was because he has been drinking beer. He ordered 3 to 4 more. And he and Raquel kept on drinking. He was already drinking Bacardi cola before that... After a while she was totally drunk. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 3 April 2008)

In this situation, alcohol facilitated in making the solicitation process quite quick which led them to the sexual encounter even if at first both had no intention to. As the intake of alcohol increases over time inhibitions also wanes. Irrational acts become more frequent as drinking goes on as shown by the following:

We also bring in the factor of...alcohol which comes into play. [T]his woman needs money because she has two daughters. [S]he made irrational actions because she's drunk. She's under the influence of alcohol. In fact she was showing her breasts or letting them be touched and so as her pussy... and umm... all these kind of things towards her. And... umm...normally [she] does not do this. [S]he was not normally like this but today she was a bit different. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 10 April 2008)

Undoubtedly, all the examples show to us the major impact of alcohol in many activities of the seafarers during the shore leave. During their stay in the nightclub and during the solicitation process, alcohol has a major influence. As alcohol is one of the main reasons for going to the clubs, behaviour of both men and women are affected as they keep on drinking. Most of the time their decisions are affected which led them to a number of risky behaviours.

5.3.6 Emotion-Based Dynamics

During the solicitation process, strategies and influence tactics are observed to emphasize emotions as they are seen to play an important role in influencing

decisions (Fessler *et al.*, 2004; Bosman and van Winden, 2001). Emotion can be used as a tool to influence behaviour. It can also be a target. Both seafarers and sex workers capitalize on the knowledge of the use of a wide range of emotions and their effects. For example, anger is an emotion most women use within the solicitation dynamics as shown by the following:

Bia started to get angry. It was obvious on her face. The other seafarers started to tell him that "Oh she is already angry. You are dead". Bia started to act as if she was pissed because the seafarer doesn't like to have sex with her. The seafarer was getting stressed. He felt that he is being pressured. He started to stand up and showed signs that he didn't know what to do. We asked him why. He said he is on duty at 12 midnight. It was just 10:30 PM. So they still had a lot of time. He said that there would be other time anyway since the ship will be in port for a few more days. He ordered lady's drink for her. Probably just to pacify her. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 30 January 2008)

This situation shows us the power of some emotions when used as a tool. There are times that it has a major impact on the other person as shown by the actions of the seafarer. In this situation the seafarer was pushed further as other seafarers kept on pressuring and cajoling him to have sex with Bia. These seafarers were doing it out of fun. The seafarer eventually agreed to have sex with Bia; but only when she was already disappointed with his initial negative answer. Bia played it differently this time using another emotion as shown:

[H]e agreed to take her out. [However,] this time she acted as if she was not interested anymore. The situation showed a lot of 'emotional blackmailing'. I pitied the seafarer in the situation. He was already stressed. He was being placed on the spot both by Bia and his colleagues. Then they finally decided to go back to the ship. Bia...was still in a bad mood. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 30 January 2008)

The impact of emotions on decision making of individuals would depend on whether the emotion is active or current or an anticipated emotion based on experience (Fessler *et al.*, 2004). Active emotion as experienced by the seafarer shown in the example has a stronger influence on one's decisions. Thus, if the sex worker is strong in using emotions, he will succumb in the negotiation process as I have noticed sometimes:

So here we see the seafarers falling prey to the emotions that are built up within the situation. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 10 April 2008)

If the sex worker is successful in making the seafarer succumb to what the sex worker wants to happen, then it means she will have a customer for the night. This is not however the end of the story as negotiations continue.

5.4 Discussion and Conclusion: Intimacy and Commerce

The objective of this chapter is to present the solicitation process as a distinct and important phase in the interactions of the seafarers and sex workers in the context of body, gender and risk. My intention is to dissect the various issues that surround this phase of the interactions, initially explore the relationship between intimacy and commerce, start to develop a cultural understanding of the male seafarer experiences of commercial sex, and identify possible factors that contribute to the risk-taking behaviour of these men. The stage of solicitation is the start of the process of buying and selling of sex. It initiates a string of events that lead to the ultimate risk seafarers face culminating in unprotected sex and risky sexual acts, thus is deemed important as it shapes the eventual outcome of the process. The outcomes come in different typologies depending on the progression of the stages. These typologies are shaped by the influence tactics used (Howard *et al.*, 1986) by both the seafarer and the sex worker.

First, it is always important to understand the motivations of men when patronising sex workers. This is one of the objectives achieved in this chapter. It is observed that in many studies on prostitution, clients have remained invisible as prostitutes remain the central subjects of these studies. This is one reason why there is difficulty in understanding the motivations of men who seek out prostitutes. Carpenter (1998) provides some clarification on some of the findings presented. Carpenter proposes a dichotomy between the need to buy sex and the choice to buy sex as one way of understanding the motives. She emphasized the need to distinguish those who need to buy sex such as the lonely, the incapacitated, tourists and strangers and those who choose to buy it like the married and ordinary men. Given this explanation, seafarers

belong to those who need to buy sex as the nature of their work provides the basis for them to have sex as they are not able to access it in any other (socially acceptable) manner according to Carpenter (1998). On the other hand, the choice to buy sex is ascribed to normal individuals who look at buying as a sexual alternative rather than a need.

Another overarching theme that comes out from the observations is hinged on gender dynamics. The narratives presented in the observations in this chapter on the solicitation process shows how the dimension of gender dominates and becomes a central issue. Specifically, these observations allude to gender roles and gender power and show how this power is mediated as part of the dynamics of power relations. These observations maybe specific to these groups—female sex workers and male seafarer clients—who possess specific characteristics based on the social structures they come from. Seafarers have specific sexual and emotional needs brought about by the bigger social structure of the maritime industry. Intimacy is one of these needs. These needs need to be addressed as explained in Chapter 4 and shown in this chapter. In the same way, the motivations of sex workers who are portrayed here to come from a social structure that predisposes them to relative economic deprivation are enacted in the solicitation process.

The dichotomy of interests presented by the seafarers and sex workers shows their non-competing objectives—one to earn money and the other to obtain good sex. However, before their respective goals are achieved, a dynamic negotiation occurs that go through various stages as shown by the data. The findings also show that, within the process, influence tactics are utilized which Howard *et al.* (1986) identified to have six dimensions namely—manipulation, supplication, bullying, autocracy, disengagement, and bargaining.

Based on the observations, the same dimensions occur among the observed population groups. They only differ in degrees and in frequency. For example, sex workers would employ manipulation with the use of emotions. Sometimes they would directly beg and plead particularly during desperate moments when they cannot get customers. Seafarers employ disengagement when they try to avoid a woman by moving away or not talking to her. Bullying or autocracy is used more by the sex workers as they are

more confident given that the place is their turf; negotiation is used by both.

Another characteristic within the dynamics of the solicitation process are positions of strengths and positions of weakness. Depending on the position, either party would employ a certain tactic to suit the situation to gain an upper hand. For example, as explained in Chapter 4, the perception of danger within the red light district is used by the sex workers as a tool to gain clients. They can use the information and manipulate the situation to their advantage. Given the fact that men also navigate other forms of risk in a foreign country they normally avoid trouble thus succumb to the objective of the sex workers. Furthermore, they normally do not want to offend the sex workers thus avoid trouble. Knowledge of the cultures of the seafarers is also a position of strength for the sex workers.

On the other hand, money is a position of strength for the seafarers. As they have the resources, they use it as a tool to gain an upper hand. The fleeting and fast shore leave also becomes a position of strength as sex workers would adjust to this temporal element. Given the fact that there are positions of strength and weakness, this gives us a notion that within this setting, observations do not conform to the notions of powerless sex workers and overpowering male clients. A state of distributed power and influence prevails within both groups which shapes the solicitation process.

The nuanced dynamics of the solicitation process can be further elucidated using the concept of 'sexual scripts'. Sanders (2008) defines sexual script as a 'set of shared conventions based on mutual dependency and sets out the boundaries and roles that determine control, power, initiation, pleasure and so forth'. 'Sexual scripts' are enacted by women and men as their form of interactions around sexual behaviour (Bancroft, 2000: 11). The different sexual scripts adopted and acted out by both are part of a wider framework played in the commercial process of solicitation. The way women in the nightclubs acted out their sexual scripts within the framework of commercial sex tried to place themselves in a position of advantage as shown by the data.

Sexual scripts acted out by seafarers during sexual engagements and fulfillment of emotional desires in conventional relationships show similarities to that of

commercial sexual relationships. For example, the process by which they look for sex workers and maintain as 'intimate partners' has semblance with the template of searching for 'romance' and 'love' like respecting the norms, buying and paying for the women, being affectionate, and showing appreciation, loyalty and care. In my study, I echo the findings of Sanders (2008) who compared male clients of sex workers and normal heterosexual men showing that 'commercial sexual relationships can mirror the traditional romance, courtship rituals, modes and meanings of communication, sexual familiarity, mutual satisfaction and emotional intimacies found in 'ordinary' relationships'. The blurring of the dichotomy between these two forms of relationships becomes problematic as this sets in the risk as will be explored further in the next chapters. This micro-relationship that seafarers venture into transpires within the macro-sociocultural structures they are embedded in as discussed in Chapter 4 thus providing a cohesive picture on how the bigger structures contribute to the microbehaviours and risk situations they are in.

Chapter 6

The Enterprise and Corporeality of Paid Relationships

One of the major trajectories of the solicitation process is a paid sexual encounter. This is the simplest form of relationship that may happen in the field that I observed—paying in exchange for sex. This is a form of direct prostitution ‘because it is clear that the primary purpose of the interaction is to exchange sex for a fee’ (Harcourt and Donovan, 2005). As Kesler (2002) aptly puts it, ‘prostitution...is not prostitution in the absence of pay’.

I will discuss this form of transaction between seafarers and sex workers in this chapter. If there is an agreement between the sex provider and the seafarer client, sex transpires and payment is provided. At the outset, this alludes to what authors such as van der Veen (2001) or Mooney-Somers and Ussher (2010) call ‘commodification’ of sex considered to be one of the major concepts in sex work literature (Scoular, 2004; Oerton and Phoenix, 2001; Overall, 1992). However, as the discussions would reveal, this sexual transaction goes beyond a simple economic exchange. This enterprise of contracted intimacy works in the context of an economy of which prostitution is considered to be one in many societies. This chapter is divided into a discussion of each of the following parts—pricing, paying, and the way seafarers value their money. I will discuss the various elements that determine these factors and how they might relate to the risk behaviours seafarers manifest.

6.1 Simply a Client

A paid sexual encounter is an agreed sexual engagement involving money and is considered a desired outcome of any solicitation process. Being an ordinary client is the simplest form of relationship that exists between a seafarer and a sex worker—one

provides the payment for sexual services rendered and the other providing the sexual services. The sex worker receives the money she needs and the seafarer gets the sexual satisfaction he desires. As one engineer said:

My body has a physical need for a warm body. That's the fulfilment of happiness. I have sex with women. It is a necessity sometimes. (Chief Engineer 22)

This form of relationship is primarily characterized by economic exchange. This is normally the initial stage of a continuing process evolving into other forms. This is common among first-time patrons or those who do not frequent the port such as those onboard tramping ships. This relationship is associated with a form of solicitation process done in a quick manner as explained in Chapter 5. This is observed among those who have a very short shore leave and hence have lesser time in port. This provides a clue to the temporal element of the socio-sexual dynamics.

It is in this transaction that there is a heightened sense of commodification of sex as seen in the mutual exchange between the client and the provider. In this relationship, sexual services are seen as a paid service and is shaped by the expectations of clients as expressed by the following seafarer:

She should carry the lovemaking well. There are women who work hard in bed. They will do their best. They will provide the romance. They can even do it in sequences. There are women who are not good in bed. We do not like these women. (Chief Engineer 38)

As clients differ from each other there are also different demands, expectations and preferences for the sexual act. Sometimes the acts would differ depending on the woman they are having sex with or based on the influence of alcohol. Some seafarers who are not satisfied with the sexual act normally complain when they do not get what they want as expressed by this seafarer:

Not all women [here in Santos] do all the moves in bed. There are those who are lazy. There are women whom you pay but they do not do anything in bed. (Second Engineer 16)

This paid sexual transaction normally includes kissing, embracing, touching in the

nightclub. Sexual intercourse is done in private bedrooms and is the most common practice. They also do masturbation either on the man or on the woman. Oral sex may be practiced which is sometimes a mutual activity.

The woman can suck. Yes she really knows. I was not doing anything. She was the one doing everything. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)

Sometimes women start with this to arouse the seafarer client. Other seafarers would prefer penetrative vaginal-penile intercourse that they are used to as said by this seafarer who is not into fellatio or cunnilingus:

When it comes to bed I prefer...the normal. Only sex...No oral. I do not like oral...Yes I do kiss. I do not lick the pussy. No, I do not go down. (Ordinary Seaman 30)

In some extreme cases, a closeted homosexual German engineer asked the sex worker to 'act' as the man in the sexual performance. She was told not to tell his crewmates about what happened in bed. According to the seafarer, this happened because of the pressure he feels onboard to have sex with women sex workers. The situation shows that the kind of sexual act in bed differs and may be dependent on the fantasies and desires of the seafarer. For example, according to the following seafarer, he prefers to think of the present reality and not the imagined in relation to the physical aspect of the sexual act and immediate gratification:

When I have sex with a sex worker, I normally imagine the woman I get or I am having sex with. How will you ejaculate if you think of others? How will you enjoy it? I think of the woman I am making love with. Others imagine their wives while having sex with the sex worker because they are used to having sex with their wives. No, I do not believe in that. I would feel I am masturbating in that sense. That means one is masturbating [instead of having sex] because he is imagining. If you have sex with somebody, you do not imagine anymore. (Chief Engineer 38)

The statement of the seafarer gives us a glimpse of how seafarers perceive their sexual partners as thoughts differ from one person to another. Such thoughts also show the variety on how they construct the sexual interaction and relationship that they have with the sex worker whether she fills in the role of the partner or simply provides

physical satisfaction to the seafarer. For some, the emphasis of this form of relationship is immediate gratification thus giving us an insight into the sexualized nature of the shore leave.

It is understood that this form of relationship is purely paid 'casual sex' and there are no expectations of further interactions particularly when seafarers move on to another port and when they do not come back to the same port. Such a relationship may be exemplified by disinterest after a sexual act.

For me, after sex, I feel like kicking the woman out since I already had orgasm. Just like that. I feel that it is just fulfilment for me. (Second Engineer 16)

This makes the relationship the easiest and most convenient form that any seafarer can have as long as he has money to pay. As this is easy to get, seafarers can have as many women as he wants in every port increasing the risk that comes into play. For example, here is a seafarer scolding his friend:

I do not understand you. You just have sex with everyone. You do not think whether the person is safe or not. You just hit and hit anywhere. Just watch out. You might get sick. Free sex and free AIDS. Ha ha ha. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 12 September 2007)

It is also this form of relationship that provides certain functionality for some aspect of seafaring life, such as the performance of the 'ritual of baptism'. This is an interesting phenomenon considered as 'rites of passage' based on the work of Van Gennep (2004). This is the sexual initiation of the seafarers where they have the first sexual encounter with the commercial sex worker abroad.

Second Cook 29: *They say on board, if you are a seaman it is necessary for you to experience [sex with sex workers].*

Interviewer: *That's what seafarers always say. Why?*

Second Cook 29: *I don't know. Like me, I left land (went onboard) as unexperienced (virgin). I was still single then, so I had to be baptised.*

Interviewer: *Where were you baptised?*

Second Cook 29: *Well, you know where? Here in Brazil. In Paranagua. Cross my heart! That was a long time ago in 1986.*

Interviewer: *What led you to be baptised?*

Second Cook 29: *Peer pressure on board.*

This is a form of male bonding activity where a new seafarer is pressured to perform a sexual act with a sex worker in port to make him a 'full-fledged' seafarer. This happens mostly to cadets and new entrants to the industry. Many of them are new and normally do not have money to engage with the sex workers. The older peers would contribute to pay the woman.

Seamen are not seamen when they do not go through 'baptism'. I have been baptised for a long time now. <laughs> I was baptised in Alaska. My first trip was going to Alaska. (Bosun 54)

'Sexual baptism' as 'rites of passage' is a form of male initiation rites. It is also an expression of solidarity with the group welcoming a new initiate to its fraternity. For a young seafarer to be a member of the occupational group he has to undergo the ritual to go from being an outsider to an insider. It is through the paid sex worker that the rites become real ritual thus the functionality of a paid relationship.

The prevalence of casual sexual encounters or paid relationships transpiring within the club maybe a function of the openness of the social space (nightclub) as mentioned in Chapter 4. The seeming openness that clients experience within the venue reinforces their behaviours. Within an accepting culture in such a public space towards such sexual behaviours and relationships, patrons manifest lesser inhibitions in frequenting the clubs and expressing their desires. This apparent confidence is expressed while being away from the gaze of the public as described by the following seafarer:

Different places have different cultures. Here the sex [in Santos] it is very vulgar and blatant....In other places it is not like that. It is convenient to go to the clubs. (Chief Engineer 17)

Their masculine identity sometimes gives them the reason to pursue such relationships. When I scrutinized further this apparent need for sex with women in port, there was a common answer to this question: because they are men, they have to have sex with women. They have a need to satisfy this particularly since they are deprived of it on board.

Yes, this is just a physical need why seafarers get women, this is just to answer

for the physical need because we are men. You are already used to having sex with a physical body instead of just self-satisfaction such as masturbation. The only thing is you will encounter difficulties because you will be addicted to it. You are not satisfied anymore by simply masturbating. (Chief Engineer 38)

Another seafarer I interviewed considers it a necessity for men or a necessary service provided by women in ports. As they are deprived of sex with their wives or girlfriends this seafarer thinks having sex with the sex workers would be good for their well being.

In my opinion they are necessary really. Because, it's a kind of a service like a barber or something, you know. Because some guys really need this, need their sex. Maybe if they are short of sex for maybe one month or something like that, especially these young guys, you know, I think that is necessary, maybe it's difficult to say but it's [probably] for their health. (Captain 15)

Aside from reinforcing their masculinity there is also the physical need for sex and the social pressure from friends:

They have sex...because sometimes it is a need. It is due to one's physical needs. Secondly, it is because of the pressure from others. If you will succumb to the prodding of others, then you lose to the temptation. That is how it is. You lose to the temptation and you end up the loser. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 30 January 2008)

As many seafarers feel that this need has to be satisfied, they go to the nightclub as it addresses this issue. On top of being a physical need, they also fulfil the psychological need to go out and meet women.

Some women develop genuine interest on their clients. I asked some seafarers about this. They perceived that there were many occasions that the women may have a form of liking towards them. This is shown by one account of a young seafarer who had a sexual encounter with a sex worker. He was able to pay only 25 USD which is half the ongoing rate. Aside from being able to bargain the price, he got the better bargain in the sexual act. For them, a lowered price is one indicator of an apparent interest.

I asked him, 'how many times did you ejaculate?' He said, 'twice'. ... I asked him if she allowed kissing. 'Yes. She was even aggressive. I actually didn't

want to but she was insistent. She was the one who wanted to. I was even avoiding her lips.’ I asked further, ‘what do you think, does she like you?’ ‘She really was insistent. I asked again, ‘how do you know that she likes you?’ He answered, ‘she was wet below (pertaining to her vagina) that’s why I know that she was interested in me. Thus, she was aggressive.’ This seafarer was smiling the whole time he was relating to me his experience. He further commented, ‘she even sucked my dick. She really knows what to do. I did not even do anything. She was doing everything.’ (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)

This seeming interest of the women is perceived by some seafarers as real and sincere. This is one form of entry to a relationship as this would instigate a repeated sexual encounter and turn into a relationship. These women could be judged as interested based on the way they interact with these men. Unbeknownst to the seafarers, this could be untrue because many of these women are very good in dealing with clients. Being pleasant to the men is one of the skills called for by the women's work. Nevertheless, the continued interplay between the two changes the dynamics over time until some of them either become true friends or share a romantic relationship as will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Central to a paid relationship is the ability of seafarers to choose the women that they like as presented in Chapter 3. I presented how seafarers choose their women and showed what characteristics they prefer with physical attributes as a priority. The rationale behind their choices is grounded on their belief that the women they get should be worth the value they pay them for. As paying clients like many other consumers, many seafarers think ideally of their ‘procured good’ as ‘best buy’ as I will discuss in the next section.

6.2 Pricing the Pleasure

Earlier in Chapter 4, I explained why the US dollar currency is standard in most ports of the world. One sexual encounter is defined as the moment one steps into the bedroom until the time of departure, with the understanding of going back to the nightclub after or the seafarer going back to the ship. This is regardless of the number of hours they would be together which would vary from thirty minutes to six hours when they stay longer to sleep over until early morning before the seafarer’s duty.

The prevailing price for a sexual encounter in Santos is 50 US dollars. This amount is the price during the first few encounters. How the money used to pay for the sexual service is seen to change as frequency of meeting and sex increases as will be discussed later.

According to many seafarers this price has prevailed for many years now without too much change. They say that this price is actually the reference price and is seen to be universally observed outside Europe and North America at least in the red light districts of ports. One reason why the price is stable is because of the exclusivity of many port nightclubs to a homogeneous clientele (seafarers) without much interference from other groups. As explained in Chapter 4, at the Harmony Club in Santos, for example, they would pay in US dollars while locals in another red light district would pay a lesser amount in their local currency. This would be the same in other ports in South America or Asia. The similarity is brought about by having the same clientele who move around thus standardizing the price. It can be said that the seafarers determined and imposed the price and the sex workers continued to observe it as years went by.

It is expected, just like in any economic system, that pricing sex would follow the economic principle of law of supply and demand. In fact according to Greenfield (1993), “despite their illegality, [it follows] similar basic economic rules of supply and demand as legal economies. For example, the demand for a service such as sex, like the demand for many legal services, is elastic with regard to price and income.”

However, observations seem to contradict this principle. One variable that stabilizes the price without following the law of supply and demand is the relative stability of the number of clients in the port of Santos. Given the exact number of ships docked within the immediate area, the number of seafarers would be constant since there is the same number of ships at any given time as delimited by the number of berthing docks. When one ship leaves another one comes. In this case, it results in more or less the same number of seafaring clients because their number does not drastically change. The demand remains relatively stable. Furthermore, since the price seafarers pay for sex is much higher than what the locals pay, there is no reason to increase price for sex as sex workers get more than enough. Thus it does not create a scenario

described by Baseman, Ross and Williams (1999) whereby “if the price of sex...increases, demand for sex services decreases; likewise, if the price of such services decreases, demand increases.” This is another dimension of the law of supply and demand which the reality of sex work in the port of Santos does not seem to follow.

The 50 USD is better referred to as a stable reference price rather than a fixed price. In other words, during solicitations, when a woman is asked her asking price this is the immediate amount she would say. However, during transactions this price may go up or down as shown by the following:

I was joking with her. I said, “oh last night you had money therefore you have to treat me with beer because you earned last night”. She said she had four clients. The first client was a Filipino who paid 50 USD and another Filipino 40 USD and another 40 USD and the other one I think 40 or 50 USD. She actually got a number just in one night the other night. She was joking that they were very, very quick sex... (Fieldnotes: Seamen’s Mission, 6 March 2008)

This situation does not however mean that the price is volatile as the reason for the price differences is not economically-determined (as shown by the economic principle of supply and demand). The change in prices is more situational rather than due to economic forces. It is not expected that there is drastic price variability within one night. For example, price may be affected by the kind of customer.

Interviewer: *How much is women nowadays?*

Oiler 39: *50 [USD] minimum. If you are younger and handsome 20 or 30 is alright. If you are not handsome, you pay the maximum.*

This may sound like a statement in jest; however, there is truth to it. In fact this becomes a common joke based on the current practice where cadets, new, young and handsome seafarers are given discounted rates. They may get a discount or they are not forced to pay the exact amount if they do not have money. Sometimes some of them get sex for free.

Another variable that brings down the price of sex is the time of transactions. As it

gets very late, prices would normally go down because of the following reason:

In many clubs, normally it becomes cheaper to get women as the night goes by. In the morning, women would be cheaper. This is because they want to earn money. If it is early morning and they have not earned yet or if they have to earn more, sexually engaging with them becomes cheaper because there are fewer customers, many are going home and there are many ladies competing.'
(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 30 January 2008)

This finding shows the temporal aspect of pricing. This variable plus the others mentioned may have a combined effect thus affecting the final price of the paid relationship.

6.3 Paying for Sex

When it comes to the ability of seafarers to pay for sex, there is an understanding that these men have the money to spend when they go on shore leave. Availability of money and their willingness to pay are important in the context of risk-taking behaviour and gender dynamics. Having money enables them to visit the nightclub and gives them the resources to pay for various services.

Money to go to the bars and to pay for sex work will never be a problem with seafarers. They are always liquid when they are in ports. They normally have savings or they ask for cash advance from the ship. This money is used to send to their families, to buy groceries and personal items and to pay for the expenses in the bars including the sexual services of the women. **(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 28 March 2008)**

Having spare money or extra savings provides a more compelling reason to go to the club as this is seen as a justifiable behaviour since only excess money is being spent for such a vice. It gives the seafarers a feeling that they are not being irresponsible and are not spending money wantonly. However, there are also occasions when the seafarers go to the club without cash or not enough money. This would not necessarily be a problem as there are ways of mitigating it. They can easily borrow from their crewmates.

If they run out of money, they normally borrow from the crewmates who are

with them. I have seen and heard many times this happened while observing them for the past nights. Sometimes the officers and those who have money treat everyone to drinks or even to pay for sexual services. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 28 March 2008)

If the urge to get women prevails as alcohol kicks in, they will resort to borrowing money to address this need as shown below:

Some seamen cannot control themselves. They will even borrow money just to get women. (Bosun 23)

There is ease in borrowing because they can easily pay on board the ship since those who lent the money work with them. On board, the lender can ask directly from the officer who handles their salary to pay for the said loan.

In some instances, it is their colleagues who will offer to lend money. There were occasions where I saw seafarers who are sympathetic to the sexual needs of their seafarer friends. Once they see their friends running out of money, they are the ones who offer to lend them cash even before the person asks. Sometimes the woman would suggest to the seafarer interested with her to borrow money from his crewmates to be able to pay her. The good relations that exist onboard among crewmates extend to the nightclubs. Friends are always of immediate assistance in times of need.

Another phenomenon that allows them to have sex without having money is through the “sex now-pay later” scheme. They normally can have a credit line with the sex worker with the agreement that she will be paid in full, normally the following day or within a few days. For the women this is a better bargain than not having an income at all for the night. This is another way that facilitates convenience in having a sexual encounter.

According to one seafarer, sometimes you need not pay the woman. It is like borrowing money from her but in the form of sex which you have to pay later on. He said, ‘for example, you want to have sex with her and you do not have money, the woman herself will tell you that you need not pay now but later on. Many of my crewmates do this especially when we have not received our salaries’. He said that the women are the ones who suggest this because they trust seafarers that much. They know that the seafarers always go back to the

bar. Seafarers really pay and fulfil their promise. (Fieldnotes: Seamen's Mission, 1 April 2008)

According to some sex workers, this scheme is allowed but not all the time. They only allow paying later on during the following circumstances: when they know the seafarer, when the seafarer or his crew have been frequenting the nightclub, when they know the ship frequents the port, and when the seafarer concerned has crewmates who provide the guarantee for the person. Not renegeing on a promise of payment using this scheme is shown by the following situation:

At the seamen's mission, one seafarer was very anxious to give the money worth 40 USD to pay Bia. This seafarer did not pay the sexual services which they performed the other night. That was like two nights ago. Today is Sep 14, so it was Sep 12. This crew was a bit conscious of it because they were warned by the company to be cautious when they are in the clubs because sometimes they are afraid that they will do harm on them especially Bia who could go up the ship. (Fieldnotes: Seamen's Mission, 14 September 2007)

This situation provides us another dimension of the continuing power relations between the two, which goes beyond the solicitation process. Given the behaviour of the seafarer in the situation and the fact that he is conscientious to pay the sex worker a 'loan' shows the position of strength and the position of weakness of both relating to what I mentioned in Chapter 5. Another reason why the seafarer will not renege on their agreement is the avoidance of trouble in port shaped by their perception of risk as explained in Chapter 4.

6.4 Value of Money: Spend or Save?

For many seafarers, their work is seen as sacrifice given the nature of their profession. Thus it follows that what they receive is seen as hard-earned money. This is where some dilemmas come in when I ask some of them how they feel about spending their money in the club and paying sex workers. I asked this question as I wanted to understand how they valued their money and if this outlook has an impact on their sexual risk-taking behaviour.

In general, many seafarers have a sense of value of the money they earn. Thus some

seafarers responded that they are not willing to spend on women (seen as a vice and an unnecessary expense) since they have to recoup the money they invested to become a seafarer. As one seafarer shares:

Before you land a job, especially on becoming an officer, you have to spend 100,000 [Philippine] pesos (1,500 GBP). This is just for the training course. How about for other things? Us ourselves we have a lot of training courses. That's true. Then now, you will go out [to the clubs] and finish your money just for these things? Life is difficult. In fact it is getting worse and worse. You spent a lot therefore you have to recoup your investment. (Second Cook 29)

This kind of response presents to us the difficulty of becoming a seafarer and the value of the money earned from the profession. For many of them, this maybe a general thought they wish to practice, however as I have started to show in different sections of this paper other factors come into play leading them to take risks.

Given the way they value their money, for those who go to the nightclub, it does not follow that all of their money is spent in the club during their shore leave. As explained in Chapter 3, they have different activities which all entail spending money. Thus, many of them would prioritize these activities. They would allot money based on their priorities as shown by the following:

Seafarers expect to go out of the ship because it is boring on board. Sometimes we make phone calls to our families. That's our priority. Other activities are just secondary or tertiary. It depends if we have money. (Able-bodied Seaman 36)

This prioritization demonstrates their sense of responsibility. To avoid guilt, set priorities are towards family and necessary personal needs before vices and sex. This is one reason why it becomes less burdensome to decide when they have spare money to spend for their sexual vices.

[I got a woman] in Bangkok because I had extra money. I was already onboard for eight months so I had extra money. We were docked in Bangkok for fifteen days. There was a beer house in the port [so we went there]. (Second Officer 9)

Thus, having spare money reinforces this behaviour of going to the club. It is easier

for them to make decisions during this occasion because of the availability of extra cash. Seafarers are quite aware that money is a necessity when engaging with women. They know very well that such activity demands spending. Thus they vacillate whether to spend it or not on sex workers.

Interviewer: *Ah I see, how about you, do you get women before?*

Second Officer 13: *Yes, I regularly get women but on a limited number as I need the money.*

Of course, it also follows that even if the seafarer is in the club and he is willing to get a woman, availability of money would still determine this behaviour as the sex worker also decides whether to engage sexually with him or not.

Kristiani was soliciting sex from this young apprentice. The apprentice was flirting in return. He was asking me how much since he was a bit shy. So I asked her. Unfortunately the seafarer does not have money to pay so Kristiani said he cannot have sex with her. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 10 April 2008)

Obviously, a sex worker would prefer to have sex with someone who can pay. This shows that most relationships and transactions in the club are based on money. This is a reality that seafarers understand. Generally, even if they have certain relations with the women in the club they would have apprehensions going to the club if they have no money. For example, there were a number of seafarers who have been staying in port for a long time because it has been rainy during the past days thus delaying the loading of their wheat cargo. I normally see them at Harmony Club until one time I was surprised that they were not going there anymore and they preferred to play sports in the seamen's mission.

I met these seafarers the other night at [Harmony Club.] This time they were not keen on going there. It is because they do not have money. At the end of the day, when they don't have money anymore, then they just keep quiet and are mum about everything. In fact I told them that I was going to [Harmony Club.] They said they are not interested. (Fieldnotes: Seamen's Mission, 5 April 2008)

Since the mission has cheaper beer and the rest of the amenities are free, they preferred staying there to going to the club making the seamen's mission a good

alternative to enjoy their time in the city.

For some seafarers the value of their money and paying a woman are not issues. These seafarers understand that sex workers need to earn money thus they do not feel conscience-stricken when paying as explained by an engineer:

Interviewer: *Is it alright with you to pay women for sex? Don't you find the amount heavy?*

Second Engineer 16: *Not really. Of course, the feeling is quite a burden if you really need the money and you want to have sex. We have to understand though that it is also a means of livelihood for these women. It is unfair if we do not pay them. In other words, at the end of the day it is economics.*

Due to this understanding, it does not become a burden for them when they have to pay for the sexual services, facilitating a pleasant and guilt-free sexual experience.

When it comes to getting the value of their money, these seafarers prefer to get their ideal women. Normally they would say they prefer beautiful women at a cheaper price thus good value for their money. As one seafarer mentioned he prefers the women in another port as they are prettier and can be cheaper.

The women in Paranagua are more beautiful and it is cheaper there because a woman may cost 25 USD only. (Fieldnotes: Seamen's Mission, 1 April 2008)

This value for money is also manifested when they face the issue of choosing nightclubs. As they prefer more beautiful women which are known to be in other clubs, they cannot go there because they are known to be more expensive besides being far away and difficult to reach. Thus they have to content themselves with generally older women in the port red light district.

He says that Nimfa is a different club. But it is 'muy caro' (very expensive). But the women are 'muy linda' (very beautiful) compared to those at Harmony Club. So fewer people go there because of the price. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)

Another way to show how some seafarers value their money is when they feel that they are short-changed because of the quality of woman they get. These seafarers are

quite conscious of the value of their money thus they want their money's worth. Some of them are very vocal of not getting it as shown by this seafarer:

After this 26 year old married ordinary seaman (OS) had sex, I asked him, "How much did you pay?" He replied, "she was charging me 40 USD but I only paid 25 USD. Actually, it should have been free. She is not young anymore. She is also a bit chubby." (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)

As earlier mentioned, when seafarers can afford it they are not hesitant to increase the price at times. They become quite generous with their money and they would be willing to spend beyond the standard price of 50 USD. This is shown by the case of this seafarer who told me their story while at Portsmouth in the UK. While they were walking in the port they saw this group of women. They found them beautiful. They thought of getting these women so they started talking to them until they came to the point of asking them for sex.

He asked, "can I have you for 25 US dollars?" The women were laughing. They said, "why the hell would you get us for only 25 US dollars when in fact Pounds is much higher than dollars?" So he joked again, "oh well, anyway it's only once that we tried this so maybe we'll just increase it to 100 dollars. OK, I will pay you one hundred dollars then we have sex." The ladies agreed. They got a hotel. He said that they had sex three times during the night and the following day. In fact they spent 300 US dollars each. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 10 April 2008)

When it comes to sex, the ultimate satisfaction of the seafarer is when they get what they want in bed. When it comes to this issue whatever they pay would not matter anymore, what would be important is they get the sexual satisfaction they feel they deserve.

Karen was with this seafarer. They had sex three times. He was extremely very happy and he was telling me, "oh, I'm extremely happy and satisfied with our sex." And I said, "so how was it?" He said, "at first, she would suck me just to keep me erected. Then we had sex. I cum three times. I'm very satisfied". (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 10 April 2008)

Thus, it is not surprising that those who have money and who are more generous get more attention from the women thus adding value to their worth. Women would provide better services in the nightclub as they entertain and serve the seafarers. They

would also perform better in bed. This generosity is probably one reason that makes the women vulnerable to the demands of the seafarers during the sexual encounters such as allowing intercourse without condom. I will expound on this in the section on bargaining.

The last issue that I will discuss here is the relationship between continuity of relationship and the expense and payment. There are two opposing views whether prolonging a relationship would be cheaper or more expensive. Seafarers say that money would have a strong bearing on the continuity of relationships. The lack of money is one reason why some seafarers do not have regular women in port.

Interviewer: *Did you ever have flings in ports?*

Chief Engineer 22: *None*

Interviewer: *Why? You don't maintain women?*

Chief Engineer 22: *No. No.*

Interviewer: *Why not?*

Chief Engineer 22: *It's difficult to maintain nowadays. It is very expensive*

Interviewer: *But you do not give money regularly anyway?*

Chief Engineer 22: *No, even if you do not give.*

This observation is however contrary to what other seafarers say. Some believe that it is actually cheaper to maintain a woman or have a relationship with one.

Interviewer: *The other seafarers you know, do they maintain women here? Or they have relationships?*

Oiler 39: *Not really.*

Interviewer: *Why is that so?*

Oiler 39: *Based on my observations, if you stick to one woman it is cheaper. Sometimes it is even free.*

Interviewer: *Isn't it more expensive?*

Oiler 39: *No it is not. It is up to you if you keep on buying presents for the woman. Many of those who maintain a woman turn out to spend lesser. Instead of paying 50, they just pay 30 or 20 only.*

These contrary views can be explained by the different interpretations of expense. Indeed as one shells out more money for a continued relationship with a woman this amount accumulates and is seen as expensive. However, when the relationship prolongs, there is an observed variability in the amount provided to the woman as this money is not seen anymore as a form of payment for sex but as part of the dynamics of a relationship. As will be explained in Chapter 7, as a relationship develops, the

men would take on the role of breadwinners, providing money for the sex workers.

6.5 Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter I presented one of the forms of relationships developed after the solicitation process. I also discussed all the various issues revolving around the relationship including the price of sex and its stability, the various factors that affect pricing, the dynamics of payment, the ambivalence in paying for sex using hard-earned money, and how they resolve this dilemma. My aim in this part of the thesis is to discuss paid relationship as one significant form of sexual transaction as a prelude towards other forms of relationships. I wanted to dissect its different elements so I can identify how such elements relate to risk. I also tried to establish that pricing and paying remain important enabling factors in the risk-taking behaviour of seafarers. They play significant roles that lead seafarers to take risks. As Pheterson (1990: 404) said, ‘the sexual component of commercial sex is most obvious for the one who is paying and the economic component is most obvious for the one who earns’.

One major fact established in this study is the static price of sex wherein there are no observed fluctuations in the reference price established within the network of port-based red light districts. There is a universally-observed price which is convenient for seafarers for easier decision making when getting women sex workers. This regularity establishes an industry behaviour that goes against the fundamental concept of economics. Economic factors such as income of seafarers do not create drastic changes on the price. This is because they have many ways of mitigating the lack of it. Furthermore there is a constant inflow (constant demand) of seafarer customers who frequent the nightclubs thus adding to the non-volatility of the price. The availability of sex workers provides no effect also in the pricing. There are factors among women that fix the price of sex work. All these discussed factors are ways and means to facilitate the ability of seafarers to have sexual engagements with sex workers. It is these stable conditions that allow ease in getting women as there is confidence in the procurement of sex.

In the discussions, I emphasized the role of money in the sexual transactions. As we

have noticed, money is central in all of the social and sexual transactions that transpire between the seafarers and the sex workers reflecting the economic dimension of their social interaction. There are many situations where these transactions become successful because of the availability of money and the willingness to spend.

The availability of money is a facilitating factor towards consummation of the interaction and sexual intercourse. It is based on an economic transaction and the involvement of carnality that is rife for disease transmission. Again, the access to money also increases the likelihood for sexual interactions. This becomes a position of strength on the part of the seafarer and a position of weakness on the part of the sex worker in relation to the discussion in Chapter 5. There are a myriad of outcomes when there is money being spent in the nightclub—seafarers can pay for the beer, food, sexual services, and everything else that can be paid such as non-use of condom and a relationship. Details of economic transactions will be explained further in the succeeding chapters on negotiations and bargaining.

Within the various transactions, there are other means that add to the facilitation of risk taking. This includes willingness of the sex worker to lower the price or provide the sex for free during especial circumstances, and the ability of colleagues of seafarers to lend money to pay for sex. The willingness of seafarers to pay for sex work is a function of the way they value the money they earn. Thus, they want to get from the sexual encounter the worth of the money they earn—including not using condoms if they so desire. The meaning of money changes as the frequency of sexual encounter increases where money is not seen anymore as payment but as a relationship-based transaction. Later on we will see how this goes hand in hand with the kind of relationship formed and the risks that they take because of these.

Beyond the money and monetary value of sex, this chapter begs for a number of related discussions as it has opened and presented into fore many interesting issues and insights. For example, the rites of passage presented in this chapter needs some elucidation as it provides an insight into a sexualized form of life transition that places an individual at some form of risk because of the pressure to perform a certain tradition. As explained by Van Gennep (2004), this ritual of sexual intercourse with a

sex worker in port is part of a socialization process within this occupational fraternity. Similar to the concept of 'initiation' (Grimes, 2000: 101) where the initiate achieves a 'new state of being', going through the process of sexual intercourse with a sex worker establishes one's status in a group and enhances his acceptability by its members. This is seen as a form of passage from his previous world of being an ordinary seafarer to a new world of an ocean-going profession full of masculinity and ready to face the adversities presented by life at sea.

Rites of passage is similar to 'loss of virginity' (Carpenter, 2001) among male teenagers as they seek acceptance by changing their 'status' from being a teenager to being an adult where such a milestone changes his identity and becomes more accepted by his peers who went through the same process. The similarity between the two is based on the sexualized form of the process despite the latter having a wife or girlfriend back home and having had sexual experience already. This gives us an insight that the rites of passage practiced has strong gender connotations given the masculinised form of the process. It presents a form of seafaring masculinity through their ability to 'conquer' sexually abroad despite having relationships back home alluding to the concept explained by Flood (2008) that in the process of homosociality the key path to masculine status is sexual activity where other seafarers become the audience.

Another interesting dimension presented in this chapter that connects with homosociality within the seafaring fraternity is the portrayal of the gay German officer who experienced the pressure of engaging with female sex workers as a form of masculine acceptance. The manner of performance of the sexualized act to achieve sexual desire and sexual pleasure supports a non-normative expression of gender and sexuality that can be explained using the understanding of 'queer theory' (Halperin, 2003; Eves, 2004). Such act presented by the seafarer cannot be supported by the understanding of gay or lesbian literature as it sways towards an 'anti-assimilationist alternative to traditional identity politics and minority group formations' (Walters, 2001). Queer theory, which emphasises on performativity and nonnormativity, would explain his behaviour a manifestation of a fluid, mobile and plural sexuality. It does not impose certain forms of correctness in ways of loving and living thus such an act is one in a whole range of sexual desires, dispositions and practices constituting

sexuality and these elements cannot be conflated (Valocchi, 2005). The phenomenon shown by the seafarer provides an insight into the fluidity and the myriad sexual behaviours of this occupational group giving a hint on the complicated reality of gender and sexual subjectivities, identities and practices of seafarers of which some of them lead to risky situations.

Adding to the complexity to these relations is an issue that needs further discussion—are the transactions presented in this chapter a simple exchange of money for lust and sex? Data show that some seafarers stay within the confines of an enterprise. Most sex work has strong economic basis. It is clear that the primary purpose of the interactions is to exchange sex for a fee. Thus some seafarers end the transactions after ejaculation providing the signal of the end of the sexual contract. The ‘simulated intimacy’ can be seen as a manifestation of ‘desexualisation’ of potentially ‘sexual’ and ‘intimate’ encounters. For some women, it is simply working and using their bodies as a tool for business and identifies the act as ‘not-sex’. This construction of the body becomes one of the approaches in navigating their way through the enterprise allowing themselves as many as eight customers in one night, for example. Some women sex workers have a way of ‘switching off’ and understand themselves as merely bodies (Oerton and Phoenix, 2001). The way sex workers present themselves with these identities sends messages to the client who may act accordingly thus reconstituting their own behaviour.

Some seafarers may look at the transactions simply an economic exchange as a way of navigating their way through these forms of extramarital sex away from home. This is an approach in lessening the guilt feelings of sexually engaging with prostitutes thus keeping their identities as good fathers and providers. Seafarers conceptualize sexual intercourse as non-intimate thus should not result into guilt feelings. They do this by providing the payment as an affirmation of a purely economic transaction, navigating away from some forms of sexual act such as cunnilingus and kissing thereby having rules on appropriate and inappropriate acts, using condom so as not to have skin-to-skin contact (which I will further explain in Chapter 8), not being active or enthusiastic in bed, and not having further intimacy after ejaculation.

On the contrary, there were also many hints presented by the data that seemingly convey a message that these transactions and interactions go beyond the boundaries of simple economic exchange. It can be argued that approaching the sexual act as routine enterprise in which seafarers buy outlets for their physical needs and sex workers addressing these needs is clearly too simplistic. As Kesler (2002) argues, ‘it is impossible to accurately reduce complex human interchanges into costs and benefits’. Kesler further points out that ‘it is this focus on the commodification of sex in the construction of theories relating to prostitution that confuses these arguments . . . [a]lthough it is obviously present in all forms of prostitution, it is but one similarity in a vast sea of dissimilarities’. There is a slippage into ‘something more’ in the sexual encounter as it goes beyond the level of corporeality. There are seafarers who repudiate the sexual act dismissing it as simply a contractual touch addressing their constellation of needs, yet there are those who cherish the intimacy addressing needs beyond the realm of the social and symbolic.

The slippage occurs in the context of individuals ascribing different meanings towards the sex act brought about by their specific predicaments and socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds—breadwinner seafarers far from their families and socially-disadvantaged sex workers. Their situations result in the way the sexual act is embodied or disembodied exemplified by the way they disavow the sexual and intimate content of the act. For example, tensions maybe at play among some seafarers as they perform the sexual act in different discourses—public act with prostitutes and private act with wives and girlfriends—thus disavowing sex in the contractual setting. There are also seafarers who do not see the distinction and the dichotomy is glossed over thus not necessarily disavowing intimate sex in either domains of sexual act. It is also possible that among those who acknowledge intimate sex, they frame their thinking in the context of being less bound to traditional structures and modalities of socialization thus allowing them a more free reign on the way they reconstitute the meaning of the sexual act. All these processes will be further elucidated in the next chapters as seafarers and sex workers re-inscribe new forms and variations of relationships and intimacies that go beyond sex and the body making a paid relationship a form of prelude.

Chapter 7

Moving on with Relationships

‘This is my friend Mario. This is Boyet. This is Allan. He is a third engineer. This is my boyfriend. This is also my boyfriend. He is a second mate. This one is a good friend. This one I love him. This is Alex.’, she said. Ines was doing a litany as she sifts through the stack of ID photos contained in a shoe box. It was a boxful of ID photos of seafarers which she collected for a long time now.’ (Fieldnotes: House of Ines, 4 April 2008)

I was amused listening to Ines. Ines is one of the women in the club I know quite well having hung out with her most of the time. She invited me to her place which is just across Harmony Club. The photos she showed me were her collection of seafarers she met for many years that she has been working in the nightclub. She said that she normally asks photos from seafarers. Seafarers carry a number of photos with them when they leave their countries. These are used when filling up numerous work-related forms. They usually carry these photos in their wallets. Some of the photos showed seafarers wearing their white maritime uniforms.

The interesting part of the conversation is how Ines related herself to the individuals on the photos. Discernable from her spiel was the use of ‘relationship categories’ such as ‘friends’ or ‘boyfriends’. In my later conversations with her she would use the words ‘love’, ‘boyfriend’ or ‘papa’ interchangeably to refer to these seafarers depending on how she relates to them. These various forms and degrees of affiliations give us a glimpse of the constellation of possible relationships that may develop through constant social interactions between seafarers and sex workers over time.

Chapter 5 discussed how relationships are initiated in the context of solicitations. A successful solicitation process normally concludes with a sexual tryst between the seafarer and the sex worker as discussed in Chapter 6, which is in its simplest form a relationship hinged on economic exchange using the lens of pricing and paying.

However, for many engagements, this does not end here particularly when the seafarer has opportunities of going back to the same port.

This chapter is a presentation on how relationships move forward beyond an ordinary client-service provider agreement. The first part will be a discussion on how true friendships develop. The second part is a discussion on a romantic type of relationship, followed by a relationship characterized by having children. The fourth part will be a discussion on how all these relationships move further and the different variables that shape them. I will also touch on the role of wives and girlfriends in these relationships in the fifth part. I will conclude this chapter by discussing the findings using concepts of prostitution, risk, gender and embodiment.

7.1 Companionship: Developing Friendships

A non-sexual form of relationship may exist between seafarers and sex workers. This is one form of relationship I commonly observed during the fieldwork. This relationship has constantly been mentioned in many conversations and interviews by the seafarers. Compared to a normal acquaintance that also exists, friendship is ordinarily defined as a form of relationship where there is a mutual interaction among two or more individuals characterized by trust and confidence.

Interviewer: *Did something sexual or romantic happen between the two of you?*

Second Cook 29: *Nothing. Nothing happened to us. But she still comes along with me.*

Interviewer: *So how do you define what is happening between the two of you? Do you have a mutual understanding?*

Second Cook 29: *I do not know if we felt love. I was honest. I was honest with her. They are honest and trustworthy as long as you are true to her.*

During the fieldwork, there were many occasions where sex workers or seafarers would introduce one person to another as ‘he is my friend’ or ‘she is my friend’. The use of the word ‘friend’ either by the sex worker or the seafarer reveals to us how they relate to the person. Many times they use the word to emphasize and negate the point

that their relationship is sexual or romantic—that what is happening between the two of them is purely based on friendship.

This kind of relationship normally starts with being a client where sex transpires. As time goes by, when the seafarer becomes interested more with companionship, rather than sex, there is a possibility that it will evolve into a form of friendship. Friendship is formed at a certain point when one is not considered anymore as a client, but only as a friend, and if the seafarer is not receptive anymore to the solicitation advances of the sex worker.

[T]his Malaysian seafarer... was looking for her (Vanessa) all the time. Until I saw them...go out...I thought...they were going to the hotel. But when I eventually went out, she (Vanessa) was there sitting with him (Malaysian) and they were eating together.... That's why it took them so long staying out[side the club]. [The Malaysian said that] ...he already had sex with her twice before. And he says that he actually does not have a girlfriend [at the moment]... He says that it's just nice to be with her because he feels comfortable being with her. That is the reason why he just feels [good].... [T]his time I don't think he had any intention to...[have sex. Every now and then]... she would sit with us on the table showing some closeness to the Malaysian. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 24 January 2008)

The manifestation of being close to the seafarer presents a form of companionship. I myself as a researcher developed personal friendships with a number of the sex workers over time. My relationship was also governed by an understanding of rules within the relationship such as loyalty and sharing resources (buying beer, lending money, etc.). As one seafarer emphasized:

Yes, only for companionship. I have somebody with me when I am in port. I have a company to eat with. I don't really like sex to be the only reason all the time. For me sex is not the only reason. If you ask me about my personal life, I am not somebody who likes women for sex all the time. [I know] [o]thers die for it. (Second Cook 29)

This kind of interaction, like any social behaviour, is rule-bound (Harré and Secord, 1972). The mutual interaction in this relationship is characterised by constant communication. There is regularity of connectedness thus keeping the link intact. This is normally done by visiting the woman frequently when the ship is in port and sending messages through mobile phones or the Internet when away. This description

gives us a sense of loyalty of the seafarer to a woman in the club. In this relationship, sharing of beliefs and goals between the two individuals are necessary to develop a friendship (Argyle and Henderson, 1984). In this discussion, we talk of friendship as a unique non-sexual bond since friendships may also exist in romantic relationships such as among married couples. Part of the shared belief is a form of understanding wherein the need of the seafarer for companionship and being cared for is addressed by the sex worker as shown:

It was not totally a [romantic] relationship. We were on a liner during that time. What happened was, we became good friends only. If your ship is in port, if you have somebody like her, you will be taken cared of. And it will be only you. She will always accompany you. (Second Cook 29)

Unlike other relationships, friendship does not generally entail financial demands. There is no observed obligation on the part of the seafarer to provide financial help.

Interviewer: *So the relationship was not necessarily based on money?*
Second Cook 29: *Not all. Only 30% would be. Maybe I just met one who is not. I am lucky.*

In fact, this may be one of the reasons why seafarers remain to have the relationship at a friendly level to avoid financial obligations. As other forms of relationships entail money they would prefer to remain friends instead and allow the sex worker to earn from others. This makes sexual intercourse a defining factor of what kind of relationship exists between two individuals.

As for me, I tell her it is up to you if you want to accompany me because I do not have money anymore. This is just the amount of money I have. I tell her that, I know what kind of life you have. You need money to survive. I do not have money anymore. If you want, you go with other [seafarers]. I am the one suggesting to her. It is because I have a wide understanding [and I understand the situation]. Now it is up to you to decide. As I have told you my money is just this much. I don't do any other hanky panky. So we go out. Drink a bit. Then eat. And go home. (Second Cook 29)

In general, however, there is an initiative to reach out financially and address the needs of the sex worker whether in small or large amount. This is how the unique bond develops with some of the women they meet in the clubs. There is an understanding that as a seafarer friend of a sex worker he has the role of extending

financial help without exchanging it with sex. This makes it fair as seafarers receive the companionship they desire and the emotional satisfaction that goes with the friendship. Sex workers provide friendship beyond the nightclub. They would sometimes accompany seafarers to other places such as the beach or go shopping with them and help them out with many needs such as sending remittances to the seafarer families or assist them in buying personal items and groceries.

Another element that strengthens friendships is the ability to understand what makes some seafarers happy such as knowledge of the cultural background of the seafarers similar to the knowledge explained in Chapter 5 during the solicitation process. Knowing the culture of the clients is very important in developing friendly relations. Sex workers are knowledgeable of many facets of the lives of seafarers making their actions usually anticipatory and pro-active. The following exemplifies this:

I was surprised that Bia knows the culture of the Philippines.... For example, she said that she buys bagoong (shrimp paste which is a especial delicacy for Filipino seafarers) from one ship and sell it to the Filipino seafarers of another ship. She had 15 containers of bagoong. She knew that this food delicacy from the Philippines is longed for by the Filipino seafarers... She said that she also likes corned beef which is another favourite of these men. So these women really know what Filipinos like. (Field Notes: Harmony Club, 17 September 2007)

Since Bia works as a ship chandler during the day, she has access to go on board ships. Her ability to source specialty food endears her to many Filipino seafarers. She becomes the middle person transferring goods from one hand to another or from one ship to the other. Thus she is quite popular among Filipino seafarers and is considered a good friend by many. Such characteristics of some of the women strengthen the bond between them and the seafarers, though of course, it cannot be denied that there are always monetary and romantic underpinnings for some of these interactions.

Such friendship, however, is not a well-demarcated relationship. There are still vacillations among the women as some of them still look forward to a sexual relationship probably motivated by financial considerations. Even if a seafarer looks at the interactions as non-sexual, there are plethoric possibilities for them to be

interpreted or construed as more than 'mere' friendship. The closeness that is developed can be regarded sometimes to be on the borderline between a simple friendship and an intimate relationship.

7.2 Love and Romantic Relationships

Within the nightclub, I would normally hear women being called 'girlfriends' and seafarers being called 'boyfriends'. This was an indication for me to investigate further what these terms stood for as they were commonly used within the venue. In fact, many other terms are used to signify a similar relationship borrowed from the different languages of the seafarers such as *mi amor* (my love), *sweetheart*, *honey*, *GF* (short for girlfriend), *syota* (means girlfriend among Filipino seafarers) or *steady* (denotes a steady relationship) among a few. When I asked seafarers what these terms meant, they said that these indicate a romantic relationship being shared between the seafarers and the sex workers. These words defined how two individuals looked at their relationship. It is a social term to identify oneself being in such a status. It is also a way for the sex worker to put a stamp of ownership on the man for others to know.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) have proposed that such a relationship is an attachment process wherein one becomes romantically attached to an adult romantic partner. Such a romantic interaction is one of the forms of relationships identified to develop between some of the seafarers and sex workers. This kind of relationship is characterized by an emotional and affectionate manifestation of behaviour towards each other. Different partners would have varying degrees of relating to each other as these are not heteronormative forms of relationships since sex workers continue to receive clients and seafarers continue to relate to their wives and girlfriends.

One of the main manifestations of the relationship is the regular presence of seafarers in the nightclub and being with their women as expressed by one seafarer:

I think they had encounters for about five to six times during one contract. He called it a relationship, a girlfriend. I would suppose that he supports her.

(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 7 April 2008)

The act of being together means sharing more time with each other and showing or displaying affection. They would normally be vocal about their relationship by telling and confirming their relationship to others. Sometimes, even if they do not divulge this to others yet show affection in public, everyone concludes that they share something especial.

When others get to know a relationship, sex workers take great caution in approaching these attached seafarers. This is to avoid conflict and trouble as it has caused a number of misunderstandings and fights among the women before. In this economic system where sex workers provide similar services, it is inevitable for some women to attempt to snatch from another woman her seafarer. This results into fights particularly if a seafarer is already linked to a certain woman in the club.

One of the manifestations of a romantic relationship is the feeling of love. Thus, I was keen on finding this out. I observed and asked seafarers if there is really love involved with their sex worker girlfriends. Many of them responded that there is always that possibility of falling in love. When I asked them how they would define falling in love, the general responses were towards more than the usual liking and doing things beyond what is expected of any relationship manifested by emotional dependence. As one engineer said:

It seems like you develop feelings for each other because we meet each other everyday. For me, as I am already a bit older what I want with her is somebody I can talk to; somebody who will take care of me and who cares for me. That's what I want... [I]f you want to fall in love you would fall in love.
(Second Officer 13)

Some seafarers described this love as 'irrational love'. Even if they know that they have wives or girlfriends and families back home they would still experience the feeling of love.

Sometimes seafarers fall in love with the women. If one does not know how to control one's emotions, he will forget that he has a family back home. **(Chief Engineer 38)**

For some seafarers, these interactions with the women they have romantic engagements with sometimes go beyond the normal trajectory of fleeting relationships. I heard from a number of seafarers who felt serious in continuing relationships with their women. For example, this specific seafarer changed his plans because of the prodding by his crewmates. He contemplated staying behind to be with a woman he felt he had feelings for even if he has a family back home.

Interviewer: *So after you were introduced to the family [of the sex worker], what happened after that?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *Nothing more because the ship left.*

Interviewer: *But what was in your mind when you were on board the ship? Why did you say you were contemplating to stay behind (jump ship)?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *As I was told by my more senior crewmates on board I should not make quick decisions because there are many [seafarers] who stayed behind [in Brazil] and were not able to leave anymore.*

Interviewer: *How did you think about it?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *I told myself and I was thinking that I have a family [back home].*

With this specific seafarer, he fell for the woman as he was introduced to her family in one occasion. This is why he felt that the woman was sincere to him as he felt she trusted him by allowing him to get into her personal life. A similar story was heard from a bosun who fell in love with women in different ports abroad. In fact, he felt like marrying them.

I fell in love with a woman when we were in Cuba. She was not from the beerhouse. She was a student. I told myself that I would marry her because Cuban women are very pretty. If I bring her to my country her beauty would stand out. Well, I was probably not lucky [because] our relationship broke down until I got transferred to Mexico. In Mexico I fell in love again. I told the woman that I wanted to marry her. She said that she won't marry me if she doesn't live in Mexico and change my nationality to Mexican. But I didn't want. I love my country that's why. (Bosun 18)

With some seafarers this feeling of love pushes them to irrational behaviour. As emotions are heightened, since relationships are experienced within the early phases of their normal trajectory, it drives some seafarers to irrationality. When a seafarer has to separate from the woman as he leaves the port he realizes that there will be a break in the emotional attachment that they feel. If they cannot cope with this feeling they address it by doing drastic measures as related by this cook:

I myself do not understand why some seafarers would die for the love of a woman. One crew... jumped ship. This was two years ago. Jump ship means 'jump ship'—jumped to the sea. He killed himself. What was the reason? There was a letter. According to the Captain, there was an investigation. That seafarer was always calling. He always called (a woman in) Brazil and not [his wife in] the Philippines. My wife went to... meet the wife of that seafarer. (Second Cook 29)

Seafarers eventually would come back to their normal senses. They would realize the foolishness of what they are doing. Other seafarers would normally advise them making the person realise that his feelings and decisions are wrong as shown below:

Ordinary Seaman 30: *After that [relationship], I started thinking that I have a family already.*

Interviewer: *Oh so you had a family?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *Not really. I am just about to. I got my girlfriend...pregnant. Yes, I am still single until now. According to my crewmates, I should not waste my life with this kind of thing [having a relationship with a sex worker] and these kinds of women. In my own country, this is only seen as good time or past time. I should not take things seriously and personally. I told them I am different. I am different from the rest when I am in love [no matter who the woman is].*

On the part of the women, varying forms of emotions would be felt from liking to some form of love. For example, the study of Savitz and Rosen (1988) shows that women 'derive pleasure from both lovers and customers' short of saying falling for the latter. Some seafarers (and sex workers) admitted that women would also feel love for the men.

Interviewer: *How about on the part of the woman? Is there love involved?*

Chief Engineer 38: *There are times that women fall in love.*

This love in fact is manifested by agreeing to shared plans no matter how absurd these plans may be, such as getting married or moving to the country of the seafarer as shown by this story:

I heard from one of the Brazilian women about two Brazilian sex workers who were brought to the Philippines by their Filipino boyfriends. One lives in Manila and one in the islands. They met their boyfriends here in Brazil and they continued their communication later on. It looks like both women have

adapted to life in the Philippines. One of them started a restaurant business.
(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 31 August 2007)

Marriage between seafarers and local women have been observed in Santos making it a real consequence of falling in love and having a romantic relationship. I met one seafarer who stayed behind in Santos to marry a woman he met in the club. He has been staying and working in the city for many years now.

The seafarers said...that the seafarer experienced 'mucho amor' here in Santos. That means he fell in love with one of the women and preferred to stay and jumped ship. There are now a number of seafarers here in Brazil. I have been hearing names. I personally met Joseph. I also have heard of somebody who has a bar in Paranagua. **(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 30 January 2008)**

These examples prove the point that marriage becomes a reality in this kind of interactions. Tabet (1989) reiterates this point of sex work being a continuum from a simple exchange of sex for money to exchange of sex for reproductive purposes within marriage. Though not all relationships would be perfect in the long run as one seafarer experienced:

I met this seafarer who is now here in Santos. He was a seafarer before and now he is married to a local woman...His name is Dodong. I met him while walking outside the seamen's mission...He said that he has not been home for 12 years now. His mother has always been crying...His mother has been wanting to see him. He said he will probably go home...He lives near the seamen's mission and works at the port area. **(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 30 January 2008)**

I started to investigate about this seafarer during the fieldwork to find out the trajectory of such relationships. Sex workers told me that he married a *Brazileira*. I asked one sex worker about his life. This is what Kristiani said:

He jumped off ship in Brazil. He fell in love with a woman in the club. Then he decided to stay in Santos. But after, when he has no more money, the woman left him. This man started living with another woman. The woman helped her. He does not really like her but since she has been very kind to him he cannot leave her. He cannot even go back to his country. I think the woman does not like. Or maybe it is expensive for them to visit his country.
(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 3 April 2008)

It is also interesting to explore how some men think about the women. Some of them are not necessarily seen as sex workers. As I will explain in Chapter 8, this positive outlook towards the women is one reason why they fall in love with them.

But not all persons who take these prostitutes out think of them as only prostitutes. I mean, there are seafarers who fall in love with this kind of women. Even though they are prostitutes. (Third Mate 41)

This awareness and acknowledgement of vulnerability to fall in love with sex workers keep some seafarers on their guard. They try to protect themselves from the risk of falling in love with the sex workers. They become more conscious of their actions. They repress emotions when they deal with them, as some women are quite adept at attracting seafarers.

Chief Engineer 22: *There is something with it. What if your feelings fall for her? That's it.*

Interviewer: *uyyy (laughs)*

Chief Engineer 22: *Right?*

Interviewer: *What do you mean by feelings falling for her?*

Chief Engineer 22: *You fall for her. You feel love for her. It will ruin you. Yes your family [too].*

Interviewer: *How about you, do you control yourself with these things?*

Chief Engineer 22: *Of course.*

Interviewer: *In other words it is only physical?*

Chief Engineer 22: *Only physical. Nothing to do with love.*

Interviewer: *No emotions at all?*

Chief Engineer 22: *None.*

Interviewer: *You never fell not even once?*

Chief Engineer 22: *No.*

These seafarers may admit having sex with sex workers, but normally they would not admit to falling for them thus differentiating this group from those who fall in love.

As another seafarer said:

There is no love that transpires. For me no love is involved. (Chief Engineer 38)

As a compromise for some seafarers, they might not admit falling in love, but they would admit having a relationship short of being romantic. This would be a form of

companionship or friendship.

It did not happen to me. You know, that's only in their mind. Me, during my first time, I did not fall in love. But for companionship I am fine. But to fall in love? No. I have a wide understanding. I was already mature during that time. I was twenty-five years old then. (Second Cook 29)

This seafarer shows how he navigates himself when having sex abroad. Not falling in love is a justification of his action and feels less guilty with the sex. This is the reason why this seafarer identified himself as 'mature' to show that he is responsible. It makes him less guilty by not manifesting any form of romantic feelings for the sex worker, yet still experience the companionship he needs away from his wife or girlfriend.

These differences on the way seafarers manifest a romantic relationship in the context of love show us diverse ways on how this behaviour is expressed. The data also presents a form of general vulnerability among the seafarers and sex workers to succumb to a romantic relationship that may approximate real and normal relationships. They develop a perception that such goes beyond an ordinary economic relationship.

[I]t's not anymore [about] money. It's not anymore economics. I think there's really some feelings...[involved]. The seafarer said, "you know why it's nice here? It's because the women understand the feelings of the men. They understand what we feel. They know how to keep us going. They know how to...make things...work for us. And we feel relieved about it."
(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 10 April 2008)

With women sex workers capable of showing nurturing personalities and with much attention lavished on these men, seafarers become vulnerable to risk, as these 'apparent' normal romantic relationships are not characterized by condom use. These relationships abroad develop because of the presence of elements like love, trust and commitment though not in the form of archetypal relationships as Thomas (1999) has explained about the romantic and sexual relationships formed by UK women during holiday breaks overseas. These forms of relationships developed by seafarers with the local women go with dominant thinking of heterosexual relationships where both experience these factors that are essential in the mutual involvement in the

relationship (Holland *et al.*, 1998; Lees, 1993). In the long run, however, the way they identify the kind of relationship they experience with the women places them at a high risk of exposure to sexually transmitted infections and HIV.

7.3 Having Children

At first, I was surprised to hear that seafarers have children with sex workers all over the ports of Brazil. Later on I was introduced to a number of pregnant women in the nightclub. Then I started to meet their children. After a few months I realized that this is quite common, making me understand that having children is one form of relationship that can exist between a seafarer and a sex worker. Later on, I started to get amused with all the stories such as the following:

I asked why there are many Brazilian women who decide or agree to have children with seafarers. She said it is much worse in Paranagua¹, because sometimes they have a children's party where all these women bring their children. There will be about 20 children of seafarers within the party. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 5 April 2008)

Some of these children live near the nightclub. They would hang around when their mothers are working. Sometimes they would approach their mothers when they need something. These children do not enter the nightclubs though.

Another observation that perplexed me is the phenomenon of sex workers having a number of children with different seafarer fathers—sometimes a combination of different nationalities. There were a number of women who were in this situation. For example, there was this woman Gabriella who had three children with three different Filipino fathers. She was quite good talking in Tagalog, which probably is one reason that endeared her to her Filipino clients.

Gabriella said that she lives near the nightclub. She also has a house in Santos near the vegetable market. She has three children. She showed me their photos. They were two boys and one girl. They are all children of Filipino seafarers. She says that they have different fathers. The children live

¹ Paranagua is a major port city in Brazil. It is south of Santos in the State of Parana.

with their grandmother. I joked with her that her children are very beautiful and that they can be movie stars in the Philippines. She said she is not interested for her children to go to the Philippines. They are aged between 6 and 12. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 31 January 2008)

I got to know more some of these women, as I stayed longer in the field. There were more of them not only in Santos but also in many other parts of the world. Trotter (2007) has documented some of these women in the port of Cape Town. During my fieldwork, there were two obviously pregnant women in the nightclub. One woman was not a sex worker but a phone peddler I introduced in Chapter 4. I kept on asking both seafarers and sex workers why they decided to have children. One reason is having a relationship, as explained by this seafarer:

Look at [Harmony Club]. There are many women with children. That means they don't use condoms. That would mean having relationships. [One has children] when he already knows the woman. They maintain these women. They maintain them. That's why they don't use condoms anymore. (Chief Engineer 22)

Sex workers provided me two reasons why they got pregnant—one is accidental pregnancy while the other is deliberate and planned. Pregnancy is the most obvious manifestation of non-use of condom. The fact that children are born to women with seafarer fathers is an evidence of unprotected sex. Deliberate pregnancy is assumed by everyone as basis for a relationship with the seafarers. I also heard that they go for abortion which is not considered legal in Brazil (Nations *et al.*, 1997). For some of them, getting pregnant may not be a planned event as shown by the following:

Chief Engineer 38: *Some women become pregnant. They are not cautious. Here [in Brazil] women are smart. They look for the seafarer who will take on the responsibility of her pregnancy. These women will look for one.*

Interviewer: *When one gets pregnant how does she know who got her pregnant?*

Chief Engineer 38: *No, it is impossible to know because many seafarers had sexual intercourse with her.*

Interviewer: *You, personally? Did you get somebody pregnant?*

Chief Engineer 38: *No.*

Let us look at another example through the case of Laila. Laila is almost nine months pregnant. She was due within that week. She said she has a baby girl. This will be her fourth child. I was curious why she still has to get pregnant when she has already

three teenage children from a Brazilian father. In fact, the last child is thirteen years old already who was delivered through Caesarean section making an additional pregnancy risky. Laila said that this time would be a normal delivery. She will deliver the baby in a public hospital. She normally has her hospital check up every week this month since it is the last month of her last trimester. The father of the baby is a 54-year old seafarer. He is currently in Poland where their ship is in dry dock. When I asked her why she decided to have a child, this is how she responded:

Laila said that she is already getting old. She said, "I am not going to be working as a prostitute for a long time and I need a stable income. The only way is getting pregnant with somebody who will support me. So this guy is sending me money. He is a Second Engineer, separated from the wife and therefore, the agency sends \$1000 as allotment for me every month." ...So they decided to have a baby. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 5 April 2008)

As shown by Laila, getting pregnant is a conscious decision within some romantic relationships. It is normally a joint decision by the couple. Normally they would provide love as the reason for the pregnancy.

Second Engineer 29: *Those seafarers fall in love with women. These are the ones who have children with them. There at [Harmony Club] there are many women with children of seafarer fathers.*

Interviewer: *I still do not understand why. Is it because the woman wants to have a...baby?*

Second Engineer 29: *Yes that's true. I have a colleague, Third Officer. It was his son. He supported him. I just do not know if until now because it was a long time ago already. Our ship was a liner—Brazil-Europe-Brazil-Europe only. The woman delivered the baby when our ship was in Brazil. Our two cadets even got extra bed sheets [from the ship] to add to the things of the woman. I just do not know what kind of hospital they went to. We saw the baby. You will see the face of the baby. He looked like a...[mixed]Brazilian.*

These women remain as sex workers despite having a child or children. Some even practice their trade while pregnant adding to the complexity of relationships. For example, Laila would still solicit money in exchange for sex once in a while. She had a different way of solicitation using her pregnancy as a means. She was flirting and joking with some of them.

There was this group of seafarers...[with a] pregnant woman (Laila)... She was telling them—"He is the father of my baby <while pointing at a

seafarer>. So tomorrow he will come with me to the hospital. He will pay for the hospital bill because he is the father.” And then, she joked to the other seafarers, “Oh he is the father of the baby.” <pointing at another seafarer> So, I said to her, “You have a lot of godfathers. That means godfather because there are many seafarers who will pay for the hospital bills.” (Fieldnotes: **Harmony Club, 5 April 2008**)

Laila maintains a place in front of the club. She prefers it this way since she has many friends who work in the club. They will be able to help her during the delivery and in taking care of the child. Then she can work in the club every now and then. Her proximity to the club entices her to continue her work despite the fact that she gets financial support from her man. With this example shown by Laila, it is not surprising to hear sexual encounters with pregnant sex workers as shown by the following:

*This pregnant woman told me that... there was a seafarer who was with her the whole time... This woman was complaining that he wanted to have sex...with her even if she was pregnant. In fact, what he did was, he fucked in the ass... [H]e also placed his dick in the vagina of the woman which is not supposed to be because she is really pregnant with a huge baby. I think it was also the fault of the woman because she was seducing him all the time at the club...During the first night, they slept together but nothing happened. But during the second night...they did something. (Fieldnotes: **Harmony Club, 8 April 2008**)*

Such examples make relationships in the club different and unique. These complex relationships veer away from the conventional forms of relationships. It is also within these complex interactions that risk is marked. Having children with sex workers defies traditional and acceptable heteronormative relationship. Obviously, these couples do not become normal families—an interesting piece of research in itself. These women continue to have sex with their clients even if they have relationships.

Within this context, one factor that defines a relationship (at least economic to some extent) is the child. Of course, the seafarer father continues with his work as a seafarer. He is not with the woman all the time except when he is in port. In the long run, however, like in any unconventional relationships, seafarers do not go back to the woman, though some men would continue to support the children.

They have two girls. He sends money every month. That has been a long

relationship, yes, but they never lived exactly together, no. They only have relationship. Just only supporting the kids. The girl is 9 years old and never saw the father. The older one is 13 years old and she knows the father but not the youngest. But he pays. (Mission Pastor 43)

There are also seafarers who totally disconnect themselves from their women and abandon their children as shown by the following:

The child who is now grown up is looking for his father through the mission. His father was a seaman and he doesn't have contact anymore. He knows the name of the father. I found the address of his father. I contacted the consulate and they found the address. I gave him all the information. He would like to know. His mother is... now sick. He would like to ask the father for help. He told me that his father never helped. Not normal. Normally, if they don't help, they go to the court and ask for help if they need help. (Mission Pastor 43)

Since many of these seafarers have families back in their home countries, once they retire they totally forget their women and their children left behind in ports.

7.4 Trajectory of Relationships

Relationships that develop between sex workers and seafarers do not occur at random. It is a process that follows certain patterns. There are a number of elements that have bearing on this behaviour and the relationships that ensues. One is the identity they have imbibed while abroad. There is a common identity that seafarers share when in port. This is expressed normally in their joke about themselves being 'single'. This has become universal and can be heard often. It is normally blurted out more often when they are flirting with women. They normally say, 'of course, when I am in port I am single'. They imbibe this thought and portray themselves as bachelors. They try to present a sense of assurance to the women that they have nothing to worry since they will not have any problem with the wives². It is a way of projecting that they have the right to seek women because they are single and available. It is this identity that plays within their minds making them bolder in continuing some forms of

² This may contradict what was mentioned in Chapter 5 where the seafarers sometimes show photographs of their families. These two have different functions but would have the same effect on getting the woman and her sympathy.

extramarital relationships.

This belief system is reinforced by what they see among their colleagues in the industry. Role modelling as a way of learning is common in any organization. Within the maritime industry, seafarers learn vicariously what others do through stories or through observations. There were times during my interactions with the seafarers that I learned how they base their actions on that of others. This is shown in their sexual risk-taking behaviours too. Some justify their actions based on the behaviours of their colleagues. If they feel that they are not different from the others they are assured that having relationships is but normal.

Another way of thinking that some seafarers share is their outlook towards compensating for lost opportunities in life as shown by the following:

After working for a long time on board, and then you get older, for some that's the time they start doing foolish things. I know why they start doing these...especially if he is an official... Maybe during those times they studied very hard. They did not do any other thing except to be good so that they will finish early, right? And be able to get the diploma. After which, be able to go on board. Then they review, take the exam, and they will be promoted again, until he becomes a Second Officer, Third Officer, and now it's possible [to do these things]. (Second Cook 29)

Thus, for some seafarers engaging with sex workers becomes a form of incentive after having missed out on these kinds of activities. Since they were not able to engage in them during their younger years they compensate by doing such in the present. As the seafarer continued to remark:

Yes, because that time you were not able to do it when you were a young man... [T]hat time you were just studying. Did he enjoy his single and young life before? No. Right? (Second Cook 29)

This explains why some seafarers continue to enjoy these relationships, from having sex to other forms of relationships with commercial sex workers.

That is why I know many high ranking with positions higher than mine like captain, chief engineer, who have wives, who [go to] the beer house. Generally there are many who are like that. They eventually have a long time

relationship sometimes. (Bosun 18)

This is not only common with officers but also with the ratings. During the interviews, I would normally ask seafarers the difference in practice between officers and ratings, young and old, and married and single. I thought this would enable me to identify possible comparative variables that shape these risky behaviours. Results showed no differences.

Interviewer: *Is there a difference between single and married seafarers in going to bars and picking up women?*

Second Engineer 16: *None. They are just the same.*

When everyone is out, positions equalize and do not matter when looking for women. (Second Cook 29)

This establishes one point that no trend can be established when they engage in these relationships. If there were any difference, it would be between the young and the old with regards to their ability to perform in bed. Advanced age seems to affect a seafarer's performance in bed, which this study found to have an effect on risk as presented in the next chapter.

There is however a difference when it comes to nationalities and cultures. According to the pastor at the seamen's mission, different nationalities have different ways of looking at relationships with sex workers abroad or probably any woman for that matter as shown below:

Mission Pastor 43: *Filipino seafarers...are like Brazilians...even if you are married you may have maybe one or two women behind your first wife. The most important is your wife and your children. But for the Germans, they don't think like that. They have the woman but it is not so normal to have another woman behind.*

Interviewer: *What kind of relationships, do these seafarers develop with these sex workers?*

Mission Pastor 43: *They will have a relationship with the same woman maybe for three consecutive nights. They come back. Maybe they phone the women but won't maintain relationships like the Germans.*

Some relationships continue because of the continuity of financial dependence of the

sex workers on the men. Support provides economic assistance to the woman at the same time keeps the relationship together as it enables constant and active communication. Take for example the case of Raquel. Even if her boyfriend is in another port city of Brazil, they still maintain their communication as she continues to be supported.

I was [always] wondering how Raquel earns money. Normally she does not force her clients to have sex with her if they do not like. So I was asking her where she gets money for food. She told me the other night that she gets money from a seafarer who stays in Vittoria³. But she does not want to go there because...it will be very expensive because of the hotel and because she does not know many people there. So it just adds to the problem. Even if she gets money from this guy, it would not really help her a lot so she might as well stay in Santos. And then it is better for her. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, April 5 2008)

Seafarers take on the breadwinner role in the relationship. After some time the money paid for sex becomes an obligation and a responsibility instead of a form of payment. Even if they were away on board, some of them would still send money to their women similar to the way they send money to their families back home. This financial obligation is more emphasized when their women bear their children as we saw in the section on having children. Money is provided on a regular basis or whenever the seafarer visits. Earlier, I provided the reason why having a permanent relationship makes it 'cheaper' for the seafarers, thus more advantageous. Sending money is also seen as a commitment by the seafarer. The fact that there is continuity of support shows some form of stability of the relationship, which may end up in real romance.

There is one seaman who has...a woman from Rio De Janeiro...She is a prostitute...very beautiful, very nice... He remains in contact with the woman and every month he sends her 150 Euros...Now he came to Brazil to have more contact with her... He is not married. When a person is not married, maybe he falls in love with a beautiful woman. (Mission Pastor 43)

For some women, when it is convenient to follow the seafarer in different ports of Brazil they would go. This will keep them physically together. The woman either takes the plane or the bus while the man is on board the ship. They will rendezvous in

³ Vittoria is another major port city in Brazil.

hotels or nightclubs.

We see here patterns where the prostitutes go from one place to another to follow their men. It's because of the support that they have. So now, I am getting a picture of what I have heard before and indeed these things are factual. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 5 April 2008)

If the seafarer goes to another country they communicate through the Internet. Thus, it is not surprising to hear from seafarers alluding to relationships when email addresses are exchanged.

Interviewer: *So you had a relationship with the sex worker?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *Yes. She even gave me her email address.*

For this seafarer, receiving an email address is significant. With electronic mail as a means of convenient communication particularly amongst individuals distant from each other, receiving an email address becomes an act of continuing the seeming connectedness that exists. Many seafarers and sex workers have experience with virtual communication as they use this with regularity to communicate with their families. Another method of communication is by sending mobile messages.

Sasha asked me to send a message to this seafarer who keeps on sending her messages such as "I miss you". One time he sent a message telling her that the ship is going to arrive on 15 March and that she should wait. He was using a crude Portuguese-Spanish mix type of language. Sasha doesn't really speak English. So she asked me to send messages to him in Tagalog. There were many 'I love you's'. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 8 March 2008)

This situation also shows how language and technology are utilized in coping with long distance relationships. Even if the seafarer is away at sea, given the reach of communication technology, it becomes easy for them to keep in touch thus maintaining the needed connectedness.

If the seafarer is in the city, sex workers also communicate through letters. There was one occasion that Bia asked me to write a letter to one of her boyfriends who was not able to go to the club since he was on duty. She asked me to write it in Tagalog while she dictated in English. It went this way:

Dear Mahal,

How are you? Let us see each other tomorrow. Call me and let us meet by the gate. I will go there. Even just for five minutes that we can meet I will be very happy. It is because I already miss you very much. Call me through my number.

Love, Bia

(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 16 September 2007)

The letter was sent to the seafarer through his crewmates who were in the nightclub. This is one of the ways sex workers maintain and sustain connectedness. Additionally, sex workers also use their knowledge of the culture to endear them to their seafaring clients.

Many relationships come to an end. Some may end, but for some lucky women, support continues as presented by the conversation:

Mission Pastor 43: *There is one very interesting seaman. He has a woman here for a long time. He was a married German. He sends money for a very long time... [H]e is sending money because I think in his mind he had a good time with this woman.*

Interviewer: *Are they still together?*

Mission Pastor 43: *No, but he still is sending money. They don't have a child but he is still sending money...His last desire is to continue sending the money...I talked with him around 3 months ago ...[and] he would like to send money and help the woman.*

With others, relationships end when obligations are not fulfilled. A lack of interest by the seafarer on the woman also results in most relationships ending. Let us take for example this seafarer who used to be the boyfriend of Karen. He did not like her anymore because he thinks she has gotten fat, meaning she is not physically attractive anymore.

[The] seaman admitted [to me] that he does not want...Karen [anymore] because she is fat. He is not interested with her anymore. But Karen was so persistent. In fact she bought a souvenir cap for him because he is the boyfriend. But she cannot give the cap to him because he was with another woman... So Karen kept asking me to talk to the seafarer. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 7 April 2008)

This seafarer told me earlier at the seamen's mission that he wanted to end the relationship by showing Karen that he was already with another sex worker so as not to be bothered by her. As these relationships are not formally discussed at the start, there is also no formal discussion when they end. Sometimes they literally just fade away.

7.5 Wives on Sex Workers

Wives and girlfriends play important roles in the sexual behaviour of seafarers. They are influential in the lives of these men as they are personally involved in many aspects of their lives. Besides, they would also be at risk to HIV/AIDS and STIs since they have unprotected sex with their husband seafarers. Thoughts of these women and the children sometimes deter the seafarer from having sexual relationships abroad as mentioned by one seafarer:

I do not use woman for making love, I am married...because I love my wife...I dream for the family. (Second Mate 40)

Those seafarers who engage in relationships are aware of the circumstances that might befall upon their wives thus they practice with caution when engaging with sex workers.

I asked the seafarer if he gets women whenever he goes to the port. He said he does but normally he is very cautious... He mentioned that he normally uses condoms all the time for safety reasons... He is concerned about his wife and children because they are growing up. Though this seafarer also did not use condoms a few times. He added that it depends on the situation. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 4 March 2008)

The family becomes the major reason not to engage in risky activities. They normally say that they do not want to ruin their families. This would mean not contracting diseases and not losing one's job as their families rely on them.

Chief Engineer 22: *That's why safety should be prioritized by oneself. Later on [in case one gets AIDS] what will happen to your family? What if you get sick?*

Interviewer: *Will insurance not help?*

Chief Engineer 22: *What insurance? Good if you die onboard the ship [with AIDS]? What if you die on land? You will have to suffer and wait for another ten years. You will have a lot of skin diseases. <pointing at his skin>*

Wives are normally aware of the sexual engagements of their husbands. Since wives are not in favour of these relationships, seafarers sometimes have to lie about their whereabouts.

Whenever I go to South America, I always tell my wife that we are in Africa. Or else she really gets jealous and angry. She knows that the clubs in South America are famous for their beautiful women. Probably she has some knowledge about seafarers having women abroad. Maybe she heard it from the media or from other people. I just do not tell her that I am in South America. If I say Africa, she will not question it because she knows that we normally do not get women in Africa. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 30 January 2008)

Some seafarers however feel that their behaviour abroad is generally accepted by their wives and girlfriends. Their distance from them is used as a rationale for such engagements as mentioned by this engineer:

It is understood because I am far from my wife and we are away from each other for a long time. That's why it is a bit accepted already. (Chief Engineer 22)

This acceptance by some of the wives is shown by acts like secretly placing condoms in the luggage of their husbands to remind them that they are aware of this activity. This action of the wives is a manifestation of tolerance on their part. They tolerate these relationships abroad knowing that they are the breadwinners, that they work hard on board, and that such relationships abroad would have no bearing on their relationship since they would go back home eventually. This acceptance does not make seafarers feel guilty about being infidelity. As one bosun defended:

Here on board you are always stressed. You are always tired. Then you miss your family. You are far from your family. All the needs being satisfied by your wife you don't get it on board. That is the logic why the culture becomes lenient when it comes to seafarers. Your contract is for twelve months. Then you have vacation for three months only. During these times it is not easy to say that you are perfectly faithful to your wife. (Bosun 18)

Seafarers also explain that having sex with women sex workers does not mean that they do not love their wives, making it an act that would have no repercussions on their marriage.

Interviewer: *Does it mean that when you have sex with sex workers you do not love your wife anymore?*

Chief Engineer 38: *No. It has nothing to do with it. I pay to have sex with sex workers. There is no love involved with them.*

There are wives though who actively intervene to stop such relationships and behaviour of their seafaring husbands abroad. Unfortunately, there are seafarers who continue to take risks no matter what interventions are done.

Just like our Third Mate, we cannot do anything anymore. He has a different thinking now even if he has a family. The wife is already begging. We were even involved. The wife knows because he told her. We were told by the wife that we should not lend him money anymore so that he won't go out and go to the bars. (Bosun 23)

If relationships and sexual engagements cannot be avoided, seafarers just take precautions when they do it. They are aware of the consequences and the risk that they would carry back home to their wives, partners and family. Some of them are quite cautious when they sexually engage with other women as shown by the following:

Ordinary Seaman 30: *I do not go down to lick the pussy.*

Interviewer: *How come you don't go down?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *It would be alright if she was my wife.*

Interviewer: *What if the woman is clean anyway?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *Even so, I don't like.*

Interviewer: *How about the woman, is it alright if she is the one who goes down?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *It's alright with me. It's up to her to do things for me. <laughs>*

When seafarers go back home to their wives, they have various ways of navigating risk. For example, during one instance, the condom of a seafarer broke during the sexual intercourse. This seafarer was afraid that he might have gotten infected. After his contract this is what he did:

When he arrived home, he was not having sex with his wife. His wife however was insisting to have sex. So he went at once to the clinic to get tested with all the possible sexually transmitted diseases. Since HIV test result would come out one week after, he needed to wait. His wife wanted to have sex. He said, "No, I am really tired. Let us do it some other time." He passed the first night. The second night, he called his sister so that they can drink until two o'clock in the morning so he has a reason not to have sex with his wife. Eventually, after a few days of not having sex, he got the results and it was negative. He suddenly just rushed and had sex with his wife. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 7 April 2008)

The wife was a bit worried during the first few days thinking that her husband might not be interested anymore with her. So his wife was relieved that they were having sex again.

Another seafarer related another story on how he navigated avoiding transmission of a sexually transmitted infection to his wife. This time the seafarer got one because he did not use condom when he had sex in India. When he arrived in his country he suddenly was experiencing "the drip". He did the following then:

I went at once to a clinic... They said that I was having gonorrhoea. The doctor told me not to have sex with my wife⁴. The doctor provided me with a strong antibiotic. He injected me by my butt. So I did not have sex with my wife for two weeks. Actually she already wanted to have sex with me upon my arrival. But I was refusing. She was wondering why. So I told her that I was experiencing frequent urination problem and that I have to go to the doctor. I never admitted anything to my wife about it until now. I stood my ground.' (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 30 January 2008)

These situations show the various implications of having sex abroad and their complexity with reference to the wife, girlfriend and the children. The numerous perspectives seafarers have on the role of the family on their sexual behaviour abroad show us the nuances of the different factors that influence these different behaviours. As one sex worker said in a study by Carpenter (1998): 'Men are not like us. They like their wives and children, but they just want that bit extra. But they come to us and then they go home again and everyone's happy.'

⁴ The incubation period of gonorrhoea is one week to one month.

7.6 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter raises many issues on concepts and dynamics of prostitution, gender and embodiment. In the previous chapter, I ended by stating that treating sexual services as commodities or goods in an enterprise to be exchanged for a price is too simplistic an approach. I have shown through the findings that prostitution goes beyond the simple contract of exchange as corroborated by many authors such as Scoular (2004), Oerton and Phoenix (2001) and Satz (1995). This chapter expounds on that point by presenting some of the typologies of relationships that develop between seafarers and sex workers beyond a simple economic framework.

The relationships observed to develop thrive within the context of ‘democratic intimacies’ described by Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) and Giddens (1992) where traditions are sidelined and lovers reconstitute a more liberal approach as part of the changes in intimate life. These resulting relationships are not distinctly defined as they are not traditional heteronormative relationships that society prescribes. These relationships, however, are shown to have the semblance and qualities of normal relationships. Kesler (2002) refers to this as ‘simulated intimacy’ reifying the uniqueness of prostitution. Seafarers and sex workers try to approximate and fit into the concepts of social units our society appreciates though short of their exact meaning. For example, to have children cannot be defined as a family unit because many of the elements of a family do not exist, although financial support and communication do. Thus, these relationships can be thought of as hybrid forms.

This complexity is exemplified for example by the way they frame these relationships by basing them on unique social concepts defined by certain elements such as sex (client versus companionship), child (parents versus ordinary clients), financial support (serious relationship versus ordinary acquaintance/client), condom use (boyfriend versus client), and marriage (husband-wife versus boyfriend-girlfriend). These concepts redefine and reconstitute the behaviour of seafarers and sex workers. For example, a seafarer should not get jealous when the sex worker has sex with another seafarer. The marital status of the seafarer has no bearing on his relationship with sex workers as seafarers have ways of rationalizing and emotionally reconciling *multiple* relationships. This may be justified by the fact that in many cultures it is

socially acceptable for men to have mistresses thus providing a cultural resource for permitting and justifying these extramarital affairs. This can also be explained by the ‘detraditionalisation’ thesis (Monaghan and Robertson, 2012) whereby the individual carves out his own intimate life with more freedom rather than dictated by norms.

The continuity of these relationships is determined by various factors as alluded to in many parts of this thesis. This includes the various determinants and motivations in frequenting the club and engaging with women and having sex with them. The way the seafarers communicate with their girlfriends is similar to the way they connect with their families. Continuity of relationship is salient in the context of risk as it has bearing on the heightened vulnerability of the seafarers given the fact that laxity in protected sex is more common in closer relationships. Another major reason for the strong bond that keeps them together is the emotional tie that exists such as the perception and feeling of love. As the cliché goes “love keeps us together” pertaining to the role of emotional connectedness.

Most relationships that develop come to an end, as these hybrid forms are not seen to be stable and sustainable. One major reason contributing to the end of this trajectory is when a seafarer does not anymore go back to the same port such as due to retirement or end of seafaring career. Everything else follows as a consequence—no more financial support, no physical togetherness, and waning long distance communication. As money is one binding factor in a relationship, lack of it will unbind it. End of communication severs the ties.

If ever long distance communication exists at first, relationships eventually fade, as he will not see the woman anymore and interest wanes. Lastly, if the seafarer continues to work, new relationships will develop again in other ports pushing other relationships to oblivion. As earlier explained, these are unusual and complicated hybrid of relationships not meant to last. Robertson and Monaghan (2012) may see some of this relationships characterized by ‘confluent love’ which they describe as ‘relationships remain[ing] good only whilst they seem mutually beneficial to both parties’.

These relationships develop within specific social context and not by chance

(Pateman, 1988). For example, these transactions occur within a sexist capitalist and patriarchal system where women sell sexual services for lack of a better paying alternative (Kesler, 2002). This is shown by the desperation of some of the women to get as many customers as possible to earn more employing different approaches in the solicitation process. As Kesler (2002: 227) argues, 'some women are more concerned with economic stability than sexual satisfaction, so that prostitution serves men's sexual needs and women's economic needs'. However, it is also suggested some women are having their sexual needs met through prostitution shown by the fact that women also choose the clients they want.

For some of them, this economic dependence lead them to these forms of relationships that may be primarily founded on financial reasons but muddled up by affective persuasions with the infusion of personal sacrifices as they become emotionally attached. As Overall (1992) noted, prostitution 'entails surrender of personal power and control and loss of independence on the part of women who engage in it'. The argument that sex workers have freely chosen this profession and manifest their agency for 'free choice' and 'consent' does not hold true all the time as prostitution is not monolithic and reveals more complexity under the current patriarchal capitalist system (Kesler, 2002).

On the part of the seafaring clients, it is argued that addressing their sexual needs provided by sex workers is part of the constellation of embodied pleasures. The different sexual relationships presented in this chapter are manifestations of eroticism and vibrant physicality from a fleeting form to an enduring type. The data walked us through male embodiment in its various modalities and corporeal concerns. Data might have presented elements of intimacy linked to the typologies of relationships entered into by the seafarers, however, the context by which these relationships are created and the meanings seafarers attach to these interactions also need to be considered. Seafarers who engage with sex workers and who go through these experiential embodiments would attach different meanings thus different significance of relationships as they accord different forms of physicality and sensuality. This makes the embodied masculine heterosexuality of seafarers highly nuanced impacting on the way they navigate some of the risky and transgressive sexual encounters.

The embodiment of emotions presented by the seafarers shows to be a continuous process of shaping and reshaping as they engage in different heterosexual relationships with different women at home and abroad impacted by different structures and processes. It is in the context of this study on global seafarers I echo what Robertson and Monaghan (2012) argue that “in advocating an embodied sociological approach, we envisage such research would foreground different men’s corporeal meanings, practices and relations while also critiquing increasingly global neoliberal processes that impact everyday lives within and beyond hegemonic heterosexual configurations”.

Chapter 8

Navigating Risk: Bodies and Condoms

Interviewer: *How many times did you ejaculate?*

Ordinary Seaman: *Twice.*

Interviewer: *Did you use condoms?*

Ordinary Seaman: *I asked her if she was safe and clean. She said, 'how do you think do I look? Do I look dangerous?' Maybe you are the one who is dangerous.' That's why I just went on to have sex with her. Then I ejaculated inside since I was already in anyway.*

(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)

This was my very first day of fieldwork in the nightclub. The response of the ordinary seaman got me enthusiastic of the possible days ahead—if seafarers are open to discuss their sexual behaviours and activities, my study would capture such a rich data. The negotiation process of condom use he related provided a very interesting glimpse to their intimate and personal interactions. As I wrote on my fieldnotes:

Reflecting back on what happened...in the club, I found it a very overwhelming experience and at the same time happy with the outcome of the very first day. I was a bit shocked though to find out that the very first hour on my very first official fieldwork, I have met a seafarer who had sexual intercourse twice...without using condoms! This just proves...that the problem still remains. To know that he has a wife is more shocking!

(Fieldnotes: Seamen's Mission, 2 September 2007)

I was surprised by the response of this twenty-six year old seafarer. I thought he was quite open telling me his story considering that he was not even drunk to be uninhibited to discuss personal matters; and we just met during that night. If I capture many of such behaviours, I thought it would really be a mine of data. However, I felt some sadness too. This is one seafarer who is just starting his career and who just recently got married. Why did he not use a condom?

Condom use is central to this study. Given the fact that majority of HIV transmission among heterosexuals is through vaginal intercourse, condom use becomes a paramount issue. In this chapter, I will discuss the various issues that revolve around the use of condom among seafarers when they have sex with sex workers. The first section explores their attitudes towards condoms. It is followed by a discussion of some pervasive myths, beliefs and practices unique to the seafaring sector that have an impact on their condom use. The third section presents how seafarers assess the cleanliness of women sex workers and how this process guides their sexual behaviour. This is followed by an exposé on the conduct of condom negotiations and bargaining. The final part is a discussion of the impact of sexual performance and physical and physiological determinants and alcohol. Through these discussions, I will try to present the nuances and complexity of condom use. I will explore the practice in relation to risk, gender and the body. Some of the issues I will discuss here were already alluded to in the previous chapters. They will be expounded on here.

8.1 Attitude towards Condoms

Condom use has never been accorded so much interest until the advent of HIV/AIDS. The proper use of the latex condom is a well-established method to decrease the risk of transmission of HIV and other STIs substantially, particularly within heterosexual sexual encounters (Feldblum *et al.*, 2003; Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, 1993a, 1993b; Weller, 1993; Grimes, 1992). Condom distribution and promotion have become a fundamental element of any HIV prevention programme. Despite all these programs within the maritime sector, condom use remains unpopular among seafarers.

This study is grounded on the premise that there is a general dislike for condoms among seafarers similar to that of the general male population as presented in the review of literature. Many impressions came out regarding condoms, which are consistent with the findings of many studies such as those of Abdullah *et al.* (2002) and Warner and Steiner (2002). Their dislike for condoms is anchored on pleasure (seen also by Fajans *et al.*, 1994), comfort and convenience (seen also by Suyenta *et al.*, 2000; Chapman and Hodgson, 1988) as shown by the following:

No I will not. I do not like it. Of course it is not pleasurable using condoms. It feels like your sex organ is not going inside the woman. (Chief Engineer 38)

According to the interviews, condoms affect sexual intercourse and disrupt the attainment of pleasure, as it is perceived to be a barrier or obstacle to the contact of flesh.

Yes, if possible [I do not want to use condoms]... It is because you do not feel anything. Just like what others say—because there seems to be a barrier or an obstacle. There is a barrier for skin-to-skin contact...I cannot really explain because others really say that it is better not to use condom. It is like eating candy with a wrapper. (Second Engineer 16)

The concept of barrier or obstacle is captured by their own lingo using the words ‘wrapper’ or ‘raincoat’ as shown below:

Chief Engineer 38: *When I am sure that the woman is not sick, I do not use a ‘raincoat’... It feels like eating a candy with its wrapper, that’s one.*

Interviewer: *Are you not satisfied with a condom on?*

Chief Engineer 38: *It is really different when there is a cover... It is really different if you wear a ‘raincoat’.*

Interviewer: *Even if you use ultra-thin?*

Chief Engineer 38: *Yes, even so. It is really different.*

This ‘raincoat’ analogy has been mentioned by Chapman and Hodgson (1988) in their article—‘Showers in Raincoats: Attitudinal Barriers to Condom Use in High-Risk Heterosexuals’. Chapman and Hodgson refer to a condom as a ‘raincoat’, which protects an individual from the rain. Barriers diminish sensation depriving one of a good sexual intercourse. It means a waste of money if they pay a sex worker and use a condom with her.

If you want to use condom, you might as well not have sex...Nothing. It’s useless. As if you are not having sex. (Ordinary Seaman 30)

As there is no flesh-to-flesh contact, individuals do not feel that they are having sex with another person. As one seafarer said:

“I never use condoms. Having a condom is like having sex to a rubber. I do not like it.”—according to one seafarer. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 30 January 2008)

When I asked one seafarer about his definition of sex, he replied that there should be no use of condom and no withdrawal during sexual intercourse. I asked him why and he replied:

That’s the height of pleasure. You have to be inside the vagina of the woman. Sometimes the woman wants it that you ejaculate inside her. You have to put inside her all your sperm. (Chief Engineer 22)

Such statements somewhat contradict the fact that there is high awareness of AIDS among seafarers. This shows that knowledge does not translate into correct behaviour. Furthermore, some of this knowledge is erroneous which adds to the seafarers’ risk behaviour. There is a vacillation in their behaviour whether to use condoms or not which became more pronounced with the emergence of HIV/AIDS. Back then, it was not common to use condoms (which were not promoted before) when the risk of contracting HIV was very low. It was common to get infected by other STIs before which were fortunately treatable.

These individuals who engage in unprotected sex are seen not to have a perception of risk thus the reason for their dangerous behaviour as shown in the following:

Able-Bodied Seaman 35: *They say that they do not enjoy when they use a condom. It is not alright with them [to use one].*

Interviewer: *Don’t they think that they will have problems?*

Able-Bodied Seaman 35: *They say not really.*

One plausible explanation forwarded by Carter *et al.* (1999) is having ‘perceptions of low risk’. This is one reason why others think that those who do not use condoms ‘risk their lives’. These individuals cannot fathom the possible consequences brought about by the non-use of condom.

Interviewer: *Why do some seafarers not use condoms?*

Chief Engineer 38: *I do not know with them. For them they probably do not care about their lives.*

Interviewer: *Why are some still hard-headed?*

Chief Engineer 38: *That's for them. They gamble with their lives. They think they are always lucky.*

Interviewer: *As if they play with their lives?*

Chief Engineer 38: *Because once you have sex and you do not use a condom, you do not know if the woman is a carrier.*

Interviewer: *Probably it depends on the woman?*

Chief Engineer 38: *Exactly. Who knows? Nobody knows if the woman is infected or not.*

Interviewer: *Come to think of it, regrets are at the end.*

Chief Engineer 38: *Yes. There are no regrets at the beginning anyway. And you know these diseases anyway. Regrets are always at the end. That's why always think of safety for oneself. Later on who knows what will happen to your family. What if you get sick?*

In summary, data gathered show that many seafarers prefer not to use condoms because of many reasons. Some seafarers criticize this behaviour as gambling one's life. This behaviour is shaped by various factors, which I will explain in the succeeding sections.

8.2 Myths, Beliefs and Practices

Seafarers have a certain way of thinking that governs their actions when it comes to the use of condom. This is akin to a belief system similar to the health belief model as explained by Strecher and Rosenstock (1997). In this section, I will present some of the ways their sexual behaviours are influenced by these myths and beliefs of which some have been commonly followed and have become a tradition. These beliefs are also used in navigating sexual relationships and the risk of HIV/AIDS and other STIs as they are shaped within their subculture (Hart and Flowers, 1996).

8.2.1 Withdrawal as a Prevention Method

Both sex workers and seafarers normally do not want pregnancy as a result of unprotected sexual encounter. Since some of them do not like using condoms, they practice withdrawal as their best means of avoiding pregnancy. As they see this as an adequate contraceptive method, they think of it as equally effective in preventing the transmission of HIV and STIs as explained by the following seafarer:

Ordinary Seaman 30: *I do not ejaculate in her. And I do not like it.*

Interviewer: *Where do you ejaculate?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *Just on her body.*

Interviewer: *What do you do? Do you do withdrawal?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *Yes, I pull my penis out... Yes, I am really doing withdrawal. Yes, I practice withdrawal.*

Interviewer: *Why do you do withdrawal?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *It is to avoid those kinds of diseases.*

Interviewer: *What do you mean by that?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *It is to avoid diseases. Who knows? Like "the drip"*

Interviewer: *So you practice withdrawal to avoid getting gonorrhoea? What do you mean by that?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *It's because it's difficult to get sick on board like having "the drip".*

In his explanation, there is a confusion between an effective contraceptive method and an effective STI prevention method. This probably emanates from the idea of condoms being effective for both. Even if pregnancy is prevented through withdrawal, the mere fact that there was unprotected sex already exposed the individuals to risk.

8.2.2 Withdrawal Causes Illness

In contrast to the above, some seafarers do not practice withdrawal as they believe that it will cause some ill effects. They believe that it is necessary to ejaculate inside the vagina and consummate the sexual process. This is how it is explained by some seafarers:

Why do I have to pull my dick out? That's why you use a woman for sex... In that case [if you want to do withdrawal] you just masturbate then... Why do I have to pull it out when it is pleasurable? ... Withdrawal is bad. It will make you impotent because it will have an effect on your testicles. There is a side effect as many people say. Also, the woman will feel irritated because she will not be satisfied. (Chief Engineer 22)

This belief dictates that seafarers ejaculate inside the vagina thus preventing them from either using condoms or practicing withdrawal. One of the explanations I have gathered from casual conversations is that the sudden halting of ejaculation will result in blockage of sperm, accumulation of sperm, and pain. This of course predisposes them to very high risk as the sexual act is unprotected.

8.2.3 Concept of 'Suction Effect'

This is probably the most interesting concept that was commonly mentioned by the seafarers whenever I asked them why they do not want to use condoms. They believe that 'suction effect' explains why there is no transmission of any STI if a proper manoeuvre is done during the sexual act which is basically withdrawal in the middle of ejaculation. This manoeuvre is not, however, a simple form of withdrawal. There is a certain timing when the penis has to be pulled out. This is done halfway of the ejaculation process. The process and logic is explained by the following:

Motorman 20: *Yes, it is like there is a vacuum... After you ejaculate inside the vagina, the penis sucks in things. This means that you have to pull your penis out before ejaculating. First, you will ejaculate. After you ejaculate, [if you don't pull it out] something will go back inside your penis.*

Interviewer: *So this means you will pull out when ejaculating? You don't ejaculate everything inside?*

Motorman 20: *No. If you ejaculate everything inside, all the sperm are out, then there will be a 'suction effect'. You don't ejaculate everything inside the vagina. You ejaculate halfway and pull your penis out to avoid 'suction effect'.*

Given their background and their exposure to engines, the physics of suction becomes the basis of their explanation of the concept plus the fact that they seem to have some information about the anatomy of the reproductive organs as shown by the following:

[T]o avoid STIs when you ...do not want to use a condom, do not ejaculate inside...so there will be no 'suction effect'. When you have sex and...you ejaculate inside the...vagina...you absorb the disease because your sex organ is immersed in the vagina...Your dick is immersed in the fluids of the woman so you pull it out before you ejaculate. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 4 March 2008)

This kind of information that governs their actions becomes a major contributing factor that leads them to take risks. This drives the point that there are many factors in the construction of risk and the transmission of HIV which emanate from different cultural elements as noticed by Jones and Candlin (2003) and Tan (1995).

8.2.4 Sense of Invincibility

There are seafarers who believe that they are not vulnerable to STIs thus it is not necessary to use condoms. One of the reasons cited is their not getting infected with any disease despite their high risk behaviour. This is affirmed through regular HIV testing which they undergo. As one seafarer said:

I have been undergoing medical examination every year. I always have an AIDS test. Despite my promiscuity and sexual adventures, I never got HIV. Maybe I am not really prone to the infection. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 10 February 2008)

The maritime industry works with a healthy workforce. Screening those who are healthy from those who are not is done through medical examination by clinics in their home countries (Carter, 2009; Mouchtouri *et al.*, 2010). This results in the ‘healthy worker effect’ in the industry. Those who are not fit are not employed. This examination includes HIV test¹ (Nikolic, 2010; Guevara *et al.*, 2010; Saniel, 2010; Mulic *et al.*, 2010). Such testing has been going on for almost a decade now. Since seafarers are tested on a regular basis before a contract², they feel that they develop a certain immunity to it. They are used to the testing and just accept it as a normal routine. This finding echoes the meta-analysis done by Weinhardt *et al.* (1999) that testing ‘is not an effective primary prevention strategy for uninfected’ individuals.

Seafarers seem to have been accustomed to this testing that they do not give much importance to it. This even strengthens their resolve to continue their sexual adventurousness in ports. A continued negative result year after year reinforces this sexual behaviour. Thus after many years they believe that they would never get any disease as proven by the test. Instead of continued safe sexual behaviour, their risky sexual behaviour continues.

¹ Even if this is not supposed to be done for purposes of eligibility, maritime countries still perform the test. I have gathered that they do not perform pre- and post-counselling which violates universal agreements. Probably, the maritime industry is the only sector where it is ‘allowed’ not to hire those who are HIV positive. This is thought to be due to the fact that insurance companies do not want to provide long term payment for people found to be infected with the virus while on contract.

² Those who come from developing countries are tested more often than those who come from European countries. They have more pre-employment medical examinations because they are always on contract.

Other seafarers may get other forms of STIs but not HIV. As HIV is more dreaded they look at STI as less risky thus are never alarmed when they contract one. This seafarer started to believe then that AIDS does not exist because he did not get it.

They say that there is AIDS. I do not think so. I have been infected three times by VD (venereal disease), but I never got it. I do not use condom most of the time.’ (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 5 April 2008)

This shows the feeling of invincibility to HIV of some seafarers. They are not able to grasp that there is no difference between contracting STIs and HIV as they share similar behavioural determinants (Fleming and Wasserheit, 1999).

8.2.5 Differential Risks

Another interesting finding that I gathered is the perception of some seafarers that some women are less risky compared to others. For example, this seafarer compared Caucasian sex workers and those from the Philippines.

Ordinary Seaman 30: *[T]he sex workers in the Philippines are much worse than the Caucasian sex workers.*

Interviewer: *Why?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *Because with the Caucasians, I did not contract any disease. In the Philippines, I got infected once...After my contract I was alright when I arrived in Manila. When I arrived there I got a sex worker. I told myself that the capability of women to infect with a disease is high.*

Interviewer: *You mean you got infected there?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *Yes, I got infected there. <laughs>*

Such experiences of these men shape their thinking and belief system. In this case, the seafarer started thinking that some women are more risky than others. Similar words were said by another seafarer:

I have been having sex with prostitutes even in the worst areas like India. I did not get any STD for ten years now. Funny part is, I only got it in my own country.’ (Chief Engineer 24)

As some of these men have sex in different countries, they are able to compare different women thus creating a way of thinking that different women present different degrees of risk. This is translated into non-use of condom in countries where

they believe the women are safe. This brings us to the next issue which is how seafarers know that a sex worker is clean or not.

8.3 Assessing Women

One of the ways by which seafarers navigate the risk of HIV/AIDS in sexual relationships is by assessing the cleanliness of the sex workers. A 'clean' woman means being free from any STI most specifically HIV. She is seen as hygienic, healthy and disease-free. This changing attitude towards sex workers came about with the emergence of AIDS changing the sexual behaviour of many clients. They became more critical. Engaging with sex workers is not the same as before. Clients go through a decision-making process not as straightforward as in the pre-AIDS era.

Seafarers who choose to sexually engage with commercial sex workers developed ways of assessing whether to engage with them or not or whether to use condom or not. They assess the 'cleanliness' of the women to enable them to decide. This is a means of assessing risk. If on this basis the woman is deemed clean, this increases the likelihood of the woman being taken out for the night. This also increases the likelihood that the seafarer will not use a condom. This method of scrutiny is similar to the assessment of perceived threat which draws on Health Belief Model (Strecher and Rosenstock, 1997).

In navigating risk, a seafarer weighs his desire in having sex with a woman and the perceived risk of the sexual act. Assessing whether a woman is safe or not (whether to use a condom or not) becomes imperative. As one seafarer said:

[S]eafarers... do not like to use condoms because it is not pleasurable... However, they should use because it is good. If one does not use, something might happen later on. Why will you use? What if she is ill? Of course you choose a woman who is clean. But does one know who is clean and who is not? (Chief Engineer 22)

The assessment of cleanliness is based on the continuous interaction between seafarers and sex workers in the nightclub. This provides them a good environment to

enable them to make decisions based on the outcome of the assessment process. As they stay in the club, observe the sex workers and as they converse with them they get to know them more. Some seafarers have ways of identifying the possible risk factors from the words that they hear and from the actions that they see. They come up with a general perception on how clean or unclean a woman is. Trust is one of the eventual outcomes determining the use of condom during sexual encounters.

Observation is the first tool that seafarers use in assessing cleanliness. Upon entry into the club, seafarers start to observe particularly if they are new to the scene. For those who have intentions of engaging with sex workers seafarers assess these observations and the result influences their decision. I made categories of the different assessment results and I will explain each accordingly.

8.3.1 Physical Manifestations

The physical appearance of the woman is the primary determinant scrutinized by seafarers. Physical manifestations would encompass everything that can be seen and smelled.

Clean Looking. Bodily presentation is one of the indicators in the checklist.

Cleanliness of a woman is normally judged based on what their patrons see. General bodily cleanliness makes the seafarers conclude that the woman is clean. This would include almost all parts of the body as expressed by the following seafarers:

Clean? Of course the way she looks and with her body. It is quite obvious if the woman is dirty... Like with her hands... You can see it already. Yes, skin. Doesn't have a bad breath. (Chief Engineer 22)

Then you check if she looks clean with her body especially the feet... Her nails should be clean. If she is clean with her nails she is clean the rest of the body. (Motorman 20)

Aside from bodily cleanliness, seafarers also look at the way the women are dressed. They have certain ways of identifying sex workers from those who are not based on the way they are dressed. There is a general observation that sex workers are

relatively skimpily dressed than normal. Seafarers also have a criterion by which they can assess cleanliness based on dressing. They say that dirty, smelly, somewhat old, faded, unattractive and tattered clothes would be bases of their judgment on the kind of women wearing the dress. Seafarers become less interested. Some of them associate it to the hygiene of the woman.

For some, observable signs are used as cues to assess a woman's state of health and well-being. Even undesirable make-up was categorized as dirty particularly if the women do not seem to know how to match the colours or if they overdo the use of colours on their faces. When I asked what qualifies a dirty woman they mentioned many features such as dishevelled hair, dirty teeth, rough skin, and skin showing many wound marks, tattoos, and insect bites to name a few.

First I try to observe before I get a woman. If I find her dirty looking I do not get her... You can see it through the way they dress up and the way they look. Those who smoke... I do not like those who smoke. (Ordinary Seaman 30)

Sex workers with blade marks on the wrists are found to be at higher risk. They are said to have suicidal tendencies because they are thought to have slashed their wrists to attempt to kill themselves or to seek attention. They are also thought to be drug dependents thus having such marks because of unstable minds. The same is true with women who show marks of drug use on their skin. Many seafarers have the knowledge that drug use and HIV transmission go hand in hand.

Skin colour is sometimes seen as an indicator in the assessment. 'Dirty' looking skin is not seen as an attractive feature for many seafarers. Blemishes on the skin are seen as dirty. Unfortunately this is generalized to skin colour for some seafarers particularly the Asians. Some of them avoid black women or any women darker than their own colour because they find them dirty. I only heard a handful of Asian seafarers who ever had sex with black women. However, this is not true for the European seafarers who prefer the coloured women. Some seafarers mentioned associating black women with the AIDS epidemic in Africa.

Tattoos have also become an indicator. For example, this amusing case of a Chinese seafarer who was about to have sex with one of the sex workers in the club shows

how strong some visual cues are.

Julia is a sex worker who has been working at the [Harmony Club] for a long time now. She is white. One time she had a Chinese client. They went to the motel to have sex. When she was undressed, the Chinese seafarer was shocked to see that she had tattoos on her body. The Chinese was turned off. He said that he does not want to have sex anymore and he ran away after giving her 50 USD. She was surprised with the reaction of the seafarer.
(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 11 February 2008)

When I asked Julia why the seafarer ran away, she said that he found her to be unclean because of the seeming dirty skin. She thought that she probably was not seen to be too feminine given the non-acceptance of tattoos in other countries as it is associated with criminals (Canales and Herscher, 2005). Tattooed women are found to be revolting to many seafarers.

Tattoos evoke many meanings to different individuals (De Mello, 1995). For some cultures, tattoos are not common to be seen among women. In Brazil it is quite common to both sexes³. Seafarers who come from conservative cultures find tattoos undesirable. They associate it to heightened masculinity worn only by brusque men who have been jailed. Thus, when they see it with these women, it provokes a negative reaction. They would find the women wearing a tattoo as undesirable because it ‘confronts’ their masculinity and find the women intimidating. Some seafarers said that they find this dirty. They think that these women come from a low socio-economic background. Since they find them ‘dirty’, these women are placed under the category ‘risky’ because they are exposed to unhygienic and socially-deviant environments.

Body Smell. Seafarers start using their sense of smell while talking to the women in the nightclub. Some cultures are very particular with smell (just like the reactions one get when the food has a distinct repugnant smell). When the seafarers are near them they are able to ascertain the body smell. They get to pick up bad breath as they talk. Perfume which they find strong or unpleasant is construed as cheap. Sometimes they

³ During my entire stay in Brazil, many people from both sexes and from all ages sport permanent tattoos. These can be placed on any part of their body. These people can be observed especially on the beaches of Santos. Based on my conversation with locals, it is quite acceptable to have tattoos. There are many tattoo and body piercing shops within the city.

find putting on perfume as a way of masking ‘dirt’ if they are sick and are unable to take a shower.

When they go to the motels, they normally ask the woman to take a shower so as not to smell during love-making as mentioned by one seafarer:

The seafarer told me that he does not think she is infected because he asked her to shower first so she will be clean. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)

For this seafarer, taking a shower becomes important in making the woman clean. Furthermore, showering is also used as an indicator if a woman is sick because she will avoid taking a shower.

Seafarers employ a number of manoeuvres to sense the smell of women. These are ways of detecting the ‘fishy’ smell which seafarers mentioned that they do not like. The following are examples of some of these manoeuvres:

One way is to smell the vagina. He related to me a joke about a Chinese seafarer who had a woman. He kissed the lips of the woman and said—“hmmm smells like melon”. Then the Chinese seafarer kissed the breasts. He said, “hmmm smells like melon”. Then he went on again and smelled her tummy. He said, “hmmm smells like melon”. Then she went down to smell her vagina and said, “hmmm there is a smell but not melon”. <laughs> Through this approach one can find out whether a woman is clean or not. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 4 March 2008)

They check the smell of the vagina to ascertain her ‘safety’ when inside the hotel room while about to have sex. If they are not able to check the status while still in the nightclub, then they have to do it in the bedroom. While performing the foreplay, the seafarer would grope the vagina of the woman. He will insert one finger inside it. After a few seconds, he will take it out and bring his hand up and act in such a way that he will be able to smell the finger. He also said that sometimes he gets the woman naked and start to move his face down until he reaches the vaginal area. He would try to smell the vagina from outside. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 16 September 2007)

According to this seafarer, the woman should not have a fishy smell. If she presents with a foul odour he would conclude that she is unclean and probably is suffering

from STI. Depending on the seafarer's conclusions, either he would continue to have sex with her and use condom so as not to waste the money he will pay for sexual services, or not to have sex at all and just pay her fees.

The above fieldnotes provide us their perception of cleanliness as it relates to having diseases. A commercial sex worker with undesirable odour is perceived to be unclean and unhealthy. This odour would not necessarily come from her vaginal area. The source of the foul odour may come from any other part of her body though a foul-smelling vagina is a definitive indicator. Any woman who smells bad is assessed to be either not very particular to keep herself hygienic thus prone to health problems or is suffering from a disease causing the foul smell or both. This foul smell may also come from her mouth. Even if it were an oral problem, seafarers would tend to generalize it to being unhealthy or prone to unhealthy situation because of the way she takes care of herself. Others are naturally turned off with bad breath thus clients avoid kissing sex workers with it.

Sick-Looking. Any woman who looks sick, sad, tired or problematic is perceived by seafarers to be sick. Indeed somebody who looks sick might really be sick particularly those who cannot hide their illness. Sadness, being tired and feeling problematic are equated to ill health. Seafarers say that they easily get tired because of malaise—a symptom of an illness. This health problem causes them to look problematic and sad. There is a general attribution of the illness to sexually transmitted infections even if the illness may be due to other reasons. They do not qualify the disease entity. Seafarers will not take out for the night any sex worker who is assessed to have this appearance. Furthermore, their interest to have sex with such women wanes when they know that these women will not perform to their expectations. Should they decide to have sex with them, seafarers would resort to condom use.

Thin and skinny women are seen as unhealthy. They are assumed to be suffering from certain diseases. When asked what comes to their mind when they see thin sex workers, seafarers would say automatically 'she got hit by the HIV virus' or 'she looks like experiencing Tuberculosis' or 'she is infected with something contagious and dangerous'. Seafarers have a way of differentiating thin and skinny to somebody

who is slim and sexy. Thin and skinny would be the more obvious bony individuals. They are seen as sickly or sick and therefore will not be selected to provide sexual service. When it comes to being fat, it is a different story. There were less negative issues about it. They said that fat women are healthy thus 'clean'. Even if they are not necessarily attractive the seafarers are still somewhat pulled towards them. Besides, some prefer women who have more body fat to 'hold on to' during the sexual encounter. They said that bony women would hurt because they will just hit the bones.

Seafarers also use their sense of hearing during the assessment. Coughing, hoarse, and sickly voice are considered to be manifestations of a sick woman. The assessment is done in tandem with the woman's general appearance and their general well-being. Coughing is an indicator in avoiding a woman. They believe that the woman is carrying an infectious entity and that she is unhygienic. If the woman is also felt to be feverish they are seen as sick too, making body temperature another indicator. Many seafarers believe that many disease entities manifest with fever, particularly infectious ones. They think that these women have to be avoided since they believe that their fever is caused by underlying STIs. As one seafarer mentioned:

Women who look like having problems are sick. If you touch her and she feels hot, she is sick. These are some of the symptoms. (Second Cook 29)

When the seafarer and the sex worker are already in bed, the seafarer continues to assess the woman for diseases. The assessment becomes a continuous process to ascertain her cleanliness.

[P]alpate the abdominal area of the woman. If she feels something in the abdominal area then that means she is probably suffering from something. The woman is suffering from a certain disease that is why she feels some pain. So therefore, then she is not probably safe for sex. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 4 March 2008)

Based on their stories, they got this knowledge from observing their wives who sometimes suffer from urinary tract infections whom they see having abdominal pains as part of the manifestations. If the sex worker feels pain, for them it would warrant the use of condom or no sex at all.

Ugly versus Beautiful. One interesting indicator that I discovered in the assessment process is based on the seafarers' concept of beauty. According to the study of Gertler *et al.* (2005) "the premium jumped to 46 percent if the sex worker was considered very attractive, a measure of bargaining power". Normally seafarers would be excited to go to the club with the thought of getting the most attractive woman. There are other seafarers who do not agree with this. They say that women who are pretty have more clients. They have a higher probability of contracting sexually transmitted infections. If one will get a beautiful woman, a seafarer would probably use a condom.

I use condoms when the woman is beautiful. That means many customers take her. But if she is not beautiful, that means she is safe. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 30 January 2008)

A number of them said that they would rather get the ugly ones because they have lesser customers thus 'cleaner'. Some seafarers disagree with this because they find ugly women as 'dirty'.

Some choose the ugly ones. But they have a reason why they choose the ugly ones. It is because they are safe. Only few men get them. (Motorman 20)

The same is true with older versus younger women. There is a mixed approach towards this. Older women have lesser customers thus cleaner. On the contrary younger ones have more customers thus more 'dirty'. Though some say that older women went through a lot of experiences thus they are not necessarily clean. As for one Romanian seafarer, a young woman is a clean woman:

Adrian said that if she is 21 years old, then definitely you do not have to use a condom because she is very young. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 7 April 2008)

Reasons behind these preferences are varied showing the nuanced attitude of seafarers towards age and beauty of women. These show the intricacies of their definition of beauty, attractiveness of women and preferences.

8.3.2 Actuations and Actions

The way the woman acts in the nightclub is another way of assessing their cleanliness. These acts can be anything from dancing, eating, and drinking to other physical activities. This is related to their general status and well-being as seen externally. For example, if they are not dancing to fast disco music and only to slow music, they are seen as sick. If they are seen as lethargic, this is interpreted as an indication that there is something wrong within their bodies. Sometimes seafarers associate this to STIs—either the woman is currently suffering from an infection or she is under medication. They are avoided as sex providers.

[W]hen it comes to getting tired, if you invite her to dance and she declines, and all she wants is to dance to slow music and she does not want to dance to fast music, then that women is not possible to have sex with. (Second Officer 13)

Another major indicator is alcohol drinking. Seafarers have ways of looking at safe women based on what they drink and the way they drink as shown by the following:

If...the woman drinks alcohol she is safe. That means when she drinks alcohol she is clean...because...when you drink medicine you are not allowed to drink alcohol. You will learn about the woman, when she does not drink she is a bit doubtful. Maybe she is suffering from something. (Bosun 23)

Interviewer: *How did you know that she was clean?*

Chief Engineer 38: *Because she was drinking a lot of alcohol.*

Seafarers have knowledge of avoiding alcohol when on medication based on their experiences. This is the basis by which seafarers look at women who avoid drinking alcohol as sick. They assume that somebody who does not drink is under medication for certain ailments. If they refuse to order alcohol but instead request for non-alcoholic beverages such as juices or carbonated drinks, they are assumed to have an illness. Seafarers would test further the situation by persistently offering them alcohol. Continuous refusal ‘proves’ their point. These women are avoided as sex providers. If sexual encounter transpires, seafarers would use condoms. The same is true with the kind of food that they eat as expressed by one seafarer:

They do not drink [alcohol] because it is bad to drink when they are sick. They do not want to get tired. They do not eat eggs. They cannot drink [alcohol] because they are sick. (Second Cook 29)

There are times eggs are eaten for dinner or as part of the nibbles while drinking alcohol. Once seafarers find out that they avoid eggs, this warrants some second thoughts on getting the sex worker as a sex provider for the night. Some seafarers believe that women who have STIs avoid eating eggs as shown by the following:

Second Cook 29: *Egg has a fishy smell. If you offer one to a woman who is sick, she will decline to eat. They normally do not like.*

Interviewer: *What do you mean when you said being 'offered'?*

Second Cook 29: *If you eat out and you offer her to eat fishy food, what seafarers describe as smelling like fish, if they decline, do not go on with your plans [of having sex with her].*

Interviewer: *Does this mean she is infected?*

Second Cook 29: *Yes. These are the reasons why I am a bit apprehensive [to have sexual encounters with this kind of woman].*

The reason behind this is based on their belief that women who are infected with STIs avoid 'fishy' smelling food such as egg, particularly the raw ones. This includes fish and other seafood. These foods are understood to aggravate the foul-smelling vagina during the presence of STIs. The plausible explanation behind this phenomenon is probably the association of the 'fishy' smell of some food to the unpleasant odour (smelly vagina or smelly vaginal discharge) when women have vaginal discharge (such as in conditions like bacterial vaginosis). Women who suffer from this report a strong 'fish-like' odour particularly after sexual intercourse. Once this smell is detected by seafarers they avoid having sex with these women.

8.3.3 Engaging Only with Clean Clients

In Chapter 4, I mentioned that seafarers are the exclusive clientele of sex workers in the port red light district. This exclusivity explains the common notion among seafarers that sex workers in ports are clean. This, in turn, is based on the seafarers being medically certified fit and healthy whenever they go on contracts. A regularity of contracts means regularity of medical examination.

Women are used by a lot of seafarers. Most of their clients are seafarers.

Seafarers go on regular medical examination. They are clean. So women should also be clean. (Second Cook 29)

Not all agree, however, with the cleanliness using the clientele reasoning. Despite the fact that they are examined and certified fit to work, there is that window period during the work contract where seafarers may contract some diseases as they are exposed in many ports. There is a general assumption that seafarers are clean not only because of the medical examinations but also because of their seemingly educated and family backgrounds. Normally nobody questions their cleanliness despite the fact that I already showed in this study that a number of them have contracted STIs and HIV given their exposure in some ports. Nobody would know their status while on board. As one seafarer raised the doubt:

I am sure, even if they are seafarers we do not know where they come from or which port they come from. We are not sure. (Second Cook 29)

Some sex workers are known to discriminate their clients. They do not necessarily have sex with everyone but only with those they like and find clean. As one seafarer said:

'She does not have sex just with anybody. She chooses her seafarer clients', said another seafarer. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 9 September 2007)

Seafarers believe that such women are careful. Just like seafarers, sex workers also have ways of looking at the 'cleanliness' of their clients⁴. A sex worker who discriminates clients based on cleanliness is thought to be one who is responsible and clean. They are thought to be conscious of their health that they do not necessarily get anybody or everyone as their clients. These women are thought to be less concerned with high income but are rather more concerned with their health. Thus seafarers place premium on them. These kinds of statements coming from the women make seafarers convinced of these women's health.

8.3.4 Certified Clean

⁴ Financial considerations normally play an important role in the work of sex workers. They would prioritize money before anything else.

A sex worker having a 'certificate' is another factor that came to determine the way seafarers see the cleanliness of a woman. Seafarers have information of the women being certified by the local social hygiene clinic and screened for STIs.

I was talking to these three seafarers from Myanmar. They were told by other seafarers that women from Nimfa (a nightclub in the old city centre) are better and cleaner because they have certificates. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 4 September 2007)

Knowledge of the seafarers about certification may be influenced by their experience in other countries which provide clinical services to the sex workers to monitor their health status given the fact that they are one of the most risky groups to STIs. Sometimes they are provided papers to certify that they are indeed in good health. This is what is meant by having a certificate. Some of the sex workers go to these social hygiene clinics regularly. Some of them do not. They probably have encountered many sex workers with these 'certificates'. Thus, for them it is less risky to have sex with sex workers who (claim to) have health certificates. It is a reason for them not to use condom during sex.

This concept of the seafarers on the certification of sex workers is related to the fact that seafarers themselves undergo strict regular medical examination. They place important significance on this because it determines their ability to work when they are certified by doctors as 'fit to work'. Thus, when the same process is applied to sex workers their confidence on the cleanliness of the women is strengthened. They have a tendency to believe that the sex worker is free from any disease even if the sex worker only relays it to him verbally. Knowing that a woman has a 'certificate' is deemed as a positive act as she is seen as responsible enough to take care of her body and to keep herself disease-free.

*I had a few sexual encounters already with prostitutes. Around five times for the past three years that I have been working. I had once in China, in Peru, here in Brazil...but most of the time I used condoms. This is the first time that I did not. Well she looks clean anyway. **She says that she did tests.** So I had two ejaculations inside her. In fact she even wanted more. But I do not like anymore. He was laughing when he said this. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 September 2007)*

Through conversations with the sex workers, the seafarers learn about the women having certificates and tests even without showing them one. But how do they know that these women are telling the truth? The sex workers will not be carrying these papers and test results with them. I was a bit doubtful about this certification process because I have heard from my conversations with the local NGOs that the social hygiene clinic beside the club was not anymore frequented by the sex workers. In fact the whole time that I was doing my fieldwork I did not see the clinic ever opened. The pervasive belief however is that the sex workers are said to be checked regularly by the social hygiene clinic. Thus they are seen to be clean and healthy. I have heard this from the sex workers themselves and management of the club, which obviously would be biased when talking about themselves.

[T]he head of the club or the floor manager says “we get all the women go to a doctor on a monthly basis...We bring them to the doctors. The women are clean.” OK fine they are clean. (Second Cook 29)

As part of their marketing, the nightclub would say good words about the women if they have to promote them. What seafarers do not know is that these women are not employed by the club. There is no way that the club can tell the women to go for regular check up. Women go to the clinics voluntarily.

8.3.5 Woman Bringing Condoms

Condom use itself becomes a method for some seafarers in determining cleanliness of women. If the sex worker is persistent to use a condom then it is assumed that she is clean. Some women bring condoms with them inside the nightclubs and in the hotel rooms as shown:

‘She brought condoms with her. She avoids getting health problems’.
(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 19 September 2007)

Women who are seen to carry with them condoms are thought to be conscious and careful about their health. There are times that these women show the condoms to the seafarers while in the nightclub or when they are already in the hotel room. Seafarers believe that women who bring condoms avoid getting infected with any STI. They

try their best to protect themselves and take care of their health. This provides the seafarers a positive reinforcement and more reason not to use condom with her. They become more insistent with the sex worker not to use one. In case they are still in the club, this determines his increased desire to get that woman.

You will know when a woman is clean. If she asks you to use a condom that means she does not want to get infected by any sexually transmitted infection. She does not want to get infected, for example, if you as a customer have it.
(Ordinary Seaman 30)

Second Engineer 16: *Many of the women here, they carry with them condoms. They always bring condoms thus they are clean.*

Interviewer: *Do they tell you themselves that they are clean?*

Second Engineer 16: *No.*

It is very interesting to follow this negotiation process, which I will discuss in the next section. The bargaining tactics are also used to assess the cleanliness of women. The more that women insist to use a condom the more that they are perceived to be clean making seafarers more persistent in not using one. Even until the bedroom, some seafarers continue to test the woman. The response of the woman would determine what the seafarer would do as shown:

At first I tried to test⁵ her if she will not resist if I attempt to penetrate without condom. If she disallows that means she is dirty and probably has an infection. If not that means she is clean and then I do not use condom. **(Oiler 39)**

It was interesting to see how this knowledge is utilised to ascertain cleanliness. It has its own place in the dynamics of the bargaining process, which at the end the men get what they desire. This negotiation process is grounded on the fact that sex workers prefer condom during sex and men do not. As one woman said to the seafarer during a sexual encounter:

'I use condom all the time. I also want to use condom with you.' **(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 9 September 2007)**

⁵ Test here means not penetrating but showing some gestures of attempting to penetrate.

When I asked the seafarer about this statement after they had sexual intercourse, he said that such a statement led him to think that the woman is 'for sure clean'. I asked him why. He said it is because he was impressed that this woman told him that she always uses a condom with her clients. I asked him if he believed her. He said that there is a high probability that it is true because during the sexual encounter it took them a long time discussing on not using a condom. The woman was strong in her convictions according to him. I later learned that the seafarer did not use a condom with her eventually. I would understand that there was a lengthy bargaining and persuasion prior to the sexual intercourse.

8.3.6 Women are not Prostitutes

The identity of the women plays a major role in the way seafarers see them. Seafarers would assume that a woman is clean when she is not seen as a prostitute. Women who work as sex workers avoid public thoughts of disreputability and immorality attached to their work (Oerton and Phoenix, 2001) thus they try to dissociate from being identified as sex workers using a number of ways. To present this point, I will first discuss women who do not stay in the clubs. There were a number of occasions that some of the respondents had sexual transactions outside the economic zones of the clubs. They encountered these women near the ports right after they go out of their ships or by the roadside. When I asked them about their opinion about these women, they believe that they are not prostitutes because they are not inside the clubs.

Able-Bodied Seaman 35: *Here in Brazil we met women in the port and not in the nightclub.*

Interviewer: *So were they sex workers?*

Able-Bodied Seaman 35: *I was not sure.*

Interviewer: *But did they ask for payment?*

Able-Bodied Seaman 35: *Yes.*

Interviewer: *Did you use condom?*

Able-Bodied Seaman 35: *Yes. She seems to know things in bed. She knew what to do. They were walking in the port. She said she was stranded. Then we were brought to her house. We had sex with her there. We were two seafarers who had sex with her.*

Another seafarer related his story of meeting a woman in the park. This seafarer ventured into the park not far from the port. He said:

I was talking to a woman in the park. She was telling me her experiences in life. She talked about her stories in Brazil. She brings her men to her house. That was her practice. She does not bring her customers to the nightclub anymore. (That was daytime. There was still an open club during that time.) She had condoms in her house. We took a taxi to her house. I paid for it. I paid her after having sex. It was always like that. It is because they trust the...seafarers all the time. (Able-Bodied Seaman 35)

There is a bit of uncertainty as to the true identity of the woman. She was not working at night so the seafarer thought that she was not necessarily plying her trade. The fact that it was daytime made the seafarer think that she was an ordinary local. This is where risk sets in because of the preconceived ideas of some seafarers on how to qualify a woman as a sex worker—any woman who is not from the club and seen during the day is not a sex worker and is understood as safe. Even the element of time has implications on the perception of male clients on the women probably due to the constant association with the opening times of the club which is at night. This impacts on their attitude towards condoms as they label these women as ‘clean’ when in fact some of them maybe part of the sex industry.

Knowledge on prostitution of many seafarers maybe limited to women soliciting in the nightclubs, as this is the place they normally frequent. As explained earlier, sex workers can solicit directly or indirectly depending on the location where they conduct their work like parks, discos, hotel lobbies and streets and the approach that they use such as advertising online or through newspapers (Harcourt and Donovan, 2005). In this study, I did not focus much on other forms of prostitution outside the port red light district.

The identity of women inside the club can be shown to be fluid. There is a changing perception about women inside the nightclub as not being prostitutes. This is part of the evolution of prostitution wherein at present ‘individuals may occasionally and opportunistically exact a fee or gift for a sexual favour without perceiving themselves to be sex workers’ (Harcourt and Donovan, 2005). Let us see for example this story of a seafarer who had a girlfriend in another port. In this situation, he believes that the sex worker is a medical student as follows:

[I]n Rio de Janeiro he had a girlfriend...The woman stays in an apartment. He said that the woman was a medical student, even if he met her in a club,...because whenever they have sex he goes to her house he would see medical books. Many of her friends also tell him that she studies. So for him, this is an assurance that she is safe because she is decent and therefore she does not carry sexually transmitted diseases... He said that she is 21 years old and has a child...she...just goes to work in such a place (club) because she needs money. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 7 April 2008)

As I explained about the women earlier, many of them are free-lancers and do not work and stay in the club every night. Many of them are not seen as sex workers. The more that seafarers get to know the women and understand their lives outside the nightclub endears them more as their identity changes from sex worker to a mother, student, sister, daughter, etc. Their professions outside the club become their identities—beauticians, ship chandlers, businesswomen, etc. This change of identity has a profound effect on the way they are seen as sex partners or girlfriends. This is one way of trespassing boundaries between public and private which Scoular (2004) describes as ‘attempts to force back public elements of prostitution into the realm of private sexuality’ thereby avoiding stigma, immorality and disreputability on both the women sex workers and seafaring clients.

8.4 Bargaining and Negotiations

Bargaining is defined as the negotiation of the terms of agreement of a certain transaction, as to sell or exchange. As defined, *negotiation* is integral in the process of bargaining. Sometimes the terms are seen as synonymous. Both have been accorded much importance since the emergence of HIV/AIDS providing a certain socio-emotional dimension of sexual encounters. Bargaining in the context of this study would emerge as a negotiation with the end goal of having sexual intercourse and the non-use of condom—most of the time a desire of the client.

8.4.1 Negotiating Early

Having a woman for the night means being able to enact one’s desires and do what one pleases. This includes the ultimate risk of not using a condom. Appraisal of the

cleanliness of women normally starts in the club when they are having initial interactions. Once a decision has been made and the seafarer intends not to use a condom, some tell their intention at once.

I tell her at once that I don't want to use a condom, I already say at the very beginning that 'no I'm not going to use a condom therefore if you don't want to have sex, it's fine with me, but I'm not going to use a condom'. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 10 April 2008)

Ordinary Seaman 30: *At the table while we are drinking [I tell her].*

Interviewer: *Really? You really ask the woman that you do not want to use a condom?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *Yes, I do.*

Interviewer: *What does the woman normally say?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *Normally the woman would say that we use a condom. I tell her that I do not like. If she does not agree then I do not agree to be a customer.*

Seafarers have to establish as early as possible that they do not want to use a condom. When seafarers emphasize that they do not want to use a condom in the first encounter it becomes a precedent and establishes that he will not use anymore in the succeeding encounters as shown:

Chief Engineer 38: *Just like the woman I got today, she agreed [not to use] a condom. She really was insistent to use condom but she couldn't force me to because I really don't want to.*

Interviewer: *How did you discuss it with her?*

Chief Engineer 38: *Of course, at first it was a bit difficult. If she knows that I do not want to use condoms, eventually she agrees. Next time around, we do not use condoms anymore. No more. Once started without a condom, we do not use from then on.*

For some seafarer patrons who are more experienced in this trade, they know that the earlier they have an agreement the higher the likelihood that it will happen. As shown by the situation there is a sense of confidence among these seafarers when they negotiate. This confidence is grounded on the fact that the seafarers have the money thus possess more bargaining power as shown by Getler *et al.* (2005). Since seafarers pay, they try to get what they feel they deserve.

They cannot do anything because we are the customers. We are always right. They are the ones who are in need [for money]. We are the ones who pay...therefore, we decide on what to do. (Chief Engineer 38)

Aside from power and gender differences alluded to by the situation, the commodification of sex and women is quite explicit, similar to what has been seen by Mooney-Somers and Ussher (2010). The seafarer identifies himself as a paying client thus has the power to choose. He feels like a customer with privileges—seafarers choose and sex workers are chosen. Normally, the women have no power to choose their clients thus accept what is offered particularly when there is too much competition.

In bargaining, seafarers would employ arguments and tactics that boost their confidence. They try to have an upper hand to win over what they desire as shown:

Ordinary Seaman 30: *Luckily, all my crewmates are older and I am the only young one so the women come to me. They do not like my old crewmates. I tell the woman, 'look at my crewmates, I am the only young one'. Then she cannot do anything and she has no choice.*

Interviewer: *OK. If the woman agrees to it?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *Yes, it's already good.*

Interviewer: *So you really do not want to get a woman who wants to use condoms? And you talk to her first about it?*

Ordinary Seaman 30: *Yes, I really talk to the woman [that I don't want to use condoms] before I bring her out.*

Seafarers have the ability to employ various reasons to convey their message and to win their arguments. This is one area where they possess 'power strength' as part of the power distribution between sex workers and seafarers. This confidence that seafarers have in the bargaining process is hinged on some beliefs I earlier mentioned. They have a strong resolve not to use condoms as guided by these thinking.

8.4.2 Condom Negotiation and Pricing

In Chapter 6, I presented various elements of pricing and paying in relation to solicitation of sex. In this section, I will discuss price in relation to condom use. Many literature on prostitution show that price for sex is determined by supply and demand governed by financial principles working within the context of an economy

(Greenfield, 1993; Baseman, Ross and Williams, 1999). A common theme is that the demand for the non-use of condom warrants an increase in the price of sex agreed through bargaining. Sex workers who insist on using condoms lose part of their income (Rao *et al.*, 2003) because successful bargaining is always seen to come with increase in price. It was surprising that this was not heard from the seafarers I interviewed. As one seafarer said:

I do not increase the price for her not to use a condom. In fact sometimes it is free to have sex with women. In Thailand I had one for free. (Ordinary Seaman 30)

Understanding the phenomenon got me more inquisitive about it. I found one chief engineer who admitted to have bargained by increasing the price of the sexual transaction. He increased the price so high so that the sex worker would have no reason not to accept it. However, in this case the bargaining was used to assess how clean the sex worker was instead.

There are women who do not agree even if I pay her double the standard amount. She says, 'what will I do with the money?' In that place we only pay 30 USD. I told her I will give 200 USD as long as we do not use a condom. She still did not agree. Then that was the time I was convinced that I will get her because I know that that woman is clean. (Chief Engineer 38)

In this case, it is interesting how the seafarer used bargaining to test how safe the woman was for sexual intercourse. It became a method of assessment. In this situation it might seem that the sex worker has won in the negotiation process; on the contrary it is the Chief Engineer who felt that he got what he wanted.

I am happy. I am reassured when it is like that. I even licked her vagina. It is really safe. When a woman is like that, that means she is cautious. That's why I am not apprehensive and I have confidence. That means she is really clean. Even if I offered 200 USD she did not agree. (Chief Engineer 38)

There is an assumption here that a woman who does not give in to a higher price for a sexual encounter without a condom is judged to be clean. This sex worker gives an impression that she is free from STIs because of the way she resists temptation. As I probed further his answer:

Once a woman refuses to have sex without a condom, she is clean. She is being cautious. If the woman can have sex without condom, she is dangerous. She is not cautious especially if she agrees at once. She is dangerous. Then this is how I know whether to use condom or not. If she is cautious then I do not need to use condom myself. (Chief Engineer 38)

Increasing the price to buy desire is observed to be uncommon. This was not normally observed thus the above example is an exception. Seafarers still have sex without condoms even if there is no increase in price. Increasing the price is not a common bargaining technique among seafarers thus is not considered a ‘power strength’ among them. Sex workers earn more money if they allow seafarers to pay the standard price. This encourages them to keep on coming back. In this manner, sex workers would earn more cumulatively as they become captive customers. Sex workers know that allowing their clients not to use a condom is known to be risky. However, money prevails as Trotter (2009: 710) observed:

Intellectually they (sex workers) understand the risk of unprotected sex, but they also understand that a risk is not a certainty. Thus, many are willing to take calculated risks so long as financial gain is certain.

Understandably, the non-use of condom may not happen during the first few sexual encounters. As the seafarer is keen on having the same woman over time, the probability of using condoms decreases. The paradigm changes as sexual interactions continue and relationships develop as we saw in Chapter 7. Thus, bargaining by increasing the price does not necessarily hold true all the time because continuity of relationship overrides the logic of price increase. As the sex worker develops an economic relationship with the seafarer, it is not necessary to increase the price. Thus, sometimes seafarers promise a relationship so that they can redefine their relationship and allow them unprotected sex.

There is one noticeable aspect in the transactions and bargaining, which relates to money. Women reciprocate more with those who have money and those who are more generous. They get more particular attention from the sex workers. This is what Cameron (2004) calls “higher intimacy/higher value added” as compared to “low intimacy/low value added products” in paid sex markets. Women would provide better services in the nightclub as they entertain and serve their clients.

Generosity with money creates the atmosphere of reciprocal generosity within the group. This is one reason that adds to the vulnerability to the demands of the seafarers.

8.4.3 Cheating in Bed

Transactions and negotiations continue in bed. As long as there is no agreement in not using condoms, negotiations and bargaining continues. Seafarers have many ways of getting away with condoms. Some of them do not tell at all that they do not want to use condoms and still get what they want at the end. For example, this seafarer does not tell the woman he does not want to use a condom. At the start, he shows that he wears one.

[T]hey know [I wear one] because they see it... I normally show that I am placing the condom on. Then I distract the woman by moving her in bed and pulling out the condom without her noticing it... [T]hey don't [notice] because they are distracted by their orgasm. I have to take it off because I also want to reach climax. (Fitter 32)

To some extent the situation shows some deception on the part of the seafarer. The incident also shows us the various ways of many seafarers manipulating the situation to their advantage. In another occasion, a similar kind of manoeuvre was carried out by another seafarer:

When he is having sex with a woman, at first they have romance. So they are in a middle of foreplay. The woman usually tells him to use a condom. He will then say—"don't worry because the condom is here." He will usually hold the condom in his hand and raise it. He will say, "the condom is always ready" ... This is to assure the woman that the seafarer will use the condom. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 7 April 2008)

There are occasions when seafarers do not need to bargain anymore. One of these occasions is when the seafarer takes advantage of the woman when she is under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Take for example this story of a seafarer who was invited to go to the house of a sex worker. The woman was already getting drunk. She invited him to go to her bedroom.

She asked me if I want to use cocaine. I said no. She used cocaine which made her really so horny. Because my friends were all pushing me to go with her, I went to her room eventually. She started caressing me. She also kissed me. I knew that she wanted to have sex. I did not really drink that much since I had a hunch this was going to happen. We were both naked and we started to make love. Because she was drunk she thought that I was using a condom. I do not like condoms so I did not use one. But when I ejaculated she felt it. She was surprised why I did not use a condom being afraid of getting pregnant. I said I am clean anyway. There is nothing to worry about it. She actually thought that I placed a condom on my dick. I deliberately did not. The condom was just on the table untouched. We had sex three times the whole night. We never used condom all the time. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 12 February 2008)

In this case the seafarer took advantage of the mental and physical state of the woman due to the effect of alcohol and illegal drugs. This is the easiest way for the seafarer to have unprotected sex.

Another easy way out of using a condom is when sex workers themselves are the ones who bargain not to use one. As one seafarer said when he insisted on using a condom:

They think that you are accusing them of having sexually transmitted infections or being sick and unhealthy. That's how it was before. [She will say,] why? What do you mean? I am sick? You do not trust me? Then she will get angry with you. (Second Cook 29)

In this case, the woman is offended by the insistence of the seafarer to use a condom. Seafarers need not bargain, as there is no need for it. They get what they desire in an easy manner.

8.5 Other Sexual Performance Determinants

Aside from social factors, there are determinants hinged on sexual performance that have significant contribution to the non-use of condom. I will discuss two—physical and performance problems and alcohol.

8.5.1 Physical and Performance Problems

Physical problems pertain to bodily conditions that make sexual intercourse difficult thus makes condom use as an added complication making its use less acceptable. For example, premature ejaculation is one problem, which I encountered.

He is very sensitive that sudden penetration makes him ejaculate at once... He told me that...some of his friends [have the opposite. They] take a long time before ejaculating. So he uses a cream to prevent ejaculating early.

(Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 8 March 2008)

Such sexual problems sometimes have an effect on condom use. This is shown by a 32 year old married AB who was on his first international contract and first sexual encounter abroad. He was complaining that it was not a successful sexual act because he was having a problem with ejaculation.

[O]nce he penetrates...he was not able to ejaculate. So it took them a while... Once erection wanes... the woman would suck him. [Then] he would again [use a new] condom before he penetrates. So the woman was already... complaining...I asked him if he was fully erected. He said yes...He never ejaculated until they just had to end it after five condoms. So I asked him "Why?" He said probably he was stressed [and] tired. (Fieldnotes:

Harmony Club, 4 March 2008)

Given the stressful and tiring work of seafarers, this was not surprising. Many seafarers complain of difficulty in erection, maintaining it, and difficulty in ejaculating. Some seafarers would just totally abandon the use of condoms after exasperating attempts of successful penetration for those having erectile dysfunctions. Take for example this fitter who had difficulty in performing in bed:

This fitter...was having difficulty ejaculating. It was going on for minutes until he asked the woman if he could take off the condom. The woman said, "sure, you can take it off as long as once you ejaculate you should pull your penis out and not ejaculate inside me". So he did. He took out the condom...had sex with her, penetrated again and when he was about to ejaculate he pulled it out. (Fieldnotes: Club, 8 March 2008)

8.5.2 Alcohol

In many occasions, alcohol plays a major role in the risk-taking of seafarers as it has a direct effect on the body and rational thinking. Being a depressant, alcohol causes

difficulty in sustaining erection, which is aggravated by the process of putting on the condom and the advance age where erectile problem is more common. The following is an example of the effect of alcohol:

I was really very drunk... I got another woman. When we were having sex I had difficulties erecting...I also tried my best to ejaculate. The woman was very angry because she did not prefer to have foreplay. So I used my hand and fingered her. I really pushed my hand in and she was enjoying it very much. (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 2 April 2008)

According to this seafarer, he wanted to hide his inability to perform by having foreplay instead.

The effect of alcohol on rational thinking has a larger bearing on risky sexual behaviours. As alcohol influences mental processes, including perception of their surroundings and decision-making, seafarers become incapable of making rational decisions. One of these is not to use condoms.

[U]nder the influence of alcohol...[s]ome of our fellow seafarers do not use condoms. I do not know with them. Maybe for them they do not take care of their lives. (Chief Engineer 22)

Sometimes, the depressant effect of alcohol and irrational thinking work in tandem resulting in a more risky situation as shown:

When you drink alcohol from a normal state of mind you will be brought to unstable thinking. It is one factor...[which contributes] not [to] use a condom... [It] happened to me wherein I did not use a condom. When I was drunk I was not conscious of events anymore... I was...drunk, I couldn't ejaculate. (Chief Engineer 38)

One bosun had an interesting story where all elements conspired resulting in a very risky scenario one could ever get into. The story is as follows:

This bosun said that condoms are not really to be trusted. "One time I was in Rio de Janeiro. I had sex with a woman there. Because of being drunk, it took me a long time to ejaculate. So the condom broke. In fact it happened twice that the condom got torn. It really takes time to cum when you are under the influence of alcohol. That was one of the few times I had to use a condom. And it was a bad experience. It got torn—which means condoms are useless

after all! Why use it then?" (Fieldnotes: Harmony Club, 4 September 2007)

In conclusion, it is unfortunate that physical and psychological sexual problems are compounded by alcohol which when working in tandem push the seafarer further in not using a condom because of the pressure to perform.

8.6 Discussion and Conclusion

The ultimate manifestation of sexual risk-taking is the non-use of condom during sexual intercourse in any form of relationship between seafarers and sex workers. As sexual behaviour has various dimensions such as number of partners, relationship to partners, and frequency of sex, these elements interact with condom use resulting in varying profiles of vulnerability (Slaymaker, 2004).

In this chapter, I presented the general attitude of male seafarers towards condom use. Many of them would prefer not to use condom if possible providing us a glimpse of their lived experience of the body. The negative attitude towards condom use by seafarers is similar to that of the general male population and is centred on pleasure and satisfaction. Since the use of condom is contrary to the achievement of pleasure there is a general dislike for it as it is seen as an obstacle and a barrier disrupting sexual intercourse. The narratives they presented in this chapter show that men's experiences of condom use constitute a spectrum of (dis)embodiment determined by contexts and settings thus impacting on the risk that befall upon them and their partners.

The body practices employed by the seafarers show how they negotiate risk by repositioning the body within various forms of commercial sex transactions. The way they see condoms bears a lot of meanings, connotations and constructions impacting on these constellation of forms of (dis)embodiment. For example, those who do not prefer to use it are seen to have a low perception of risk towards HIV and STIs. Generally, many seafarers are aware of this risk. This awareness translates into the behaviour they manifest when they navigate through the risk brought about by these

health issues.

The way seafarers manage risk is also shaped by their beliefs, knowledge and attitudes towards condoms. Many of them share a belief system peculiar to those within the industry, as they comprise a subculture given the closed nature of their group and high level of interaction. Despite the fact that they have high knowledge of HIV provided during their education and training, they still have ways of thinking that run contrary to this knowledge placing them at very high risk.

One area in the risk management of seafarers is ascertaining and choosing clean women to sexually engage with. Their definition of cleanliness is generally centred on not having STIs particularly HIV. They employ various indicators in the assessment process making them part of their belief system. Such practices of risk management change their risk perception enabling them continuity of their desired behaviour. Though some of these practices bring them to a less risky state, additional factors compound the problem as their decision making is also influenced by these elements like social pressure, sexual performance, influence of alcohol, and time constraints.

Sexual negotiation and condom bargaining between men and women are not simple transactions (Wojcicki and Malala, 2001). These socio-sexual dynamics have always been described through a perspective where one is ascribed to possess power and the other resisting it. These dynamics present some manifestations of the power relations between the sex worker and the seafarer. These negotiations and bargaining are continuous processes within the temporal continuum of the sexual interactions. It may occur at the very start until the consummation of the sexual act. These processes may come in different forms and situations—requesting a sex worker to have sex with a seafarer, a sex worker asking a seafarer to get her for the night, seafarer bargaining to lower the price for sex, seafarer not wanting to use a condom, or a seafarer cheats by not using a condom.

The sexual interactions are further influenced by the kind of relationships that exists between the seafarer and the sex worker. It is easier for the seafarer not to use condom if the seafarer is a regular client or if there is a relationship that exists thus the

changing identity of the women. Social constructivist approach explains the views employed in this discussion as the process of risk construction goes in relation to the identity of the women shaped by the social context (Bajos, 1997).

The practice of risk management of seafarers indicates a balancing act of different factors including the acknowledgement of the existing risk of HIV/AIDS, the desire to satisfy themselves avoiding the displeasure of using condoms, and their perception that they have a responsibility to their wives, partners and families. Compounding their vulnerability is the translation of these into risk management practices, which are sometimes in themselves risky as they are not scientific and evidence-based but grounded on popular beliefs within the subculture.

Condom use thus raises important views on how seafarers embody a potentially erotic and intimate physical encounter. Condom use becomes a manifestation of discursive formation on how seafarers locate their bodies, sex and sexuality. The non-skin-to-skin contact and the mere act of using a barrier is a way of disavowing sex in the public sphere considered to be unacceptable a norm. There is a decoupling of the body from the sexual act with the use of condoms. According to Oerton and Phoenix (2001), 'the threat of AIDS/HIV have seen the growth of discourses of safe(r) sex that have at their heart the de-coupling of sex from the body'. This decoupling of sex from the body allows the evolution of discourses into different context as shown by the data such as discourses within the realm of 'morality and immorality, good and bad, disease and health, dirt and cleanliness, reputability and disreputability'. These dichotomous categories are segregated by the use and non-use of condom. For example, condoms should be donned as it lessens the stigma of being immoral and disreputable when having sex outside marriage. The same is true with discourses on avoiding diseases and having sex with seemingly dirty sex workers. Condom use provides a feeling of controlling the body and having a sense of ownership. In the same manner, non-use of condom provides the other picture of flesh-to-flesh erotic pleasure and carnal sensuous embodiment. All these forms of embodiment however have to be critically observed and analysed within the bigger social and historical context.

Chapter 9

Narratives of Risk, Sexuality and Body: Conclusions

In reflecting upon the story of Rudy, the seafarer I introduced in the prologue, and juxtaposing his life trajectory with the different events presented in the empirical chapters, we are afforded a view of the geographical spaces and social contexts that Rudy traversed in his occupational journey. Rudy is but one of the many seafarers who go through this phase of their lives—being at work, on board a ship away from home. Here in this final chapter, I am going to conclude these ethnographic accounts I observed and presented. I summarize the main findings of my study, reflect upon its strengths and weaknesses and draw conclusions based upon their narratives collected from the formal and informal interviews and the observations conducted during the fieldwork. The data as presented in Chapters 3 to 8 provided a continuing picture of the setting, activities during the shore leave and onboard, identities and desires, relationships developed in the nightclubs, sexual relations, negotiations and bargaining, locating their bodies and corporeality, and all the various experiences of seafarers as they navigate their way through the ramification of the sexual and non-sexual engagements and interactions with sex workers. I will conclude by highlighting and synthesizing the various facets presented by the study as it cuts through a number of encompassing themes.

This chapter consists of six main sections with the first five as the key findings and conclusions of the study focusing on: 1) the culture of risk; 2) the context of masculinity; 3) how relationships become risky; 4) the negotiated construct of unprotected sex; and 5) the embodiment of sex and sexuality by seafarers. Though this is found to be an ambitious undertaking, I will try to approach all the discussions with the goal of integrating the central themes that emerged in the different empirical chapters I presented. I will finish by providing my own reflections and insights of the work in the field as a researcher in a risk-laden environment, the implications and

contributions of the study specifically in public health and the maritime industry, and its future directions.

9.1 Understanding a Culture of Risk

Reflecting upon the predicaments of Rudy compels us to ask: what contributed to his infection by HIV through his risk-taking behaviour? What made Rudy vulnerable as he went through his work as a seafarer? Are there structural features within the seafaring occupation, onboard and in port that contributed to the vulnerability of seafarers placing them (and the women) at risk?

The empirical chapters walked us through some of the major highlights in the lives of seafarers including Rudy. Given the cycle on how seafarers traverse their working lives over space and time, it would be possible to make deductions and identify possible contributing factors to their vulnerability as they can easily be located within the spaces of the ship and in port—the social spaces of the industry. There are elements and characteristics within the industry including its policies and processes that become critical factors in shaping the context of HIV/AIDS epidemic, though admittedly, there is little explication on how they facilitate and structure the possibilities for seafarers' sexual affairs outside marital relationships.

To address these questions raised by the study, I employ the concept of cultural theory of risk as introduced by Douglas specifically on the social construction of risk and danger (Douglas, 1966, 1970, 1982, 1986a, 1994). Her work on the cultural theory of risk is based on the idea in which risk is seen as a social construction having different social structures resulting in different risk perceptions (Dake, 1992). According to Wildavsky and Dake (1990: 43), Douglas' main tenet is that 'selective attention to risk, and preferences among different types of risk taking (or avoiding), correspond to *cultural biases*—that is, to worldviews or ideologies entailing deeply held values and beliefs defending different patterns of social relations'.

Cultural theory explains that the way individuals perceive risk is a collective construction shaped by different elements of the society. This concept of collective

thinking is further elucidated through the work 'How Institutions Think' by Douglas (1986b) which proposes that individuals think (and behave) based on the basic structures for thinking provided to them by the society and culture. There is a sense of social solidarity among groups of individuals and that the 'classification, logical operations, and guiding metaphors are given to the individual by the society' (Nelson, 1988). Taking from this lead, it is plausible to explain that the determinants to this collective risk-taking behaviour that seafarers manifest are influenced by structures within the industry and the economic environment within which the industry is embedded. These structures unintentionally contribute to HIV risk by silently condoning and facilitating opportunities for seafarers to engage in sexual relations in ports.

To understand and explicate some of these influences and links, let us look at some of the highlights from the empirical chapters. In Chapter 3, I presented how the shore leave was spent and how onboard situation, as part of the social environment wherein seafarers function, impacts the way seafarers perceive the risk in engaging in sexual trysts with sex workers. The work and social conditions of seafarers on board are influenced and shaped by the labour conditions within the maritime industry. In effect, the way individuals engage in extramarital relations are linked to macro-social structures or suprastructural elements (Hart and Carter, 2000) in which the industry is embedded. Social phenomena such as globalization and neo-liberal economic policies, which spawned the shift of maritime labour markets to developing countries have made an impact on the sexual risk behaviour of seafarers such as seeking sexual intercourse while at work and outside marriage.

Shipping companies functioning within a capitalist milieu and free market competition focus on prioritizing profit and minimizing cost. As labour is one of the elements in the maritime industry that can easily be manipulated, it is the first that shipping companies would change to save on cost as the need arises. Human resource strategies are hinged on deliberately recruiting and hiring able-bodied ratings from the developing world willing to accept contracts that normally undermine them. These seafarers become subjected to longer tours of duty compared to their counterparts from the developed world. This shift becomes a means of cutting on costs by the industry to the detriment of labour. Longer tours of duty results in a longer period of

time onboard and of being away from their families. There are those who are even willing to work beyond the stipulated contract to the advantage of the company, as the seafarer would not require additional travel and processing expenses.

Such a working milieu for seafarers results in more frequent engagements with sex workers because of having far less restrictions when away from home in a longer period of time. Additionally, the patriarchal tradition of the maritime industry, which employs mostly males, becomes an inherent feature of a gendered industry that works in tandem with other factors. The process instigated by this economic environment becomes iterative. This global economic framework also produces a form of desire by the men for women away from home at the same time it becomes an economic arrangement that creates the supply of women, in this case within the ports.

All these processes frame a certain culture, which Douglas (1986b) would describe as individuals whose group membership is confined to a single cultural typology. Those who transgress the rules, whether observed norms, actual stipulations or formal rules, are subjected to punishment (such as blacklisting or not being rehired by companies and manning agencies). Thus, to maintain group membership means adapting to the personality of the cultural setting they are embedded in. This results in a form of social cohesion, as it becomes an occupational fraternity or tight social network within a closed institutional setting. It becomes a community of practice as described by Wenger and Snyder (2000) wherein the group members are engaged in a 'certain process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour'. It is within this social network that diffusion of the similar culture is nurtured, practices and beliefs are shared and social exchange established.

This is exemplified for example by the acceptability and supportive stance of seafarers towards engagement with sex workers. There is a cohesive and unifying act to go to the nightclubs as a group as it has become an accepted norm. This cohesiveness also results in accepted behaviours of borrowing money and time as presented in Chapter 6. Borrowing time and money¹ and paid in similar units enables

¹ Borrowing money and time can also be explained using the theory of *social capital* (Burt, 1992; Portes, 1998; Loury, 1977). This is based on relational resources embedded within personal ties of individuals. Within the seafaring sector, establishment of social capital is more profound across

the engagement of the seafarer with a sex worker. Seafarers who are in the clubs and who need to go back to the ship for their duties would ask other seafarers to swap duties to allow him to stay longer. For those who do not have cash, it is convenient to borrow money from crewmates. Sometimes the crewmates volunteer to lend money to a fellow seafarer when they observe that a colleague would want to get a sex worker or pay for the expenses in the club. Social exchange theory (Stafford, 2008; Cook and Rice, 2003) provides a good theoretical grounding for such a stable social exchange and negotiation among the seafarers as it explains how these men see good outcomes of such transactions based on their subjective cost-benefit analysis and the way they compare the alternatives. Being on the same ship, it is easy for one to ask the money back during payday. Enterprising seafarers sometimes ask for interest. It is also within this shared culture that transactions happen predisposing some seafarers to venture into risky behaviours (including the effect of peer pressure).

According to Douglas (1986b), these social conventions become self-sustaining because deviating from such norms has no incentive. These are considered collective behaviours as they are shared thought systems shaped by the maritime industry and the economic framework it is working within. Another reason for the continued adherence is that these shared belief and behaviour systems reinforce adherence as the expected outcomes materialize.

The social structure on board a ship (as a functional unit of the bigger social organization of the maritime industry) impacts on how seafarers perceive risk. Using the grid-group model developed by Douglas (1970, 1982, 1986a, 1994) and Douglas and Wildavsky (1982), the ship as a cultural type can be classified as a hierarchical organization or institution characterized as high-grid-high group. This is one of the types of social structure identified in the matrix.

There is a clear social demarcation of the groups (officers and ratings) with different functional and social responsibilities. There are limitations on the social roles the members can acquire. There is authority that is highly respected and regulation of group members is practiced. Social roles are well circumscribed thus boundaries are

nationality lines and ranks, as closer friendships are developed as shown in Chapter 3 and becomes the basis of the social exchange.

observed. Transgressions are punished thus bad behaviour is not encouraged. Deviations from the norms are meted with punishment such as non-renewal of contracts, blacklisting or repatriation as earlier mentioned. In this kind of organization, there is a high pressure to act according to the agreed rules as shipping companies push for more profits through more voyages, fast turnaround time, no accidents due to alcohol intake, and decreased or limited recreation in ports. The strict policies within this industry shape the way the organization is built thus sustaining a more monolithic thinking. For example, the policy of not being late on board the ship is etched in the minds of every seafarer as it would cause trouble and delay in their next voyage. This makes the activities during shore leaves rushed including engagement with women. This also explains the thinking of many seafarers not to cause trouble in the clubs so that they will not be reported to the police and delay the ship. Thus, they pay generously the women to avoid trouble.

The use of the theory of Douglas is criticized, however, for being deterministic, that is, it does not put into consideration the person's free will (Tansey and O'Riordan, 1999). Given the multicultural crewing of ships, it is possible that seafarers bring in their own cultural biases. However, Rayner (1992) explains that Douglas does not mean to stereotype individuals but in fact confirms the presence of existence of cultural bias. Even if the individual is inclined to behave according to stipulations by the society based on specific social structures, it does not follow that the reactions of individuals would be the same and predictable.

These explain the varying perceptions of different seafarers towards risk given their different backgrounds. Many ratings would come from developing countries and officers are mostly from advance economies. Since this demarcation also goes along national lines, the hierarchical culture is further strengthened thus creating different risk perceptions as shown by the patron distribution profile of the clubs and engagements with the sex workers mentioned in Chapter 4. Day workers composed of many ratings such as fitters, chefs, cooks, stewards, painters, electricians, bosuns, ordinary seaman are observed more to frequent the nightclubs. Their work schedule does not conflict with the regular time (night) of the red light district. Since these positions are more for the ratings, and with ratings coming mostly from the developing countries, it is not surprising to read many reports of ratings from these

countries affected by HIV/AIDS. It does not however preclude the vulnerability of seafarers and officers from European and North American maritime labour countries to HIV risk since there are also data showing their infection rate (as shown by Hansen *et al.*, 1994; Tomaszunas, 1994; Sesar *et al.*, 1995; Abellan Hervas *et al.*, 1999; Huang, 2002). This further illustrates the point that different social structures based on the different social origins of seafarers results in different risk perceptions that have a bearing on the degree of manifestations of risk behaviours.

Some experts believe that individuals have dynamic lives and therefore cannot be boxed in a static state as proposed by Douglas' cultural theory (Boholm, 1996). As Hendry (1999) observes, individuals are fluid as they have to function in different organizations and institutions even if these have conflicting cultures. Thus, in multinational crewing, ships bring in cultural attributes of the nationalities onboard giving rise to nationality- and culturally-linked risk factors. Elements such as alcohol culture, religious and spiritual orientation, proximity of culture of seafarers with the prostitutes come out as factors that can be linked to the risk behaviour. These factors differ among different backgrounds. For example, alcohol consumption is more common in some cultures on board where some seafarers have a higher want for alcohol based on their cultural backgrounds placing them at a higher risk as shown in many studies (Weindhardt and Carey, 2000; Corte and Sommers, 2005; and Halpern-Felsher, Millstein and Ellen, 1996).

There are many instances that some seafarers would not necessarily 'adapt' to the prevailing culture contrary to Douglas' cultural theory of risk thus showing some form of individual free will. In Chapter 4, I mentioned that seldom do Indian and Chinese seafarers frequent the club and engage with women. I only observed one Indian seafarer who engaged sexually with a prostitute. The rest of the numerous Indian seafarers I interviewed and met espoused spirituality and religiosity and parental and marital obedience. Chinese seafarers also had fewer sexual encounters.² Chinese, Thai and Burmese seafarers observed had fewer encounters with the sex workers because of their limited command of the English language.

² This is reportedly due to their relatively lower salary; consequently, they are unable to afford the sex workers. The limited financial capability of Chinese seafarers due to low salary as shown by the study of Zhao (2011) presents another point on how labour contracts affect their sexual behaviour.

It can be argued however that behavioural manifestations in following the cultural typology may be an array of actions from simple and passive acceptance of the sexual behaviours of others to actual sexual encounters with sex workers. The acts of accompanying colleagues to the club even if they just stay in their seats, avoid women and simply drink the night away are manifestations of adherence to the culture. Even if individuals bring in a certain background to the organization, modern society dictates for them to be more fluid. Thus they are able to function in different organizational settings with different cultures (Hendry, 1999). According to Linsley and Shrives (2009), 'an individual could attempt to manage this dichotomous existence by changing personality according to the cultural setting that they are operating within'. Hendry (1999) proposes an alternative explanation wherein the individual does not provide his full commitment as a way of resolving the conflict when his worldview is not consistent with that of the organization. This fluidity in different organizations and the variability of individuals within one cultural group provides a good lead in explaining the prominence of some risks and others seen as less or insignificant.

In conclusion, it can be deduced that the worldview of the individual seafarer is affected by the cultural typology of the organization and framework which it revolves around. I attempted to elucidate the interaction between supra-structures and individual behaviour by looking at how men's opportunities for extramarital sexual relations are informed and shaped. I tried to frame that family relations, unequal gender relations, sexuality, private desires, sexual realities and moralities are socially, economically and politically organized within this particular setting.

Douglas' cultural theory of risk is an appropriate and adequate lens in this analysis as there were various determinants that were identified from the empirical data that may be industry-specific. The identification of these determinants provides an understanding of these inherent factors within the culture of the maritime industry and the ship, consequently contributing to our knowledge of the way they perceive risk and the way this perception influences their behaviours and actions. The analysis of the type of culture is not however a simple process as there is difficulty in understanding how complex institutional structures achieve adherence among its

members. One certain thing is that the outcomes of these determinants shape the prevalent shared culture that influences individual seafaring thinking and beliefs through consistency in established thought structures. The sexual risk taking behaviour of seafarers is not a simple product of individual decision-making but an offshoot of the social organization and unintended product of industry and state policies.

9.2 Performance of Masculinity

The empirical findings of this study provide us with a number of insights into concepts of masculinity and gender. As seafaring is a highly gendered profession³, findings of this study have shown many accounts of masculine narratives among the seafarers interviewed and observed reifying the role of gender as a crucial element helping shape the narratives of men (Doyal, Anderson and Papparini, 2009).

In this specific environment with a predominant male population the prevailing construction of masculinity is highly observed if not heightened. This gives us an insight that upon further scrutiny of the maritime industry it can be inferred that the industry can be categorized as an institution that promotes hegemonic heterosexual masculinity. The workplace is a major area where masculinities are moulded and ‘where central elements associated with hegemonic masculinity, such as competitiveness, autonomy, providership and risk-taking, are played out’ (McKay and Lucero-Prisno, 2012). Many of these manifestations have been highlighted by the data from the time they leave the ships (Chapter 3), stay in port and in the clubs (Chapters 4 and 5), have engagements with the women (Chapters 6 to 8) and the time they go back on board.

The maritime sector has been fashioned with a distinct masculine identity and with a hierarchical power structure. There is a recognizable presence of patriarchal structures within this industry embedded with heterosexist masculine authority, control and domination. This patriarchal tradition of the maritime industry, which

³ This is similar to institutions like the military and other transport workers.

employs mostly males, becomes an inherent feature of a gendered industry. Such institutions as described by Lumsden (1984) are:

largely comprised of men imbued with heterosexual and patriarchal values....These institutions promote and disseminate economic and political beliefs consistent with the interests of the dominant economic class. Moreover, they also further the heterosexist values, which legitimize the prerogatives of heterosexual males, encourage the sexual and emotional dependence of women upon men, and invalidate homosexuality.

The collective behaviour of seafarers as they go through their daily lives, as presented in the different empirical chapters, are shaped and reshaped by an economic social order hinged on hegemonic heterosexual masculinity.

These elements are diffused within many of the industry's social, political, economic and ideological aspects thus perpetuating a socially constructed and socially imposed hegemonic heterosexual masculine regime. The arrangement of the social order shows a political dimension of sexuality characterized by a patriarchal and capitalist social class system and a division of labour along gender lines. This makes the performance of the daily routine of seafarers as they leave their families, work onboard and go on shore leave dictated upon by the masculine framework that encompasses the maritime global social order. This links the performance of being a husband and a father as shown by the example in Chapter 3.3.2 (Connecting to Home) and the engagement with sex workers as presented in the other empirical chapters interlinked with the bigger political economy of seafaring work.

The general male stream and the ordering of work marginalize women in the lives of these seafarers as wives are left at home with limited sex lives and financial dependence upon them. Sex workers they engage with are also in similar marginalized predicaments. The acceptance and seeming dismissal by the wives as presented in Chapter 7.5 of a philandering husband and yet a responsible breadwinner whose earnings directly go to address the needs of the family are hallmarks of this socially constructed masculine order. These activities ground heterosexual masculinity in the social practices within and by this institution. This inevitably links heterosexuality and masculinity to the production and maintenance of power thus engendering many myths about seafaring men such as 'women in every port'. The

continuity of many practices is imposed by the gender regime that exists, which discourages some forms of masculinity and discourages others allowing them to flourish.

The maritime industry can be seen as a social product of masculine organizing perpetuated by different actors including the state. There is an obvious extensive control by men of the apparatus of the state and the industry in the areas and processes of ideology, production and distribution of knowledge, ideas and information. For example, images of seafaring continue to strengthen the concept of a working virile conquering man as its symbol being produced and reproduced. The organized perpetuation of this economic class includes institutions such as shipping companies, maritime schools, insurance companies, etc. Within the maritime social organization, people follow the instituted sociopolitical hierarchy and its authorities, held by the different elements and institutions that establish the structures of domination equated to the condition and practice of this power.

In the social ordering of the institutions involved in the daily lives of seafarers, we see an amalgamation of different institutions including the state enforcing a restrictive and oppressive gender and sexuality. The social organization of prostitution within the port is a social product of the collusion between the state and the hegemonic heterosexual masculine shipping industry. The state, which is another embodiment of the power of the hegemonic masculine regime, perpetuates the use of women as sexual objects or capitalizes on the economic and emotional weakness of women to cater to the institutionalized needs of global seafarers. The enactment of Brazilian laws on prostitution is a social product of oppression in the form of sexism, which is enacted, embodied and symbolized by the individual seafarer. Narratives presented affirm the notion that men are accorded more freedom to express their sexuality than women resulting in a more effective instrument for social control.

These concepts presented make the analysis of the performance of masculinity separated from the concepts of individuality and marginality to the wider political economic arena, such that its practice is not grounded on personal sexual satisfaction. As Frank (1987) stated, 'hegemonic heterosexual masculinity, then, is "hooked" to more than sexual satisfaction in a society where male dominance is part of a rigidly

structured hierarchy'. This is exemplified in the social locality of the ship and in the maritime industry as a bigger social organization where an overwhelming male social order sublimates into a somewhat enclosed and rigorous structure.

One of the discouraged practices within the hegemonic masculine culture of the maritime industry is the expression of emotion, which then becomes constrained and stifled. Seafarers present themselves as able to carry their jobs with full virility and without complaints, present their role as breadwinners and strong fathers to their families, and conquer women in ports with pride. Contrary to these beliefs, narratives of seafarers demonstrate that these men experience forms of emotional pain expressed in feelings emanating from loneliness and distance from their families. Being away from home for a long period of time results in emotional stress as time and distance pose challenges to the capacity of seafarers to manage their sexual and emotional longing.

It is however unlikely that these men would openly express the negative effects of this emotional disturbance. This is consistent with the point of Cleary (2012) that the 'expression of emotions is gender-specific and constrained in some social localities'. Seafarers negotiate the conflicting emotional experiences of loneliness of being away from home and hegemonic masculinity with their emphasis on emotional suppression. This is a way of dealing with the emotional consequences of being away from home at the same time preserving masculinity. These men would employ different coping mechanisms as shown by their activities during the shore leave either to alleviate the form of suffering that they experience, to mask the negative experiences, or to counteract them.

These forms of masculine performance would be prevalent in an environment where only certain forms of masculinity are promoted. The last thing seafarers would do is disclose this distress, not even to acknowledge this distress, that builds up within them as a result of being away from their loved ones. Norms dictated by dominant or hegemonic masculinity would discourage the expression and disclosure of their emotional vulnerability. The prolonged situation of being distant from their families and secure environments back home leads them to a situation that narrows their coping mechanisms to their activities in port. Thus, it becomes a relief every time

they go on shore leave as it represents a way out of the accumulated difficult situation and constrained ship environment. The longer they are at sea the longer they experience difficulties thus exacerbating and prolonging further their feeling of inner distress.

We come to the question that arises from the data about masculinity in this social locality whether power imbalances exist among seafarers given the diversity of the backgrounds of these working men. From a wider perspective we can see a generalized concept of shared male privilege applied as a blanket view given the similarities resulting in a singular form of masculinity.

Further analysis however shows that the social organization of power relations among these men, and their hierarchical setup provide a bridge with which to link masculinity and heterosexuality with labour, power distribution, organization of production, leisure, social relations, race and class. For example, those who are in the lower ranks have power muted by the authorities:

They resist a marginalized masculinity driven by workplace subordination and labour market insecurity by combining a ‘cautious masculinity’ of self-control and competence on the job, an ‘expressive hyper-masculinity’ of compensation in port and among peers, and a ‘breadwinner masculinity’ of providership, sacrifice and responsible fatherhood at home. (McKay and Lucero-Prisno, 2012)

This results in multiple and conflicting masculinities onboard fuelled by the hierarchical organization and by the existing differences such as those between young entrants to the profession against the old and between the officers against the ratings. This is further proven by the different vulnerabilities that arise from the outcome with engagements with the sex workers as alluded to by the data.

Given the changing landscape of masculinity, there is a shimmering light ahead that would change masculine thinking of many seafarers. There are indicators shown by the data about emerging forms of masculinity. There are seafarers who are more responsible with regards to saving money for their families as breadwinners and those who avoid engagement with sex workers—seen as important trademarks of

responsible masculinity. As Gary Kinsman (1987) comments on the necessity of changing hegemonic heterosexuality masculinity:

redefining of masculinity and sexuality will also help destroy the anxieties and insecurities of many straight men who try so hard to be 'real' men. But the success of this understanding depends on the ability to develop alternative visions and experiences that will help all people understand how their lives could be organized without heterosexuality as the institutionalized social norm. Such a goal is a radical transformation of society in which everyone will be able to gain control over his or her own body, desires, and life.

However, the challenge of changing the status quo would not be that easy. As Frank (1987) surmised:

Centuries-old patriarchal orders are not easily eradicated. Domination by men of other men and women is based on, and perpetuated by, a wide range of social structures, from our intimate sexual relationships to the organization of economic and political life.

9.3 Risky Sexual Relationships

One of the highlights of the story of Rudy is his relationship with one of the sex workers he met. The relationship that he developed is similar to those presented in Chapters 6 and 7 together with other different forms of relationships that exist between sex workers and their seafarer clients. Discussions in these chapters classified these relationships into categories—from the simplest form of client-provider to simulating a family with child/children. These categories, however, are not distinct and well defined entities. They can be described as fluid and belong to a continuum. These different levels of relationships shaped by psychosocial factors—motives, transactions and commitment—are not what we normally see as hetero-normative relationships. These relationships mimic socially acceptable engagements having the inherent elements and characteristics of a normal relationship yet void of other innate elements. This brings me to conclude that these relationships can be considered 'hybrids' or 'mimics' devoid of the standard rules making them complex thus leading to the risky behaviours and relationships observed in this study.

There is evidence from the data showing how these seafarers and sex workers mimic or simulate normal relationships. These relationships are also characterized as compressed, i.e., they occur within a short period of time. Within these time periods, these relationships normally display the inherent characteristics of socially acceptable relationships characterized by elements like cognitive, affective closeness, and commitment. As shown by my data presented in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, seafarers and sex workers engage in activities like sharing personal information (cognitive), they can be seen to possess a deep sense of caring and positive attraction (affective closeness), and convey the message (e.g. discussion of future meetings and plans) that they will remain to be with one another (commitment). Commitment is also shown (and forcibly imposed) as exemplified by the loyalty of the one-woman rule in the club.

Nightly observations provide us clues to the way they perform the rituals of relational interactions. Some of them show all the attributes of a romantic relationship including the increased public display of physical expressiveness like kissing, holding hands, embracing, etc.—sometimes over-performing these dyadic determinants of a romantic construct. In such relationships, they manifest comfort in close proximity (Allgeier and Byrne, 1973) and there is more tactile involvement (Rosenfeld *et al.*, 1976). The act of sexual intercourse whether in paid relationship or a romantic relationship signifies intimacy, closeness, and love within the heterosexual relationship (Gavey *et al.*, 1999). According to Moss and Schwebel (1993) the level of intimacy becomes the basis by which individuals evaluate their romantic relationship. Thus, some relationships between the seafarers and sex workers were defined to reach a higher level of romanticism and intimacy characterizing the romantic form.

Despite having the inherent characteristics of heterosexual engagements, these relationships will never attain normalcy since they were built on unconventional circumstances. This is the reason why they are ‘mimics’ or ‘hybrids’, which is a characteristic of the changing landscapes of relationships. This variation of relational interactions proves the idea of the changing nature of modern relationships exemplified by being transient and non-committed, having relationship outside marriage or having children with another woman. This is in contrast to the classical

notions of relationships emphasizing traditions and arrangements (Thomas 1999; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995), which will never happen between seafarers and sex workers because of their fleeting circumstances given that seafarers are highly mobile and do not stay in one place as emphasized in Chapter 3. Despite the fact that some of them perceive their relationships to be real and normal, there are also elements that contradict this reality thus reclassifying this relationship to be unconventional.

As most seafarers are married or have girlfriends, these relationships with sex workers are extra relationships (extra-marital affairs in the strictest sense) developed away from home. Thomas (1999) looks at extra-marital affairs as contrary to the definition of normal relationships as they are articulations of 'belongingness' (Baumeister and Leary, 1995) and warrant nearness. Since these characteristics are not normally attained, seafarers and sex workers just approximate this experience and feeling in a number of ways as presented in Chapter 7 thus simulating normal relationships while in port. For example, when they are away at sea, the women left behind in ports are treated in the same manner as their wives with similar forms of communication and support provided such as continuous communication through phone messages and emails and by sending financial support.

The motives identified on why seafarers engage with commercial sex workers as shown in Chapters 3 and 6 further present its complex nature. The reasons varied from want and longing for sex as a normal physical need, the need to meet the opposite sex, longing to hear the voice and touch the body of women, the attraction to foreign women, curiosity, inclusion in their 'collection' of women they had sex with from different countries, accepted part of the recreational package of shore leave, need to meet fresh faces, need to converse with others other than crewmates, peer pressure, etc. Some of these findings were seen by other authors such as Trotter (2008) who opines that sexual desires among seafarers well up since they are away from their partners for a long period of time thus the need to meet women in port.

Another reason why these relationships occur is because they fill the void created by being away from their wives and girlfriends. This is a way of easing the burden caused by the distance from the family. As presented by Lamvik (2002: 186) it is to

'ease the sense of emptiness, absence and loneliness, which the seamen often are experiencing during their time on board'. Such acts allow him to 'traverse the geographical gap and isolation' (Lamvik 2002:186). In a sense, the performance of engaging with commercial sex workers becomes a way of shortening the sense of distance of this gap by simulating a relationship abroad. The sex worker takes over the wife's role to provide his emotional and physical needs. Others would take the sex workers as temporary replacement and have a sense of still being 'connected' with their wives and girlfriends. Some seafarers reported having their wives in their minds when having sexual intercourse with sex workers. Others get sex workers who look like their wives or girlfriends. These motives add to the changing paradigm of hetero-normative relationships seafarers and sex workers mimic. They also require us to redefine how we 'understand' infidelity in as much as the women are meant to be 'surrogate' wives and girlfriends.

Fluidity is another factor that characterises this complex relationship. As presented in Chapter 7, the constructed identities of these individuals do not remain static. There are various dynamics and interactions that occur between them that change their construction of identity thus the fluidity in developing different forms of relationships within a continuum. Despite the fact that the sex workers primarily work to earn, there is also that certain desire of being wanted and loved, which may result in relationships evolving into romantic forms. This common perception that men want sex and women want love and relationship is solidified. In such instances, this is an acceptance of the normative concept of hegemonic masculinity whereby men seek women because the latter accept subordination.

When the need for seafarers to express their masculinity and the ability for sex workers to express their normative femininity by providing pleasure (whether paid or unpaid) are met, it paves the way to the construction of a relationship. This relationship carries on further with evolving roles of both such as seafarers continuously providing money to the sex worker, and sex workers getting pregnant by their seafarer boyfriends.

Another manifestation of the fluidity is the changes in the way sex workers construct the meaning of money provided by the seafarer as the relationship progresses. As

presented in Chapters 6 and 7, at first this money would be seen as a simple payment for sexual services provided. As engagement continues, this will become part of the obligation as a boyfriend-provider. Even without sex at times, money would still be given. Seafarers take on the provider role and in return the woman provides the care the seafarers long for. The provision of money will not continue to follow time or contract construct. It will happen on an irregular basis without any obligation on the part of the women to provide sex except to act accordingly as expected of any partner. The amount of 50 USD also becomes variable. Other seafarers would continue to give even if they left the port. Some sex workers receive a monthly allowance. The monetary obligation goes up when a child is born as presented by the data.

The complexity of these relationships is nurtured by a number of factors such as the regularity of frequenting the clubs, as mentioned earlier, when the ship stays longer in port. Patronizing the clubs becomes more frequent paving the way for further strengthening the bonds of the relationship as mentioned in Chapter 7. Frequency does not necessarily mean having sex every time the seafarer visits. They can go there and just drink and engage socially with the sex worker. This is another manifestation of the approximation of the normative performance of relationships experienced in normal situations.

The approximation of normal behaviour as shown by these sexual and relational narratives which Sanders (2008) calls 'male sexual scripts' when dealing with sex workers is a way of trying to mirror 'traditional romance, courtship rituals, modes and meanings of communication, sexual familiarity, mutual satisfaction and emotional intimacies found in "ordinary" relationships'. This mirroring renders the demarcation between commercial sexual transactions and non-sexual transactions unclear. Thus seafarers use the terms 'love', 'mahal', 'sweetheart' or 'honey' normally used for wives and girlfriends to refer to the sex worker as shown in Chapter 7. Knowing that these relationships are 'different' becomes an opportunity for them to explore these engagements devoid of the rigid structures and obligations of the relationships they have back home (as shown by Thomas, 1999) making them more convenient to navigate. One of the attributes of this hybrid relationship is the convenience for seafarers to easily move out of it since there are no binding restrictions. In addition, less anxiety and tension are involved when letting go.

On the other hand, some seafarers imbibe the belief that these relationships are real and not imagined. This results in one's inability to demarcate between his relationship with his wife and his other relationship with a sex worker. Thus, a seafarer would have similar ways of relating to each of them. The fact that one exists after the other in a geospatial sense makes it somewhat easy for the seafarer to navigate between these two relationships. This probably makes the distinction between the two relationships quite blurry despite all the social cues that tell them that extramarital affairs are not tolerated by the society.

Some of these relationships continue as they are recognized and maintained *by* 'stability, affective concern and continuation into the foreseeable future' as suggested by Hogben (2006: 500). This sense of continuity of performance of such relationships sometimes extends beyond the tour of duty for some seafarers. The possibility of attachment, feeling of romantic love and the desire to continue a relationship happened to some seafarers who married the sex workers they had a relationship with, stayed in Brazil for good, brought these women back to their home countries, or continued to send money to support the women as shown in Chapter 7. Some seafarers who thought of doing a similar thing and who were not able to experience some feeling of loss when they had to leave the women behind when the time to depart had to come.

These relationships occur in specific contexts. Carpenter (1998) alludes to one of the contexts as economic transactions occurring within a modern liberal democracy. This provides meaning to the transactions by 'creating sexually specific practices, capacities and status for men and women' as shown by the empirical findings. These transactions are also premised on the dichotomy of public and private spheres that differentiates personal and intimate transactions from a framework of sexualized enterprise.

Context of gender also plays an important role in these transactions. In this specific study, we see that sex workers are overwhelmingly females, and seafarer customers overwhelmingly males. There are apparent income and status inequalities between the sex workers and their clients that have become part of women's lives and of the

larger societal structure. According to Kesler (2002), this is because prostitution contributes directly to the inferiority of women in our society thus helping shape the notions of female subordination and the sexuality of men and women. It moulds a thinking of women who exist to serve men's sexual needs. The economic framework within which seafarers function, 'facilitates a notion of masculinity tied to commercialized and sexualized leisure (ensuring the demand for sex workers), and generates the means to purchase these sexualized 'commodities' (Phinney, 2008).

Such notions place the women 'as the dual victim of a risky family and an unequal market' (Carpenter, 1998). As the women come from disenfranchised backgrounds, they experience 'double jeopardy' making prostitution a vehicle for 'double victimisation' as they become victims of an unequal and exploitative economic environment showing structural reasons as determinants rather than personal factors. This approach is based on a victim/agent dualism where 'sex work is an inherently unequal practice defined by the intersection of capitalism and patriarchy. . . [which] epitomizes men's dominance' (Overall, 1992). The enactment of these masculine sexual performances is fulfilled in a specific geographic space—the nightclubs—where purchase of sex transpires.

In conclusion, seafarers engaging with other women and women engaging with other male clients do not mould strong relationships despite the fact that they perceive the enactment of the relationship real. Since these relationships are hybrid, the rules that govern them are also fluid and blurry. There is an inability to categorize the various relationships, which makes the rules arbitrary. It is within this complex relationships and flimsy grounds that place seafarers and sex workers in an environment of risk. They also occur in specific contexts and within specific gender dynamics.

9.4 Negotiated Safety: Navigating Unprotected Sex

Obviously, Rudy had unprotected sex with a woman (or women) resulting in his infection with HIV. In most cases, he probably did not use condoms during the sexual encounters, as he did not perceive the situation to be risky. This is the case for many other seafarers who practice unsafe sex because of the way they perceive the

risk. Their attitude towards condom is a manifestation of the way they perceive risk. In Chapter 8, I discussed the nuances of condom use among seafarers as a way of navigating the risk of STIs, HIV and risky relationships with sex workers. Acknowledgement and perception of the lurking risk of HIV/AIDS prevents seafarers from practicing unprotected sex all the time. This practice, seen as a form of risk management, includes the identification, assessment, and prioritization of risks as a consequence of the continued desire to have sex without condoms. Seafarers employ various ways, processes and practices to avoid, lessen or mitigate the risk by navigating their way through the perils of HIV and STIs. Within this social context, power between genders becomes central and is continuously negotiated between male clients and female sex workers. It is a 'negotiated order' as defined by Strauss (1978) and discussed by Fine (1984).

This 'negotiated order' further manifests in the risk management practices seafarers employ such as by using condoms if perceived as risky. This brings me to one of my conclusions that unprotected sex between a seafarer and a sex worker is the penultimate manifestation of sexual risk and that seafarers negotiate their own interpretation of the social order of condom use using a complex process determined and governed by a combination of factors and the interplay of all these elements. Earlier, I mentioned a number of these determinants using the concept of cultural theory of risk by Douglas. Navigation of risk or risk management is a continuous reconstitution in action resulting from tacit agreements between seafarers and sex workers and other intervening factors and thus not bound by the knowledge of the consequence of the virus.

In this continuous risk management process, constructivist approaches would espouse that individuals construct their knowledge and understanding based on prior experience and derived knowledge and understanding. These individuals then revise them based on new experience thus undertaking a continuous process of 'negotiated safety'. Seafarers learn this new knowledge from their interactions with other seafarers and as they go through their work cycle. Such knowledge is used in managing risks as they face the dilemma of fulfilling these sexual desires or letting go of them.

In Chapter 8, I identified a number of determinants that influence seafarers' attitudes towards the use of condoms which includes their personal perception and thinking about condoms. The myths and beliefs they held concerning condoms, cleanliness of women, their physical limitations and the effect of alcohol. Consequently, their attitude towards condom is shaped by their knowledge about condoms and their perception of risk brought about by HIV/AIDS. From the empirical data, I deduced five overarching elements that continuously redefine their perception of risk as part of their risk management. These elements encompass all the different determinants explaining the 'negotiated order' with regards to non-use of condom during the sexual intercourse namely—identity, trust and confidence, cleanliness, and relationship.

I use the word 'identity' to refer to 'common identification with a collectivity or social category' (Stryker and Burke, 2000). Locating sex workers within their more complex social positions and not seen exclusively from a moralistic standpoint (such as the identification of sex workers as 'immoral' or 'harbinger of diseases') changes the way these women are perceived and constructed. Looking at them as also at the same time ordinary workers (ship chandler, waitress, cashier) or as students, beauty parlour keepers, albeit from more 'feminine' and conservative roles, radically alters the acceptability of these women to seafarers. Women one meets in the park do not have the identity of sex workers. The male clients themselves change these perceptions by consciously identifying these women as wholesome and healthy. They imbibe the notion of hetero-normal relationships. This alteration in the perception and construction of the women brought on by changing the discursive location of these women facilitates and enables the seafarers to have unprotected sex with them.

On the other hand, sex workers also form some identity of their seafarer clients. They normally have a good sense of them, knowing that most of the seafarers are educated, moneyed, married or with girlfriends back home, and are healthy because of the regular medical examination they go through during every contract. Since these clubs exclusively cater to seafarers, women tend to believe that the seafarers are clean and free from any STI. This paves the way for anxious-free sexual encounters given the good and clean background of seafarers. They would not normally put up a strong resistance against seafarers who insist on not using condoms.

Related to identity are trust and confidence in the woman. Seafarers would agree to have unprotected sex when they trust a woman and when they have confidence that she is free from health problems. Trust and confidence are developed from men's understanding of the women through different cues mentioned in the different chapters from the time they enter the nightclub to the moment that they are about to consummate the sexual act in bed. Cues such as 'certificates', woman's job and family background, alcohol drinking, physical appearance, clothes, etc. are elements that determine the development of trust and confidence on the woman.

Trust and confidence are interrelated with the perception of cleanliness of the women. Assessing the cleanliness of women utilizes different tools for identifying the possible presence of risk factors found among the women as possible carriers of infective agents particularly when seen as unhygienic and unclean. When a seafarer deems the woman dirty, condom will be used or he will not get the woman; but if he deems her clean, condom will not be used during sexual intercourse.

The way seafarers navigate through the possible risk of the sexual act is by negotiating the different interpretations of concepts of clean and dirty. They continuously practice flexibility by rejecting formal rules and control techniques (vis-à-vis condom use) and substituting them with alternatives that they find just as acceptable as the one replaced. They rationalize using beliefs such as 'suction effect', through physical appearance that stands in for health, and through 'certification' of women as presented in Chapter 8. The multiple techniques employed by seafarers in assessing cleanliness of women show the continuous reconstitution of the negotiated order. This alludes to a form of 'negotiated risk' (vis-à-vis 'negotiated safety') seen as a unique concept in risk sociology.

Relationship is another important element that determines condom use and is thus a significant contributor to the 'negotiated order'. As seafarers and sex workers go through different forms of relationships, changes in the degree and strength of bond occur. As bonds and relatedness become stronger, similar to normal relationships, the probability of condom use becomes lesser. In this situation, identity comes into play, because the evolution of relationships also changes the identity of the way they relate

to each other. As a relationship is constructed as romantic, seafarers and sex workers agree not to use condoms.

The identity of a relationship influences the way seafarers construct risk and the kind of preventive behaviour they practice against sexual transmission of HIV. The identity or type of partner influences the sexual negotiation and bargaining in the context of condom as shown by Bajos (1997). This changing identity illustrates why individuals do not protect themselves due to the social normalization of gender roles. It explains the differences in preventive behaviour based on the relations or type of partner in the context of power role relationships and social, sexual or confidential relationships.

It should be emphasized that these different determinants are interrelated. For example, trust and confidence are natural outcomes of the changing relationship. Changing identity to a girlfriend status is a consequence of an evolving relationship. Within a romantic partnership, trust is demanded—trust in the woman as clean and healthy and trust in the relationship. Trust also translates to confidence wherein the seafarer is confident in not using condoms and not contracting any disease from the sexual partner because she is seen as clean.

Another major finding in the context of condom use is that bargaining, as a process towards a ‘negotiated order’, did not reveal price increase in the sexual transactions, which contradicts the common notion universally observed. Seafarers never brandished their money to overpower the women, as increasing price for sexual transactions is not a common norm. Everyone pays a standard price, which at times would even go lower as shown in Chapter 8. Some seafarers would even get sexual intercourse for free. Sex workers agreed, offered or conveyed to accept not using condoms based on the premise that the seafarer will go back as her customer and continue the relationship knowing that seafarers are ‘captive’. The sex worker allows price stability to command loyalty and keep the seafarer to herself for the rest of his career whenever he goes to the same port as tradition dictates. He becomes a financial resource and a source of psychological benefits.

For the sex workers, this becomes a steady source of income and becomes particularly useful when there is an immediate need for money to send to their children back home or to pay the rent of their apartments. It is for this reason that they try to strictly impose the one-woman policy in the nightclub that seafarers follow. These sex workers would worry more about these stresses and raising money rather than HIV thus allowing non-use of condoms with seafarers. Regularity and frequency of meeting and having sexual intercourse develops into a relationship for a number of them.

In this continuing process, other elements are factored in including information and knowledge. Knowledge turns out to be a very important element predictive of the sexual risk behaviour and the way they manage the risk. There is no doubt that the seafarers are very knowledgeable about many facts of HIV/AIDS and STIs. However, as Oriente (2005) pointed out, there is a ‘development and circulation of lore or misinformation on HIV’ which in turn shape their risky behaviours that can be described as ‘disturbed risk perception’ as exemplified in the beliefs and myths presented in Chapter 8.

In this part, the argument I presented is that negotiation for safety and navigating reduction of risk are reflections of the different processes and interactions of various elements that contribute to the creation of a new set of thinking and strategies, different yet related to the prescribed set of order of safety—that of using condoms. I presented here that understanding condom use is central to this study. Condom use remains integral to understanding the AIDS pandemic. I also emphasized that unsafe sex (non use of condom) represents the ultimate act of sexual risk that fuels the epidemic yet condom use is viewed only as a means of risk reduction and not risk elimination.

9.5 Boys, Buyers and Bodies

Narratives of men buying sex highlight the seeming imbrications of sexual risk-taking, masculinity, relationships and condom use by bringing into fore related concepts of embodiment and corporeality. Many parts of the data presented in this

study reify some concepts of the male body referring to what Watson (2000) calls 'experiential embodiment' and other aspects of corporeality. Narratives presented by the seafarers show the intertwining of male bodies, masculinities and emotions and how they relate to the reproduction of the relationships they experience. The concept of embodiment cuts through all these themes I mentioned in this last chapter as it provides a fitting approach towards the understanding of the different relationships seafarers have with sex workers.

As presented by the empirical findings, sexually engaging with sex workers, ranging from being instruments for men's sexual gratification to being individuals who engage in relationships that maybe characterized by emotion and affection, provides good views on how embodied heterosexual masculinities are exemplified. This concept of embodiment among seafarers who patronize sex workers and develop different forms of relationships maybe characterized for example by separating love from sex or the inclusion of it as part of the concept of being embodied and disembodied. For example, we read from the accounts of seafarers in Chapter 6 that after the sexual act they do not want to do anything anymore with the women and just want to 'kick them out of the bed'. It is simply a quick physical relief seen as driven by biological needs with no further interaction and rapport. They switch from their 'real' selves to a 'different' individual. Others mentioned of seeing the women as their wives or girlfriends when having sex; while in Chapter 7 we read of seafarers having sex with sex workers who see them as intimate partners. Chapter 6 also provides a very rich insight into how seafarers relate to their own bodies such as 'my body has a need for a warm body' (see Section 6.1) and how the seafarers position their bodies such as 'the woman sucks... I was not doing anything' (Section 6.1). These accounts show the nuances of locating the body, sex and sexuality and their ramifications with contexts such as expression of desire, intimacy, infidelity or immorality.

One form of disembodiment is when seafarers see their sexual engagements with sex workers as desexualised. Desexualization is shown for example by women who undergo vaginal examination exposing their vaginas and being probed with speculums or fingers and dismissing the process as non-sexual by using social roles and scripts of the health professionals and drapes as affirmation of the idea (Henslin and Biggs,

1971). Male sex workers do not consider fellatio as an erotic encounter but as a service and a business transaction (Reiss, 1961). Seafarers employ many discursive devices to desexualize these sexual acts such as dismissing the act as purely for physical gratification, by paying the sexual transaction, non-engagement after ejaculation, avoiding 'intimate' acts like kissing or licking the vagina or by not having contact with some body parts, not being active in bed, and by using condoms. In terms of power relations, some of the seafarers reoriented their narratives by embodying exploited individuals. They create the discourse of women sex workers as the wielders of 'power [by] using their bodies as currency in commercial sex, [with] men as buyers' (Coy, 2009) who would position themselves as the exploited. This form of embodiment shown by seafarers who became submissive to the whims of sex workers was presented in Section 4.5.

In this study, narratives of seafarers differentiate sex and love which may not necessarily coexist. Some seafarers emphasized the reproduction of 'hegemonic truth' as described by Mooney-Somers and Ussher (2010) as centred on the physical body and more often on the genitals without the context of relations and emotions. This was shown by the seafarers as presented in Chapter 3 emphasizing what has been historically presented as hegemonic scripts that men have the natural bodily desire for women as emphasized by Connell (2005). The data presented in this study mirrors what many studies on prostitution present where women's bodies are commodified fully fitting with the concept of men's desires and fantasies within a patriarchal capitalist system. One explanation that can explain the sexual behaviour of seafarers that allows them to go through a sexual act without too much 'personal involvement' is decoupling sex from the body or perform sex without guilty feelings or any sense of immorality, infidelity or risk.

For some seafarers, the act becomes non-sex to avoid imputations of being 'cheaters', immoral, or infidel to their wives. According to Oerton and Phoenix (2001), this brings sexuality to different planes of discourse—morality and immorality, good and bad, reputability and disreputability. Seafarers would disavow the act of sex so as not to be labelled bad, immoral or disreputable by their colleagues, wives, family and friends. Seidler (1994, 1997) emphasized similar points arguing that bodies need to be controlled and contained as they will lead to moral transgression and sin. Data

shows us how some of the colleagues showed their disapproval of some of their crewmates who engaged with sex workers by labelling them as unprofessional and disloyal to their wives. The use of condom, which prevents the body from ‘touching’ another body, also brings the discourse towards the concepts of disease and health and dirt and cleanliness. Thus, Chapter 8 provides us numerous accounts on how seafarers navigate their bodies in the context of disease avoidance and remaining clean through various decision-making processes and cues. These discourses however are dynamic. They become interlinked and intertwined and they evolve. New meanings emerge as these discourses are continuously recreated and revised. This becomes one of the reasons for the different trajectories of the relationships that emerge as presented in Chapter 8 and the reasons for condom use in Chapter 9. The way they position their bodies become products of these discourses, and as these discourses change the products also vary.

The discursive constitution of the body that seafarers manifest do not emanate as inherent but acquires meaning based on the context. These specific body practices and discursive devices do not work in itself or by itself but are linked with location (public and private spheres), identities (clients and sex providers), and contexts (distance from wives and stressful work). Meaning is created based on the specific contextual discourse they revolve around. One context which has implications on how seafarers become embodied or disembodied is how they locate themselves between the division of public and private spheres.

Buying and selling of sex transpires in the public sphere exemplified by the accessible red light district compared to the private sphere as shown in the confines of home and marriage. This dichotomous configuration however becomes problematic as seafarers find themselves experiencing private emotions and relationships within the public sphere beyond the confines of private domestic affairs. This binary of commercial and non-commercial sex configurations becomes blurry making the configuration of risk problematic as encounters become embodied—potentially erotic and intimate—with a woman and a man in private settings. This creates a complex interplay of discourse and practice experienced by these men as they engage with women in public sexual encounters because of the diverse meanings created. This dual explanation should be emphasized as social construction of the clients and his

practices. Sanders (2008) saw similar experiences of other sex clients in her study who manifested a range of emotions leading to the glossing over of the dichotomy. Oerton and Phoenix (2001) argues that ‘the conjunction of these powerful discourses—of ‘private’... and ‘public’... between women and men—creates a vacuum or empty centre into which different and paradoxical meanings can be sucked’.

Context also provides an enabling tool such as seafarers being pushed by their sexual predicaments being away from intimate partners or having bad relationships with their partners thus showing shifting contexts and shifting embodiment. For example, Rudy, the bosun, presented this predicament of dissatisfaction that led him to engage with women in ports and positioning his body as someone in need of intimacy. It is within this dichotomy that explains some risks that seafarers become embedded in as they navigate through the nuances of buying sexual services and engaging with women and allowing these practices to become constituted as variously embodied or disembodied. Based on the need established by the structural features of his workplace and the bigger society, we see seafarers acting on natural impulses and urge thus establishing exercise and control of their bodies. Such a need is based on their predicaments on board resulting in forms of deprivation and perversion in the enactment of their masculine needs and roles. For example, their longing for women becomes sublimated in the desire for engagement with the opposite sex. These events also transpire in contexts such as what Carpenter (1998) calls modern liberal democracies or what other authors (such as Monaghan and Robertson, 2012) call patriarchal capitalist system. All of these also exist as ‘the individual is less bound by traditional bonds that structured particular trajectories through life and particular voices or modalities of being [thus] it becomes possible for new and different identities and relations to emerge’ (Oerton and Phoenix, 2001).

According to Oerton and Phoenix (2001), ‘the meanings of sex and sexuality still tend to be conflated and through palimpsest movement, written on to the body [as] sex and sexuality exist as categories that are given meaning because they are embodied experiences’. It is possible that in making sense of sexual engagement with sex workers, seafarers reconceptualize sex by discursively emptying and reconstituting the symbolic space of the embodied practice of sex. This becomes problematic as the

repudiation of sex creates a space open-wide for re-inscribing sex into the sexual act thus making their bodies involved in the sexual act rather than being desexualized and distanced. They experience slippages from a desexualized act to a more embodied sex thus potentially intimate and pleasurable.

Slippages from a desexualized nature to a more involved sexual interaction are enabled by a number of cues. Even if seafarers deploy discursive devices such as using condoms, avoiding kisses, being less active in bed, avoiding acts like cunnilingus, avoiding contacts of body parts, they remain prone to slippages due to many contexts. For example, penetrative sex, skin to skin contact, sexual intercourse in a private room are not dissimilar with the conditions and acts in a desexualized context as the discursive terrains are comparable. Furthermore, as earlier stated, within a wider social context, similar acts are performed with wives and girlfriends blurring the demarcation. Many sex workers also go beyond contractual sex by making purchased experiences similar to the experiences with wives and girlfriends as they want to 'provide more' to simulate what seafarers miss with their partners as presented in Chapters 5 and 7. An initial disembodied sexual encounter also becomes a prelude to a more embodied experience as the process continues over time. As the cycle is repeated with multiple contacts and visits to the club, the dynamics change resulting into embodied forms of relationships as presented in Chapter 7. This leads to conflation of the dichotomies as they make use of both as they wish and for whatever purpose it suits them.

9.6 Reflections and Future Directions

An ethnographic approach in the conduct of studies poses challenges in the areas of the positionality of the researcher, practical aspects of the methodology, and research ethics amongst others (Sanghera and Thapar-Björkert, 2008; Milner, 2007). Dealing with a sensitive topic from a moral, legal and safety standpoint compounded the degree of challenges such a study encounters. Discussion about sex as a research topic is normally accorded a different reception as many see it as a very personal issue.

The path that I took in undertaking my study was full of challenges. I started discussing this in Chapter 4 (section 6) with regards to my positionality and issues of corporeality within the fieldsite. To be in an environment of prostitution—an illegal trade in many parts of the world—is not an easy task to navigate for an outsider, albeit a nosey researcher. The initiation of the study particularly upon entry into the field was somewhat a daunting task given the distant persona of an outsider in the closed culture of the sex industry. During the trajectory of the research process, as I had to deal and interact with various individuals in the field, I had to change hats many times to be able to conform with different expectations without compromising my research goals. I had to be a friend to the sex workers, a cooperative guest in the seamen's mission, and a respectful bystander inside the nightclubs. I had to play the games of the sex workers and at the same time avoid confrontations with them.

It was a daily decision making challenge whether to do one thing or not—Should I keep on lending money whenever a sex worker borrowed? Should I keep on entertaining drug dealers who want me to help in their business? Should I continue discussing the nightclubs, which is somewhat a taboo in the seamen's mission? How should I react to the sexual advances of the women? All decisions I made always had to consider all aspects of the study such as adherence to the protocol, upholding ethics, and placing my personal safety a priority. Everyday, I was always exposed to drugs, sex trade, corruption and alcohol, thus providing a research environment of insecurity.

Aside from relational issues, the study also faced financial and logistical concerns in conducting the fieldwork as it was not cheap to live in the country, on top of a number of cultural challenges including the inability to speak perfectly the local language when I had to talk to someone who does not speak English. For example, my local supervisor wrote a book in Portuguese about the sex workers, which I wanted to read. The convenience in the time of the observations was a challenge, as I had to stay in the nightclub until early morning. Gender of the researcher did not come as a major issue per se except when I was sometimes seen as a customer. Another challenge was the continued communication of the researcher with his supervisors, family, and friends who were far away from the field. Internet communication alleviated this problem.

Despite all of these challenges, the fieldwork turned out to be one of the most exciting parts of the study. Sometimes I reflected while I was almost finishing the fieldwork why there was really no major obstacle. I attributed this to a few factors. My nationality was an important element. All seafarers know Filipinos as seafarers. Thus, it was not difficult to deal with me culturally. Most of them had ease talking to me. It was easy for me to get Filipino seafarers to be interviewed. Language and culture were common factors. If I had to do the interviews with Filipino seafarers, I spoke in their national language. If I had to conduct the interviews with other seafarers, English became handy, it being the language of the shipping industry.

Being a male researcher mattered most in talking with the seafarers. It was easy for me to discuss at their 'level' particularly when it comes to sexual matters. Thus, I had no difficulty eliciting very personal information. Many of them even divulged more information than necessary. In the end I got what I wanted—a substantial data to provide substance for my PhD work. I also realized in this study as a novice researcher that social phenomena are products of human lives, and the players within the fields whether sex workers or their clients are human beings with important stories to tell and my main role was to listen.

This study sheds light on a number of issues that we assumed studies, under the theme of sexual risk-taking, have covered. Though it is true that there have been numerous studies in this area and other related topics under prostitution and HIV/AIDS, this study looks at the perspective of a group of male clients of commercial sex workers. Many studies of prostitution have been employing feminist approaches, as their focus are usually the female sex providers thus neglecting the understanding of the risk behaviours of their clients. This study digs deeper into the lives and the experiences of the male clientele thus giving an understanding of this under-researched group. It is not the purpose of this study to justify the male clientele who are normally portrayed to possess hegemonic power, but instead, to understand the way they go through the different stages of their engagement with the sex workers, how risk comes about in the different dynamics and how contexts shape these behaviours.

The study also provides a deeper understanding of the specific target group of this research—the seafaring population. There is a dearth of information regarding the sexual behaviour of this group warranting greater understanding. Given the number of seafarers globally and the important role they play in the global economy, studying the group becomes imperative. This thesis strengthens the need for the scaling up of HIV/AIDS programs in the maritime industry. It is important to broaden the reach of interventions using more creative and innovative approaches targeting the different phases of the work cycle of seafarers. The fact that mobility and relationship with family are flagged in this study gives us a clue as to what interventions should focus on. For example, to ‘shorten’ the perceived distance between the seafarer and his family can be addressed by providing constant access to communication. Changing work contracts for some seafaring countries by allowing wives to come along or by shortening the time period of contracts would be a new avenue worth testing. Encouraging more women to work as seafarers is likely to change substantially the social environment on board and the pervasive masculine culture that exists.

This thesis contributes to the broader discourse on risk, sex, sexuality and bodies. It also contributes to understanding the determinants of HIV/AIDS such as mobility, gender, work, relationships, etc. and which can be related to condom use and other risk behaviours. Through the case of seafarers, this study was able to shed light on these important aspects which might provide an explanation for other social phenomena relevant to the AIDS pandemic. In addition, this qualitative study advances understanding that would otherwise not be captured by quantitative methods and quantitative social science such as epidemiology. This study provides a kick off point to further refine future studies.

Studying the seafarers in other ports would be an interesting approach to test the hypothesis forwarded in this study as other risk factors that are peculiar to the setting might be identified. This goes too with studying seafarers as they go through the work cycle—starting from their home countries, going on board, and until they go on shore leave in different ports of the world. Studying seafarers in their home countries while with their families and within their culture and comparing them to their behaviour while on board and in port would provide a more robust understanding of the risk behaviours because of the wide scope of a holistic approach. A deeper

investigation of the role of the wives, partners and the family is also warranted and so is onboard dynamics among crewmembers.

To a larger extent, this inquiry is a step towards contributing to the development of guidelines and policies that would help address some of the issues global seafarers face. The importance of some of the results may provide some insights for policy in the maritime industry specifically on compensation for those contracting the virus while at work, HIV testing, health promotion and intervention, communication with families, and other services related to the minimization of the risk as it relates to work and family relations. As the observations are limited to one red light area in one port city, it is imperative that the theories developed be tested and evaluated in other situations. This provides us one of the limitations of the study.

There are still many gaps in the inquiry on seafarers' sexual risk-taking behaviour. While HIV prevails and the epidemic does not wane, it is imperative that more in-depth studies be conducted using various tools of inquiry particularly the use of qualitative approaches. As the epilogue will show, we are not only discussing a large global industry, but also the lives of individuals who have aspirations for themselves and their families.

Epilogue: Rudy's Farewell to Seafaring

When Rudy learned that he tested positive for syphilis and HIV he was devastated. He was repatriated home. He knew he would never be hired again as a seafarer.

With the prodding of a labour lawyer, Rudy filed a case against the shipping company. He won the case and granted him a compensation of USD 60,000. Unfortunately, he only received USD 26,000 because of the bargaining of the other side. This became the first case of a seafarer in his country to win a case for contracting HIV. He said that it was not HIV that made the court decide on his favour, it was pulmonary tuberculosis that he had as a co-infection.

Rudy blames his HIV on not learning about it from his training programmes. There was no information provided to him. He lamented that pre-departure programmes included only safety when visiting ports. He heard about AIDS only through the media. There was no information on board the ship and in the clubs and ports. Condoms were not distributed.

When I asked him if he was sure that he got it from the sex worker he had a relationship with for four years, he said that he is very sure. He never had sex with somebody else.

I asked Rudy what happened to her. He replied, "She is dead. She is dead. <showing sadness on his face> I feel sad about it. Yes of course. She became a part of my life. I had a serious feeling for her. We were together for four years."

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Appendix A : List of Interviewees

Note on the Sampling Process: Purposive or theoretical sampling was used in this study. The participants chosen were seafarers who had sexual experiences with commercial sex workers in ports and/or who have knowledge on the topic. The sampling process went through the following stages:

First stage. Mingle with many seafarers and initiate conversations. Establish rapport and identify individuals who can provide ample information for the study. Initiate small conversations and pose initial questions to allow identification of potential interviewees. Cover as many seafarers as possible across nationality, age, rank, and civil status.

Second stage. Further engage with seafarers by requesting more information. If I feel the person would be a good respondent based on observations, such as not being evasive and generally willing to engage with my questions, I ask him for an in-depth interview. I also ask him whether I can audio record the process. If he agrees, I give him and read to him the information sheet and the consent form. I can also give him the information sheet, and schedule the interview at a later time, to allow him more time to think whether to consent or not.

Third stage. Finalise agreement to hold an interview. The whole process, from the engagement to the interview proper, takes a few hours to a number of days, depending on a number of factors such as availability.

Response rate. With this process of identifying, selecting, and inviting interviewees, the response rate was 65 to 75 percent. Those who refused to be interviewed cited constraints such as lack of time, finding the subject matter too personal, and language issues. The following table lists the successful interviews conducted. It includes non-seafarers who agreed to be interviewed.

Interview	Position	Nationality
1	Chief Mate	Filipino
2	Bosun	Ghana
3	OS	India
4	Chief Cook	Filipino
5	AB	Filipino
6	Chief Cook	Filipino
7	Chief Cook	Filipino
8	Third Engineer	Filipino
9	Second Officer	Filipino
10	Fourth Engineer	Indian
11	Fourth Engineer	Filipino
12	AB	Indian
13	AB	Chilean
14	Second Engineer	Indian
15	Captain	Polish
16	Second Engineer	Filipino

17	Chief Engineer	Filipino
18	Bosun	Filipino
19	Electrician	Filipino
20	Motorman	Filipino
21	Bosun	Russian
22	Chief Engineer	Filipino
23	Bosun	Filipino
24	Chief Engineer	Filipino
25	OS	Filipino
26	Second Engineer	Pakistani
27	AB	Filipino
28	Motorman	Kiribati
29	Second Cook	Filipino
30	OS	Filipino
31	Cadet	Algerian
32	Fitter	Filipino
33	Chief Cook	Filipino
34	Third Officer	Filipino
35	AB	Filipino
36	Electrician	Filipino
37	Second Mate	Norwegian
38	Chief Engineer	Filipino
39	Oiler	Filipino
40	Second Mate	Indonesian
41	Third Mate	Filipino
42	Captain	Iran
43	Mission Pastor	Brazilian
44	Mission Priest	Colombian
45	Sex Worker NGO Staff	Brazilian
46	Mission Staff	Brazilian
47	Mission Staff	Ecuadorian
48	Mission Psychologist	Brazilian
49	Oiler	Filipino
50	AIDS Expert	Dutch
51	Public Health Expert	Brazilian
52	Mission Staff	Brazilian
53	AIDS Expert (Labour Union)	Bangladeshi
54	Messman	Filipino
55	Sex Worker NGO Staff	Brazilian
56	AB	Filipino
57	Canteen Worker	Brazilian
58	Sex Worker	Brazilian
59	Sex Worker	Brazilian
60	Bosun	Filipino

Appendix B: Approval of Ethics Review Committee

Cardiff School of Social Sciences
Director Professor Huw Beynon
Ysgol Gwyddonau Cymdeithasol Caerdydd
Cyfarwyddwr Yr Athro Huw Beynon

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19th March 2007

Our ref: SREC/192

Eliseo Lucero-Prisco III
PhD Programme
SOCSI

Dear Eliseo

Your ethical approval application for your project entitled "*Risk, sex and seafarers: all aboard in one voyage*" has been approved by the School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of Cardiff University following its meeting on 10th January 2007 and you can now commence the project.

Please note that since your project involves data collection abroad, you may need approval from a competent body in the relevant jurisdiction.

If you make any substantial changes with ethical implications to the project as it progresses you need to inform the SREC about the nature of these changes. Such changes could be: 1) changes in the type of participants recruited (e.g. inclusion of a group of potentially vulnerable participants), 2) changes to questionnaires, interview guides etc. (e.g. including new questions on sensitive issues), 3) changes to the way data are handled (e.g. sharing of non-anonymised data with other researchers).

All ongoing projects will be monitored every 12 months and it is a condition of continued approval that you complete the monitoring form.

Please inform the SREC when the project has ended.

Please use the SREC's project reference number above in any future correspondence.

Yours sincerely


AP Professor Soren Holm
Chair of the School of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

cc: E Renton
Supervisors: G Williams
H Sampson

Appendix C: Visiting Scholar: Request for Brazil

Cardiff School of Social Sciences
Director Professor Huw Beynon
Ysgol Gwyddorau Cymdeithasol Caerdydd
Cyfarwyddwr Yr Athro Huw Beynon

29 August 2007

Prof. Maria Helena de Almeida Lambert
Reitora
Universidade Católica de Santos
Av. Conselheiro Nébias, 300
CEP: 11015-002 Santos -SP
Brasil

Dear Prof. Lambert,

We are writing to you as the PhD supervisors of Dr Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III to endorse his application to become a **Visiting Scholar** of the Department of Public Health (Saúde Coletiva) of the Universidade Católica de Santos. Dr. Lucero-Prisno is registered for his PhD in the School of Social Sciences of Cardiff University in Wales, United Kingdom. He will conduct his fieldwork in the City of Santos, Brasil working on sexual risk-taking behaviour of international commercial seafarers in the context of HIV/AIDS. His study is approved by the PhD Panel and the Ethics Committee of the School of Social Sciences of Cardiff University. It would be very helpful for him to have an attachment at your university.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,


Prof. Helen Sampson
Director, Seafarers International Research Center
School of Social Sciences
Cardiff University


Prof. Gareth Williams
Director of Research, Cardiff Institute of Society, Health and Ethics
School of Social Sciences
Cardiff University


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Appendix D: Visiting Scholar: University Approval



DECLARAÇÃO

Declaro que Don Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III, doutorando na Universidade de Cardiff, País de Gales, foi aceito como pesquisador visitante no Programa de Pós-Graduação em Saúde Coletiva desta Universidade para o período de 1º de novembro de 2007 a 31 de outubro de 2008.

Santos, 04 de outubro de 2007.

Prof. Maria Helena de Almeida Lambert
Reitora

Reitoria

Avenida Conselheiro Nébias, 300 – 11015-002 – Santos, SP – (13) 3205-5555

Appendix E: Visiting Scholar: Department Approval



Santos, 20 de setembro de 2007.

Ao Prof. Dr. José Augusto Fontoura Costa
Coordenador Geral de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa

ASSUNTO: Solicitação como estudante visitante

INTERESSADO: Don Eliseo-Priso III, doutorando na Universidade de Cardiff, País de Gales

PARECER: Após análise da versão completa do projeto de pesquisa, comprovante de aprovação pelo Comitê de Ética da Universidade de Cardiff, do currículo e documentos relativos ao vínculo com a Universidade e com os professores responsáveis, recomendamos que o pedido seja deferido. Para a Coordenação de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa a fim de que sejam adotadas as providências cabíveis.



Prof. Dr. Paulo Frazão
Vice-coordenador do Mestrado em Saúde Coletiva

Coordenadoria Geral de Pós-Graduação *stricto sensu* e Pesquisa
Rua Carvalho de Mendonça, 144 - 11070-100 - Santos, SP - (13) 3205-5555

Appendix F: Information Sheet and Consent Form

Information Sheet

Who am I?

My name is Dr. Don Eliseo Lucero-Priso III; I am a PhD research student in the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University, United Kingdom. I am attached to the Seafarers International Research Centre (SIRC) as a Nippon Foundation Fellow. SIRC is one of the leading research centres on seafarers in the world. My PhD project is looking at seafarers' understandings of sexual risk and the spread of sexually transmitted disease.

Why am I doing this research?

This research is designed to gain an in-depth understanding of how seafarers think and talk about sexual matters. This study is in response to the call of the international community to understand more about the vulnerability of seafarers to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

What will your participation involve?

I would like to conduct an interview with you that will last for about one hour. Anything you say will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. I **will not** use your name, the name of the ship or the company. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers to any of my questions.

Taking part in an interview is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw or stop the interview at any point. Should you wish to withdraw, any information gathered prior to the withdrawal will be deleted. You have the right to refuse to answer any question.

What will I do with the information?

With your permission, I will record the interview. The interview will, if necessary, be translated into English, and will be transcribed. Access to this information will be limited to me and my academic supervisors and the information will only be used for the purposes of this study.

The findings of this study will be presented in an anonymised form in my PhD thesis. This study may also result in one or more articles for scientific journals and I may give presentations to those interested in the subject. The recordings of the interviews will be deleted after publication of the results. I will see to it that your right as an individual will be given utmost priority and concern. The Ethics Committee of the School of Social Science of Cardiff University has approved this research.

What is my contact information?

Email: donprisno@hotmail.com
SIRC: www.sirc.cf.ac.uk

It would be a very big help if you can participate in the study. I believe that you can contribute much to this research.

**Appendix F: Information Sheet and Consent Form
(back of Information Sheet)**

Consent Form

Name of Researcher: Don Eliseo Lucero-Prisno III

- | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. |
| 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. |
| 3. I agree to take part in the study. |

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

2 copies: 1 for participant and 1 for research file

Appendix G: Interview Guide (page 1)

TOPIC GUIDE FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW (SEAFARERS)

Information to be given before commencing the interview:

- nature and purpose of research
- confidentiality
- no right or wrong answers
- digitally recorded for accuracy, not to misquote, no one else other than myself will listen to the recorded conversation, may turn the recording off anytime during the interview, can leave anytime during the interview
- can read the transcript and interviewers comments
- any questions before we start?

- **Personal background** (start interview like an informal conversation to *break the ice*)

- **Work background / Life as seafarer** ✓ 19 18 - 10

- **Life circumstances while on tours of duty**

- **Life circumstances while ⁱⁿ ports**

1. at port (how long, where do they go, what they do, social networks, pay attention to risk situations)
2. what are they interested to see on ports
3. how do they feel when not working onboard; are they happier?
4. how do they look at their free time
5. do they look for phones to call their families

- **Experiences in bars/ red light districts and experiences with sex workers**

1. have you been to bars on ports? when? how often?
2. do you mingle with the bar girls?
3. what do you discuss with them?
4. how long do you stay in the bars?
5. do the bar girls offer sexual services? ✓
6. do these sexual engagements become 'relationships'? ✓
7. do you look forward to meet them in the future? ✓
8. do the girls look forward to communicate with you on a regular basis? ✓
9. during sexual encounters (use/ non-use of condom, discussions) ... only part
10. paying for sexual services, how often, how much, how is it negotiated, ✓
condom use during sexual encounter, who initiates use of condom
11. do you have a regular woman in certain bars?
12. how do they feel about any/your 'relationship'?

Appendix G: Interview Guide (page 2)

13. do you discuss events on port when you are back onboard
14. what have you heard/seen of other seafarers' experiences

- Relationship with bar girls

1. experiences with relationships with bar girls
2. what are the backgrounds of these women?
3. what are the arrangements?
4. is sex a major consideration in this relationship?
5. what are the expectations of girls? What do they look forward to?
6. do they look forward to having children
7. circumstances leading to the arrangements
8. why seafarers go to this extent
9. how do they see these women
10. is it purely business or relationship?
11. how is the relationship maintained/continued?

- Other information

1. knowledge of AIDS/STIs (symptoms, how is one infected, cure and prevention, concerns, worries)
2. their knowledge and how they act according to this knowledge
3. knowledge of other seafarers who got infected
4. is it a serious problem
5. where to get information on prevention
6. knowledge and practice of illegal drugs
7. feelings towards use of condoms
8. perception of risky activities (what is a risky activity, why is one at risk)