

School of Social Sciences



Working Paper Series Paper 27



Emotional Labour in a Globalised Labour Market: Seafarers on Cruise Ships

May, 2002

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ISBN 1 872330 68 1

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Seafarers on Cruise Ships: Emotional Labour in a Globalised Labour Market

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Introduction

Hochschild's groundbreaking work in 1993, *The Managed Heart: Commercialisation of Human Feeling*, is significant in that it identifies a previous invisible dimension of work. She argues that dealing with emotions is an important and demanding component of work, in particular, in service work, entailing management of feelings and the expression of emotion. This is described as *'emotional labour'* where workers strive to 'create and maintain a relationship, a mood, or a feeling (1983:440) during their social interaction within the labour process, as shaped by the dictates of capital accumulation (Taylor, 1998:84). Drawing on theories of theatre acting techniques, Hochschild proposes that emotions may be controlled or self induced or suppressed as part of the labour process, hence her identification of two forms of emotional labour: *'surface acting'* and *'deep acting'*. The former involves pretending 'to feel what do not ... we deceive others about we really feel, but we do not deceive ourselves (1983:33).' 'Surface acting' is therefore used when workers change how they appear to others by adapting their body language. The workers are aware that their behaviour lacks sincerity. The latter, 'deep acting' means 'deceiving oneself as much as deceiving others (1983:33). When 'deep acting', workers induce feelings in themselves by drawing on emotive memories. In this case, the emotions are actually felt by the worker. The ultimate outcome of deep acting is that these feelings become internalised and the worker is estranged from their 'real feelings'.

Central to Hochschild's argument is that the contention that emotional labour is performed at a personal cost to the worker and that this is a direct result of the 'commercialisation' of emotions. She argues that emotional labour is part of the package that companies are selling to customers, so that in effect, workers are selling

their smiles to management. There are both gender patterns and class patterns and the civic and commercial use of human feeling, hence emotional labour affects men and women and the various social classes in distinctively different ways (1983:20).

Despite Taylor's criticism (1998) that the phenomenon of emotional labour, until recently, had been neglected by the British academy, a considerable body of literature on the subject has been produced since the 1990s. A quick literature survey has found that in spite of the critique, challenges and development (James, 1989; Wouters 1989a; 1989b; Tolich, 1993; Wharton, 1993), Hochschild's thinking continues to underpin the debate related to emotion in the workplace (Smith and Gray 2000; Fineman 2000). The insights offered by her work remain integral to an understanding of emotion management (Hunter, 2001). Like Hochschild's study, the existing literature focuses on service industry – an industry delivering voice-to-voice or face-to-face service, for example, with flight attendants (Taylor, 1998), nurses (Smith, P. 1992; Smith & Gray, 2000; Sharon & Bolton, 2000), midwives (Curtis,1991; Hunter, 2001;), telephone sales agents (Taylor & Tyler, 2000) and even detectives (Stenross & Kleinman, 1989) and as the research subject. Three distinctive features can be identified among the available reported studies. First, these studies concentrate on the sectors of the economy, where women dominate the workforce (with the exception of the study on detectives, of course). Second, racial or ethnic relation is not an issue in the workplaces studied. Although we believe that there must be black, Asian and other minority workers, female and male, in the workplaces under study, they are missing from the picture. Thirdly, the workplaces examined always have a fixed locality within certain nation-state borders, hence subject to the state regulations. In these studies, however the market is globalised, the worker physically works in the same space and can leave it 'at the end of the day'.

This paper examines service work in today's cruise shipping - an industry that demands hard labour, physical *and* emotional, from a labour force, which has become highly globalised and where although still a minority, women have made substantial progress in their participation of the shipboard production since the 1990s. Based on an on-going empirical research, the paper argues that the commercial use of human feeling, while doubtless having class and gender patterns, also has clear racial or ethnic patterns. As it has impact on the two sexes and the various classes, emotional

labour affects various racial or ethnic groups in no less distinctively different patterns.¹

The World Cruise Shipping: Gender, Hierarchy and Ethnicity

One of the most important facets of the sociological approach to work relates to the underlying claim that work is a social not an individual activity. What appears a freely chosen individual activity may well reflect, at least in part, socially structured constraints and facilitators which are, or appear to be, opaque in nature. It has been widely accepted that the three most important socially structured facilitators and constraints existing in contemporary capitalist societies are those of class, gender and race (Grint, 1998:223). Indeed, relationships at work are not constructed by the interaction of men and women, workers and bosses, blacks and whites, but by white male bosses, and by black female workers and by all the other possible permutations of this triangular social construct. The social organisation of labour is inordinately complex, the variables of class, race or ethnicity and gender are significantly super-ordinate in the quest for explanation. Grint's conceptualisation reflects the nature of the essential social world of work on board today's cruise ships.

First of all, world shipping is known for its distinctive social divisions based on hierarchy. Lane notes in his study of British seafarers in the late twentieth century, '(H)ierarchy touches almost every aspect of shipboard life. It is a subject that reveals deep-running social divisions and seems to offer a microcosm of society at large (Lane, 1986:152).' This is largely true in all the Western European ships. On these ships, officers have their own bars, cabins and dining areas that are unquestionably better than those for ratings. Furthermore, there is normally little informal social interaction between officers and ratings in Western ships. Even on American ships, where the hierarchy is believed to be less rigid and the relationship between officers

¹ Debates certainly exist on the definition of 'race', 'ethnicity' or on individuals' racial, ethnic or even national identities. Here, for practical reasons, I chose to adopt Geertz's position. According to Geertz (1963), both 'race' and 'ethnicity' are socially constructed and, indeed, no distinction can be made between the two. Rather, it is the case that racial constructs are related *primarily* to physical features, while ethnic constructs are related *primarily* to cultural features like common forms of language, location, kinship and customs etc. In many cases, the two will simply be indistinguishable in practice. In this paper, the two terms are used without distinction. .

and ratings is ‘often quite informal’ and ‘easy-going’, the officers and ratings are always ‘cordoned off into separate classes with officers socialising with officers and ratings mingling with ratings’, as observed by Schrank and other observers when they compare the ship regime in American fleets with that of the Norwegians (Schrank, 1982:4, 45).

At the same time, the shipboard production and social organisation have been further complicated with the globalisation of the world labour market for seafarers in the past twenty years. Since the mid-1980s, cruise shipping has been the fastest growing sector of the world maritime industry with an average growth rate of 9.6%, the highest in world shipping. Today, there are about 250 cruise ships (over 1000 GT) sailing on world waters calling ports in all world regions. Despite the fact that cruise ships themselves are capital intensive and ship technology has developed rapidly through automation and computerisation, the shipboard production remains labour intensive. On average, one seafarer is expected to serve two to four passengers, depending upon the position of the ship along the hierarchy of the cruise market. While the market competition has become increasingly intense and there is little margin in nearly all the other components of production for ship owners to squeeze for further cost reduction, seafarers’ wages have become an arena where ship owners battle fiercely with trade unions and national and international regulators for control. The existing Flag of Convenience (FOC) regime effectively allows ship owners to escape regulations of nation-states and enable them to employ cheap seafaring labour from any part of the world and at terms and conditions laid down purely at their will.² Whereas mixed nationality crew are hardly a new phenomenon in the world ocean-shipping, the world seafarers labour market has been consciously globalised in recent two decades (ILO, 2001:31-43). Nowadays seafarers are recruited virtually from all parts of the world and increasingly from Asia, E. Europe and other developing countries. In the cruise sector, the fleet has a shipboard workforce of 100,000 representing at least 120 countries. On any ‘typical’ such modern dream ship, it is ‘normal’ to find well one and half thousand seafarers working together from several dozens of countries.

² FOC refers to a practice adopted in the mid 20th century in world shipping. Such a practice allows ship owners to transfer their ships to the register of smaller nations devoid of maritime administrations and lacking in experience and knowledge of merchant shipping. Ship owners’ objective is to minimise taxes, operating cost and regulations on operations especially on crewing practices. One of the best source or reference is Lennart Johnsson’s *ITF Campaign – pas, present, future* (1996).

For centuries, seafaring has been regarded as a male domain and world maritime history a series of tales of men, ships and the sea (Creighton & Norling, 1996). Likewise, cruise shipping has been, until recently, almost exclusively a male dominated industry. Of course, in old liners like *Queen Mary* and *Titanic*, women were found serving as nurses, stewardesses and telephonists, conducting 'women's work'. Their number, however, was extremely small and they, as their male counterparts, were nearly all white Europeans. This leads to the conclusion 'There were too few women seafarers for them to have had any impact on the occupational culture (Lane, 1990:9).'

The sexual composition of the work force on cruise ships today has substantially changed since the late 1990s. The 'feminisation of labour' (Standing, 1989), while occurring mainly in the 1980s in many sectors of the world economy, has started to happen on considerable scales in world cruise shipping since the late 1990s. The growth in world trade and the consequent expansion of world shipping, taken together with the globalisation of the world seafarers' labour market in the 1980s and 1990s, has led to an increase of women's shipboard employment. This growth was especially marked in the cruise sector, the fastest developing sector of the world maritime industry as well as the world leisure travel industry (Cartwright & Baird, 1999). Here, while the overall growth of the work force in the 1990s was as high as 60%, women seafarers of different nationalities are found constituting about 20% of the workforce at sea (Zhao, 2001). Although women still remain the minority aboard, their relatively dense concentration in a dynamic industrial sector can only have a considerable impact on the structure and processes of shipboard production and social organisation, where 'gender issues' have, until recently, been considered as irrelevant.

One striking feature of the world cruise shipping today is that ships are getting bigger, grander with a capacity to carry larger numbers of passengers. Modern cruise ships have indeed become huge floating hotels which are constantly mobile across world waters carrying two to three thousands of passengers, who are typically from North America and Western Europe and entranced with the fun, sun and romance as depicted in *The Love Boat*, a highly 'successful' television series made in the late 1970s and remain popular today (Cartwright & Baird, 1999:38). The nature of the

shipping in this sector of the world maritime industry has changed so much that many cruise lines have begun to refer to their customers not as passengers but as ‘guests’, because, as they explained, ‘(N)owadays people embark upon these ‘love boats’ not for transport. They are here for fun and leisure.’

The ship also carries a large number of seafarers. For example, *Grand Princess* (109,000 GT), one of the mega-ships, built in the late 1990s, has a capacity to carry 4,400 persons including 3300 passengers and 1,100 seafarers. *Millennium* (91,000 GT), the largest ship in SIRC’s GLM Database, was found to have 2449 passengers and 994 seafarers aboard when she was trading in the Mediterranean early in 2000. These seafarers were recruited from all parts of the world: 28% from Asia, 27% from Western Europe, North America, 23% from Latin America, 17% from Eastern Europe and 4% from other world regions. Women constituting 25% of the crew. They are placed on board to serve the passengers, whose number of 300% of the number of the crew. These seafarers were placed there to ensure that their ‘guests’ get what they have paid the company for, namely, fun, sun, romance and leisure.

Smile is a vital component of the product or service cruise lines promise to deliver to meet their customers’ demand for leisure. Seafarers’ smiling faces, of men and women and of various colours, are displayed on travel agents’ shelves and permeate cruise lines brochures, advertisements in newspapers, travel shop series on television and so on. These smiling faces are presented to convey a message or to leave an impression: on cruise ships seafarers enjoy their work as much as passengers enjoy their fun and leisure. ‘It’s a heaven not in this world!’, as put by one of the major cruise lines in its television advertisement.

In fact, shipboard labour is extremely hard for seafarers on cruise ships. This is probably the only point agreed by both trade unions and ship owners. Either in trade unions’ publication or in crewing agencies’ pamphlets or in shipping companies’ brochure, seafaring labour in hotels and catering departments are described as ‘involving work for 12 hours a day and 7 days a week’, and ‘the work is conducted in a confined space, far away from your family and friends for most part of the year (ITF, 2000; Marine Employment, 1999; Dickinson & Vladimir, 1997). The only party deliberately kept away from this knowledge is the customers. Passengers on cruise

ships know little about the ‘inside stories’ behind the stage. What they can see are what presented to them: spotless cabins, sparkling glasses, glittering swimming pools, and seafarers’ beaming smiles. They are in darkness about seafarers’ hard labour, physical and emotional. Behind the scene and below the deck, seafarers conduct hard physical labour – to keep the cabin spotless, the glasses sparkling, the swimming pools glittering etc. Their wages are low; they live in cramped accommodations; their food is a far cry from the exotic and luxurious foods and drinks enjoyed by their ‘guests’; they miss their families and friends who are on the other side of the globe However, once in the scene and on the deck, seafarers, no matter how they really feel, are obliged to control or manage their emotion so that they can combine the product of their physical labour with the product of their emotional labour. They, therefore, appear smiling.

The Study

Literature on contemporary world seafarers is scarce and there is very little mentioning of seafarers employed on cruise ships. In the late 1990s, some world trade unions commissioned a retired captain to look into the working and living conditions on a major Miami-based cruise line (Goff, 1998). Its unpublished report is likely the only available study on the subject. Seafarers’ conditions on cruise ships have occasionally been touched upon in newspapers or televisions, but this usually would not happen until some ship disasters had hit the headlines in the media. The media light shed on seafarers on *Ocean Glory* in Dover is one of these few cases rightly illustrating the point (Lloyds, 2001). Such a lacking of study on seafarers is partly because of seafarers’ invisibility. Unlike workers in mining, textiles or car manufacturing, or in nursing, midwifery, or even in airlines, seafarers work on ships floating for months at sea, hence invisible to the public eye.

The paper presented here is based on the data drawn from one of the on-going research projects conducted in Seafarers International Research Centre (SIRC). The research project looks into the working and living conditions of women seafarers employed on today’s cruise ships. We would like to note that ‘emotional labour’ was not included in the initial research design. It began to draw our attention only during

our shipboard research where participant observation and in-depth interviews with the seafarers were adopted as the two main instruments. This is reflected in the research material we draw for this paper.

Three major sources of empirical data are used to support this study. Firstly, SIRC's Global Labour Market Database (Cruise), which contains the information on 40,652 seafarers gathered from 104 crew lists collected from 83 cruise ships calling at some of the world's major ports including Barcelona, Dover, Southampton, Rotterdam and Miami) between 1998 and 2000.³ Secondly, over 100 in-depth interviews were conducted in Europe, North America and Asia with shipping managers, crewing agents, trade unionists, naval architects, port & sailing chaplains, and seafarers, female and male, of various nationalities serving in various ranks and positions aboard cruise ships. Thirdly, a shipboard research voyage in the Atlantic. Most of the interviews have been taped and transcribed and are currently being analysed with the assistance of NUDIST; the data obtained through the surveys conducted on two cruise ships is under analysis with SPSS.⁴

The rest of the paper, then, reports our findings regarding seafarers' emotional labour in their labour process on board ship, although data on their physical labour is also employed when necessary. The examination focuses on a segment of the crew, the ratings placed in hotel and catering departments - seafarers serving in cabins, bars and restaurants where they have most contacts with passengers who demand service that can only be 'satisfactorily' delivered through seafarers' physical *and* emotional labour. They represent the majority of the crew aboard. Whereas gender and class (or hierarchy) are clearly employed as important frameworks of reference, we deliberately shed more light on the racial or ethnic patterns in the examination. Our intention is to highlight the issue, which does not seem to draw enough attention in the available discourses on emotional labour.

³ SIRC's Global Labour Market Database consists of two parts based on the crew lists collected from both cargo and cruise ships. In cargo shipping, the Database represents 340,000 seafarers employed on 12,000 ships between 1997 and 2000.

⁴ *NUDIST* is a computer package designed to aid researchers in handling non-numeric, un-structured data in qualitative research. *SPSS* (Statistical Package for the Social Science) is a package of statistical computer programs developed for the analysis of social science data.

Findings

Smile: Management Control and Division of Labour Aboard

Management Control

Since the late 1990s, management of the cruise lines has started to press seafarers more for ‘quality service’. ‘This means,’ as the human resource manager of a major cruise shipping company noted,

‘(W)e not only want our crew to keep the cabins clean, to serve the passengers with right wines and right foods. These material aspects are certainly important. But we also want our crew to maintain a right attitude. They must always remember, this is part of the hospitality industry and they must help the company keep our guests happy, and they can do this only by keeping themselves happy, and demonstrate it to our guests through their service and attitudes (Interview 3, London).’

Concepts like ‘people skills’ have been included as part of the core training course for seafarers in the hotel departments and such skills have begun to be taught to students in maritime academies. These ‘concepts’ and ‘skills’ have become so vital that sometimes instructors would be flown in to board ships in the midst of the ocean to teach and reinforce seafarers with these concepts and skills through on-board training – a practice increasingly popular with ship owners and managers due to its effect of cost-efficiency. A bar waitress recalled her experience of attending such an on-board training course:

He (the instructor) joined the ship yesterday, he was flown from the Academy. We were told he was sent to train us on health and safety at sea. But, it wasn’t ... no, I think no health and safety. Not really. It was ... a training like you know, communication in the bar, some service, you know these things. But not really health and safety. He was talking about like we are a friendly crew, we are a happy crew. I mean it’s like you don’t have to talk with passengers about

your problems like you are not happy. It's like .. most of the time you have to smile, talk about something nice, to show you are happy (Interview 101).

In fact, the managerial control of seafarers' emotional labour starts before the seafarer's employment is secured. Managers use their perception of the seafarer's capacity to smile, together with other criteria such as seafarers' age, English competence, experiences in shipping or hospitality industry, to decide, first, if the applicant is recruitable and then which part of the shipboard production the recruited seafarer should be allocated. Such managerial perception is usually grounded on the stereotype of men and women and of certain racial, ethnic or national groups. The following accounts were from our interviews with the crewing agents and the human resource managers in several world locations:

Interview is a must in most cases. It gives us an opportunity to meet the applicants and evaluate their personality and ability to work with people. Smile is certainly an extremely important area we will look into. After all, this is hospitality industry and smiling faces are more welcome by our guests. We use many Indians on our vessels. Believe me. They are wonderful people. They work hard and they always smile. We would like to keep this tradition (of employing seafarers from India) (Interview 5, Southampton).

Somehow, the Asian seafarers, especially the Filipino, they can smile very nicely. They seem to have born with a wonderful service culture. They always greet the guests and always smile. And, they do it so naturally. We get very good feedback from our guests about these seafarers. They always look energetic, positive and cheerful, even after 9 months at sea! In comparison, European seafarers seem easy to get fatigued. After 4 months, their fatigue will show, and our guests don't like to see those who serve them look tired and cannot smile (Interview 25, Manila).

Managers tend to make particular notes about seafarers from Eastern European countries, accusing them for 'not be able to smile' or 'they are always so rigid'. Many of them admit that they would give priority to employ Asian seafarers provided seafarers from both regions are available in the labour market and their rates remain

the same low. This is the ideal situation. In reality, however, managers would sometimes have to make compromise and hire seafarers who are assumed less able to smile. For example, one of the ships in our sample was re-deployed from the Caribbean to the Mediterranean early in 2001. Nearly all the Filipino seafarers were replaced with seafarers recruited from Bulgarian, Romania, Poland and Russia. Management was not happy with such a change. 'Because', as the crewing manager explained during the interview, '(T)hose Filipinos were really, really good with our passengers. Our guests like their warmth and smiles. But, we had to change the crew, because we are now trading in Med. that obviously is close to Europe. Using (Eastern) Europeans crew will save us much cost in crew flight (Interview 65, Atlantic).

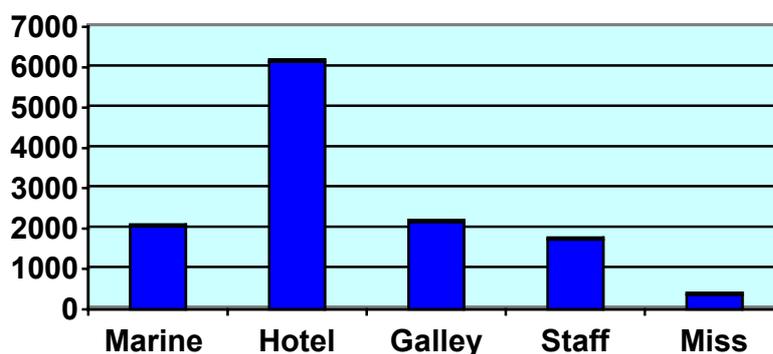
Clearly, since profit making is the ultimate goal of the company, ship owners, under market pressure, would sometimes chose to sacrifice or reduce the emotional component of the service for their customers by disposing their preferred 'more-smiling' seafarers and adopting their less preferred 'less-smiling' seafarers.

Now, with the recruited seafarers, a fundamental question is that how to divide the labour on board ship so that each recruited seafarer is placed in the 'best' place of the production and the seafarer can make the best of his/her assumed 'potential' and serve the company's 'guests' to their most satisfaction. This will be discussed in next section.

Division of Labour Aboard

Division of labour on cruise ships is extremely complex. To enable the dream ship operate smoothly, over 200 job positions have to be filled in the 18 departments - from Deck, Engineering, through Housekeeping, Food & Beverage, Galley, Bar, to Casino, Beauty Salon, Clergy and so on (ISE, 2000). The following graph illustrates how proportion of seafarers are distributed by departments on the ship.

Figure 1. Seafarers by Departments (2000)



As shown in the above bar chart, seafarers are, first of all, segregated into two categories: those in the marine (Deck and Engineering) departments and those in the Hotel Departments (Housekeeping, Galley, Food & Beverage etc.). However, the labour division is determined by function as well as by other social facilitators or constrains, in particular, by seafarers' gender and ethnicity. For example, the marine sector almost entirely crewed by male seafarers, who are further differentiated by their nationality or ethnic background. The senior officers are almost exclusively employed from Western Europe or North America or other developed countries. Ratings and junior officers are, in contrast, overwhelmingly recruited from Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and other developing countries. Here, seafarers are encouraged to smile when they come across with passengers. But it is not an essential requirement from management to specify feeling rules. After all, seafarers in these departments, especially the ratings and junior officers, spend most of their time in the bridge, on the deck or down below in the Engine Room, where they are supposed to deal with 'things', not with people.

Managerial expectation for senior officers is different. Since the Captain and other senior officers have the privilege to participate social activities in the passenger area, they are therefore obliged to be 'nice' and to 'smile' to the passengers. For instance, as the master of the ship, the Captain is obliged to hold social dinners twice a week at the Captain's Table 'socialising' with a dozen of selected passengers by talking with and smiling to them throughout the dinner. For any weekly cruise, he is obliged to take pictures with hundreds of dressed-up passengers. The picture taken would last for several hours and the man has to manage his feeling and emotion 'properly' so that he

can keep smiling, greeting passengers, shaking hands with them and posing for them throughout the show.

Departments in hotel and catering take over 70% of the entire crew. Here, both men and women of various nationalities are employed. Again, seafarers' gender, nationality or ethnic origin work together in allocating these men and women into their 'proper' roles and functions. Galley, for example, is almost entirely a men's world. Here large numbers of men from Asia, E. Europe, Latin America and other less developed parts of the world are used to prepare food for passengers as bakers, butchers, cooks, cook assistants, utilities or cleaners, under the supervision of senior chefs mostly from W. European countries such as France, Italy and Sweden. Laundry, far down below the deck at the very bottom of the ship, is another men's world in the hotel sector. Here, literally only men, Asian men in most cases, are found washing, drying, ironing, sorting and folding thousands pieces of the ship's linens, the passengers' clothes and the crew's uniforms. In their job description, management encourages these seafarers to maintain a positive attitude with their job. There is, however, no emphasis on the importance of their 'people skill'. Again, just like the deck and engine seafarers, these laundry seafarers are dealing with *things*, not directly with people, hence are more likely to subject to physical labour than to emotional labour.

Women seafarers, on the other hand, tend to be assigned with tasks to deal with *people*. In fact, shipping managers seem more progressive or pro-active in promoting women's employment aboard compared with some male seafarers, especially those towards the lower end of the ship hierarchy.⁵ The main rational behind 'management strategy' is that they have found 'women are welcome or even preferred by our guests,' 'we find they are better dealing with people, especially with the difficult passengers', as we were informed during the interviews. The following account is from a captain who has 20 years experiences of working on cruise ships,

⁵ We found a clear male resistance against women's participation in shipboard production, primarily from among the male seafarers towards the lower ranks of the ship hierarchy. Such a resistance lies mainly in these male seafarers' fear that further promotion for women's participation in shipboard production may reduce the employment opportunities for men. This will be fully discussed in our final research report.

Of course its positive to have at least an equal number of women on board. This is because, first of all, in service, I think, girls have better criteria than men, the men are more steady, last more hours, but the women are unique in this thing, they are better, its their nature. So if you put this in a whole I find they are equally performing. For example in the housekeeping you can take the type of the typical British butler like you've seen in the movies, how many of them can you find to make a cabin look luxury and always with a smile? You cant find many, because it's not in a mans nature. But you can find many girls who can make a cabin look beautiful, nice and cosy, an they smile better, it's their nature. (Interview 96, Madera).

As a result of such perception of women's 'natural' ability or capacity, women are placed in areas where seafarers have more contacts with the company's customers, hence more likely to subject to emotional labour. For example, nearly all the nurses on the 83 ships in our database are women and over 70% of the receptionists are female seafarers.

It must be noted that capital is not racial or ethnic blind in deploying workers in production. Having found that women seafarers can deliver a better face-to-face service in today's cruise market, managers, then, begin to consciously distribute the recruited women seafarers according to their 'potential' or 'capacity' based on their racial or ethnic origins. The decision is made primarily both on management's assumption of the 'different capacity' of women from different ethnic backgrounds and on their assessment of the demands of the market. In today's cruise shipping industry, the market is dominated by a strong nostalgia for the 'classic image' of the luxurious across-Atlantic old liners. White European faces are an important component of such an image the cruise lines today chose to recreate and maintain. In today's competitive market, since the companies feel that it is too expensive for them to crew their ships entirely with the white Western European seafarers, they endeavour to deploy seafarers from this region, preferably women, in some 'key points', usually the reception, the cruise department, the fitness centre, the shop, the hairdressing salon etc. These places are considered to best represent the visual image of the cruise line as well as the best selling points. The following account is from

another captain who is retired but still actively sits at the management board of a major cruise shipping company:

But there are jobs for which you will need Europeans. For instance, on a cruise ship, you have a cruise department, a shop, a fitness centre, a hairdressing salon. All the girls within these departments will tend to be of the same nationality or at least from the same region, usually, as the bulk of the passengers. This is because they will relate much more to the passengers, they represent the classical image of the industry, and they are doing a direct selling job to the passengers (Interview 8, Bangor).

Doubtless, management's ultimate goal is to deploy the labour force in a most optimal way so that most profit can be made out of the shipboard production. Thus, departments like reception and nursery, for example, are staffed not only almost entirely with women, but also almost entirely with white women from developed countries such as Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Canada and the United States. Work in these 'selling pints' are intensive and involves substantial feeling management from the seafarers. However, seafarers in this sector only constitute about 2% of the total workforce and most of these jobs are concessionaires that have bought the right to staff and operate their own department, hence largely independent of the control of the ship management. At the same time, seafarers in this part of the ship production have a higher status along the ship hierarchy, are therefore entitled to better treatment of wages and welfare. They are categorised as *staff*, have their own dining and sleeping areas that are segregated from the rest of the workforce – the *crew*.

Although Asian seafarers, especially some Asian women such as the Filipinos, are known in the industry for their 'nice smile' and 'natural service culture' and indeed sought after by some cruise lines, their representation is either completely missing or very low in these 'key points' aboard. E. European women are found in both sectors. But their number is small, although higher than that for Asians. Again, these non-white W. European women's low representation here is explained by management either on the ground of their intention to maintain the industry's 'classical image' (hence the exclusion of Asians and blacks) or on their concern about the perceived 'lack of smile' of seafarers from Eastern European countries. Stereotyping of certain

social groups based on the group members' sexual and racial or ethnic identity thus pillars the division of labour on today's cruise ships - a hallmark of the industry in the 21st century.

Smiling: Seafarers' Lived Experiences of Emotional Labour Aboard

As already noted, seafarers' physical labour has been recognised by the main parties of interests in the industry, despite the ignorance of the customers. But, how about seafarers' emotional labour? How is it composed in the service they are obliged to deliver in the labour process? What is the personal cost involved? These questions will be discussed in this section.

This section looks into seafarers' lived experiences attempting to analysis the emotional labour contained as an 'integral' component in the process of their shipboard production. Our examination concentrates on two groups of the seafarers: the cabin stewards/stewardesses in Housekeeping and the waiters/waitresses in Food and Beverage on board ship. As shown in the following graphs, these seafarers represent the bulk (71%) of the crew in the hotel and catering sector of the shipboard labour force. In terms of regional origin, we find that 41% of them are from Asia, 23% from Eastern Europe, 17% from Western Europe and North America and other developed countries, 15% from Latin America and 4% from other parts of the world. Women constitute 17% of the total workforce in this sector.

Figure 2. Seafarers by Section in Hotel & Catering (2000)

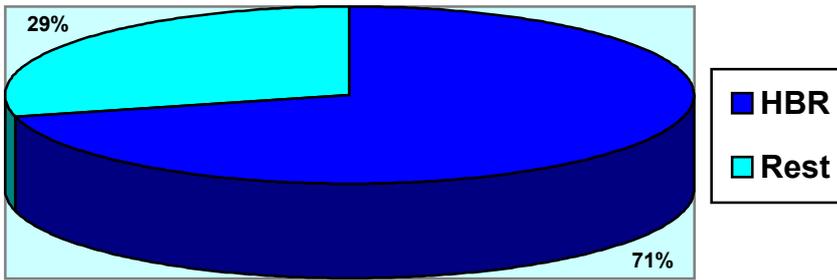


Figure 3. Seafarers by Region in Hotel & Catering (2000)

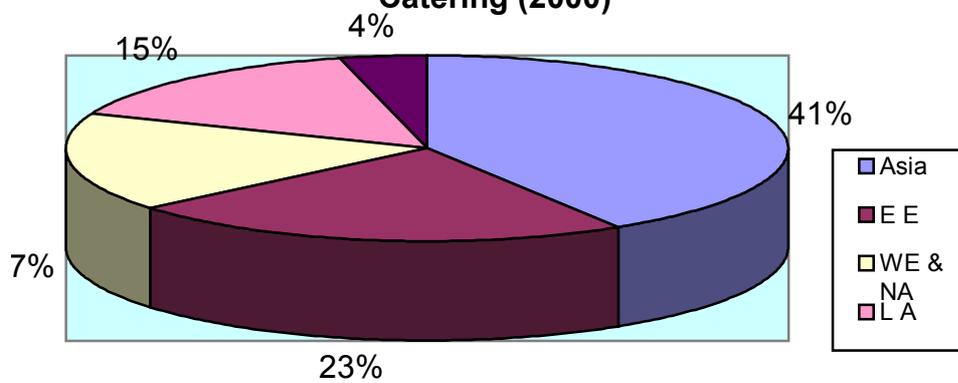
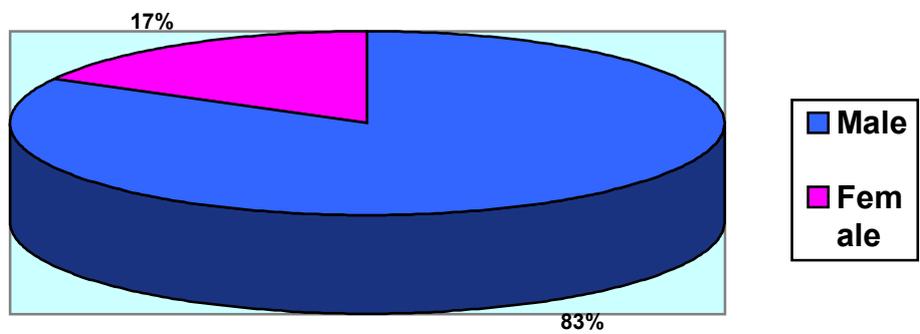


Figure 4. Seafarers by Gender in Hotel & Catering (2000)



Seafarers in Bars and Restaurants

Food and beverage are an important ingredient of the service cruise lines offer to passengers, indeed an essential part of the leisure and fun passengers seek aboard. The service in bars and restaurants are labour intensive. Put together, seafarers in this sector take 42% of the total crew employed in hotel and catering departments.

The service demands both physical and emotional labour. Physically, it involves long hours, carrying large amounts of food and drinks to passengers, collecting and carrying large amounts of plates, glasses, forks and knives back to the galley. Seafarers here are constantly exposed to the supervision and control of management and the scrutiny of the passengers, hence are vulnerable to emotional exploitation. Waiters and waitresses in both places have given clear evidences to support their argument that their job is both physically and emotionally hard. As Sam, a Thai headwaiter explained to me, 'It's hard not only because you have to carry heavy trays and bring food to the table for hundreds of passengers. You have to greet them, be nice with them, smile and talk to them. It's non-stop. You must do this three meals a day, every day (Interview 104).'

In these workplaces, seafarers' racial or ethnic origins are used to determine their positions along the ship hierarchy. While the managers are predominately white male, Asian seafarers experienced in hospitality industry are increasingly employed as waiting seafarers. Those from Thailand, especially men, are particularly popular with ship managers, because, in addition to their experiences, they are assumed to be able to smile 'naturally' and to have 'born' with a right 'service culture', hence 'popular with passengers', as we were told by ship managers.

However, we found, through our shipboard observation of the operation process in bars and restaurants and our in-depth interviews with seafarers serving in these areas, that these Asian seafarers have to work even harder on their emotion in order to deliver the 'proper' service which makes them popular with passengers. Sam, the Thai headwaiter, for example, was one of the few seafarers who were most popular with the passengers and collected most tips at the end of almost every cruise. His main

station is the main restaurant, where, he works for 11 to 12 hours a day and seven days a week, as every other waiter or waitress does. What distinguishes Sam, however, is his 'brilliant memory' and his 'broad smile'. He is always at the restaurant entrance, greeting every passenger with a bright 'Good morning' or 'Good afternoon' and a broad smile. He remembers many passengers' names, notices their likes and dislikes, asks about their families, and sometimes flirts a bit with women passengers. This apparently forever-happy-energetic-and-smiling headwaiter transformed into another person with the progress of our two-hour interview in a quiet office under the bridge. He becomes serious and shares with us how he feels about the job:

It's very a hard job. I always feel exhausted when I finish it and come down to my cabin. You may not know the nature of hospitality industry. The restaurant is a stage, a show. You are an actor. Believe me, you can be totally drained just by greeting people, chatting with them, smiling to them, and things like that. As an Asian, I have to work harder, I have to make more efforts to please the passengers. Sometimes, I feel have to flirt a bit with the ladies, because I find it works. People are generous if they like you (Interview 104).

Sam and Suchart, another Thai headwaiter, are the two most popular headwaiters in the main restaurant, the best tip-earners among all the seafarers, and have been selected many times as the Best Seafarer of the Month in their department. However, when the post of restaurant manager became available, it was another European headwaiter, who was promoted to the position. Sam, decided to accept the 'surprise' philosophically; Suchart found it hard to do so. He took it as an issue in our interview with him, '(E)veryone says it should be Sam. He is about the same age as that man. He is more experienced and he is certainly the most popular waiting seafarer with the passengers. But, unfortunately he has dark hairs. Like me, he is an Asian (Interview 99).'

Housekeeping Seafarers

On the ship, housekeeping is conducted by both men and women, and increasingly by women. It is here that large numbers of women seafarers are found and the majority of the seafarers are recruited from Eastern Europe, Asia and other developing countries. Physically, their work is very demanding. Maxton-Graham's observation twenty years ago on board a Royal Viking cruise ship in South Pacific remains true today. The following quote is taken from his book *Liners to the Sun*, where he records his observation of how his Norwegian stewardess is making up his cabin:

I asked if I might watch her make up our cabin to see how she coped; she agreed. It was clean linen day and she turned first to our two berths, stripping the sheets and blankets. Gry told me that making twenty-two beds each day, smoothing sheets and bedspreads, was hard on her fingertips. Once the beds were made, she dusted everywhere – ‘anything that shines,’ one of her friends has advised her – so she tackled the chrome chair legs as well as the assorted clutter that passengers leave on every table, bureau, and desktop. In the bathroom, she scrubbed the floor on her hands and knees and wiped down the mirror, shelf, and ceiling with a damp facecloth. ... Long before she had finished, I realised that her job involved intensive hard *physical* (Zhao's emphasis) labour (1982:263-267).

A sensitive observer though, Maxton-Graham failed to depict the whole picture. What he noted is the physical part, the part he can physically *see*. What is missing is the invisible part in the labour process, the component of emotional labour in the cabin stewardess' production. The following quote from our interview with a Bulgarian cabin stewardess reveals some insights in this dimension:

When you work in the cabin, you are almost alone. You can't see people. You can speak with no body. You just do your job. Apparently, that's it. Actually, it isn't only this. It's a lot more. For example, you must remember the guests' names, remember what kind of fruits or drinks they like to be put in their cabins, small things like this. You must remember to smile when you meet

them, no matter how tired or how low you are. After all, you depend on them for gratuities (Interview 79, Agadir).

The following account gives another evidence. It is from another stewardess from Ukraine, a single mother with an 8-year-old son.

For me, the hardest part is to help guests with their children. Last week, I tried to help a couple put their boy in an adjacent cabin. He was also 10, a couple of years older than my boy. But the woman was not happy. She said her son was too far away from her. It was very hard for me. My son is not even 8 and he is so far away from me, we haven't seen each other for 8 months. And this woman complained that 3 yards or so were too far from her (sobbing)... What did I do? I had to control my feelings, and I kept telling myself: this is only your job. You will see your son in 28 days. Forget it. Smile! (Interview 86, Atlantic)

Cabin seafarers are encouraged to 'personalise' their cabin service. In an on-board training session, the instructor urged a group of cabin stewards and stewardesses to 'leave a bit of your personal touch in the cabin when you make the bed for passengers in the evenings.' He continued to say,

You can leave something little on the top of the pillow, a sweet, a mini-chocolate bar. Or, you can arrange the bedding in a nice, creative, personalised way so that your guests will feel at home. In other words, you should make the bed with your heart, make it cosy and comfortable. In doing so, you leave a bit of your personal touch there. Your guests will pick up small things like that and they will be generous with you at the end of the cruise (Interview 91, Atlantic).

Labour in housekeeping is subjected to close managerial control. Cabins are checked regularly by supervisors and randomly by department managers. As the Housekeeper on the ship we sailed told us, 'we do all we can to ensure that our service is well delivered to our guests. Our commitment is to make them feel relaxed and happy.'

Cruise lines are notorious for the extremely low wages they pay the serving seafarers. The fifty-dollar monthly wages are accepted as a 'norm' in the industry, especially by cruise lines based in America. Seafarers, therefore, have to rely almost entirely on customers to pay them wages. This makes them more vulnerable to emotional exploitation. Gratuities or tips are therefore a regime used effectively by management to ensure that seafarers extract every ounce of their physical and emotional energy to please the company's customers so that their wages, they can only hope, to be paid at the end of the cruise.

The human cost can be high as a result of such intensive physical and emotional labour. The words from a Russian stewardess may cause some deep concerns:

I don't know. In my case I remember after I finish first and second contacts I could no longer smile. I lost my smile. My sisters also asked me why you don't smile, you were very happy before. But I didn't know what to explain. I didn't know why my behaviour was changed here on the ship. May be I was tired. May be my mind was changed because of this life here? (Interview 67).

Conclusion

To seafarers on cruise ships, the labour is as hard as before. Indeed, it has become harder. Since the 1990s, ship owners have begun to compete with each other to build larger and larger ships. The 'Economy of Scale Effect', resulting in increased profit, is certainly behind the ship owners / operators' strong interest in large cruise ships. Both capital cost and operating cost per passenger decreases rapidly with the increase of ship size. With bigger ships, crew costs only increase marginally (Levander, 1999; Flynn, 2000). During the same period, the crew-passenger ratio keeps growing with the increase of the ship size. Traditionally, the typical ratio was 1:2 to 1:2.5 depending upon the position of the ship in the cruise market. Each cabin seafarer looked after 10 to 12 cabins, as observed by Maxton-Graham twenty years ago. Now, it has become 1:3 on most ships and can be 1:4 or even higher. What does this mean to seafarers? It means that the seafarer has to clean more cabins, remember more names and smile to more passengers. They have to labour harder for longer hours. But, changes in this

aspect did not happen overnight. The intensification of the seafaring labour has happened gradually, and subtly in many cases. On board today's ship, the single most striking difference from the early 1980s is that chances are getting rarer for one to observe the same work to be conducted by Norwegian or seafarers from other developed countries. Now, these tasks are conducted by seafarers from developing countries, from Asia, from Eastern Europe, from Latin America and so on. Placed at as front line workers at the bottom of the ship hierarchy, these seafarers are bearing the brunt of the restructuring of the world shipping. The joining of these men and women from the non-traditional (Western European) maritime nations in world dream ships has undoubtedly raised new issues to our 'traditional' study of emotional labour, at least so in Britain. As gender and class, race, ethnicity and even nationality must be taken into account in today's discourse on the changing shape of work.

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