

**The Social Construction of the South African
Seafarer's Identity and Coping strategies, in the
International Merchant Navy**

By

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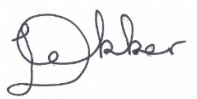
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South Africa

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work. All citations, references and
borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged.



.....
Lydia Carol Dekker

3 March 2017
.....

Date

DEDICATION

**Dedicated to Nico Dekker
And in Memory of
Maria D'Alton**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Editors: J.R. D'Alton and Vanessa-Lynn Neophytou

My Husband *Nico Dekker*; My father and stepmom: *Krista and Jerrard D'Alton*; My Sons, *Nicolaas and Oliver Dekker*; My daughter-in-law, *Tracey Dekker*; My Mother-In-Law, *Loraine Dekker*; My brothers *Robert and Daniel D'Alton* and families; My sister-in-law, *Elsie Dekker*; My grandchildren: *Nicky and Rachel*. My best friend *Vanessa-Lynn Neophytou*’.

My Facebook friends, especially *Mark Wootton*, and all my other Facebook cheerleaders; A special thanks to *Captain Babs Beuse*, who set up the Facebook group Women-at-Sea; and all my participants;

Thank you to my supervisor *Professor Sultan Khan* for all his patience.

And to those who did not believe that I could do it. These pessimists were responsible for my determination.

“How do you eat an elephant? Bite by bite”

**I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your
name forever. Psalm 86: 12**

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the social construction of the South African seafarer's identity and their coping strategies while working in international waters. There are two main objectives in this research. The first objective is to analyse how South African seafarers, who come from diverse cultural, language, gender, and racial backgrounds, construct their own identities, and their co-workers' social identities, as well as how their co-workers construct South African identities in the maritime context. This objective is achieved by researching the South African seafarers' social identity construction through the discourses of culture, language, gender, and race. Furthermore, the research acknowledges the role that the maritime industry, maritime culture, ship culture, safety culture, and training plays in the South African seafarers' social identity construction. The first objective includes historical previews of the international and national maritime industry. By researching the relevant historic foundations of the maritime industry, the research lays the foundation for understanding how the maritime industry's development influences the social identity constructions of seafarers. The second objective is to analyse how the coping mechanisms influence the social identity construction of the South African seafarer. This part of the research entailed researching and analysing how seafarers work and live for long periods in a unique industry: as this can render them vulnerable to physical and psychological problems. The theoretical framework of this thesis is social constructionism and organisational theories. In keeping with the theoretical framework, the research was qualitative in nature drawing on multifaceted qualitative methods: semi-structured and unstructured interviews, focus groups, and netography (social media). The findings reveal that the South African government's efforts to relaunch the South African maritime industry have not been successful at the time of print. Furthermore, it is found that the South African seafarers have a need to protect their social identities against ignorant family members, the public, and the maritime companies on a continued basis. This is because they are not able to comprehend their seafaring experiences and challenges while working at sea. Some of the challenges include: working in a multicultural environment, communication problems, cultural, language, gender, and diversity, which not only lead to an arduous working environment, mentally and physically, but also to human error accidents. These challenges play a large part in the construction of the seafarers' social identities.

List of Abbreviations

COC	: Certificates of Competency
ECDIS	: Electronic Charts and Information Systems
ECSA	: The European Community Shipowners' Associations
EFT	: European Transport Workers Federation
EMSA	: European Maritime Safety Agency
ETO	: Electro Technical Officer
FOC	: Flag of Convenience
GMDSS	: Global Maritime Distress and Safety System
HTW	: The Human Element Training and Watchkeeping
III	: Implementation of IMO Instruments
ILO	: International Labour Organization
IMCO	: Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization
IMO	: International Maritime Organization
IMSO	: Convention of the International Maritime Satellite Organization
ISM	: The International Safety Management Code
ISPS Code	: The International Ship and Port Facility Security Code
ITF	: International Transport Worker's Federation
MARPOL	: Marine Pollution
MEPC	: The Maritime Environment Protection Committee
MET	: Maritime Educational Training
MLC	: Maritime Labour Convention
MSC	: Maritime Safety Committee
NCRS	: Navigation, Communications Search and Rescue
PPR	: The Pollution Prevention and Response
SDC	: Ship Design and Construction
SOLAS	: Safety of Life at Sea
STCW	: Standards of Training, Watchkeeping and Certification
WMU	: World Maritime University
DUT	: Durban University of Technology

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Chapter One

Introduction

The researcher wishes to introduce this thesis with a widely circulated quote on the maritime social media on life at sea:

The Sad Seafarer

Money, Travel and Women?
Is that what they told you?
How about homesickness.
Sea sickness.
Maintaining relationships.
No-good crews.
Bad supervisors.
Hard work.
Unpredictable accidents and deaths.
Prisoner-like life.
No proper sleep and rest.
Unforgiving seas and oceans, etc.
So do not make like you know us, and you never will.
(Anonymous, 2013)

1.1. Motivation for the Research Topic

The above anonymous quote has been uppermost in the researcher's mind throughout the research for this thesis. How do we know who the seafarer is? What is his or her identity? Is it possible to understand how their social identity as a seafarer developed?

The motivation for this thesis, at least in part, was when the researcher reflected on her role as a seafarer's spouse. This was stimulated by a common Oriental seafarer's view of his wife's role in his life – they often refer to her as their 'queen' (Mariners Galaxy, 2016:1). It was when the researcher reflected on this view that it dawned on her that she had unwittingly been inducted into the royalty of the seafaring hierarchy – she had become a queen!

A sailor's queen is described as:

It is not at all easy to hold the position of a Queen in the real world. In fairy tales, a common girl becomes the Queen only after she finds her Prince Charming, her one true love!! A common girl with courage, passion, open-mindedness, learning drive and honesty can smoothly sail in her realm as a

Queen. A sailor's Queen is that special woman who decides in her heart and mind to marry a sailor and hold his hands through smooth seas and rough weather. This woman is special because of all the above said qualities that she possesses. She has unconditional love in her heart for her man and his family that even distance cannot dim. This is the best form of support a partner can ever give to another being miles apart from each other. The sailor at sea works peacefully knowing that the Queen will be able to handle things at his home front. She waits for her man patiently while doing all her daily chores with all the responsibility brilliantly with only one motivation: One day less and then we will be together. She doesn't neglect her duties just for the reason that her prime support is not with her. Rather, she is full of strength to make him and his decision to marry her proud. Sometimes celebrating first birthdays, anniversaries or festivals alone without him is what she has to take in her stride. But that test too, she passes with flying colours in front of everybody, no matter how much lonely she is feeling from inside. Just ask the pillow for the hidden truth! (Mariners Galaxy, 2016:1)

As the above quote indicates, the researcher's spouse's concerns increasingly centred on his work at sea from one trip to the next. During his absences his 'queen's' concerns were to manage without her seafarer at home and practically raising her children as a single parent during the long periods he spent at sea. Not truly understanding the realities of life at sea, she realised how his personality gradually changed from outgoing and gregarious to being more introverted mainly preferring only his family's company (Mariners Galaxy, 2016).

This was further reinforced by the reading of and reflecting on *The Sad Seafarer*, a widely circulated quote referred to above, which reflects on the realities of life at sea shattering many of the common Hollywood-based romantic notions of a carefree, adventurous and swashbuckling life. It highlights the fact that life aboard ship is not a pleasure cruise (Anonymous, 2013; Bhattacharjee, 2016).

Her husband also had to spread the short periods at home between his extended family – his wife, children, parents, siblings and his church friends, which made his time at home stressful. His first years at sea were extremely difficult as communication was very sparse. After dropping him off at the airport, the researcher would hear from him perhaps once or twice when he was able to phone on the satellite phone for a few minutes, and then only hearing from him again once he landed in Johannesburg, South Africa, before catching the connecting flight home. Over time communication improved as internet coverage became more readily available when he went ashore and thereafter when the internet was introduced onboard ship. Later, the situation improved considerably

when cell phones were introduced with apps such as WhatsApp and Facebook. Even then, it was not possible to really understand what he experienced during the time he spent at sea. He told his 'Queen' funny stories now and again, but preferred to spend time with his family, attending to maintenance at home, fixing those things that broke during his absences, and spending quality time with his children and later grandchildren.

With the children grown up, the researcher decided to continue her tertiary education and was then offered a research programme doing her PhD in sociology focusing on the lived experiences of South African seafarers. It is only by researching seafarers' lived experiences and phenomena such as multiculturalism; inter-cultural communication problems; social isolation; home sickness; mental and physical phenomena; death at sea; corruption; bad management; incompetent crew, and so forth that the researcher started to get a glimpse of her husband's lived experiences at sea. During the research she became aware of the extent of the literature on the subject - a multitude of books, research papers, and articles on international seafarers, but that very little qualitative research existed on South African seafarers specifically. Although the majority of South African seafarers work in international waters, their lived experiences were muted. One of the reasons their voices are not heard is mostly due to the lack of interest in the impact of the phenomena mentioned above as the majority of maritime research is of a quantitative nature.

The researcher started asking questions about South African seafarers. Who are they? What is the formation of their social identity construction? How do they adapt to the seafaring industry coming from a diverse nation? And how do they cope whilst at sea. It was only later in the research that the importance of the female seafarer came to the fore and how her social identity construction is formulated.

1.2. Researcher's Core Arguments

Social identity construction does not occur in isolation. It is culturally embedded, starting at birth and continuing throughout the whole of a person's lifespan. As a person moves from his or her protective cultural environment into the educational context and later in the career context, he or she is exposed to other cultures, other languages, and other perspectives of how gender is performed, and how different race groups are perceived, which could all radically differ from his or her cultural understanding (Burr, 2007; Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010).

The hierarchy remnants that existed during apartheid are still visible in post-apartheid South Africa (MacDonald, 2006). Although changes did and do occur, these remnants are still found in the primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions in South Africa (Jansen, 2009; Steyn, 2001). Even though the majority of South African seafarers attended diverse educational facilities, their cultural upbringing has still not been totally socially amalgamated with other cultures. This can have an effect on the social identity construction of the South African seafarer. Also, this can determine how they adjust to working in the merchant navy.

A person's mother tongue is culturally embedded (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). The term 'mother-tongue' will be substituted by the term 'cultural-language' to differentiate between the global working language used onboard ship, which is English, and that of the mother-tongue in the usual context. Language are one of the vehicles for culture (Burr, 2007). Thus, cultural-language socially construct the member of the said culture's perception of gender, cultural symbolism, body language, rituals, and tangible and non-tangible symbolic objects, and coping strategies (Burr, 2007; Goffman, 1963a).

Culture is not only a native phenomenon, but also exists in the organisational and work context (Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). Due to the fact that ships are segments of the maritime organisation, each develops its own culture, which in turn, is influenced by the organisational culture.

Maritime organisations are controlled and regulated by global international policies set by organisational bodies such as the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). These maritime policies were created in the wake of the sinking of the Titanic in 1912 and these policies were set in motion to prevent the occurrence of similar accidents (International Maritime Organisation, 2015h). These organisations, which will be further discussed in chapter one, have expanded and changed as other maritime accidents occurred. A safety culture was constructed and maintained by international policies and maintained by these maritime organisations.

However, maritime ship owners, just as any land based industry, are under pressure to show a profit (Doherty, 2015; MarEx, 2015; Wright, 2015). Initially ships were registered in the resident country of the owner (Klein, 2005). As Western countries applied stricter labour laws, minimum wage policies, high tonnage tax, and so forth, ship owners started looking

at other viable solutions (Chapman, 1992; Yannopoulos, 1988). Developing countries such as Panama and Honduras, not only have more lenient labour laws, but are more cost effective for registering foreign ships under their flags (Özçayir, 2000). The re-registration of ships under a flag other than the owner's resident country is called Flag of Convenience (FOC) (Özçayir, 2000). The developing nations that accept foreign vessel registrations benefit financially by this practice (George, 2011; Gregory, 2012; Grossman, 2012; Singla, 2011). However, because ships are removed from their flag state of origin and the strict labour regulations to a FOC flag state with relaxed labour constitutions has made seafarers vulnerable to human rights abuses (George, 2011; Gregory, 2012; Grossman, 2012; Singla, 2011). These abuses are not just aimed at female seafarers, but at seafarers in general.

The seafaring industry is a unique industry, where male and female seafarers work and live in a contained multicultural environment for long periods without the luxuries such as returning home at the end of each work day to relax with their families and friends (Borovnik, 2005). They work seven days a week in 12 hour shifts. Multiculturalism and a strenuous working environment can make the seafarer vulnerable to physical and psychological problems. These problems carry over to their work environment and can place the individual seafarer, his or her co-workers, and the ship at risk of damage and maritime accidents (Brady, 2013; McKay and Wright, 2010; Nautilus, 2010; Raunek, 2013; Sea Health, 2012; Thomas, 2004b; Zhao, 2004).

1.3. Research Approach

This thesis discusses thematically, by drawing from international and South African maritime literature. To understand the maritime industry and the social identity construction of South African seafarers, it is important to look at the history, organisations and international and national policies that form the foundation of the national and international seafaring industry.

The theoretical framework of this thesis is based on social constructionism theory and organisational theory. The researcher explains these theories as ‘umbrella theories’ and nested under them are several theorists and their theories. Social constructionism theory, the elder of organisational theory, shares the same platform. Both reject essentialism and argue that cultures, institutions, organisations, gender and race are socially constructed. Both argue that language are one of the vehicles for transmitting knowledge in the said

context. They both maintain that language is social action, and that it is through interaction that knowledge is constructed. Both contend that inter- and intragroup interaction socially construct social identities.

Through researching theories that underpin social constructionism and organisational theory a foundation is laid for understanding how the South African seafarers' social identities are constructed.

1.4. Methodology

The methodological approach in the fourth chapter explains the methods that were utilised to gather the data. The researcher selected the social constructionist paradigm to guide her in selecting the appropriate methods to be utilised for this thesis. The researcher explains the chosen paradigm, ontological and epistemological questions that needed to be answered to determine the best method to gather the research data holistically. The data collected was done by utilising qualitative methods. The qualitative methods used were multifaceted. Face-to-face interviews, interaction through social media and two focus groups were used. This chapter also addresses how the participants were selected, and the ethical concerns that needed to be addressed prior to commencing the research.

1.5. Data Analysis

The data analysis was divided into two chapters to address the two focal points of the research. Chapter five analyses the participants' lived experiences from the culture, cultural-language, language, gender, and race perspectives. Chapter six focuses on the coping mechanisms South African seafarers utilise to work in their unique environment.

Chapter five examines how South African seafarers' national identities are socially constructed through regular interaction with other cultural groups, each with their own unique cultural-language, which constructs the members' world view. One of the researcher's goals was to investigate the extent to, which multicultural interaction in the educational institutions influenced the South African seafarers' experiences whilst working in the multicultural environment inherent on ships. To enable the researcher to analyse the social identity construction of the South African seafarer it was necessary to draw from international literature resources and some international respondents' reaction to questions

asked on social media sites to substantiate some of the comments South African seafarers made during the interviewing processes.

Chapter six is an analysis of the stressful work and living environment South African seafarers' work and live in viewed from the participants' perspective. The researcher enquired about their perspectives on how the lack of social interaction, fatigue, loneliness, isolation, harassment and bullying affect their work in the merchant marine. How people cope in stressful situations depends on their cultural and social constructed identities. In other words, each culture has its own way of coping with stressors at sea. The ability to cope is largely dependent on support drawn from family and friends, the organisational culture, and the ship's culture. Many maritime organisations advertise that they train their officers to be culturally sensitive and how to detect stressful situations amongst their diverse crew. The participants' experiences of their companies' wellness programmes is diverse. Chapter six analyses the psychological and physiological stresses South African seafarers experience and observe.

To substantiate the researcher's analysis of the participants' responses chapter five and six draw from chapter two the literature review, and chapter three, the theoretical chapter, to substantiate the researcher's analysis of the participants' responses, experiences, and observations while working and living at sea.

1.6. Conclusion

This thesis focuses on South African seafarers who come from diverse backgrounds. Their diverse backgrounds construct diverse social identities that can result in a difficult work environment. This diversity includes culture, cultural-language, gender, and race. The merchant navy is regulated by international bodies to ensure that the maritime organisations abide by international safety policies. Each maritime organisation has its own culture, which influences the ship and safety cultures. The multicultural officers and crew socially construct the ship and safety cultures. Life onboard a ship is complex and unique in that the crew live and work together for long periods at a time when stressors develop. How a crew member handles stressful situations depend on his/her available coping mechanisms?

Coping mechanisms are culturally constructed, thus in a multicultural working environment each nationality has its own set of coping techniques. These coping techniques depend on support from family and friends, ship support and company support.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

International maritime has been extensively researched. Investigation into the identity construction and coping mechanisms of South African seafarers working in international waters necessarily draws on international literature, which is challenging given the paucity of literature on the South African merchant navy. Given the absence of a South African merchant navy per se, it comes as no surprise that all South African seafarers work in the global merchant navy sharing similar work experiences under the international maritime governance framework. South African seafarers bring into the seafaring community unique cultures, arising from their distinct perspectives, which are characteristic of the diversity of South African society. This experience includes how they perceive working and living in an environment where they have to adapt to the ship's culture, regulated by a set of distinctive safety cultures. When you add to the amalgam of culture, English as a maritime language, which is not necessarily the seafarers' first language; the seafaring experiences can become mordant. Seafarers also work in a multicultural environment, with diverse cultural-languages, diverse races, and diverse genders. To adapt to this diversity, seafarers need to develop strong coping mechanisms, the lack whereof can lead to psychological and physical stressors, which endanger not only the individual, but also the co-workers and the ship's safety.

This chapter focuses on the international merchant navy, which will be discussed thematically. It commences with a definition of maritime concepts, to enrich understanding of the seafaring industry.

This is followed by a description and discussion of the nature of the seafaring community, specifically on how the Flag of Convenience (FOC) influences life at sea and a discussion of the maritime culture including the safety culture. Thereafter, international declarations governing the seafaring community, specifically those of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) will be examined. This is followed by an examination of the extent of the seafaring community, the nature of its organisation, the different occupational stratifications within the seafaring community and the different occupational challenges

confronting seafarers. Lastly, the chapter concludes by examining the occupational redress opportunities available to seafarers while onboard.

2.2. Definition of Concepts

In layman's terms, the word "navy" conjures up an image of military vessels rather than general maritime transport. "Merchant Navy" is a term applied to the commercial shipping fleet and includes a range of maritime companies on an international level. Definitions for the merchant navy was surprisingly difficult to find, as all references point to its function – ships involved in a country's commercial shipping sector with little reference to clarify, which ships being categorised. The closest definition was drawn from the Business Dictionary (2014:1), which defines the merchant navy as:

All non-military ships including bulk carriers, coasters, container ships, tankers, passenger lines, etc., but excluding fishing and research vessels, listed on the official registry of a country. Also called merchant navy.

The merchant navy, then, consists of a collection of ships with different functions, such as:

- a. Tankers: carriers of oil, fuel, gas and chemicals;
- b. Bulk Carriers: transporting coal, grain, ores and other powdered substances;
- c. Ferries: intercontinental or smaller inter-island vessels that provide transportation to water-locked communities or vehicle transportation;
- d. Cruise Ships: provide travel for holiday makers;
- e. Off Shore Support: ships supplying crew, supplies and other services to the oil and gas offshore industries;
- f. Cable and pipeline laying ships: mostly engaged in servicing the gas and oil industry (Baillie, 2012:1).

Similarly, the definition of seafarers can become confusing as there are different categories of crew serving on a vessel such as officers, ratings, and hospitality staff. Likewise, on cruise lines there is an extensive staff complement working in the entertainment and customer service departments. Hence, a seafarer is defined "as a person who is employed or engaged in any capacity onboard a seagoing ship..." (Dimitrova, 2010:32). Mostly there is confusion about who is classified as maritime crew and who is not. Although the majority of people do not refer to the hospitality crew as 'seafarers' maritime literature does not make a distinction between hospitality, entertainment and 'crew'.

Seafarer is defined as "any person who is employed or engaged or works in any capacity onboard a ship" (Maritime and Coastguard Agency, 2006:1).

The term Flag of Convenience (FOC) plays an important role in the way maritime companies manage their maritime investments on and offshore. FOC's culture, safety culture, and the mental and physical wellbeing of seafarers have been red flagged by international unions as possible sites of abuse (George, 2011; Gregory, 2012; Grossman, 2012; Singla, 2011). FOC is used to explain that a ship has been removed from the country of origins' ship registry and registered in another country. This practice is also referred to as 'Flagging Out'. Registering ships under another country's flag started during the 1930s when American ships started moving their ships' registrations to Panama and the Honduras (Özçayir, 2000). The FOC phenomenon developed out of the need for ship owners to cut costs by avoiding high taxes and the imposition of trade unions in the country of origin (Alderton, Bloor, Kahveci, Lane, Sampson, Thomas, Winchester, Wu, and Zhao, 2004). FOCs also allow ship owners to recruit non-domiciled seafarers at much lower wages, as they can avoid the country of origin's minimum wage policies (Alderton et al., 2004). The relaxed policies of the new flag state allow ship owners to get away with welfare and security fund payments, and environmental issues, which are strictly enforced by their home country (Alderton et al., 2004).

Chin (2008a:32) describes how FOCs work in practical terms.

One finds that ships are built in one country, registered and flagged in another country, their owners are based in a third [country] the daily operations are managed from a fourth country and seafarers sourced globally. From this, it may be asserted that ships registered under FOC have a transnational character to it and are more than likely to evade regulatory frameworks within the maritime sector.

2.3. Nature of the Seafaring Community

The nature of the seafaring community is multi-faceted. Initially, it starts with the country where the ship is registered. FOC opened the industry to cheap labour, resulting in the crew being recruited from different nation states. The consequence of flagging out of ships resulted in the prevalence of multicultural crews, which pervades and has become a dominant feature within the seafaring community (Horck, 2006; Kahveci and Sampson, 2002). Multiculturalism is expressed in diverse languages, gender diversity, and a variety of races, brought together in a single contained environment, where the whole crew has to work, live and coexist for a period of time (Kahveci and Sampson, 2002). Given the diversity of behaviour within a multicultural context onboard FOC ships, life onboard a

ship increases the risk factors for human rights abuses, and exposes seafarers to accidents at sea given the diversity of interpretations and meanings, which are culturally embedded (Kahveci and Sampson, 2002; Sadjadi, 2012).

Culture in the seafaring community cannot be defined by just looking at the seafarer's cultural orientation. It includes interaction with the ship's culture and that of the safety culture prevalent onboard a ship (Berg, Storgård and Lappalainen, 2013; Borovnik, 2005). This is evident as a multicultural-crewed ship brings together seafarers from many nations, diverse languages, diverse races, and diverse gender orientations.

2.3.1. Flag of Convenience (FOC)

FOC is very critical to the merchant navy as it influences, and continues to influence, many aspects of the maritime navy. The impact of FOC can be observed in the social construct of a ship's culture, safety, the use of maritime language, gender, race and coping strategies (Baker, 2006; Chin, 2008b)

One motivation for 'flagging out' is lower labour costs (Chapman, 1992; Yannopoulos, 1988). When employing crew under a FOC, savings can be substantial with lower wages and the fact that ship owners do not have to comply with the state of origins' labour laws specifically with regard to the payment of benefits such as pension funds, medical benefits and minimum wages (Chapman, 1992; Yannopoulos, 1988). Owners of FOC vessels avoid high taxes and minimum wage commitments to seafarers by employing individuals from developing countries under FOC registrations (Klein, 2005). They often evade flying the flag of their own developed country to avoid conformity to labour and maritime employment legislations (Chapman, 1992; Yannopoulos, 1988). In other words, merchant navies are governed by the flag state where they are registered (Klein, 2005). Flagging out also provides owners the latitude to evade responsibility for gross human rights violations; ways to avoid legal consequences for merchant navy accidents; death of the crew and passengers, and environmental responsibilities in the event of oil spills (Klein, 2001). It is important to note that the international governing bodies, such as the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), are constantly working on ways to combat environmental and human rights violations orchestrated by FOCs. Unions such as Nautilus, Maritime Union of

Australia and individual International Transport Federation (ITF) representatives, and maritime news groups, such as Marine Insight, often highlight FOC vessels' abuses.

2.3.2. Culture

Culture is deeply imbedded in the merchant navy environment. When researching the merchant navy environment, culture cannot be ignored, as it not only impacts on the seafarer's identity construct, but also influences the operation of the ship in terms of how it is managed and run. It also has an impact on the safety of the ship and its crew. In the merchant navy culture is subdivided into maritime culture, safety culture, and multiculturalism.

Culture as defined by Adler (1977) not only signifies the fundamentals of the essence of culture, but also suggests how multiculturalism affects the mind of the individual.

Nation, culture, and society exert tremendous influence on each of our lives, structuring our values, engineering our view of the world, and patterning our responses to experience. Human beings cannot hold themselves apart from some form of cultural influence (Adler, 1977:25).

He further argues that a multicultural person is like a person with a 'homeless' mind (Adler, 1977). A 'homeless' mind is a mind that allows for flexibility, but does not allow for changes to become a permanent fixture in the multicultural individual's mind (Adler, 1977). Furthermore, an individual who finds himself in a multicultural environment, or as Adler defines, has a 'homeless' mind, is hungry for ideas and feelings that help him make sense of the world, or context wherein he finds himself (Adler, 1977). In other words, a person who finds himself in a multicultural environment does not fully accept the demands of the temporary culture he finds himself in as he is not totally free of his innate culture as it is difficult to differentiate his cultural world view from the outsider world view (Adler, 1977).

Horck (2006:33) researched the nature of culture in the merchant navy. He uses culture to explain that "in order to belong to a cultural group you need to communicate" with your co-workers in the merchant navy. Hence, communication is achieved through culture, language, gender, race and coping strategies. These intersect with each other, if one fails it inevitably affects all the others (Burr, 2007, Gergen, 2012, Horck, 2006, Li and Karakowsky, 2001).

2.3.3. Maritime Culture and Safety Culture

Maritime culture is based on the collective experiences of danger, confined living spaces in a traditional all-male community (Land, 2002). In addition, seafarers' uniqueness lies not only in living in shared and confined living spaces but also in their restricted work environment. This is exacerbated by having to socialise with seafarers from multicultural backgrounds for extended periods (Borovnik, 2005). Horck (2006) advocates the importance of training cadets in 'cultural awareness', as this mutually benefits all onboard a ship. He defines maritime culture as:

...constructed, flexible, reconstructed, complex, changeable and identified by great variation and divergent tendencies. The important aspect of culture in the context of the merchant navy is that marine culture carries the same weight as other cultural studies (Horck, 2006:32).

Maritime culture relies on the adherence to policies. Effective communication is important to maintain a positive maritime culture aboard a ship. This can be accomplished by group meetings to ensure that goals and requirements are understood by all present (Bhargava, 2013a). Team meetings enforce a maritime culture by ensuring that all crew members participate in the understanding of what is expected of them regarding safety, work schedules, procedures, interdepartmental communication and technical operations. This ensures individual and ship safety (Bhargava, 2013a). By including all crew in the daily operations of a ship gives the crew a sense of shared experiences and of belonging (Bhargava, 2013a).

Effective ship management also determines a healthy ship's culture. Effective management involves addressing the problems of harassment and bullying. This is achieved by training both management and the crew and can be facilitated by the distribution of anti-harassment material (Dickinson, 2011, 2013). This is of importance as a ship's culture can be destroyed by bullying and harassment, especially sexual harassment. Dickinson (2011) further refers to the extent of negative attitudes and actions that can lead to male and female seafarers leaving the merchant navy and creating a negative perception of the industry.

Adherence to maritime policies circumscribed by various international bodies includes the safety of a ship. Safety culture is described as:

...the product of individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, competencies and patterns of behaviour that determine the commitment and professing of an organisation's health and safety management (Raluca, 2009:160).

Safety is a crucial element of a ship's culture, and determines not only the physical and mental health of seafarers, but also includes measures to be taken to reduce accidents at sea, which not only pose a risk to the individual but to the ship as a whole (Bhargava, 2013b). Safety plays a significant role in a ship's culture. The merchant navy constantly refers to the link of the human factor as the cause of up to 95 percent of all accidents at sea (Berg et al., 2013; Rothblum, 2000).

A healthy ship culture is characterised by a give-and-take culture between management and seafarers. Most literature focuses on the lack of respect, recreational facilities, internet access to contact family, gossiping, intolerance towards seafarers from other cultures, intimidation, poor command of English and harassment, just to mention a few. It is important that these issues are addressed on a continued basis, so that a healthy ship's culture can be maintained and restored (Belcher et. al., 2003; Borovnik, 2005, 2011; Raunek, 2013; Seafarers' Rights, 2012)

2.3.4. Language in the Multicultural Merchant Navy

The previous section dealt with safety culture and it was highlighted that there is a link between adequate fluency in the English language and safety. A sociological perspective is that there is a link between identity, culture and language (Stets and Burke, 2003). Stets and Burke (2003) continue to explain that culture or society influences identity through shared language. Language further influences the way people interact with each other (Chirea-Ungureanu and Visan, 2011; Stets and Burke, 2003). This is no different in the merchant navy where identity, culture and language intersect (Stets and Burke, 2003, 2009). A common language is required as a means of communication in the merchant navy (Chirea-Ungureanu and Visan, 2011). However, since the merchant navy mostly consists of multicultural crews, individual culture and cultural-language have to be set aside for a common maritime cultural-language (Horck, 2006).

As mentioned previously, Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping (STCW) requires that all crews have to be competent in English, which is the dominant maritime working language (Sekimizu, 2010). However, on most merchant

navy ships the definition of ‘language competency’ is debatable. Poor command of English between the officers and ratings can endanger the ship and crew (Rashed and Kamal, 2010). Cultural and language diversity can place strain on the relationships onboard the ship, especially if taken into consideration that second language speakers often have a heavy accent (Rashed and Kamal, 2010).

Chirea-Ungureanu and Visan (2011) give some examples where accents can become problematic onboard a ship. Italians and Romanians tend to pronounce words as they are spelled, for example pronouncing ‘w’ as ‘v’ resulting in ‘water’ being pronounced as ‘vater’ (Chirea-Ungureanu and Visan, 2011). Japanese seafarers often confuse the pronunciation of the letters ‘l’ and ‘r’ resulting in words such as ‘pilot’ pronounced as ‘pirate’ and ‘ladder’ as ‘rudder’. Mispronounced words and heavy accents can seriously influence safety in the merchant navy (Chirea-Ungureanu and Visan, 2011). Albayrak and Sag (2011) also noted how safety at sea is linked to the working language. They, however, pointed out that written and spoken English usage onboard are more applicable to the technical jargon and that it did not take into consideration the long term implications it could have on the social structure of the merchant navy (Albayrak and Sag, 2011; Horck, 2006). Nevertheless, in the maritime context language is not only about work-related communication, it is also about the cultural-languages other than English spoken by the crew (Chirea-Ungureanu and Visan, 2011; Sea Health, 2013).

Rashed and Kamal (2010) refer to ‘cultural-language difference’ and ‘language barriers’ as contributing factors in human error accidents at sea. They continue by suggesting that if English is the secondary language of the crew and if this is added to the cultural diversity, then miscommunication is likely to increase, which in turn could lead to maritime accidents (Rashed and Kamal, 2010).

Communication problems due to working language competency are particularly observant when ships enter a harbour and have to communicate with the port crew and pilots resulting in misunderstanding and miscommunication (Horck, 2008). There is also the challenge of seafarers in emergencies having to communicate coherently and competently in a second language in situations where cognitive demands are high (Hetherington, Flin and Mearns, 2005). Miscommunication in day-to-day activities varies from seafarers being mildly annoyed to resulting in dangerous situations, which can seriously affect a ship's safety (Hetherington et al., 2005).

Short (2007) explains how miscommunication can take place onboard a ship; especially in instances where English is a 'foreign' language to seafarers. Where English is a second language to seafarers a nod or a polite 'yes sir' is not sufficient in determining whether the command has been, or was, properly understood (Short, 2007). An example of how miscommunication can lead to an accident at sea was evident when the *Crimson Mars* ran aground on the River Tamar in Tasmania on 1 May 2006 (Australian Transport Safety Bureau, 2006). After instructing the helmsman where to steer the ship the pilot omitted to ask the helmsman to repeat the instruction as per protocol (Australian Transport Safety Bureau, 2006).

This seemingly simple report of communication between the helmsman and the pilot was saturated with cultural miscommunication. The first miscommunication was the manner in which the command was given. The helmsman interpreted the manner in which the pilot spoke to the Filipino helmsman as a 'joke', thus cultural misunderstanding occurred due to the lack of cultural awareness between the two men (Australian Transport Safety Bureau, 2006). It is alleged that it is common for a Filipino to say 'yes' when he does not know, or if he only half-understands an instruction, or if he is unsure of himself (Andres, 1999). In the case of the *Crimson Mars* this could have been avoided if maritime protocol was followed and the helmsman had been asked to repeat the instruction to the pilot, thereby avoiding any possible misunderstanding, which might have occurred (Australian Transport Safety Bureau, 2006). According to the *Crimson Mars* accident report the cause of the accident was due to human error, in this case cultural miscommunication (Australian Transport Safety Bureau, 2006). The miscommunication can be explained by the fact that Filipino crews seldom question their superiors, which in this case was an interaction between the helmsman, the captain, and the pilot (Andres, 1999). The Filipino would have viewed the pilot and captain as revered and wise people and more knowledgeable, and would therefore have considered it insubordinate to question the instruction given (Andres, 1999). If the pilot had been trained in the understanding of the cultural differences that could occur on a multicultural ship, and maritime protocol was followed, this accident could have been avoided (Australian Transport Safety Bureau, 2006). Acknowledgement of 'other' cultural identities onboard ships could avoid mishaps and accidents as described in the example above. Thus, having a good command of English does not necessarily mean that cultural awareness is present (Horck, 2006; Visan and Georgescu, 2012).

2.4. Gender in the Merchant Navy

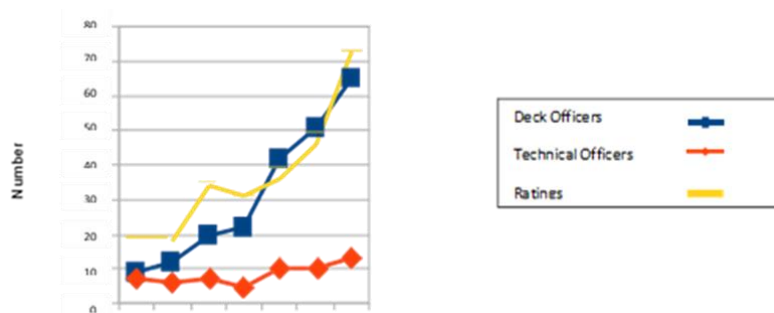
Gender issues in the merchant navy are feverishly debated in maritime research. These debates include arguments that women are an “under-utilised and under-developed resource in the merchant navy” (Belcher et al., 2003:7). Women seafarers face different challenges as compared to their male co-workers. It is perceived that they need to prove themselves to their male counterparts, often having to become ‘masculine’ in appearance and behaviour, taking on high risk lifestyles, including smoking, drinking, and drug usage, to ‘fit in with the boys’ (Hansen and Jensen, 1989; Horck, 2008). Thomas (2004a) speaks about the myths and stereotyping that follow female seafarers when they take up employment in the merchant navy. One of these is that seafaring jobs are not appropriate work for women, and that female seafarers are not capable of making critical decisions when working at sea.

Chin (2008a:46), points out that:

... The social construction and use of oceanic space remains distinctly masculinised despite the changes... Gendered attitudes and expectations persist in dictating the terms and conditions of women’s labour on ships in general and deck and galley departments in particular.

Statistically, women seafarers’ employment in the merchant navy is in disproportion to their male counterparts (Belcher et al., 2003; Horck, 2008). Currently only approximately two percent of female seafarers are employed in the merchant navy (Belcher et al., 2003: 9; Cele, 2003). Sixty-eight percent of the female seafarers are employed in the ferry industry followed by 26 percent in the cruise industry and six percent in the cargo industry (Belcher et al., 2003:12)

Figure 1: The Total Number of Female Seafarers



Source: Sulpice (2011:65)

Despite the seemingly low percentage of female seafarers in the merchant navy, women's intake trends in training colleges are increasing (Belcher et al., 2003:13).

Notwithstanding the fact that women are interested in careers at sea, and many government and maritime institutes encourage it, the industry is not equally female friendly. Female seafarers' rights are often overlooked and prejudged in this male dominated industry (Belcher et al., 2003; Singla, 2012).

To protect female seafarers' rights, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) addresses female seafarers' basic rights. The ILO states that all women seafarers have the right to equal training and job education and are entitled to the same minimum wage, working hours, overtime and living conditions as their male counterparts (Singla, 2012). Female seafarers cannot be discriminated against when applying for a maritime position and female seafarers have the right to expect protection from sexual harassment (Singla, 2012). They have a right to paid maternity leave; protection against hazardous working conditions whilst pregnant and must be re-employed after maternity leave (Singla, 2012). However, in the case where female seafarers work on a Flag of Convenience (FOC) ship, their rights vary in accordance with the ship's country of registration (Singla, 2012), which could be problematic if the country of registration does not acknowledge female seafarers' rights. Female seafarers must have access to sanitary facilities, contraception and medical assistance onboard and onshore (Singla, 2012).

Despite efforts made by ship management, gendered assumptions and practices persist (Chin, 2008b). Policies tend to be gender-blind and do not take into account that female seafarers have particular needs, which differ from their male counterparts (wa Africa, 2010).

Beuse (2013), an international Facebook participant, said that one of the biggest problems female seafarers face is that companies do not take into account that female seafarers' physique is different to that of men and to name one example, male coveralls do not properly fit the female physique and consequently tend to be very uncomfortable.

Belcher et al. (2003) research entitled *Women Seafarers: Global Policies and Practices* made an in-depth examination of the global merchant navy and female seafarers' participation therein. Their research focused on a multitude of issues regarding the working

conditions of female seafarers in the merchant navy. These issues include female recruitment, and their working conditions onboard ships. Furthermore, they quantify the seafaring industry in the context of the employment of female seafarers. In addition, their research includes qualitative research to highlight problems, such as sexual harassment and discrimination, which female seafarers face whilst working offshore (Belcher et al., 2003).

Female seafarers are not uncommon in the merchant navy. Traditionally they were mostly employed in the hospitality department. The recruitment of female seafarers only began in earnest during the late 1990s, when it was apparent that there was a shortfall of male seafarers, women were encouraged to consider the merchant navy as a lucrative career choice by enrolling in officer training programmes in merchant navy training institutes. Female seafarers are generally drawn to the cruise lines in the hospitality sectors, but the true need is for female officers (Belcher et al., 2003:6).

At World Maritime University (WMU) the female student enrolment for deck officers increased to 25 percent in Spain and in the UK to 4.6 percent. The 2001 global statistics indicated that female officers employed in the merchant navy represented 7 percent of the global maritime market, whereas the male officers employed represented 42 percent; female ratings were 93 percent in comparison to the 58 percent of male ratings (Belcher et al., 2003:14). The increase in female ratings can be attributed to the maritime technical colleges' effort to encourage female students to consider the merchant navy as a career choice. For example, the University of Catalonia, Barcelona introduced the Dona programme for women seafarers. Similarly, the Faculty of Nautical Science has seen an increase in female students from 5 percent during the 1996 enrolment to 25 percent in the years following (Belcher et al., 2003).

Generally, female seafarers receive good reports from the management in the merchant navy. Reports such as: "The women are more alert..."; "The women are above average"; "You must have good brains [to be a seafarer], and women are usually better in this respect", illustrate the relative standing of women seafarers in the merchant navy. There also are many negative and stereotypical perceptions of female seafarers: "Women are ok for passenger ships"; "...they leave after two or three years"; "I do not believe women can be good officers"; "Women will find somebody, make love, maybe marry and leave", are some of the negative perceptions surrounding female seafarers. Female seafarers have to endure stereotyping as being 'mentally and physically unable to do a 'man's job' and

subsequently are often paid less than their male counterparts in the same job function (Belcher et al., 2003:30).

Similarly, Thomas (2004a) reported that female seafarers are treated with contempt by male seafarers when they enter the merchant navy. Their role as women has always been socially constructed as a caregiver, wife and mother, not as seafarer (Thomas, 2004a). Qualified female seafarers often have to struggle to find acknowledgement for their abilities onboard ships. For example, a qualified female engineer, employed on a cruise liner was given a waitressing job and had to fight to be allowed to be moved to the engineering department (Belcher et al., 2003). Similarly, a female seafarer was patronised for doing a 'mans' job and was given cleaning duties (Belcher et al., 2003).

A conversation with a female seafarer on social media (Facebook) reflected some of the problems women at sea face. A female captain was in distress, while her ship was docked in Dubai and when she went on shore leave, she was not allowed to return to her ship without a letter of no objection from her company stating that she is one of the crew. Thus, the intimidation of female seafarers does not only occur onboard ship, but also ashore.

To be accepted and respected, female seafarers have to work harder at their jobs than their male counterparts (Thomas, 2004a). Those female seafarers who persevere do so in the belief that they have a fulfilling job and are respected as a woman and as a seafarer (Marine Insight, 2011). Some female seafarers have to resort to other measures to be taken seriously by their male colleagues (Kitada, 2010). Women in a male dominated organisation often have to perform as "conceptual men". This gender performance often results in women having to act like men in the workplace by dressing and speaking like their male counterparts, for example, by shouting and showing aggression (Demaier and Adams, 2009; Kitada, 2010). Women who reject performing as 'conceptual men' and work on their own terms risk being overlooked when opportunities for advancement are presented (Demaier and Adams, 2009).

When asked on Facebook: Do you use make-up onboard or do you try to look as boyish as possible? Do you dress up when off-duty or going ashore or do you leave all fancy stuff at home? One respondent acknowledged that she originally cut her hair short and wore baggy jeans and jumpers when at sea so that she would be taken more seriously. However, as she was promoted in the ranks she could return "more to [being] female", but she still

leaves makeup and fancy clothing for special occasions. Other respondents said that they do not ‘purposely’ dress boyish, but often end up looking so. Nevertheless, all agree that perfume and sexy clothing is a no-no while working in the merchant navy. However, it should be noted, that a differentiation should be made between female seafarers working in the cruise liner industry and those working onboard tankers, cargo ships, or ships servicing the oil industry. Officers, male or female, working on cruise lines are required to wear a white uniform, in contrast to the rest of the merchant navy where coveralls are worn by all ranks and ratings. The cruise liner industry is focused on ‘pleasing the passengers’ and that includes dress codes and behaviour.

In the hospitality departments onboard cruise lines seafarers are required to function within the parameters of emotional labour by expressing themselves emotionally. Emotional labour involves the management of the expression of emotions, even though they may be emotionally drained or lacking in this regard (Zhao, 2002). The smile is considered a vital component of the product or service that cruise lines promise to deliver to meet their customers’ demand for leisure (Zhao, 2002). Smiling staff, is depicted on cruise liner brochures as a hallmark in selling and maintaining the image of the leisure industry (Zhao, 2002). It is within these strictures that female seafarers in the hotel and catering industry are stereotyped as being friendly and helpful (Zhao, 2002). It is due to this stereotype that female seafarers are sought after in the service industry on cruise lines (Zhao, 2002). It is alluded that a smiling woman easily puts difficult customers at ease; customers prefer women to men at key points in the leisure industry, such as at the information desk, for face-to-face interaction (Zhao, 2002). Behind the smiles, female seafarers often have to mask fatigue, the result of long, intensive working hours and the stress of being away from loved ones for periods of up to ten months a year (Zhao, 2002).

Some male seafarers are also susceptible to gender discrimination and abuse. Filipino men have been emasculated and feminised since 1898, when they were employed as ‘house boys’ working for western expatriates (Fajardo, 2011). This feminisation continued in the United States of America navy, when they actively recruited Filipino seafarers to preform perceived feminine housekeeping roles (Fajardo, 2011). Filipino men are often socially constructed as being hyper-feminised in the merchant navy (Fajardo, 2011; McKay, 2007). By accepting jobs that are considered ideally designated for females, men are categorised as falling short of the perceived ideals of hegemonic masculinity or being ‘less manly’,

often ostracised for their inability to secure a 'real job' (Henson and Rogers, 2001). Continued gender assessments of men working in traditional 'women's' jobs can lead to them being categorised as 'being gay' (Henson and Rogers, 2001).

By feminising Filipino men, they are also disempowered. These men are open to exploitation and are targeted by the merchant navy for cheap labour in all ranks (Fajardo, 2011; McKay, 2007). The exploitation of Filipino seafarers may also be noted when recruitment agencies charge large sums of money from applicants for appointment (Fajardo, 2011; Klein, 2002a). For instance, recruiting agents attract Filipino applicants by offering to pay their airfare, which they then recover by monthly deductions from their meagre salaries (Fajardo, 2011; Klein, 2002a; Moran, n.d).

2.5. Race in the Multicultural International Merchant Navy

Racial diversity in the international merchant navy also lends itself to abuse and harassment. Racial diversity in the cruising industry is higher than in any other ships in the merchant navy and is often dubbed the 'mini-UN' by crew (Chin, 2008b). A person's race often determines his or her occupational status onboard a cruise liner. Female seafarers, recruited from the global north, with lighter skins are mostly allocated front-line jobs, such as 'entertainment, spa-health and concierge services' (Chin, 2008b). Female seafarers from the global south, with darker skins, often find themselves working as cabin cleaners and as waiters (Chin, 2008a; Zhao, 2002).

Management of cruise lines justifies this segregation by affirming that white European faces are preferred in key positions, such as the front desk, salons, gymnasium, and in shops (Zhao, 2002). The cruise liner management prefers eastern Europeans to work in the 'frontline', where they are working directly with the passengers. Cruise line management places them in the 'frontline' because of their physiognomical 'whiteness' features; the combination of their light skin tone, and Romanesque features, and the fact that they are paid low wages, make them 'suitable' for the cruise line industry (Chin, 2008a).

According to Zhao (2002), European seafarers onboard cruise lines are classified as staff and not as seafarers and consequently enjoy a higher status, which comes with better privileges such as access to their own reserved dining room, better wages and separate and

larger cabins (Zhao, 2002). Filling these key positions is considered vital to the maintenance of the cruise liner image, but at the same time comes at a cost as Europeans often demand and are paid higher salaries (Zhao, 2002). Consequently, non-European seafarers mostly fill non-key positions (Zhao, 2002).

Cruise liner managements often have pre-conceived notions when hiring seafarers. One criterion is 'emotional capital'- which determines how well the seafarer can project the cruise liner's image as a pleasure vocation in, which staff present themselves as always being friendly and able to maintain a smile (Zhao, 2002). Seafarers from Eastern Europe are often stereotyped as "unable to smile" and as being "always rigid", which places them in a disadvantaged position when applying for positions on cruise lines (Zhao, 2002). On the other hand, Indians are perceived to "always smile" while Filipinos smile nicely and are deemed to have been born into a wonderful service culture, making them always look energetic, positive and cheerful, even after nine strenuous months at sea. In contrast, European seafarers are perceived to be easily fatigued, which tends to surface after only four months at sea.

In viewing the emotional capital potential of seafarers, a perception is founded on the assumption that guests do not like servers who look tired or cannot elicit a smile (Zhao, 2002). Up to 70 percent of seafarers in the cruise liner industry are employed in the hotel and catering department. Men and women of diverse racial and national backgrounds fill these positions (Zhao, 2002). The galley is male dominated and largely staffed by men originating from Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and other developing countries (Zhao, 2002). They are employed in the preparation of passengers' meals and work under the supervision of senior chefs employed from Western Europe - France, Italy and Sweden (Zhao, 2002).

The laundry department also is an essential service on the cruise liner (Zhao, 2002). In this department, racial segregation also is common. Not only is the laundry hidden from the public view, staff is confined to the lowest deck levels of the liner (Zhao, 2002). Asian men who are known to be prepared to work long hours and are perceived as being able to endure strenuous manual labour occupy the majority of these positions (Zhao, 2002).

In researching cruise lines Chin (2008b) points out that stereotyping Southeast Asian seafarers as coming from a 'good service culture' results in them being perceived as

‘feminised’ and consequently being employed in traditional female roles. They are often employed as stewards, thus occupying one of the lower rungs in the cruise liner’s occupational hierarchy and are paid lower rates (Chin, 2008b).

In cargo and service ships, it is noted that the majority of senior officers mostly originate from Western Europe, North America or from other developed countries (Zhao, 2002). Junior officers are mostly recruited from Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and other developing countries, with an under-representation of African seafarers (Zhao, 2002).

2.6. International Declarations Governing the Seafaring Community

The IMO and the ILO are separate organisations. Both are concerned with the merchant navy (International Transport Workers' Federation, n.d.). They sometimes join forces when they are faced with issues of mutual concern (International Transport Workers' Federation, n.d.).

Maritime disasters have often led to organisations or policies being conceptualised and set in place as preventative measures to deter future similar disasters (International Maritime Organisation, 2013a). The disaster of the sinking of the Titanic, which occurred on 15 April 1912, led to the conception of The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) in 1914 (International Maritime Organization, 2013b). To improve SOLAS policies the UN facilitated the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization IMCO to come into existence during the 1948 conference held in Geneva (International Maritime Organization, 2013b). However, IMCO only came into being in 1959; and its name was changed to International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in 1982 (International Maritime Organization, 2013b). The IMCO’s first assignment was to amend the SOLAS code to reflect current maritime safety issues (International Maritime Organisation, 2015a). The IMO’s membership consists of 171 member states: UN members, the Cook Islands and three associate members, Faroes, Hong Kong, and Macau (Australian Maritime Safety Authority, 2015).

The mission of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) is to promote safe, secure, environmentally sound, efficient and sustainable shipping through cooperation. It aims at the highest practicable standards of maritime safety and security, efficiency of navigation and prevention and control of pollution from ships, as well as through consideration of the related legal matters and effective implementation of IMO’s instruments with a view to

their universal and uniform application (International Maritime Organisation, 2015a:1)

The Torrey Canyon disaster in 1967, which caused a 120 000 ton oil spill led the IMO to amend and expand its policies to include pollution prevention (International Maritime Organisation, 2015a). Marine Pollution 73/78 (MARPOL 73/78) was initiated by IMO during 1973 to protect the environment against ship related pollution. MARPOL is regularly updated to accommodate the rapidly changing maritime industry (International Maritime Organisation, 2015c).

Furthermore, IMO established a system whereby the guilty parties of pollution can be brought to book and compensation awarded to countries affected by such pollution (International Maritime Organisation, 2015d). To prevent further disasters, accidents, and human element accidents, a training protocol called Standards of Training, Watchkeeping and Certification (STCW) was implemented during 1975 and enforced in 1978. STCW 2010 contains the latest amendments enforced from December 2015 (International Maritime Organisation, 2015d).

Convention of the International Maritime Satellite Organization (IMSO) was set in place when IMO acknowledged that satellite communication has the potential to assist ships in distress situations. This was achieved with the launch of the satellite Telstar in 1962 (International Maritime Organisation, 2015b). However, with the evolving technical industry, many of the functions of IMSO were becoming obsolete, and consequently replaced by the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) (International Maritime Organisation, 2015b). Since 1999, GMDSS was enforced as replacement systems for IMSO (Inmarsat, 2015). GMDSS equipment is deemed safer at sea, as the system sends out automatic distress signals, preventing any source of human error (Inmarsat, 2015).

A 1987 maritime accident involving a roll-on-roll-off (Ro-Ro) ferry, *Herald of the Free Enterprise* once more led to IMO amendments. *Herald of the Free Enterprise* had 80 crewmembers, approximately 459 passengers, 81 passenger cars and 47 freight vehicles onboard resulting in reported fatalities amounting to 231 passengers and crew (Pope, 2013). Human error was cited for the cause of the accident and the subsequent huge loss of life (Pope, 2013).

Statistics for maritime accidents due to human error are reported as follows:

- 84-88 percent of tanker accidents;
- 79 percent of towing vessel groundings;
- 89-96 percent of collisions;
- 75 percent of allisions [the running of one ship upon another ship that is stationary]; and
- 75 percent of fires and explosions.
(Rothblum, Wheal, Withington, Shappel, Wiegmann, Boehm, and Chaderjian, 2002:6).

Due to the *Herald of the Free Enterprise* accident the IMO adopted at its 16th Assembly in October 1989 Resolution A.647 (16), Guidelines on Management for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention, ISM CODE (International Maritime Organisation, 2015c), which aims to ensure safety at sea, prevention of human injury or loss of life, and avoidance of damage to the environment, in particular to the marine environment and to property (International Maritime Organisation, 2014)

The International Maritime Organisation (2014:1) prescribes that the safety management objectives of the ship's company should, inter alia:

- Provide for safe practices in ship operation and a safe working environment;
- Assess all identified risks to its ships, personnel and the environment and establish appropriate safeguards; and
- Continuously improve safety management skills of personnel ashore and aboard ships, including preparing for emergencies related to both safety and environmental protection.

The International Safety Management Code (ISM) enforces the work of IMO's five committees (International Maritime Organisation, 2015e). The five committees are: The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC); The Maritime Environment Protection Committee (MEPC); The Legal Committee, The Technical Co-Operation Committee, and the Facilitation Committee (International Maritime Organisation, 2015f).

The MSC is the senior committee; the MSC and MEPC are supported by the following subcommittees: The Human Element Training and Watchkeeping (HTW); the Implementation of IMO Instruments (III); Navigation, Communications; Search and Rescue (NCRS); The Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR), and Ship Design and Construction (SDC) (International Maritime Organisation, 2015f).

The Technical Co-Operation Committee's function is to consider:

- Aid to navigation;
 - Construction and equipment of vessels;
 - Manning from a safety standpoint;
 - Rules for the prevention of collisions;
 - Handling of dangerous cargoes;
 - Maritime safety procedures and requirements;
 - Hydrographic information;
 - Log books and navigational records;
 - Salvage and rescue; and
 - Any other matters directly affecting maritime safety.
- (International Maritime Organisation, 2015f:1)

Furthermore, IMO amended the SOLAS code to enhance the safety of ships and ports (International Maritime Organisation, 2015g). The International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code) was adopted in 2000 (International Maritime Organisation, 2015g). Internationally governments must take measures to protect the ports by detecting and deterring acts, which could threaten the security of the maritime transport sector (International Maritime Organisation, 2015g). The ISPS code also established the right of a government to impose compliance measures on ships entering its ports (International Maritime Organisation, 2015g). Noncompliance with the ISPS code, by ships can lead governments to take legal action (International Maritime Organisation, 2015g). The ISPS code also gives ships the rights to protect themselves against pirate attacks (International Maritime Organisation, 2015f).

Figure 2: International Governing Bodies

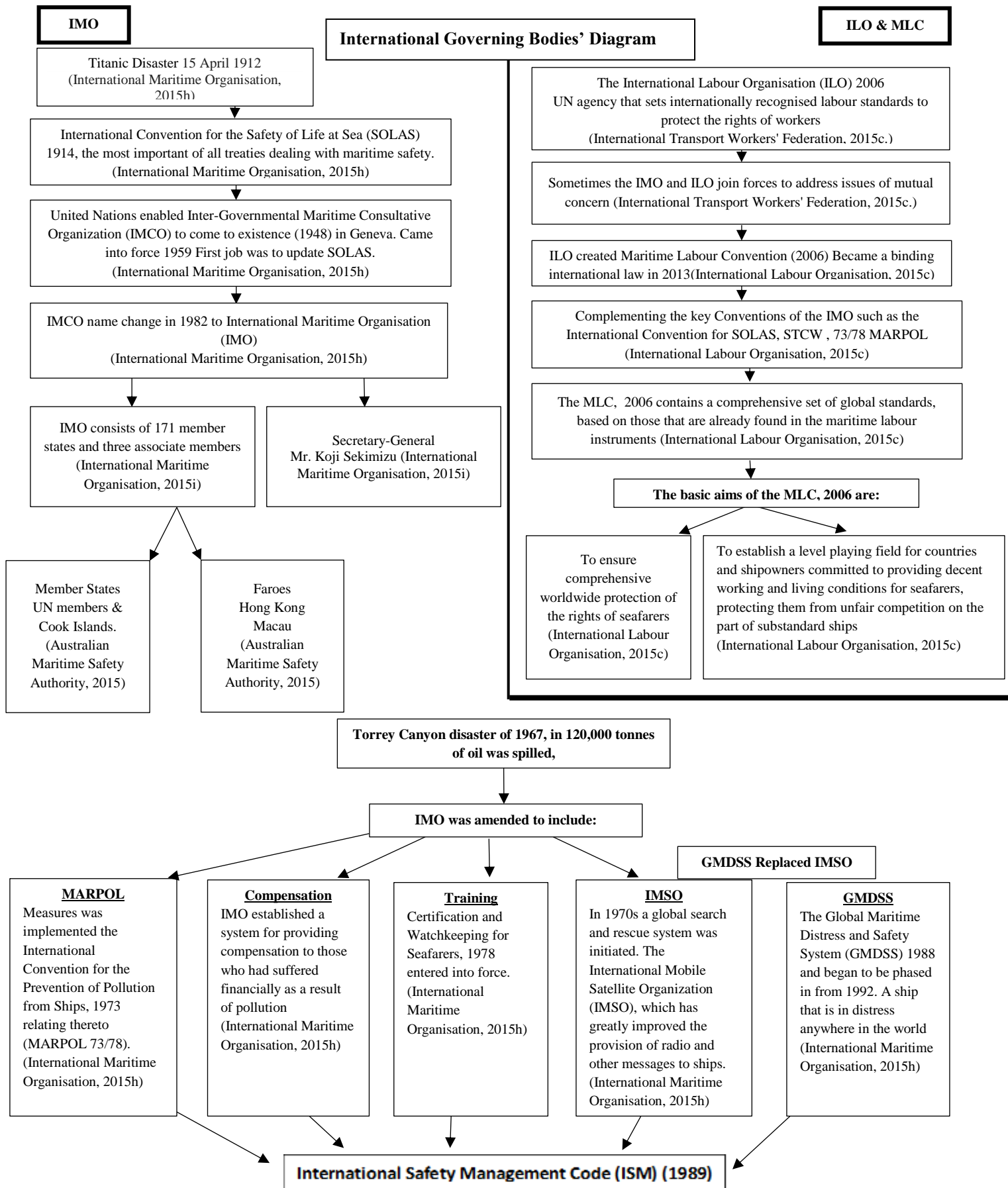


Figure 2

International Safety Management Code (ISM) (1989)

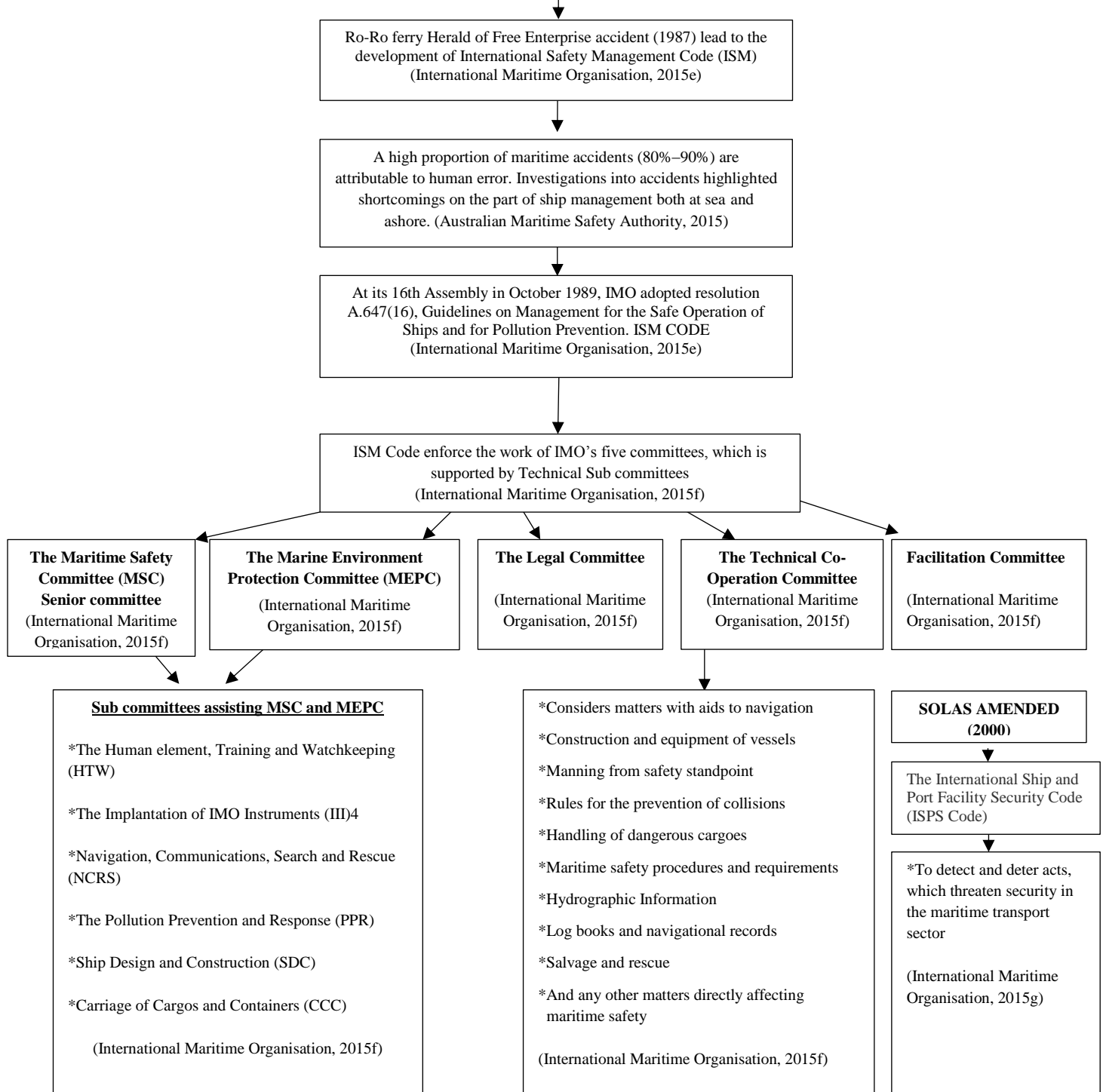


Figure 2, is a summary drawn up by the researcher, which depicts the international governing bodies. It is important to note that the IMO and ILO governing bodies are separate bodies, but run in parallel to each other. When the need arises the IMO and ILO will combine forces to address issues of communal interest.

The IMO policies are drafted and amended after major maritime accidents. The sinking of the *Titanic* (1912) impelled the founding of SOLAS and IMO. The *Torrey Canyon* disaster (1967), and the Ro-Ro Ferry *Herald of Free Enterprise* accident (1987) all had a major impact on the way the IMO implemented and enforced its new policies. After the *Torrey Canyon* disaster, the IMO was amended to include the four pillars: MARPOL, Compensation, Training, and GMDSS.

Furthermore, the ISM Code was put in place after the Ro-Ro Ferry *Herald of Free Enterprise* accident, which caused a major ecological disaster when it spilled chemicals in the sea, as well as a major loss of life, which was attributed to human error. This accident also resulted in amendments to the IMO policies. Five committees were formed under the ISM Code: The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC); the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC); the Legal Committee; the Technical Co-operation Committee, and the Facilitation Committee. Lastly, the SOLAS Code was amended to enforce international port security.

2.7. Extent of the International Seafaring Community

The governing bodies set in motion by the IMO and ILO regulate the international seafaring community. An understanding of the IMO and ILO conditions of recruitment, basic conditions of employment, and the training of seafarers are important aspects, which regulate and manage the international seafaring community.

2.7.1. Recruitment of Seafarers

The recruitment and placement of seafarers are defined as:

any person, company, institution, agency or other organization, in the public or the private sector, which is engaged in recruiting seafarers on behalf of ship owners or placing seafarers with ship owners (International Labour Organisation, 2006:1).

The recruitment of seafarers has become very problematic as unemployed seafarers often fall victim to many fraudulent recruitment agents (American Bureau of Shipping, 2011). Alderton et al. (2004) note that in instances where the supply of labour greatly exceeds demand, potential seafarers often have to pay a gatekeeper's fee, usually in cash. These job seekers, mostly from the Philippines, pay an agent anything up to 1500 US dollars just to get onto the agency's books whilst smaller agencies are often dubious operators as there are reports of agents absconding with the seafarer's money without providing any service (Alderton et al., 2004). The more honest agents are those who charge a fee, assist seafarers with their paperwork, training, and visas. However, larger agencies do not charge a fee, but are paid a finder's fee by the maritime companies (Alderton et al., 2004).

Recruitment of seafarers occurs within the context of a competitive market, especially when maritime companies insist on cheaper labour costs (Alderton et al., 2004). To supply 'qualified' labour, corrupt agencies often offer short STCW courses, or even go to the extent of supplying seafarers with fraudulent papers to validate skills and abilities (Alderton et al., 2004).

To protect maritime recruitment agencies, the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) has set policies in place to ensure that agencies are registered, licenced or regulated by the MLC code (Maritime Labour Organization, 2006). The MLC code stipulates that maritime recruitment agencies are not allowed to charge seafarers either directly or indirectly, a placement fee (Maritime Labour Organization, 2006). The agency may only charge the applicant for obtaining a medical certificate, a national seafarers' book, a passport or other travelling documents. The visa cost is to be charged to the ship owner (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2015a).

2.7.2. Basic Conditions of Employment under the ILO

The ILO has set up international labour standards to promote a fair working environment, which focuses on freedom, equity, security, and the dignity of seafarers. These standards give the seafarers:

The right to a safe and secure workplace, where safety standards are complied with, where you have fair terms of employment, decent living and working conditions and social protection, such as access to medical care, health protection and welfare
(International Transport Workers' Federation, 2014a:1).

The ILO also states that seafarers have the right to freedom of association, in other words, they have the right to join a trade union of their own choice. Furthermore, they have the right to a union representative to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement on their behalf. The ILO not only protects seafarers from forced labour, but also allows seafarers to be paid for the work they have agreed upon (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2014a).

Figure 3: Basic Conditions of Employment

Principle	Details
Minimum Basic Monthly Wage	As agreed by the ILO Joint Maritime Commission from time to time.
Normal Working Hours	8 hours per day, 48 hours per week (which equates to 208 hours per month).
Leave	<p>Leave shall in no case be less than 30 calendar days for one year's service i.e. 2.5 days per calendar month.</p> <p>One day's basic wage = basic monthly wage divided by 30. Multiply by 2.5 to get leave pay per month.</p>
Overtime Rate	Each hour of overtime should be compensated at a rate of 1.25 x the basic hourly rate (the monthly basic wage divided by 208).
Weekly rest day and Public Holidays	<p>Work performed on the weekly day of rest and on public holidays should be duly recorded and signed by the seafarer and should be compensated by:</p> <p>1. Overtime remuneration in respect of each hour worked at the rate of 1.25 times the hourly rate for normal hours OR</p> <p>2. In lieu of remuneration, at least equivalent time off duty and off the ship at the rate indicated in 1 above OR</p> <p>3. Additional leave in lieu of remuneration at the rate indicated in 1 above</p>

Overtime Hours

Overtime records should be kept and signed by the seafarer and the master or duly authorized Officer.

(Source: International Transport Workers' Federation, 2014a:1)

In addition to these basic conditions of employment, female seafarers receive maternity protection (International Labour Organisation, 2013). The Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) provides for 14 weeks of maternity benefits to ensure that they can financially afford to stay at home during maternity leave (International Labour Organisation, 2013). The benefits are to be not less than two thirds of their current earnings (International Labour Organisation, 2013). The ILO stipulates that female seafarers should be protected from working in a harmful environment for the duration of their pregnancy (International Labour Organisation, 2013). In addition, it is unlawful to terminate a female seafarer's employment due to pregnancy and she must be allowed to return to the same position held prior to maternity leave with the same rate of pay (International Labour Organisation, 2013). However, the flag state's labour laws supersede that of the ILO policies regarding female seafarer's maternity rights (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012a). In terms of the International Transport Workers' Federation (2012a) maternity rights may be protected by the union's collective bargaining agreements on the following grounds:

- If one works on a Flag of Convenience vessel, they will be covered by the legislation of that flag state, which might not make provision or any maternity rights. However, ITF-approved agreements do guarantee minimum rights;
- ITF approved agreements for merchant vessels stipulate that pregnant seafarers must be repatriated at company cost and are entitled two months' full pay in compensation;
- The timing of the repatriation may vary depending on where one works and the stage of pregnancy. In instances where the ship is trading coastally, or where a doctor is onboard, it is generally considered safer for pregnant women to work later into a pregnancy. For instance, in Britain, a pregnant seafarer may work for up to 28 weeks of her pregnancy. However, when working on deep sea vessels or very high speed craft, the risks need to be assessed carefully;
- Pregnancy should never be treated as a disciplinary offence. Pregnancy testing before employment may constitute violation of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 183.
(International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012a:1)

2.7.3. Training of Seafarers

Prior to the adoption of the STCW code by the IMO in 1978 (enforced in 1994 and amended in 1995), Maritime Educational Training (MET) was based on the standards of the country of origin, and mostly through vocational training (Mukherjee and Brownrigg, 2013). STCW 1995 consisted of a mandatory and recommendatory part of the syllabus (Mukherjee and Brownrigg, 2013). For seafarers to obtain their STCW 1995 more stringent training was required, which included learning English as a mandatory maritime language (Mukherjee and Brownrigg, 2013).

Despite the adoption of the STCW 1995, shipboard accidents were still caused as a result of substandard training, which fell short of global uniformity (Mukherjee and Brownrigg, 2013). In spite of the IMO's attempts to reduce human error related accidents, it acknowledges that steps that are more stringent needed to be taken (Mukherjee and Brownrigg, 2013). To address the shortcomings of the MET, a new set of policies was necessary to readdress the qualifications of seafarers as professionals and accordingly define their competencies and proficiencies (Mukherjee and Brownrigg, 2013).

The STCW 2010 Conference, held in Manila, Philippines, orchestrated changes to STCW 1995 to keep pace with the rapid global changes in the maritime industry. These changes were due to be enforced from December 2015 (Mukherjee and Brownrigg, 2013).

These changes included:

- a. Improved measures to prevent fraudulent practices associated with Certificates of Competency (COC) and strengthen the evaluation process;
- b. Revised requirements for hours of work and rests, and new requirements for the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse, as well as updated standards relating to medical fitness;
- c. New certification requirements for able seafarers;
- d. New requirements relating to training in modern technology, such as Electronic Charts and Information Systems (ECDIS);
- e. New training and certification requirements for Electro Technical Officers (ETO);
- f. Updating of competence requirements for personnel serving in all types of tankers, including new requirements for personnel serving on liquefied gas tankers;

- g. New requirements for security training, as well as provisions to ensure that seafarers are properly trained to cope if their ship comes under attack by pirates;
- h. Introduction of modern training methodology, including distance learning and web-based learning;
- i. New training guidance for personnel serving onboard in polar waters, and
- j. New training guidance for personnel operating Dynamic Positioning Systems.

(Mukherjee and Brownrigg, 2013:193)

STCW 2010 has had and continues to have a major impact on seafaring training, especially in the Philippines. During a 2013 audit by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) it was revealed that there were 93 maritime colleges and 104 training centres in the Philippines (Crossworld, 2013). The goal of the EMSA audit was to determine whether these maritime training institutes complied with the STCW 2010 code (Crossworld, 2013). It was observed that the maritime training curriculum met most of the STCW 2010 requirements, but that it was not implemented in all of these maritime institutes and in certain instances substandard training courses were in the offering (Crossworld, 2013).

Maritime English continues to be a major challenge in the maritime sector. The STCW 2010 requires officers to understand, read, and write English fluently. On the other hand, reading and writing English is not a requirement for ratings as the basic requirement is the ability to understand instructions provided in English (Sekimizu, 2010). Horck (2006) not only stresses the importance of teaching English in the maritime training institutes, but he points out that cultural sensitivity should be added to the seafaring curriculum. Visan and Georgescu (2012) support Horck (2006) who stressed the importance of providing cultural training, or ‘soft skills’ in maritime curricula:

People may assume that their foreign friends or colleagues see the world exactly as they see it, which of course is rarely true. Within a closed and stressful environment similar to that of a ship, these assumptions can cause misunderstandings and even lead to conflicts. In this respect, cultural awareness with a good command of English is a ‘must have’ for multilingual crew. Since culture and communication are interconnected and inseparable from each other, the focus must be on gaining intercultural communicative competence onboard merchant ships (Visan and Georgescu, 2012:167).

Academic and training facilities recognise the importance of adding “intercultural competences in the maritime curricula” (Visan and Georgescu, 2012:167). Some

maritime companies' offer on-board training in soft skills and some companies have made these courses compulsory (Nautilus, 2014). The UK Chamber of Shipping, the European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA) and the European Transport Workers Federation (EFT) (Nautilus, 2014) compile these courses. One of these courses, *Guidelines to Shipping Companies on Eliminating Workplace Harassment and Bullying*, was translated into 15 languages and a training video makes it more accessible to officers working offshore (Nautilus, 2014). Similarly, Nautilus produced the *Protect and Respect* guide to help their members identify and eliminate bullying and harassment in the workplace (Nautilus, 2014). Training guides and accompanying videos are constantly updated to assist management and officers to recognise bullying and harassment and to provide them the tools to manage these problems (Nautilus, 2014).

2.8. Occupational Categorisation of Seafarers

Onboard ship there is a distinct occupational structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The ship is divided into three distinct departments, the Deck, Engineering and Catering Departments, all managed by their respective department heads: The Chief Mate, the Chief Engineer, and the Campbos. The head of the ship, like that in any other organisational structure is the captain who is the representative of the shipowner and is tasked with the overall responsibility of commanding the ship.

Each department head manages several lower ranks and ratings. The Deck Department's lower ranks are: Chief Officer/Mate; Second Officer/Mate; Third Officer/Mate, and the Deck Cadets. The deck ratings consist of: Bosun, Able Seaman (AB), Ordinary Seaman (OS), and Trainee OS.

The Engineering Department's chain of command is:

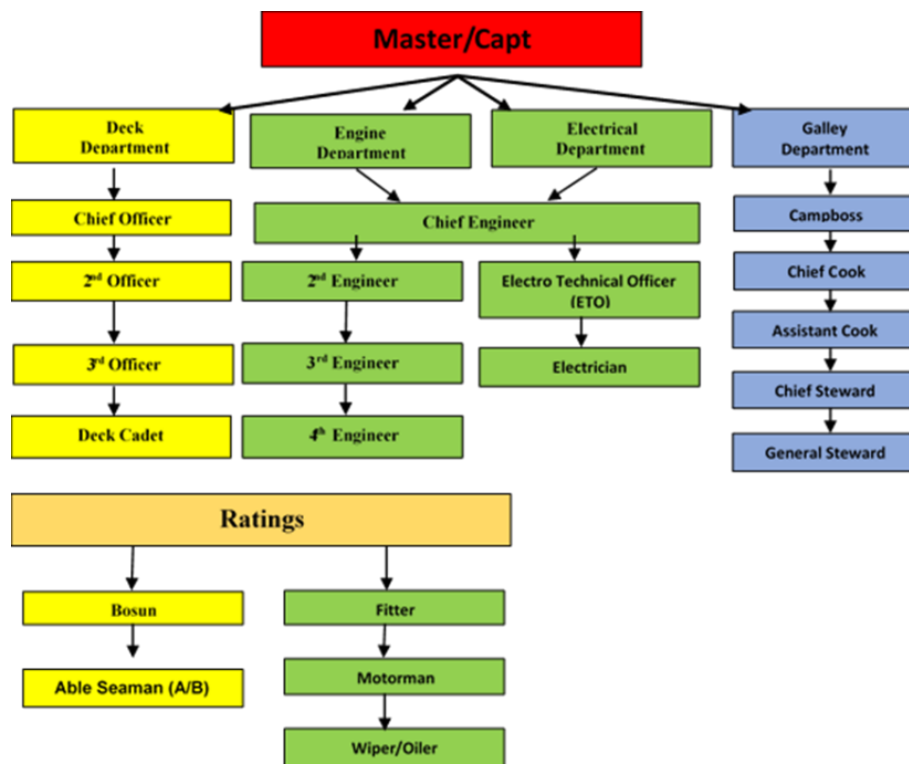
Chief Engineer; Second Engineer/First Assistant Engineer; Third Engineer/Second Assistant Engineer; Fourth Engineer/Third Assistant Engineer, and Fifth Engineer/Engine Cadet. The Engine Room Ratings: Fitter; Motorman; Wiper, and Trainee Fitter / Trainee Wiper.

The Catering Department's chain of command is:

Chief Cook; Trainee Cook, and Steward (Wankhede, 2013:1).

The captain receives instructions from the owners and/or client for the destination and/or work that is allocated for the ships' journey. It is important to note that the deck and the engineering departments run in parallel to each other. The Chief Mate and Chief Engineer are heads of their respective departments, and are supported by the 2nd and 3rd mates/engineers. The Captain starts the delegation process by issuing the orders. The Chief Mate and Chief Engineer's responsibilities are to delegate to their subordinates their respective duties. The lower ranks are expected to perform their duties as designated and to report back up the chain of command the status of their respective departments. The Captain informs the Campboss of the duration of the sea journey and how many seafarers he needs to cater for (Wankhede, 2013:1).

Figure 4: Ranks at a Glance



2.9. Occupational Challenges Confronting Seafarers

Occupational challenges seafarers have to face on a daily basis can have severe consequences for themselves, the ship's crew and for the safety of the ship itself. Furthermore, these occupational challenges affect the physical and psychological health of all the seafarers aboard. These challenges can be averted if the seafarers are equipped with strong coping mechanisms to withstand these occupational risks. These challenges include

fatigue; lack of social interaction amongst crew members; lack of support from family members; fear of abandonment by ship management on foreign soil, and poor working conditions.

2.9.1. Coping Mechanisms Onboard Ship

Seafarers need strong coping mechanisms to deal with the normal everyday work at sea. Factors that have been emphasised in past and current maritime literature are: intolerance; fatigue, which can lead to burnout and work related accidents; lack of social interaction amongst crew members; physical illnesses; lack of, or limited shore leave; discrimination; constant security threat of pirate attacks; abandonment by management on foreign soil; work related accidents; poor communication with loved ones at home; home sickness; isolation; difficulty adjusting to home life on return from a sea trip are the most frequently cited coping challenges facing seafarers (Brady, 2013; International Transport Workers' Federation, 1998, 2002, 2004, 2012b, 2014b; McKay and Wright, 2010; Nautilus, 2010; Raunek, 2013; Sea Health, 2012; Thomas, 2004b; Zhao, 2004).

How well a person copes under stressful situations is linked to his or her identity development and their perceptions of the social support available to them from the home and work fronts (Baker, 2006). Stress develops when the seafarer's demands at work exceed the available coping mechanisms (Oldenburg, Jensen and Wegner, 2012). There is evidence that people who have a strong support system, be it at home or at work, are more likely to possess a strong ability to cope with stressors (Baker, 2006).

Stress, burnout and coping mechanisms in the merchant navy are intrinsically linked. Burnout is defined as the seafarer's "reaction to chronic work related stress" (Oldenburg et al., 2012:13). Seafarers with long contracts are more likely to suffer from burnout (Oldenburg et al., 2012). In the merchant navy, the burnout syndrome does not recognise rank, culture or age but is known to manifest itself more amongst officers who are entrusted with greater responsibilities (Oldenburg et al., 2012). The IMO places great emphasis on burnout and stressors as they often place the crew and ship at risk as they cause seafarers to make unnecessary mistakes that affect their concentration (Oldenburg et al., 2012). Multicultural crewed ships place a greater strain on all crew, regardless of rank or culture; multiculturalism often causes misunderstanding, intolerance, and hostility amongst crew members (Oldenburg et al., 2012).

Cultural diversities can create insurmountable barriers onboard a ship. These diversities can lead to the lack of respect from co-workers across the spectrum of all ranks and ratings (Sea Health, 2014a). Officers with many years' experience report that there are many problems regarding the well-being of seafarers at sea (Sea Health, 2014a). Given their confined work environment seafarers are constantly in each other's company and this is problematic as they cannot return home after work to be with family and/or friends to unwind and relax as is the case in onshore work (Sea Health, 2014a).

Coping with work stressors at sea becomes more problematic when there are officers who do not deal with conflicts and work related problems as they occur (Sea Health, 2014a). Problems at sea occur when the crew feels that seafarers do not support and help each other. Ratings look to their superiors for support, but they might feel that their needs are ignored if they perceive that they do not receive recognition for work well done (Sea Health, 2008). When a seafarer does not cope with the working environment, he/she is at risk of making human errors, which can result in personal injury and compromise the safety of other crew members or of the ship itself (Sea Health, 2008). Hence, working onboard the international merchant navy requires both physical and mental strength to cope with stressors resulting from working and living in a confined environment (Kaushik, 2012).

2.9.2. Fatigue

Warnings of the consequences of incessant fatigue can have on a ship and individual safeties are continually published in merchant navy literature (MI News Network, 2014; Nautilus, 2013; Oldenburg et al., 2012; Smith, Allen and Wadsworth, 2006). The risk of fatigue is known to be greater with decreasing numbers of crew members onboard and shorter docking times in harbours with the expectations that the remaining crew takes on heavier workloads (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012b). This may be partly attributed to the way in, which working conditions are interpreted. The STCW's originally stated 98-hour working week for seafarers is deemed acceptable, but is in sharp contradiction to the IMO's 72-hour recommendation and even worse when compared to the 48-hour week for onshore work in other industries. Under these excessive working hours fatigue is almost inevitable in the merchant navy (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012b). Fatigued seafarers are not fully alert, tend to take shortcuts, are

susceptible to physical and mental short and long term health problems (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012b).

In a report by the ITF the impact of fatigue on work performance provides some insight:

- One in four seafarers stated that they had fallen asleep while on watch;
- Almost 50 percent of seafarers taking part in the study reported working weeks of 85 hours or more;
- Around half said their working hours had increased over the past 10 years, despite new regulations intended to combat fatigue;
- Almost 50 percent of seafarers surveyed considered their working hours presented a danger to their personal safety;
- Some 37 percent said their working hours, sometimes posed a danger to the safe operations of their ship

(International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012b:1)

The danger signs of fatigue include the inability to stay awake, clumsiness, headaches and giddiness, loss of appetite, insomnia, moodiness and needless worrying, poor judgement of distance, speed, slow responses and difficulty in concentrating (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012b). Stress related fatigue can lead the seafarer to repeat the same mistakes, poor work efficiency, reclusive behaviour, avoiding interaction with other crew members and negligence in following instructions (Raunek, 2012).

A classic example of the effect of fatigue on ship safety is a container ship collision with a sea wall when the officer on watch fell asleep, which resulted in major damage to the ship (Nautical Institute, 2014). Long working hours are a main cause of stress onboard the merchant navy due to a lack of proper rest schedule (Raunek, 2013).

Other examples include:

The grounding of a cargo vessel south of Greece, where the Master believed he was sufficiently well rested, but nevertheless fell asleep in a chair next to the chart table in such a position that the bosun could not see that the Master was asleep. The vessel, on autopilot and with the Deadman alarm turned off, subsequently grounded at speed causing severe damage
(MI News Network, 2014:1)

In another instance, a Chief Engineer, who had been working extensively on main engine repairs without good rest for almost two days began to undertake maintenance on the vessel's thermal oil system. He hurried the dangerous task of cleaning out the system of waste material, leading to a significant engine room fire that ultimately lead to his death as well as further casualties onboard (MI News Network, 2014:1).

Similarly, a crew member onboard a ship passing the Iberian Peninsula suffered a psychological breakdown and had a misadventure that led to him perishing in the sea. Investigations revealed that the seafarer had worked seven months without a break on the ship, and had joined her without leave immediately after his previous ship service ended (MI News Network, 2014:1).

Long and uncertain working hours have been one of the main reasons of stress onboard ships. This leads to an imbalance in the human biological clock caused by the lack of proper work and rest hour scheduling.

When asked why fatigue is still a current issue in the merchant navy, an international female seafarer replied:

In the maritime industry women work the same hours as men. Fatigue becomes an issue when other factors come to play outside the 12 hours on 12 hours off. For example, rough seas, alarms and working longer than 12 hours for operational requirements. Most of the time it extends from broken sleep. There are no days off to catch up on a bit of extra rest. The other major thing is heat, engine rooms are nearly always over 38°C. I have worked in some that have been up around the 60°C mark. Then you have the heat on deck at 35°C - 40°C during the day, which is pretty average. However, the sun heats the deck up so you get heat from the top and bottom - all these things plus more contribute to fatigue.

It is difficult for seafarers to manage and prevent fatigue. To help seafarers cope with long working hours, the STCW 2010 set a new resting requirement of ten hours in every twenty-four-hour cycle (Sekimizu, 2010). However, failure to comply often leads to “fudging resting hours onboard ships”, purposely entering resting hours incorrectly on the database (Bhargava, 2013b). This often happens when the workload exceeds the hours available per day (Bhargava, 2013b). ‘Fudging’ resting hours are not uncommon and the reasons vary such as inadequate manning resulting in the crew having to take on extra workloads to meet deadlines (Bhargava, 2013b). Some ship owner and/or management have been reported to ‘fudge’ resting hours to prevent ship arrest due to not complying with STCW regulations. Fudging resting hours often occur when captains, who aim for rewards for an exemplary management of his or her ship, work extra hours, or expect his officers or other crew to follow suite (Bhargava, 2013b).

2.9.3. Lack of Social Interaction

Seafarers need to adapt from life at sea to life ashore after each trip (Carter, 2005). Given their fluid identities between an unstructured home life and structured work life signals that seafarers need to adjust their discontinuous social life on an ongoing basis (Carter, 2005). Failure to make this transition from home to the working environment at sea often leads to isolation and social maladjustment (Alderton et al., 2004).

The existing hierarchies in the merchant navy often hinder social interaction between officers and ratings and between different cultures (Alderton et al., 2004). A lack of social interaction is common due to stratification of rank, department, country of origin, and shift work that results in considerable social isolation (Carter, 2005). Social isolation, exacerbated by the lack of social interaction, is known to have a huge impact on the seafarers' wellbeing (Alderton et al., 2004). Senior officers as managers of ships often tend to feel isolated in that they cannot socialise and maintain a strict and well managed ship if they allow familiarity with the ratings resulting in a compromise of their rank (Carter, 2005). The captain and other senior officers often have to report to the owners and management thereby coming under constant pressure because they have to take the blame for any irregularity that might occur onboard the ship (Carter, 2005). The large responsibilities that rest on the captain and the senior officers often pose an identity crisis to the extent that their pride in their seamanship is compromised resulting in their seeing themselves as floating clerks and scapegoats, isolating them further from the rest of the crew (Carter, 2005).

Working and living in a confined workplace, with multicultural co-workers not only isolates seafarers from the outside world, but also within the workplace where they have little in common to share outside working hours (Alderton et al., 2004). Prior to the ban on alcohol use, crew of all ranks and ratings could relax and unwind over drinks, which encouraged social interaction and eliminated isolation (Kahveci and Sampson, 2002).

With the advent of high tech communication systems, globally people are now able to communicate with others with greater frequency and ease. This, however, does not always mean that seafarers benefit from the new communications systems (Seafarers' Rights, 2012). Being away from loved ones and lack of communication can lead to anxiety disorders, stress and depression, loneliness, homesickness, burn-out and a feeling

of isolation (Seafarers' Rights, 2012). Suicide is not uncommon in the seafaring scenario and can be up to four times higher than in any shore-based work (Sea Health, 2002; Seafarers' Rights, 2012).

The pain of being away from family and friends can be lightened by the internet and satellite telephone, which is captured in the quote below:

The Internet has become an accepted and necessary luxury onboard ship that is valued as a technology that serves to make and keep everyone happy. Seeing the face or hearing the voice (or even just a text message) of a loved one after a tumultuous day at work via Skype, while in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, provides solace like nothing else. Seeing a new email pop up during the voyage provides a feeling of unparalleled joy and satisfaction, offering temporary relief to the perennial malady of loneliness. It is considered as a seemingly small but important way of remembering that there are people back home missing one's presence and you are together in thought (Bhattacharjee, 2014:1).

The Satellite Telephone on the other hand is not a device used to make routine calls to inform everyone that one is keeping well. It is not for frivolous conversation, but rather used to make a call when one is either really happy about something, or needs the support of a loved one. The calls are often expensive and are of short duration. Despite its short duration seafarers are often elated having made a call to their loved ones (Bhattacharjee, 2014:1).

2.9.4. Support and Family

Seafarers who are separated for long periods from home and family are often also exposed to work place trauma (Thomas, 2004b). Events that result in emotional trauma include situations such as finding a colleague who has committed suicide; attacks or constant threat of pirate attacks whilst at sea; dealing with attempted rape and a hazardous workplace environment (Thomas, 2004b). These examples are not “once-in-a-career events” but are regular occurrences. It is reported that on one trip a seafarer had to deal with two suicides and two deaths caused by work accidents whilst at sea (Thomas, 2004b). In another, a seafarer had to deal with an engine room fire and risked his life to fight the fire in order to ensure the safety of his colleagues. Post event the seafarer suffered severe post-traumatic stress, experiencing nightmares and sleepless nights (Thomas, 2004b).

Stress at home, such as illness or death of a loved one, or even a breakdown in marriage can lead to stress and anxiety amongst seafarers (Thomas, 2004b). Seafarers who had to

deal with divorce described that they struggled to sleep and that their problems with their marriage was on their minds all the time and that it was aggravated by the fact that they could not go home to resolve the issue (Thomas, 2004b). Being physically removed from the situation and support network of friends and family at home does not help the seafarer to cope with their work at sea (Thomas, 2004b). It has been noted that seafarers with children have better coping mechanisms than those without (Oldenburg et al., 2012). Oldenburg et al. (2012) suggested that just the mere knowledge that a seafarer has children at home, makes them less vulnerable to burnout, they have better coping mechanisms to handle challenges presented to them at sea. Children at home have a positive effect on a seafarer's life, which in turn helps him/her to cope onboard. Children tend to be excited when communicating with their seafaring parents and they give positive feedback of their lived experiences at home (Hult and Österman, 2015).

Most seafarers manage cope after traumatic events at sea and at home if they have support from their friends onboard, their family and friends at home and the welfare support and counselling offered by their companies and the Seafarers' Mission globally (Thomas, 2004b). There is, however, a percentage of seafarers who struggle to cope with trauma because of the lack of management and professional support (Thomas, 2004b). The lack of coping mechanisms is exemplified in a letter written by a seafarer whose colleague lost a leg in a work related accident onboard a ship (Sea Health, 2014b). This letter reveals the "raw emotions" he had to deal with after the captain accused him of being the cause of the accident. Even though the seafarer was cleared of all blame by an investigation by the relevant maritime authority, he still experienced a deep sense of guilt (Sea Health, 2014b). Given the nature of the trauma experienced, psychologists strongly recommend that seafarers need counselling to cope with accidents at sea (Sea Health, 2014b).

Family emergencies cause stress and anxiety for seafarers working offshore. International respondents on social media said that it is very difficult to manage emergencies whilst at sea. It helps if you can share with someone, but that is not always possible, especially if the atmosphere on the ship is not such that you want or feel that you can share your personal problems. However, the Seafarer's Missions are of great help in this regard. Thoughts of self-harm and suicide do occur, but support from family and friends is essential during these occurrences. When you lose a loved one it becomes

difficult to hide your grief, but when your co-workers show empathy it helps you to cope. In the same breath, it becomes essential for ones company to respond quickly when a loved one is lost and make immediate arrangements to fly home. Unfortunately, it often happens that it takes a few days before one arrives home, sometimes too late for the funeral.

The internet, when available, plays an important role in assuring the seafarer that his family is well; it also allows parents to cyber-parent when the need arises (Herwadkar, 2014a). The internet gives the seafarer access to ‘chat clients’ such as WhatsApp, SMS, Skype, and so forth (Herwadkar, 2014a). The internet and chat clients help the seafarer to receive immediate communication when a family emergency arises and family can keep them up to date on the newest developments of an emergency (Herwadkar, 2014a). Chat clients allow the seafarer to feel part of his family life, as regular and instant contact can be established cheaply (Herwadkar, 2014a).

The internet also provides the seafarer with tools to cope when removed from family and friends; it allows him/her to disconnect from and put aside his/her work after a long and difficult day (Herwadkar, 2014a). But there is a downside to having internet onboard as it can aggravate existing problems if it is not well managed (Herwadkar, 2014a). The internet connection is not conducive to social interaction onboard the ship, as seafarers isolate themselves in their cabin and spend hours chatting and surfing the net (Herwadkar, 2014a). Arguments and misunderstandings occur when the company caps the internet usage, as it is very expensive to allow unlimited usage (Herwadkar, 2014a). The internet can become very slow when seafarers use Skype or stream a movie and arguments can arise when some seafarers ‘hog’ the internet with applications that use large amounts of bandwidth (Herwadkar, 2014a). Self-inflicted fatigue can occur if internet usage is not well managed and this in turn can adversely affect productivity and the safety of crew and ship (Herwadkar, 2014a).

To contact and stay in contact with family became a matter of urgency for some Filipino crew, during *Typhoon Haiyan* (2013), which was one of the deadliest natural disasters ever to strike the Philippines (Wingard and Brändlin, 2013). A Filipino participant shared how their female captain onboard a cargo ship allowed unlimited, free satellite phone access for the Filipino crew to contact their loved ones for the duration of the storm.

Stress, home sickness, burnout all can be combatted by creating space for recreational activities (Bhattacharjee, 2014). A recreation room allows the crew to gather and socialise, watch movies, listen to music or even play on gaming devices (Bhattacharjee, 2014). Parties onboard the ship go a long way to encourage social interaction (Bhattacharjee, 2014). The crew also welcomes regular partying as it breaks the monotony of the work schedule. Celebrations such as Christmas, New Year, and birthday parties with good music and a barbecue allow the crew to relax and socialise for a few hours (Bhattacharjee, 2014).

2.9.5. Other Factors Causing Stress

There are other factors that contribute to strain and discomfort onboard merchant navy vessels such as the threat of pirate attacks in the West-African coastal waters (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2014b; MI News Network, 2013a). Several countries have resisted the deployment of security guards (Gun riders) and ships are not legally allowed to carry weapons from one country to another (Farmer, 2014; MI News Network, 2013a). When ships cannot protect themselves from pirates, hijacking and kidnapping of the crew, it becomes unviable to use West Africa's shipping routes (MI News Network, 2013a). Despite the objections to the employment of armed security personnel, shipping companies more often resort to this option (Farmer, 2014). On 21 August 2008, named *Black Thursday* in the merchant navy, three merchant navy ships, *Iran Deyant*, *Irene* and *BBC Trinidad*, were hijacked and the crew, cargo and ships were held to ransom. Farmer (2014:1) reported: "... in 2008, 99 percent of the merchant vessels were unprotected". Originally, ship owners tried to protect their ships with non-lethal weapons and security measures, such as sound guns, lasers, water cannons, razor wire, cages and electric fences, boat traps and foul-smelling liquids (Farmer, 2014). These measures, including armed guards, have helped to reduce the surge of hijackings with only two hijackings reported in 2013 (Farmer, 2014).

Psychological stress on seafarers sailing along the West-African coast is considerably higher than in other shipping lanes and seafarers' demands for the protection of armed guards increased since *Black Thursday* (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2014a; Officer of the Watch, 2012).

The seafarers who were attacked while sailing in the merchant navy developed high stress levels and indicated that they did not receive sufficient support from their companies to help them deal with the event (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2014a; Officer of the Watch, 2012). Even though pirate attacks are declining, seafarers' stress in anticipation of a possible attack does not decreased (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2014a; Officer of the Watch, 2012). During 2016 headlines on piracy attacks were "Indonesian Forces Intercept Hijacked Ship", when Indonesian forces intercepted a hijacked Singapore-flagged ship just outside Borneo and rescued twenty crew members and arrested nine pirates (MarEx, 2016a:1). Nigeria has also become a hotspot for piracy with headlines such as "Two More Crew members Kidnapped by Nigerian Pirates". Other attacks recorded in Nigeria during 2016 were:

On April 20, 100 nm [nautical miles] off Brass, Nigeria, pirates boarded an offshore supply vessel and kidnapped two individuals. The remaining crew retreated safely to the ship's citadel.

On April 19, seven armed pirates approached a tanker underway and attempted to board. The crew used water hoses to deter boarding. Due to crew actions and evasive manoeuvres, the vessel's high freeboard and razor wire along her bulwarks, the pirates called off their attack.

The Maritime Trade Information Sharing Centre - Gulf of Guinea reported a similar, unsuccessful attack on another vessel 30 nm away on the same day.

On April 18, pirates attacked a vessel off Brass and attempted to board. Armed guards on the vessel repelled the attack with gunfire and the pirates withdrew.

The security firm, Clearwater told World Maritime News Friday that there had been a total of six attacks in the area within the span of a day (MarEx, 2016b:1).

Piracy has had a negative effect on the recruitment and retention of seafarers as the fear of possible attacks and capture discourages young people from pursuing a career in the merchant navy (Stevenson, 2012). The psychological effect that piracy attacks has on the captured crew and their loved ones is indescribable.

During 2016 a spate of piracy off the coast of Indonesia and ten Indonesians' five-week captivity, the captured seafarers' families received support from the Sailors' Society in Indonesia (MarEx, 2016a).

An unnamed crewmember told Sailors' Society that "we were very stressed because they frequently threatened to slit our throats." (MarEx, 2016a: 1)

"Although they are all home safely, it is a real possibility that both the seafarers and their families will be suffering from stress after this traumatic incident," Muhartono said. "I have been offered counselling and have asked the ship's owner to give the seafarers a grace period of a month to recover. (MarEx, 2016a:1)

According to authorities, Abu Sayyaf is still holding at least 11 people hostage (MarEx, 2016a:1).

2.9.6. Abandonment and Poor Working Conditions on FOC Ships

Seafarers sailing on FOC ships have a higher probability of abuse by owners and agents who do not concern themselves with seafarers' plight and need for better treatment and better living and working conditions onboard merchant navy vessels (Raunek, 2012). Incidences where owners of merchant shipping companies have abandoned seafarers on foreign soil are not uncommon.

In addition, these seafarers are also subjected to a lack of medical attention, unpaid wages and lack of food (Raunek, 2012). Even though IMO and ILO have set international regulations to prevent human rights abuses, these abuses still persist (Raunek, 2012). Eleven seafarers working on the Egyptian coal carrier *Wadi Alkarm* went on strike when they docked in Port Kembla, Australia, after they had been sailing without being provided with food and water for twelve hours a day while at sea and their wages had been halved without any explanation by the owners (MI News Network, 2013b). The seafarers logged a complaint with the ITF and the ship was arrested, but the Australian Department of Immigration revoked their visas and the seafarers were informed that if they leave the ship they would be arrested (MI News Network, 2013b). The seafarers were abandoned by their employers and received no help from the Australian government, leaving the ITF to fight for these seafarers' rights (MI News Network, 2013b).

On the celebration of the Day of the Seafarer in 2012 the ITF reported on the shocking conditions of shipping in the Black Sea. The report was entitled '*The Black Sea of Shame*' (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012c). The report highlighted the

conditions of the merchant navy sailing in in the Black Sea: poor living conditions, unpaid wages, corruption, which was widespread on these ships (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012c). ITF inspectors spoke out on unsafe and ageing boats, management who believed that crew is a “dispensable luxury”, and ignoring the basic protection as required by the IMO, such as medical, injury and death insurance (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012c). The report concluded that “the industry is substandard, with working conditions that affect the physical and mental well-being of seafarers, and that the situation in the “Black Sea of Shame” “can no longer be tolerated” (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012c:1)

2.10. Occupational Redress Opportunities for Seafarers

The role that the International Transport Federation (ITF) plays in the seafaring community's wellbeing is of importance. The ITF is a governing body of a conglomeration of unions, which protects seafarers from human rights abuses, which is rife in the maritime industry. This section will discuss the structure and role the ITF plays in the merchant navy.

2.10.1. Maritime Unions

Unions tailored for seafarers are found in most countries, but this thesis will concentrate on the largest federation of unions, that features in most literature under the aegis of the International Transport Federation (ITF).

The ITF is a global federation of an estimated 700 unions from 150 countries, representing over 4.5 million transport workers (Chin, 2008b; International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012d). Chin (2008b), describes the; ITF as the largest and most powerful union federation in the world.

ITF was founded in 1896 by seafarers' and dockers' union leaders who realized the need to organise internationally against strike breakers. Today the ITF organises workers in ships, ports, railways, road freight and passenger transport, inland waterways, fisheries, tourism and civil aviation. (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2015b:1).

The ITF is endorsed through global campaigning and by promoting solidarity; it stands firm against totalitarianism, aggression and discrimination (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2015b). One of the functions of the ITF is to bring unions together

for information sharing, and to work on strategies to combat unjust transport practices (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2015b). In addition, the ITF protects members from unsafe working environments and attempts to promote physical and mental health in the workplace (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2015b). The advantage of joining an ITF endorsed union is that support for industrial action can be drawn globally to achieve a stronger bargaining leverage (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2015b). The ITF informs the media on union actions and developments and has its own transport magazine, which is distributed to members worldwide, and members can access the ITF through their website (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2015b).

The ITF represents transport workers' interests in international bodies, which take decisions affecting jobs, employment conditions, or safety. Such bodies include the International Labour Organisation, the International Maritime Organisation, and the International Civil Aviation Organisation. The ITF also takes up the interests of transport workers with the OECD, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2015b).

The ITF is funded from the affiliation fees of its member unions. These fees are used to fund union activities, FOC Campaign, and their worldwide welfare support (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2015b).

ITF's contribution to the protection of the rights of seafarers who work under flag states, started when labour unions began to oppose working conditions on ships flying FOCs during the 1930s (Özçayir, 2000). It was during 1957 when the unions began to realise the seriousness of human rights issues on FOC vessels and that of the maritime companies who opted to register their ships under FOC to take advantage of these flag states' relaxed labour policies (Özçayir, 2000). The ITF was originally established (1948) to address the problems created by the FOC registrations, and threatened to boycott the ships that were transferred to the Panamanian flag (Özçayir, 2000). It was only during 1958 that the ITF Congress started a global boycott of FOC registered ships (Özçayir, 2000).

To highlight some of the achievements of the ITF, it is worth profiling some of its interventions to date. In a presentation to the Maritime Manpower Singapore Conference the ITF General Secretary Stephen Cotton said that its inspectors and affiliated unions had collected nearly 60 million dollars in unpaid wages in 2014. “So there are still elements of the industry that need to be tidied up,” he said. The lion’s share, 81 percent of the unpaid wages some 48 million dollars was collected in Europe. This reflects the fact the ITF has a much higher number of inspectors in European countries than elsewhere in the world. A further 14 percent or 8.37 million dollars in unpaid wages was collected in Asia. (Hand, 2015:1).

Another achievement by the Nautilus/International Transport Workers’ Federation was an incident where Chris Jones a Federation's inspector assisted four Filipino crew members after they had complained of being assaulted and abused by the captain of a ship, an incident in, which the four seafarers from the fishing vessel *Mattanja* were allegedly punched and kicked by the captain of another vessel owned by the same company. The crewmen had been trying to leave their vessel in Sutton Harbour, Plymouth, when the captain of the other ship followed them and tried to throw their suitcases into the sea. The ITF has been investigating the conditions under, which the men were employed and made arrangements for them to fly home (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012e).

2.11. Conclusion

The merchant navy is a global industry, which needs international governing bodies to address issues that not only affect one country, one shipping company, one ship, or one ship’s crew. It has a global effect on the industry at large. Considering that up to 90 percent of all goods are transported by sea, the seafaring industry cannot and should not be treated as a single entity. The same can be said of the nature of the seafaring community. The majority of international shipping is multicultural immature. When culture, ships culture, safety culture, the ship's working language, cultural-language, race, and gender diversity are all thrown together on a ship, it can be foreseen that serious problems will emerge. These problems can be safety related, or human error related.

Shipboard problems can affect individual seafarers, as the ship’s language is not necessarily the seafarer’s home language. Communication problems can develop, which

in turn can lead to safety issues at sea. Lack of cultural understanding can lead to intolerance, bullying, and discrimination. This in turn can spiral into emotional problems, such as the feeling of loneliness, depression, anger, and in some cases suicide. Homesickness, often caused by not being able to be with family in cases of emergency, can also lead to emotional and even psychological problems. All these problems in turn circle back to the issue of safety at sea.

To break the cycle, a strong international governing body is needed, such as the IMO and the ILO to address issues that affect the maritime industry. These governing bodies were established to protect the environment, the ship owners, as well as the seafarers. The last decade has witnessed the governing bodies becoming more concerned with the wellbeing of seafarers. Another body, the ITF, was formed to coordinate maritime unions under one federation. By bringing the different unions under one umbrella, it provides separate unions with the opportunity to draw strength from other international unions, as ‘strength lies in numbers’.

The South African seafarer forms part of this international maritime community. However, their identities are rooted nationally and culturally on South African soil. South Africans have a different perspective of the world, and how they act and react when placed in an international and multicultural environment is an important aspect to address.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Framework

3.1. Introduction

From a theoretical perspective, sociologists raise several questions regarding identity construction. This chapter will be divided into nine sections, starting with this thesis' framework drawn from two main theories, the social constructionist theory and organisational theory.

Both social constructionist and organisational theories are 'umbrella' theories, meaning that they are broad theories, and several different theories are nested under this 'umbrella'. By utilising the social constructionist theory and organisational theory, it will be necessary to also draw from these 'sub' theories, under the umbrella or broader theoretical frameworks, in order to give depth to the research topic. The main theories draw from the founder fathers Karl Marx and Max Weber, but due to the organisational nature of the research, Fordism and Taylorism will also be incorporated.

The second section will concentrate on social constructionism theory and identity construction theory. Both these theories share the same characteristics and both explain how the 'Self' or social identity comes into being. Different theorist concur that the identity is always in flux and not innate to a person. It is only after one has a grasp of how the 'Self' is constructed that one can look at the theories of how social identities are constructed in the workplace, which is the third section of this chapter.

Social identity construction in the workplace can only occur by bringing in the founding fathers', Marx and Weber's theories on the development of the workplace identity and how this affects the workers and their identities in the workplace. Branched from these founding fathers' theories are two other significant men, who had a huge impact on the manufacturing industry from the very outset. Later their contributions spread and were absorbed globally. Henry Ford and Fredric Taylor, both studied the worker's human nature, and out of these studies, practical implementations were developed for the manufacturing of goods and the management of factories. Fordism theory was developed from Henry Ford's vision of reforming his factories to obtain maximum productivity. Taylor's theories were the product of Frederick Taylor, who researched the principles or practice of scientific

management and work efficiency. Although only briefly discussing Taylorism, Frederick Taylor worked with Ford to incorporate his “work-in-motion” theory to help increase production in Henry Ford’s car manufacturing plants. Fordism also had a role to play in the way gendered identities were socially constructed in the workplace. However, gendered identities and social constructionism in the non-work context crossed over into the workplace boundaries.

The fourth section of the theoretical chapter will look at sexual orientation and gender identity construction. In other words, how gendered social identities are socially constructed. Gendered identities are preformed and are continually in flux, but perceptions of gendered identities are slow to change in the work context. This section will start by defining gendered identities, and how they are perceived and received in the work environment. Diversity in the workplace, be it gender or culture, is an important factor that cannot be ignored when researching the work environment either off- or onshore.

In the fifth section, this thesis will theoretically look at the cultural identities in the work context. Intense research is done on how cultural identities are socially constructed, reconstructed and maintained, especially in the merchant navy that carries a mostly multicultural crew onboard its ships. Cultural identities, if not properly understood, can cause significant problems in the merchant navy. However, cultural identities are also in flux when people move from their familiar cultural home-based context into an unfamiliar host-culture abroad.

How the mobility of seafarers shapes their social construction of identity will be the focus of the fifth section of this chapter. Migrating from your home country into a host country inevitably involves considerable changes, adaptations, and reculturation.

The sixth section will concentrate on social construction and language. Culture can only be transmitted through language, in other words, language is the most important element in the social construction of identities. A distinction must, however, be made between communicative language and cultural-language. Communicative language, in the case of seafaring, is English. This permits a global working language to allow for effective communication in the workplace. However, cultural-language plays a huge role in the workplace, as it serves not only for communication, but also for the transmission or sharing of cultural knowledge; a knowledge that is only available to those who share the same culture. This knowledge includes cultural knowledge of symbols, signs, norms, and values,

which are not available to the 'other' in a diverse workplace. For 'others' and 'self' to work in a multicultural environment, hard and soft skills will be required for everyone in the corporate structure, in other words, up and down the hierarchal system.

The seventh section will look at the soft and hard skills needed in understanding diverse identities in the workplace. Acquiring soft and hard skills will become an asset for the company and for the worker personally. Soft skills are the communication skills, required to effectively work in a team; solve problems; cultivate cultural sensitivity, and interpersonal skills. On the other hand, hard skills are the technical or practical skills acquired during training that are needed to get a job done. However, even if an employee has the required hard skills but little or no soft skills he or she becomes a liability to the company, as they become incompetent in their ability to work and communicate with 'others' in a diverse workplace such as onboard a ship where teamwork is essential especially considering the confined workspace.

The eight section will look at the way social control forces cultural identities to adjust to ship and organisational identities. Working in a diverse environment can be complicated if there is no conformity in the workplace. To enforce conformity, social control is needed. In a multi-cultural environment, there must be common norms to create a company culture to ensure that everyone understands the importance to adhere to the common norms and goal settings. This requires a reconstruction of social identities.

The shaping of coping mechanisms through multiculturalism will be the ninth and last section of this chapter. Adjustment to a multicultural environment has always created conflict, be it conflict between the 'other' co-workers or inner 'self' conflict. Migration to another cultural environment is stressful, as a conflict arises between norms and values between the different cultures. If the host culture does not recognise the 'other' cultural identities, stress can escalate physiological and psychological problems for the outsider.

3.2. Sociology and Organisational Sociology

Most human activities occur collectively in social groupings, for example cultural activities, and even in trade and industry related organisations (Crowther and Green, 2004). The origins of sociology and organisational sociology are to be found in the theories of the founder fathers of sociology, Marx and Weber (Crowther and Green, 2004). Although,

Marx and Weber did not focus on trade and industry related organisations *per se*, their focus was more on the human element working and existing in these organisations. With the exception of Weber, who also brought bureaucracy under scrutiny (Crowther and Green, 2004; Hilgert, 1964). Weber's work contributed to organisational sociology, which is an understanding of hierarchy; the importance of "clear lines of command, procedures, and regulations, including rules for recruitment regarding various positions in companies" (Crowther and Green, 2004:2). If we view organisational sociology from Marx's perspective, it will be noted that he not only highlighted how capitalists exploited the workers during the Industrial Revolution, but also how it affected the workers (Crowther and Green, 2004).

3.3. Social Constructionism and Identity Construction

Social constructionism's theory and organisation theory have many characteristics in common. Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) unified sociological and organisational theories by presenting the individual identity construction as the programming of "the Software of the Mind", in other words comparing the 'self' as a computer software programme (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Initially it is important to unpack what is meant by the term "identity". Stets and Burke (2009:2), argue that identity is the "symbolic interaction", that is interaction, "between self and language". The term 'interaction' is very important when considering how identity is constructed. For identities to be constructed, interaction must occur in the inter- and intra-group context (Stets and Burke, 2009).

Stets and Burke (2009:3) further define identity as being:

A set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a particular role in society, a member of a particular group, or claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person.

It is imperative to note that an individual does not just possess one identity, but:

People possess multiple identities because they occupy multiple roles, are members of multiple groups, and claim multiple personal characteristics, yet the meanings of these identities are shared by members of society (Stets and Burke, 2009:3).

These multiple identities and multiple roles can at first be explained by using the example of the roles a woman plays within her family. Not only is she a daughter to her parents, she can also fill the role of wife, mother, and employee. Each of these roles requires an identity to fulfil them (Stets and Burke, 2009). These identities, from the example cited indicate that an identity is not static, but fluid and adaptable in different circumstances. In other words, in social identity theory, an individual, as an agent, is capable to actively construct their identity (Burr, 2007; Stets and Burke, 2009).

An actor is equated to being an agent playing a role on stage (Stets and Burke, 2009). As individual actors perform a role they perform an identity. Actors are able to perform different roles taking on different identities in different contexts (Stets and Burke, 2009). The researcher explains that the performing actor wears a mask and that different roles require different masks. The masks represent the different identities performed (Stets and Burke, 2009). Kitada (2010) uses the example of the way female seafarers play different roles when they are onboard the ship as opposed when they are back on shore with their family and friends.

Stets and Burke (2009:6) explain that playing different roles are always conducive to good performances:

We might look at role conflict and the stress that a person feels when serving as an agent in incompatible interactional systems.

Goffman (1963a: location 222) said about actors:

We are clearly seen as agents of our own acts, there being very little change of disavowing having committed them.

Stets and Burke (2009) talked about being a member of multiple groups, that give claim to multiple identities. Belonging to these multiple groups requires the actors to perform different roles. These groups include, gender, race, culture, and national groups (Burr, 2007; Crowther and Green, 2004). Both organisational theory and social constructionism argue that one cannot separate and research the individual's identity characteristics in isolation, as characteristics such as culture; language, gender, and race are interdependent. (Burr, 2007; Hilgert, 1964).

From a sociological perspective, the formation of personal and social identity construction starts at birth, when an individual is "born into a world where the conceptual frameworks

and categories used by the people in our culture already exist” (Burr, 2007:6). Similarly, organisational theory also argues the same point by maintaining that the programming of the mind, or identity construction, starts within the family during infancy. Thereafter the individual ‘programming’ continues within the broader cultural framework, such as the neighbourhood, school, and later the workplace (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Furthermore, Håvold (2007) and Burr (2007) stresses that individual and social identity construction develops through language. Language is the vehicle, which transmits knowledge. It is through language that we can form, transform, act, interact, and generally make sense of the world (Burr, 2007; Crowther and Green, 2004; Stets and Burke, 2009). Mother tongue gives meaning to cultural symbols and signs. To differentiate between mother tongue and maritime English this thesis will in future refer to mother tongue as ‘cultural-language’ (Stets and Burke, 2009).

When we further our inquiry into the construction of identity, it is important to refer to George Herbert Mead. Mead is regarded as the founder of symbolic interactionism, which is underpinned by social constructionism (Mead, 1934). His view was that the self and society are interdependent:

The individual possesses a self only in relation to the selves of the members of his social group; and the structure of his self-expresses or reflects the general behaviour of this social group he belongs, just as does the structure of the self of every other individual belonging to this social group (Mead, 1934:164).

Stated differently, Mead contended that people construct their and ‘others’ identities through daily interactions with each other (Burr, 2007).

Organisational theory also uses the term ‘personality’ instead of ‘identity construction’. For example, Hofstede et al. (2010) and Mead (1934) both refer to ‘personality’ in their writings. Personality is often defined as the characteristics and qualities that form a person’s character (Morf and Mischel, 2003). Furthermore, Morf and Mischel (2003:26), state that there is a danger to see the ‘personality’ as being separate from the ‘self’, and the “personality-equals-traits equation is by no means universally shared” especially in the realm of psychology. It is only by drawing from the early traditional way looking at personality and by drawing from the social, cognitive and processing paradigms, that researchers view ‘personality’ in a new light (Morf and Mischel, 2003). This new approach

includes looking at the “goals, motivation that underlie behaviour central to self and self-regulation” (Morf and Mischel, 2003:27).

Thus Morf and Mischel (2003:27) warn:

Splitting the self from its personality system would be manifestly dysfunctional for self-theory. Doing so would leave the self-disconnected from the individual’s motivations and life pursuits, including self-evaluation and self- assessments, planning and control process, and so forth as well as from its development. The costs of splitting self from the conception of personality are arguably even more severe in personality theory. They leave the personality without a self, split from its most central driving motivations and organizing process, e.g. self-regulation, self-enhancement, self-construction, self-evaluation, self-protection, in danger of being little more than a static list of traits or factors.

As seen in the foregoing, a strong link exists between social constructionism, identity theory and organisational theory. The rest of the chapter will not focus on these theories individually, but holistically.

3.4. Social Identity Construction in the Work Place

Organisational theory looks at the workplace holistically. The theory it encompasses not only the workings of the workplace, but acknowledges that a company is run by individuals, each with his/her own personality traits, own identity, their own culture, and history (Aritz; Walker, 2012). On the other hand, identity construction, from a sociological perspective, looks at the ways individuals, or groups interact with structures, and the influences these structures have on individuals and groups (Berger, 2011; Burr, 2007). Both organisational and social constructionism theories argue that these structures, be it educational, work, or governmental, play a role in the way the identity of the individual is constructed (Aritz and Walker, 2012). In addition, organisational theorists argue that organisations have their own identities, and these structural identities again affect the social construction of individual identities (Aritz and Walker, 2012).

To understand the foundation of the social identity construction in the work place, this thesis will briefly discuss the founding’ fathers’ work on the economic and social structure of the workplace, work, and the workers. Karl Marx and Max Weber were two prominent theorists interested in the work, worker, and the organisations employing the workers.

This thesis aims to link Marxism to the research topic by using the researcher's perception of Marxist theory. Karl Marx's identified with the worker and how the worker was exploited by the industries employing them (Woodward, 2004). Marx theorised on the role the workplace, or rather industry, played in the worker's identity construct (Woodward, 2004). This construction process lay in the relationship between the worker and the employer. Marx (1886) pointed out that the commodity, or if one can add, service, produced does not equate to the worker's value.

The question that must be raised is: what is the value of human life? Does it lay in the wage paid to the worker? Does it lay in the covert price paid by the worker? In other words, does the worker have to trade his identity, creativity, dignity, autonomy, and ownership of his skills for a wage? Alternatively, can it be said that the worker has sold his soul to the employer? Marx (1886) pointed out that a commodity's value is three fold: one part is the product's cost to manufacture, the next is the value to the end user and the third is the worker's labour. The value of labour reduces as industries become modernised and machines replace human labour (De Genova, 2006). Workers' perceived value in relation to his work and paid labour is an identity bearer (Edgell, 2012). Within the work context, there is an ongoing negotiation between the employee and employer; more often than not it is the employee who has to forfeit certain aspects of his personal identity for a wage (Edgell, 2012).

Edgell (2012:19) said that:

... The significance of paid work in industrial capitalism transcends the basic need for economic survival, it gives meaning to life and is therefore a crucial element in identity formation.

Edgell (2012) deemed it important to discuss Marx's theory of alienation in conjunction with work theory, as it is an important factor in the identity construction of work identity.

Marx used the term 'alienation' to discuss the effect work has on the worker. Marx firstly argues that the worker is alienated from the product of his/her labour as the product, be it tangible or in the form of a service, is owned by the employer (Edgell, 2012). Marx continued to reason that active alienation exists because it fails to develop a worker's creative potential, and work becomes undesirable because of this (Edgell, 2012). Marx further maintained that it is at this point that work is seen as forced labour, however, this thesis would like to contradict this statement by Marx and would rather replace it with the

term 'job satisfaction'. Where creativity is suppressed, the level of job satisfaction decreases.

Edgell (2012:36) sums up Marx's alienation, in four dimensions:

- Powerlessness or lack of freedom and control at work;
- Meaninglessness or lack of understanding and sense of purpose;
- Social isolation or lack of sense of belonging and an inability to identify with the organisation; and
- Self-estrangement or lack of involvement and hence fulfilment at work.

Marx's theory of alienation can be linked to the 'human element', which plays a large part in the wellbeing of a seafarer. This in turn has an impact on how the identity of a seafarer is constructed. The wellbeing of an individual mostly depends on social interaction between individuals. In the case of the merchant navy, wellbeing is also equated to the emotional side of identity construction.

The human element plays a significant role in the seafaring industry, and is intensively researched. Although the International Marine Organisation (IMO) and maritime industry fight for better humane working conditions, inhumane working conditions are still prevalent within the merchant navy (Alderton et al., 2004, Alert, 2013, Berjot, Altintas, Lesage, and Grebot, 2013; Berlingieri, 2015, Carotenuto, Molino, Fasanaro, and Amenta, 2012; Klein, 2001, 2002b, 2005, Roberts, 2003).

Weber's (1991) research on the workplace and the worker reveals some significant facts that are applicable to this thesis. Firstly, Weber's theory on work ethic had a significant impact on how work was and is understood today. His view was largely influenced by his religious mother, who was a devoted Protestant, although he, himself, was aloof to religion, he acknowledged the Protestant work ethic in his essays (Weber, 1991). The Protestant work ethic calls on believers to work hard and to show themselves prudent in the eyes of God and man (Edgell, 2012).

They followed the biblical scriptures such as:

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. 2 Thessalonians 3:10 (King James Bible).

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. Colossians 3:23-25. (King James Bible)

The Protestant work ethic changed the meaning of work, and it was later just referred to as 'work ethic' (Edgell, 2012). Edgell (2012) also stresses that work is identity forming and that religion as a culture informs the identity of its members. The Protestant work ethic was absorbed in government and non-government structures, and became the secular work ethic (Weber, 1991). Weber further argued that cultural-religious influences are a major force in society. These influences, or forces, are related to capitalism, bureaucracy, and the rational-legal nation-state in the Western world (Weber, 1992). Weber did not argue that religion in itself influenced the economic world, but rather that the Protestant work ethic did (Boundless, 2015; Weber, 1992).

Weber's perspective of the influence of the Protestant work ethic was its rationalism of science; the amalgamation of observation with mathematics; an increase in the study of scientific methods and jurisprudence; bureaucracy; and the process of rationalisation of government administration and economic initiatives (Boundless, 2015; Genta, 2011; Weber, 1992).

Industrial sociology and organisational theory view the workplace in a continual state of flux and it was through research that scientific adaptation of the workplace was observed, and how these changes affect the workers' identities within the workplace (Thompson and Ackroyd, 1995). Edgell (2012) further argued that a person spends much of his time travelling to work, thinking about work and doing work, and that it is understandable that work plays a vital role in the formation of one's identity. To understand work identity one needs to look at employment in relation to unemployment (Edgell, 2012). When unemployed, an individual feels a loss of identity; work is not only about providing for financial commitments, but more about job satisfaction (Edgell, 2012). In addition, Goffman (1963b) argues that individuals perceive a sense of stigma attached to them when they become unemployed.

It was during the 1980s when mass unemployment occurred that the deprivation theory was formulated (Edgell, 2012). The deprivation theory, coined by Jahoda (1982) (in Edgell, 2012), is grounded on work and the employment function in industry. Jahoda (in Edgell, 2012) argues that work functions not only on the work tasks, but also on the function of time structure, social contact, collective purpose, identity and status, and regular activity. As mentioned previously, employment can only be understood in relation to unemployment, thus it is imperative for this thesis to look at both phenomena. If unemployment is referred to as the feeling of deprivation and the lack of psychological well-being, then employment will, on the other hand, give a feeling of work satisfaction and feelings of self-worth and psychological well-being. Unemployment can also lead to withdrawal from social institutions, such as religious activities, and a sense of loss of collective achievement (Edgell, 2012). It is important to note that different cultures view and experience employment and unemployment differently (Edgell, 2012).

According to Mitropoulos (1999) industrial and social productivity need to be researched sociologically, and this can be done by considering Fordism and Taylorism. Henry Ford (1913) introduced high wages with line-production (Mitropoulos, 1999). Frederick Taylor (1917) established the scientific management theory, otherwise known as Taylorism (Walonick, 1993).

Taylorism advocated four basic principles:

- Find the one ‘best way’ to perform each task
 - Carefully match each worker to each task
 - Closely supervise workers, and use reward and punishment as motivators,
 - The task of management is planning and control
- (Walonick, 1993:1)

These four principles are now known as ‘work-in-motion’ concepts and are still applied in organisations globally.

Taylor helped Ford to implement his ‘work-in-motion’ principles in his factories, and had a huge impact on the way modern industries are run, and in how the workers’ identities are socially constructed in the work context (Ford and Crowther, 1922). It was during the 1913s that Henry Ford designed the production line and paid his employees a larger than average wage, resulting in a lower staff turnover rate and a higher than average job satisfaction

sentiment amongst his employees (Mitropoulos, 1999). Job satisfaction is not only based on a salary reward system, but also on other components, such as social support, opportunities to participate in decision-making, higher autonomy and learning multiple skills, which in turn promote loyalty, and higher levels of production (Kashefi, 2009).

Fordism resulted in the reconstruction of social identities in the work and home context by paying men a larger regular salary (Uluorta, 2009). The larger disposable income constructed men as real 'men', in other words men could become good providers for their families (Uluorta, 2009). Henry Ford also revolutionised organisations by introducing an eight-hour workday thus creating leisure time, which in turn allowed his workers' time to enjoy their disposable income by spending it on commodities and other activities (Uluorta, 2009). Men's identities were socially constructed as the provider, whereas the women's identities became socially constructed as home keeper, in other words, if men are able to provide for their family adequately women do not have to work (Uluorta, 2009).

Industrial psychology and organisational theory realised that human behaviour within the workplace is linked to worker's affiliation with other social groups within the workplace (Haslam, Van Knippenberg, Platow and Ellemers, 2003). Within the work environment, content or discontent usually have their roots within intragroup processes and intergroup relations (Haslam et al., 2003). Furthermore, they claim that by understanding social identity within the workplace, one can have some understanding of social behaviour within the work context (Haslam et al., 2003). Understanding the workers' social identities helps organisations to understand and analyse existing problems within their organisation (Haslam et al., 2003).

One of the problems prevalent in the majority of global organisations is diversity, or multiculturalism. Diversity can cause conflict and lower production due to the fact that there are heterogeneous thinking, creativity, and viewpoints (Haslam et al., 2003). A greater understanding of the problems created by diversity can be obtained by utilising social identity theory in combination with organisational theory (Haslam et al., 2003).

Haslam et al. (2003) further emphasised the importance of social identity theory by arguing that it is a complex, multifaceted and dynamic theory. They continue by adding that social identity theory has the advantage of being applicable to "complex real life situations, like

inter-ethnic conflict, political activism, union participation and workplace behaviour” (Haslam et al., 2003: location 204).

Social identity theory was formulated by researching conflict that arose through intergroup relations (Tajfel, 1981). Additionally, Tajfel (1981) discussed the problems that could arise when diverse ethnic and different cultures work together. Haslam et al. (2003) argue that even though diverse groups work together they retain their social and cultural identities. Although intragroup is cohesive, there still is different cognitive and psychological behaviour amongst members of the same group (Haslam et al., 2003). If a social group does not offer an individual psychological, objective support, then that individual might leave the group to join another. In other words, social mobility occurs (Tajfel, 1981). With social mobility the individual will absorb the identity of the new group he joined (Tajfel, 1981).

Social Identity is not only confined to in-group and out-group interaction. It can be defined within a gender based social group.

3.5. Sexual Orientation and Identity Construction

Much has been written about gender identity. However, this thesis will concentrate on the theories, which are most prevalent for this study. Several aspects will be theoretically discussed in this section of this chapter. This thesis’s core theoretical framework is social constructionism and organisational theory. However, references will be drawn from other theories to complement the two main theories. At first, it is necessary to clarify the differences between sex and gender. Secondly, a deeper insight is required to understand how gender, be it male or female, is constructed within the workplace. Thirdly, gender alternatives will be considered as well as how it constructs gender identities. Fourthly, male/female gender will be discussed in relation to each other. Lastly, hegemonic male identities will be discussed.

In the popular media the word ‘gender’ is often confused with the word ‘sex’. Sociologists differentiate between sex and gender by arguing that sex is the biological category of a child at birth (Wodak, 1997). Gender, on the other hand, is described by Wodak (1997:3) as the “psychological, social and cultural difference between males and females”. Giddens (1991) continues by arguing that gender identity is open to many different options. These

options allow gender (male/female) the ability to self-identify themselves enabling them to live their chosen lifestyle (Giddens, 1991). Kimmel and Messner (1998:xiii) discussed how men were socially constructed by “science, politicians, writers, military figures, and philosophers and that men are rarely understood through the prism of gender”.

They further argue that through all academic disciplines how:

Men’s lives are organised around gender issues, and how gender remains the organizing principles of social life. We come to know ourselves and our world through the prism of gender. Only we act if we didn’t know it (Kimmel and Messner, 1998:xiv).

Men are mostly treated as if they have no gender and in gendered maleness have become invisible to themselves and the rest of the public (Kimmel and Messner, 1998). In other words, society has become ‘gender blind’ regarding men. Kimmel (in Kimmel and Messner, 1998) realised this when he viewed himself in a mirror, all he saw was a ‘human being’, he did not see himself in relation to a male or race, and he realised that he never really realised how his maleness shaped his life. Kimmel and Messner (1998) explain and compare this ‘male gender blindness’ sociologically to that of race. Whereby white people do not see themselves in relation to race, but the marginalised racial groups are visible to themselves and to the raceless white people.

Gender should be described as a verb. Lindsey (2011) calls it “doing gender”; Kitada (2010) argues that gender is performed; and Butler (2007) states that performing identity is a theory of agency. This thesis takes the standpoint that gender in the workplace is not static but fluid, identities are ‘performed’ and not assigned.

Performing gender generally will be grouped under the social constructionism umbrella and Goffman (1959:32) defines performing as:

I have been using the term ‘performance’ to refer to all the activity of an individual, which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and, which has some influence on the observers.

Goffman (1959) explains why individuals’ performance is necessary by illustrating that when an individual joins a new group, the group would like some information from the newcomer. This information includes the “social economic status, his conception of self, his attitude towards them, his trustworthiness, etc.” (Goffman,1959:13). The reason why

the observers need to gain more information on the performer is to help them categorise him/her, which in turn will give them cues as how they should respond to the performer and how the performer might respond to them as observers (Goffman, 1959). But this performance of an individual can be deceptive as there might be a reason for the performer not wanting the observers to know certain aspects of him/her (Goffman, 1959). Furthermore, Goffman (1959) argued that in the process of presenting yourself, you can equate yourself with a stage, which is divided into the platform where the performance is visible to the observers and the backstage, which is visible to you, and if I may add your fellow performers closest to you. Performing gender can be linked to Goffman's symbolic interactionist theory, the theory of how you perform your gendered self in the workplace. This public performance is not necessarily the same as the individual's performance in his/her private space.

Role-play [in the workplace] has the advantage in that it can serve as a protective barrier between the actor and the observers (Goffman, 1959). Women entering a traditional male work environment often find that they have to 'perform' a male identity, acting like a man, talking like a man, drinking like a man, swearing, become aggressive, and so forth, to be accepted by the male observers (Collinson and Hearn, 2004; Horck, 2008). This role play can protect a female seafarer against bullying, harassment and other elements, which can make her life difficult in the traditional male work environment (Horck, 2008).

Goffman (1959) expands on the protective barrier by arguing that having some 'elbow-room' can also prevent the audience from seeing the actor's real self, and it is the actor's choice what he/she wants the audience to see or not to see. This barrier is for the performer's own good, as it provides protection against potential threats to self, which, on closer inspection, can 'destroy' the identity (Goffman, 1959).

Tajfel (1981) did not neglect female gender in his research. He spoke on how stereotyping exists within the 'ingroup' context (Tajfel, 1981). This stereotyping was often aimed at the marginalised females. Change remains slow, even though women continue to fight for equal rights (Tajfel, 1981). Furthermore, Tajfel (1981:341) repeated the feminist rights slogan "Whatever you can do I can do better".

Tajfel (1981:341) is further quoted on his perception on gender identity:

There is still continuing insistence that there are many jobs women can do as well as men, or that they are often barred from them in the past and present sex discrimination and the corresponding dominant public attitudes [have a] part in how we are socially constructed in our childhood.

This stereotyping of women, which often results in gender discrimination and consequently can result in them being barred from the workplace is more than a century old, and it remains problematic in the current work environment, as will be detailed in the data analysis chapter.

One of the power structures that are evident is the wages women receive compared to men, even though they perform the same work as their male counterparts (Schmitt, Branscome and Ellemers, 2003). Even though gender discrimination, harassment and victimisation is against many countries' constitutions, it stubbornly persists (Einarsdóttir, Hoel and Lewis, 2015). These constitutions include prohibition against discrimination, harassment and victimisation not only against women in the traditional gender construct, but also against:

...lesbian, gay and bisexual employees and protection against unwanted conduct that violates personal dignity or creates intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. (Einarsdóttir et al., 2015:1185)

However, despite the legislation against this discrimination against different 'genders', discrimination remains high. The data from the UK statistics indicate that discrimination in the workplace leads to homophobic bullying (Einarsdóttir et al., 2015). Individuals with alternative genders are found to prevent these negative attitudes and marginalisation by conforming to the workplace culture (Einarsdóttir et al., 2015). Homophobia, or a more politically correct term, 'sexual prejudgement', is defined by the intergroup theory as an individual and/or group fear against out-groups or gender non-conformability (Einarsdóttir et al., 2015).

As previously mentioned, gender does not refer to the genetic makeup of a male or female, although through the popular media, gender mostly refers to females, whereas masculinity refers to males. However, one cannot research each of these labels in isolation. To understand maleness and femaleness, either as a collective gender or according to sex has to be done in relation to each other.

Social roles at home often carry over into the workplace. The socially constructed role of the female is that of a home keeper, wife, mother, care-giver, and is perceived as having a lower status than that of a man (Lindsey, 2011). In contrast to the woman, the man is seen as the breadwinner, disciplinarian, handyman, and decision maker (Lindsey, 2011). These roles can be flexible to some degree, but role changes can produce confusion in certain social areas, such as in a work context (Lindsey, 2011).

Social norms that have become rigid in certain areas, such as gender roles can lead to groups, in-groups, and sub-groups being stereotyped. By being stereotyped into roles people are expected to behave and accept the norms and values of the stereotypical role, they have been assigned to (Lindsey, 2011). Women are often stereotyped as unreliable, not able to make quick decisions, controlled by their hormones and prone to emotional outbursts. In other words, women are mostly perceived as being physically and mentally inferior to men (Lindsey, 2011). These stereotypes carry over into the workplace, and the perceived weaker genders are vulnerable to becoming victims of bullying, harassment and sexual abuses. In other words, they have lesser power within the work environment (Freeman and Lindsay, 2012). It is important to note that men, who are perceived as falling outside the hegemonic male category, are not immune to bullying, harassment and sexual abuses (Lindsey, 2011).

Whitehead and Barrett (2004:1) state that “increasingly men’s sense of gender as constructed through dominant representation of masculinity” is coming to the fore. The sociology of masculinity has been increasingly studied for a greater understanding of what makes a man a man (Whitehead and Barrett, 2004). Whitehead and Barrett (2004) also point out that there are differences between men, and it is not easy to define the term “masculinity” as masculinity is not only culturally specific, it is performed differently in different circumstances and in different timelines. However, they did construct a definition drawn from their research:

Masculinities are those behaviours, languages and practices, existing in specific cultural and organizational locations, which are commonly associated with males... So masculinities exist as both a positive, inasmuch as they offer some means of identity signification for males, and as a negative, inasmuch as they are not the ‘Other’ (feminine). Masculinities and male behaviours are not the simple product of genetic codings or biological predispositions (Whitehead and Barrett, 2004:15).

If one decodes the above quote, it can be said that masculinity is a socially constructed identity, in other words, it is a verb and not something that men 'have'; masculinity is differently performed in different ways in different contexts (Whitehead and Barrett, 2004). Furthermore, Whitehead and Barrett (2004) use the example of the US military, which is known as a hyper-masculine institution where men are socially constructed as hegemonic masculine to perform in different settings. Masculine identities are diverse, and some men are perceived to have more power than other 'less masculine' men (Whitehead and Barrett, 2004). This supremacy is coined hegemonic masculinity, which "creates subornment and marginalised men" (Whitehead and Barrett, 2004:18). The perception of an un-masculine man is usually that of someone who behaves differently; does not have the same interests and is not violent and not commandeering (Connell, 2004). The term 'masculinity' is seen as a normative term and men are compared and judged against this (Connell, 2004). Failing to 'be' and 'do' masculine activities, places them in different categories, such as being 'weak' and 'gay' (Connell, 2004). Masculinity and hegemonic masculinity are, more than often not, is a term used to describe Western 'white' men. The marginalised men have different ethnic, cultural and national identities than those who are considered 'normative' (Connell, 2004).

Organisations treat management theoretically in an "asexual" way, but in reality management functions are still dominated by men (Collinson and Hearn, 2004). The organisational identity is still very masculine, which is an indication that most organisations are still male-dominant not only marginalising women, but also men who are not perceived as possessing the masculine identity (Collinson and Hearn, 2004).

3.6. Cultural Identity

Cultural identity in the workplace also has an in-group – out-group component, which has a dominant culture in opposition to the marginalised cultures.

Our understanding of the world is culturally embedded, our knowledge of the world is taught by social interaction within the cultural context (Burr, 2007; Hofstede et al., 2010). Cultural identity is formed through cultural-language, which carries cultural symbols, norms and values from one generation to the next (Burr, 2007). It is through social interaction within a culture or in-group that our knowledge is forged (Burr, 2007). Culture is a social construct, and not innate. However, learning our 'mother-culture' is easier than

learning to work and live in an 'other' culture (Hofstede et al., 2010). With our cultural-language we are able to interact with each other within our in-group (Burr, 2007). But when individuals move outside their in-group and come into contact with 'others' (outgroups), cultural-languages can be misconstrued as the out-groups do not share the same norms and values the individual was taught culturally (Burr, 2007; Hofstede et al., 2010).

Hofstede et al. (2010, location:6503) expand on the notion of an individual who moves away from his mother-culture into a foreign culture, by arguing that it is “accompanied by similar psychological and social processes”. This encounter between an individual and other cultural groups often leads to cultural shock (Hofstede et al., 2010). It is a process for an individual to reculturate him or herself or even to attempt to understand some of the new culture’s norms, values, and symbols-such as how to greet someone, how to give or accept gifts and basic etiquette (Hofstede et al., 2010). However, the engrained mother-culture will prevent the newcomer from integrating totally (Hofstede et al., 2010). If the reculturation process is not successful, negative feelings such as distress, helplessness, isolation, hostility towards the new environment, and a feeling of discrimination can arise (Hofstede et al., 2010). Moving from one’s mother-culture to a new culture can lead to the feeling of loss of cultural-identity; and a shift of personal identity is needed to integrate fully into one’s new environment (Hofstede et al., 2010). This integration process will be more complicated when the newcomer has to enter a multi-cultural environment (Taylor, 1911).

3.7. Social Construction of Identity and Mobility of Seafarers

The mobility of seafarers can be equated to temporary global migration, as they move from their mother-culture into a global culture. Seafarer migration is sporadic and continuous as it is temporary in nature because there never is any prospect of permanent settlement and they are obliged to move into and from multicultural environments on a regular basis.

Rubington and Weinber (2003) state that migration is not a new phenomenon, and used the example of post-World War I migration to the United States, which illustrated that the migration caused conflict between the mother-culture and the new culture. The lack of cohesive norms and values between the migrants’ cultural identity and their host countries cultural identity caused confusion for the migrants and hostility from the citizens of the

host country (Rubington and Weinber, 2003). This resulted in the development of a phenomenon where the new migrants did not know where they fitted in and a sense of normlessness, culture-conflict and breakdown of culture occurred (Rubington and Weinber, 2003).

South Africa had a few incidences where culture clashes between migrants and nationals escalated into violence. This phenomenon is termed xenophobia. Although the thesis will not concentrate on the extreme violence in the South African context, some aspects are of relevance to this research. Xenophobia is defined as “an undue or excessive fear, hatred or dislike of strangers or foreigners” (usually new immigrants) (Soyombo, 2008:88).

Xenophobia is usually the result of in-group and out-group conflict. It usually involves people who have been working and living together for a period of time and come into conflict with each other (Soyombo, 2008). Although xenophobia is not mentioned in the maritime industry, it is mostly downplayed to a softer variation and spoken of as 'problems regarding multiculturalism'. Multiculturalism is increasing as global migration expands in the work context and migration barriers are becoming more flexible allowing workers globally to travel relatively freely (Soyombo, 2008). Increasingly national maritime industry unions are seen to instigate hostility against foreigners who are increasingly infiltrating the available opportunities of their nationals' seafarer work. This is a situation, which has been fostered to increase corporate profits (Doherty, 2015; MarEx, 2015; Wright, 2015).

Current (2015-2016) examples of xenophobia are becoming more prevalent in the merchant navy, as companies seek ways to combat the current global economic crises, which are linked to the oversupply of oil, which in turn results in the drop of the oil price. Australia is an example of seafarers becoming hostile towards foreign seafarers who are replacing them (McIver, 2016).

An example of an online article headline showed the dismay of the Australian seafarers:

Australian seafarers are warning that the local industry is at risk of going under unless the influx of foreign workers is halted (McIver, 2016:1).

And a snippet from the same article:

[Jobs] aren't drying up because there's no work, but drying up because the Government is allowing \$2 an hour exploited labour to replace them [Australian seafarers] on the coast (Mclver, 2016:1).

Two theories, which can be linked to the current seafaring frustration and anger regarding the loss of work opportunities, can be explained by the economic theory of xenophobia and the Frustration-Aggression Theory (Soyombo, 2008). The economic theory of xenophobia is linked to the economy of industry, which in turn results in unemployment and eventually poverty (Soyombo, 2008). The frustration-aggression theory is attributed to the frustration of a group of people that believe that their economic situation is due to the 'other' who are responsible for their situation - the other can be either an institution or an out-group (Soyombo, 2008). It was found that men display more ferocity towards out-groups than women (Kramer, Leonardelli, and Livingston, 2011).

Migration, (temporary or permanent) is experienced differently by different people (Leonardelli, Pickett, and Joseph, 2011). In this context identity, integration, and acculturation will be discussed in relation to the host country. However, it is just as relevant to the seafarers' community who for long periods work in the merchant navy that serves as their 'host country'. The model of acculturation states that there are four types of immigrants; those who are integrated; those who are assimilated; those who are separated and those who are marginalised (Leonardelli et al., 2011). These models are based on the extent to, which the migrants continue to cling to their cultural identity once they arrive in their host country or, in the context of this thesis the ship (Leonardelli et al., 2011).

Individuals, who have bicultural identity, are able to retain their home cultural identity and integrate well into their host country's cultural identities (Leonardelli et al., 2011). Furthermore, there is the integrated individual who tries to keep the home-culture identity, but attempts to integrate some of the host country's cultural identities with his own. There also are those assimilated individuals who want to keep their home-culture identities but also want to fully integrate with their host country's cultural identity at the same time (Leonardelli et al., 2011). Additionally, there are immigrants who are not interested in assimilating their host countries' cultural identities and only keep to their own cultural identities (Leonardelli et al., 2011). Lastly, there are the marginalised individuals who are

not interested in maintaining their home-cultural identity or assimilating with their host country's cultural identities (Leonardelli et al., 2011).

Regardless of the above assumptions, immigrants are likely to experience changes to their social identities as they interact with the host country's citizens or the 'other' cultural groups (Leonardelli et al., 2011). All people have a need to 'belong' to a group, be it a cultural group, sub-cultural group, nationality, or people who are from the same ethnic background. This need to belong can move immigrants to assimilate their personal and social identities with those of the host culture (Leonardelli et al. 2011). Burr (2007) states that no identity is fixed and that the fluidity of identity is only possible through social interaction and, most importantly, shared language.

3.8. Social Constructionism and Language

For most laymen, language is seen only as a means of expressing oneself by sharing an experience, giving orders, imposing discipline, and so forth (Berger and Luckmann, 2011; Burr, 2007). However, for social constructionists, language is more complex in that it is part of the social construction of an individual (Burr, Collier, Gergen, Harre, Davies, Foster, Merttens, Montero, Parker, Potter, and Willig, 1998). Social constructionism, heavily emphasises the importance of language by arguing that it is only through language that an individual is able to construct the world around him or her (Berger and Luckmann, 2011; Burr, 2007; Heracleous, 2012).

Because identity can only be constructed through language and through interaction with the 'other', there is a strong emphasis on language and identity construction (Burr, 2007). Language discourse, through the speech act theory, challenges the essentialism of language by arguing that language is a verb or that "to say something is to do something" (Heracleous, 2012:11). In this reasoning language is defined as a symbol, which is culturally specific. Symbols are then further defined as objects and text, just to mention a few, which only have meaning for the individual who shares the cultural meaning thereof (Hofstede et al., 2010). Furthermore, language is used in different contexts, and in each context it is 'performed' differently and it is through this performance that social identities are developed (Burr, 2007; Heracleous, 2012). This reminds of Goffman's theory on the performance of identity on stage either in front or behind the curtain, as such it is a performance that can only be enacted through language.

Language in the backstage is informal, first name basis cooperative, decision making, profanity, open sexual remarks, elaborate griping, smoking, rough informal dress, 'sloppy' sitting and standing posture, use of dialect or substandard speech, mumbling and shouting playful aggressively and kidding, inconsiderateness for the other in minor by symbolic acts, minor physical self-involvement such as humming, whistling, chewing, nibbling, belching, and flatulence. The front stage behaviour language can be taken as the absence (and in some sense the opposite) of this. In general, then back stage conduct is one, which allows minor acts, which might easily be taken as symbolic of intimacy and disrespect of others present and for the region, while the front region conduct is one, which disallows such potentially offensive behaviour (Goffman, 1959:78).

Burr (2007) builds on Goffman's hypotheses on language by arguing that if language builds identity, language also maintains and challenges knowledge. In other words, language is the receptacle of personal and social identity changes (Burr, 2007).

Language in the global workplace is multifaceted (Hofstede et al., 2010). When workers from diverse cultures are forced to interact with each other, it is important that they find a common ground to work from (Hofstede et al., 2010). This common ground will be to build a work culture, with a common language, which understands and shares the "rules for behaviour, cooperation, and leadership" (Hofstede et al., 2010:434). Each work environment consists of different groups. These groups not only have to construct a new work identity and a symbolic language, they must also adhere to the organisation's culture and symbolic languages (Hofstede et al., 2010; Aritz and Walker, 2012).

Some global organisations are changing their management goals to include cultural sensitivity by the inclusion of the interpretation of the symbolic languages of their diverse personnel (Aritz and Walker, 2012). Culture and cultural-language diversity are still very problematic in the global maritime industry, as English has been established as the primary maritime language. English discourse is being researched in the maritime industry, as it is one of the causes of maritime accidents. Language related accidents are classified under human error accidents, which represent 80 percent of all reported maritime accidents (Horck, 2006).

By enforcing English as the global industry language, it suppresses other languages and creates the danger that the global industries are only viewed through a Western discourse (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2012). Enforcing English, as a business language will ensure that communication does take place, but the question remains as to what knowledge

is being transmitted and whether the message received is understood correctly (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2012). Anderson (2012:179) states that organisations are socially constructed and this influences the discourse of languages, which in turn influences how workers work and how “they construct and interpret social reality through dialogue”. Inequality occurs when English as the preferred language of trade is enforced on the employee (Anderson, 2012). The command of English and identity continues to be a territory of struggle in global industries. These struggles could be reduced if workers are allowed to communicate in their cultural language or in an English related dialect (Anderson, 2012).

The English language has been accused as being imperialistic in nature (Phillipson, 2003). Phillipson (2003:38) defines imperialism as being “ideologically loaded” and that imperialism is loaded with the perception that issues are viewed from a European framework.

He furthers his definition by stating that imperialism is:

- Self-exaltation on the part of the dominant group.
- The devaluation of the non-dominant group.
- The suppression and stagnation of its culture, institutions, lifestyles and ideas.
- Systematic rationalisation of the relationships between two groups, always favourable to the dominant group (Phillipson, 2003:38).

However, the imperialism theory on language explains it simply by adding “we are a nation with language whereas they are tribes with dialects” (Phillipson, 2003:38). This quote is embedded in power or the lack thereof. The imperialism theory has summarised the empirical language as follows:

Imperialism theory also encompasses the political, social ideological dimensions of exploitation and integrates all these strands into a coherent whole, the theories attempt to account for the structure, which perpetuates inequality in the world (Phillipson, 2003:46).

3.9. Soft and Hard Skills in Understanding Diverse Identities in the Workplace

Dorsey (2004) explains that soft skills are an important part of an organisation and that soft skills protect hard skills in industries. Soft skills are communication skills, teamwork and problem solving. (Dorsey, 2004; Kuokkanen, Varje and Väänänen, 2013). Horck (2006), an internationally recognised maritime researcher from the World Maritime University

Malmö, Sweden, researched the importance of the inclusion of cultural training into the maritime colleges' curricula. Although he does not refer to it as 'soft skills', he discusses the consequences of the lack of communication and cultural sensitivity skills.

Horck (2006:86) continues by arguing that lecturers must ensure that students have the ability:

To understand and identify other people's way of speaking from a multiple perspective, to critically accept messages, enable concepts to make sense and to be able to argue on these viewpoints

Shakespeare, Keleher and Moxham (2007) added inter-personal and intra-personal skills, leadership ability, and self-reflection to the soft skills category.

Hard skills are mostly part of the formal training received when entering the educational 'system': primary education; college education, and the education you receive informally through experience. This includes reading, writing, diverse subjects and in later years your chosen vocation, such as engineering or as a medical practitioner (Shakespeare et al., 2007).

There are many contemporary theories of motivation, which could be discussed in this chapter. However, Maslow's theory is a good fit in understanding the importance of the soft skills needed in an organisational setting to motivate employees. The motivational process can only occur if there is an understanding of the basic needs of the individual. Although Maslow does discuss the need to belong, he does not propagate the need to belong in a group or a culture, which is a very important factor in soft skills development. A leader cannot motivate people if he/she does not understand people's needs in other words if you do not possess the soft skills needed to do so.

In many industries, managers are trained to motivate workers to become more productive. Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation explains this motivation process. Maslow (2012), an early theorist, theorised on the individual's basic needs. Maslow stated that by fulfilling these needs it is possible to motivate the worker and to increase production. The first need is the physiological, which includes hunger, thirst, shelter and other physical needs. It is further argued that if the primary physiological needs are not met, it then will not be possible to motivate people (Maslow, 2012).

Maslow's second need is the need for safety, which includes security and protection from physical and emotional harm. If a person's safety is threatened, he starts to look for a protector, be it a parent, a supervisor or another leader (Maslow, 2012). The third need is the social need, which is affection, belongingness, perception of acceptance, and friendship. These needs can only be satisfied in the contexts of where one shares commonality – the work and living environments. This might be found in the marriage, friendship, cultural or work environment (Maslow, 2012).

Maslow's fourth need is the need for esteem, which is two-pronged: internal and external. The internal factor is the need for self-respect, autonomy and the feeling that a person has achieved something worthwhile in their work or social life. The external factor is the need for status to be recognised, and the need for attention (Maslow, 2012). If the need for esteem is not met then it can produce a perception of inferiority, which is the perception that a person has a weakness, or the perception of helplessness that can lead to discouragement (Maslow, 2012). Self-actualisation stands at the pinnacle of Maslow's pyramid of hierarchy of needs and represents the drive to reach one's goals and full potential. In essence, people who are satisfied with all of the above-mentioned aspects of Maslow's theory will develop a need to be and do better, and to be more creative in developing themselves (Maslow, 2012).

Figure 5: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



(Source: McLeod, 2016:1)

Shakespeare et al. (2007) hypothesised that you cannot separate soft skills from hard skills as “the hard skills are already the soft skills”. Employers need people who can operate with hard skills, and have the soft skill ability to work effectively (Shakespeare et al., 2007).

The example Shakespeare et al., (2007) used is that of a nurse. He or she might have the hard skills (knowledge) to work with patients, but if they do not understand the basic needs of the patient, and do not have the correct communication skills to mediate between the patient and doctor, he or she will not be successful in their job function. Thus, soft skills override hard skills in importance in any industry (Shakespeare et al., 2007). Dorsey (2004) stated that when young people enter the workplace, most have the attitude of 'I know the job, if I work hard I will be successful'. This, however, is a fallacy, as successful people are those who can combine the hard skills with the soft skills. In any profession, you need the ability to engage and interact with people to work effectively (Dorsey, 2004).

It is often assumed that soft skills are innate and that you learn them from childhood, such as how to talk or interact with other people. Unfortunately, this is not true (Dorsey, 2004). Horck (2006) views soft skills from a maritime perspective when he argues that teachers/lecturers in maritime institutes should include soft skill training, such as cultural awareness in their curricula. By taking soft skill training just as seriously as hard skill training, the viability of Maslow's theory on motivation will become viable.

When students are instructed in soft skills they will be protected against harmful elements and assist them to develop the skills that will prevent them from inflicting physical and psychological harm on their co-workers (Horck, 2006; Maslow, 2012). In other words, as a leader or manager one needs to possess the basic skills to acknowledge the 'other' co-workers' basic needs required to reach his/her full potential. Hence soft skill training has become an important requirement in many organisations (Kuokkanen et al., 2013).

When people from diverse cultures migrate into a new cultural environment, adjustment can be very difficult, as they will often lack the necessary soft skills to adapt to their new environment (Shakespeare et al., 2007). This lack of soft skills will become obvious, especially when they migrate to a country with a different cultural-language such as English, which will place them at a disadvantage in that although they might be equipped with the hard skills required to do the work, they lack the soft skills to adapt to the workplace identity (Shakespeare et al., 2007; Horck, 2006).

Hofstede et al. (2010) equate computer hardware with hard skills and computer software with soft skills. They argue that a person's mental software determines his physical and psychological functioning. They further state that this computer software, or 'soft skills',

can be compared to the ability to make the 'other' feel secure or unsafe, which are experienced or expressed in fear, anger, love, joy, sadness or shame (Hofstede et al. 2010).

To program this software, all humans need the ability to communicate, interact and relate to a friendship group, which acknowledges one's home-culture, norms and values (Hofstede et al., 2010). This, in turn, refers to the safety, social, and esteem elements of Maslow's (2012) hierarchy of needs. Hofstede et al. (2010) also stated that it is problematic that the 'hardware' or hard skills are seen to be more beneficial to the company than people who possess soft skills. The reality is that soft skills are or should be ingrained into a person's work identity (Shakespeare et al., 2007), or taught at learning centres until it intertwines with their hard skills (Horck, 2006).

3.10. Social Control Forcing Cultural Identities to be Adjusted to Ship and Organisational Identities

Goode (2016:51) defines social control as “efforts to construct and ensure conformity to a norm. Social constructionists, such as criminologists, who researched deviance, see social control as the central concept of deviance (Goode, 2016). Social control is used in all societies to ensure that members adhere to the norms of the group, culture or subculture, be it informally or formally controlled (Berger, 2011; Janowitz, 1975). However, social control varies between group, culture, subculture and context in terms of what is seen as the accepted norm. What is seen as an accepted norm in one context might not be seen as acceptable in another (Berger, 2011; Goode, 2016).

Social control theorists argue that social control can be divided into two elements, informal and internal social control and formal and external social control (Goode, 2016). Informal social control is taught and internalised from birth. Children learn from their parents the acceptable norms of their home and culture or community (Goode, 2016). All people are socialised by identifiable agents within their community, it is only at a later stage, as children grow up, that they are exposed to extended norms in schools and by the media (Goode, 2016). If norms are disregarded the offending individual can be brought back in line by being gossiped about, ridiculed, or become victim of scorn and in some societies the offender is completely shunned or excommunicated.

Less harsh displays of approval or disapproval of actions can be expressed in a smile or a frown and praise or criticism (Berger, 2011; Goffman, 1963a; Goode, 2016). In this

process, depending on the type or extent of the deviance committed, the deviant person's identity might be discredited (Goode, 2016). Once a person has rebelled against the social norm, his/her identity might come into question and he/she could be 'stuck' with a label, which could be a permanent adhesive to their self (Goode, 2016). When the deviant person realises that his or her actions are not deemed acceptable, they will adjust their behaviour to gain approval again (Goode, 2016). If the internalisation of norms is successful, then informal social control can be said to be effective, especially when a deviant person feels guilty of his or her actions (Goode, 2016). However, when a group becomes too large to only rely on informal social control, formal social controls are needed to bring deviant behaviour under control (Goode, 2016).

Formal social control is more about deviant behaviour in a larger society and formal organisations, such as when the police are employed to control and bring behaviour under control (Goode, 2016). Formal organisations are empowered to use external methods to enforce social control, such as the arrest of the deviant person (Goode, 2016).

But in the work context formal and informal social control can be used to bring deviant workers under control (Berger, 2011). Professional organisations use disciplinary hearings and have a structured chain of command, which asserts social control (Berger, 2011). On the other hand, formal control can be asserted on industries by trade unions to protect the workers against deviant actions or practices by employers (Berger, 2011).

Informal social control is as important in the work environment and can be enforced by co-workers (Berger, 2011). In the context of the merchant navy, where workers work in a contained space over long periods, informal social control can have a devastating psychological effect on a seafarer. As an example, improper maintenance of hygiene may result in a seafarer being avoided and becoming isolated (Crewtoo, 2016a). There also is a code of conduct, which should be adhered to by seafarers whilst onboard a ship. Not adhering to this code of conduct can lead to formal and/or informal social control being exercised (Crewtoo, 2016b).

The reason for these codes are cited as follows:

Seafarers are often required to spend both their working and leisure hours in the confined environment of a ship with the same individuals. This can make seafarers more susceptible to the stresses of everyday life than those working ashore. In this environment, the need for discipline and good behaviour is particularly important. Ships are dangerous, seafaring is demanding and tough, and without some form of social glue to hold a crew together, then you can get real problems. Ships experience violence, intimidation, and bullying. So having a foundation and set of ground rules is no bad thing (Crewtoo, 2016:1).

Berger (2011) stated that in all occupations, and in all occupational hierarchies, there is a code of conduct, and in order not to ‘damage’ your career opportunities in the company, it is important to adhere to these codes of conduct. Some of these codes are unwritten rules in organisations and in social institutions, such as clubs, which may include dress, acceptable language and even table manner codes (Berger, 2011).

By not adhering, consciously or subconsciously to the formal or informal social control, can have psychological consequences such as, disapproval, loss of prestige, ridicule, or contempt in the workplace or social group (Berger, 2011).

3.11. Shaping of Coping Mechanisms through Multiculturalism

Adler (1977) defined multiculturalism as a phenomenon whereby a person expands his/her horizons to reach beyond their own cultural limits (Adler, 1977). The mobility of seafarers from their mother-culture to their host-culture can lead to extreme stress for the new-comers and create hostility as there can be a conflict between norms and values between the two cultures (Rubington and Weinber, 2003).

Gutmann, Taylor, Wolf, Rackefeller and Walzer (1994) pointed out that it more often than not organisations that do not recognise workers with diverse cultural identities but expect them to conform to the company's cultural identity. They further their argument by stressing the importance for the host country and companies to respect the unique identities of each individual “regardless of gender, race or ethnicity” (Gutmann et al., 1994:8). Diverse cultures not only require respect, but also recognition for unique cultural practices, activities, and unique world views, which will not only validate their individual identities, but also their cultural identities (Gutmann et al., 1994). It is only

when recognition of their identities are honoured that they will feel 'at home' (Gutmann et al., 1994). Taylor noted that the lack of respect for diverse personal and cultural identity can lead foreigners to feel that this lack of respect "inflict a grievous wound, saddling its victims with crippling self-hatred". Hence, identity recognition is a "vital human need" (Taylor, 1994:26).

For a person to be able to adjust to work stress and to a multicultural work environment it is of vital importance for the employee to socially survive in a fluid working context (Wei, 2007). For people to adapt to a new environment they must be able to control their affective and cognitive processes as well as their behaviour to reduce stress (Wei, 2007). Furthermore, Stets and Burke (2009) research on stress and identity argues that people who perceive themselves as being of a certain typecast like feedback to confirm their identity. Failing to receive this feedback can induce symptoms of stress. In other words, when people "are not able to achieve this congruity between situational based self-perceptions and their identity standards" stress occurs (Stets and Burke, 2009:76). They further their discussion on stress by adding that it has been theorised that stress is not necessarily due to people having too much on their plate, but due to the interruption of their daily routine. A person's identity can change when they feel that the orderliness of their day has been disrupted. Similarly, stress can be induced when they feel marginalised and that they cannot fend off the perceived danger to self (Giddens, 1991; Stets and Burke, 2009). People who need strict routines, or schedules, find that when their schedule is disrupted they have to expend a lot of energy to cope with the disruptions and changes to their day. When there is less disruption and less energy expended, a person tends to feel that he or she is able to cope and their identity-verification takes place (Stets and Burke, 2009).

Giddens (1991) discusses specific problematic areas, which 'pushes people's buttons' and need to be dealt with before it causes harm. One of these areas is anxiety. Anxiety is related to one's security system, and is not related to one specific event. Anxiety tends to 'paralyse' a person when he or she is supposed to react to a situation and when he or she is faced with anxiety; it is usually a threat to self-identity. On the other hand, there is anxious readiness, which is different to anxiety. Anxious readiness is when a person is fully prepared to react to a threat, but still triggers a physiological effect. Fear also is

a reaction that a person experiences when confronted with a threatening problem or event (Giddens, 1991).

According to Giddens (1991) there are certain mechanisms in place that help a person cope with uncertainty. One of these is rituals or strict day-to-day schedules. In this respect, Giddens quotes Goffman's theory of interaction and links it to day-to-day interaction with others (Giddens, 1991). These interactions could be the ways in, which a person interacts with people, body language, and language itself and the way and manner of speaking. These rituals give a person social and emotional security in the context he or she is living or working in (Giddens, 1991).

When rituals are entwined with tradition, you have the added advantage that it mixes the cognitive and moral elements with social and emotional security. However, if these elements of interaction, rituals, and traditions are perceived as being threatened by others, such as the others' change in body language, or a perceived negative glance, it can be perceived as a threat against self and disturb the schedule a person has for the day (Giddens, 1991).

One way of coping or escaping marginalisation is to attempt to blend with the crowd to protect oneself from being a target of emotional abuse (Giddens, 1991). Blending into the work context is not uncommon in the merchant navy. Stets and Burke (2009) who argue that people will change their appearance and behaviour in the way they dress and talk, and generally adhere to the norm to enable them to blend with the group verify this. The changing of behaviour, language and image is an interactive strategy, which allows you to fit into the group, but will not necessarily be congruent with your self-identity. Weinderstein and Deurschberger (in Stets and Burke, 2009) coined this strategy to merge into the group as 'altercating'. This is a strategy whereby people reproduce themselves into the new context

Stets and Burke (2009) stated that people feel that their identity is threatened when they do not have a support structure in place when an incident occurs. According to the merchant navy these incidents are related to emotional abuse, bullying and harassment (Rider, 2016).

People who are attempting to cope with incidences are always looking for nonverbal cues to assure them that the other supports their identity, or the out-group (Stets and Burke, 2009). However, when the person feels that his or her identity is threatened, they will try and protect it by blaming others for the incident, or withdrawing from interactions until the incident is resolved (Stets and Burke, 2009).

Religion is also seen as a coping mechanism. By looking at religion holistically, there are a number of strategies that can be used to help a person cope. Faith in itself gives a religious person a 'higher power' or authority to call, pray, or meditate upon in the time of emotional and physical needs (Hood, Hill, and Spilka, 2009). Religion also gives members a support community to lean upon. Research has shown that people who use religion as a coping mechanism show much lower levels of stress.

Coping mechanisms or the lack thereof is entwined with the person's identity. Not only are coping mechanisms culturally specific, it must be understood that within a multicultural environment not everyone relies on the same coping mechanisms.

3.12. Conclusion

The identity construction of the South African seafarer is complex, and cannot be researched on one characteristic of such identity. This also is true when researching any individual's identity. Identity construction is intertwined with culture, cultural-language, language, gender and racial/national identities. The above-mentioned identities need to be researched holistically to understand the identity construction of an individual.

Because the seafarer works and lives in a 'contained' space in a multicultural environment, multiculturalism cannot be excluded when researching the social identity construction of the seafarer. When different cultures are thrown together in one living and working environment, there always will be in-group and out-group conflicts, especially if the dominant group does not respect or acknowledge the 'other'.

In the merchant navy, there must be some conformity to the organisation's identity to ensure that everyone, regardless of culture, cultural-language, gender and race/nationality understands the goals of the company. To ensure effective

communication most companies disregard cultural-language and enforce English, which is the global working language in the merchant navy. However, this often leads to miscommunication and misunderstanding as the message, which is sent, is not necessarily the message correctly interpreted by the receiver because cultural-language (knowledge), often overrides the work language in, which the message was sent in.

Female seafarers' representation is askew in the merchant navy and due to stereotyping; they are at a higher risk of being marginalised, harassed and bullied. Females often have to adjust their socially constructed identities as women in an attempt to conform to the male dominated workplace. The same is true of men who are not accepted in the hegemony male in-group when the dominant male group does not perceive the 'other' male identities as 'men'. This friction is specifically noticeable between the Western dominating cultures and seafarers coming from developing nations, such as the Filipinos.

Recruiting organisations often require that seafarers possess the required hard skills (know-how), but neglect to include soft skills in their assessment of the applicant's qualifications. In the merchant navy the focus on soft skills is not only about the ability to function as a team player and display the ability to have interpersonal communication skills, but it also includes being culturally sensitive. Soft skills are essential, especially for management.

Coping mechanisms play an important role in the merchant navy. If a seafarer does not have strong coping mechanisms and support structures in place, it could lead to physiological and psychological strain. Coping mechanisms are also culturally specific and soft skills are needed to detect seafarers in emotional distress. Just as much as the seafarer needs to have a support system in place, coping is needed when a seafarer feels that his own or/or his cultural identity is under threat. The first action or reaction would be to protect these identities from being violated, with any coping mechanism available to them.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4.1. Introduction

Methodology is only one set of several processes, which together form the framework for this research topic.

The foundation for a research started with the selection of a paradigm. Disciplines tend to stick to a certain paradigm, although modern scholars look beyond their discipline's preferred paradigm for alternative ways of framing their research. Once the paradigm was determined, the ontological and epistemological questions needed to be addressed, as the first informed the next. Similarly, the methodological debate was informed by the epistemological questions. Once the above-mentioned processes were addressed the researcher investigated the most suitable methods appropriate for the research topic. This research was structured around the social constructionism paradigm, which is mostly used in the discipline of sociology and other social sciences.

To understand the formation of the methods to be used, this chapter will explain the processes followed by laying out the paradigm; ontological questions; epistemological questions, and the motivation for using a qualitative methodological framework. Following the discussion of the preceding processes, the methods and research instruments for data gathering will be discussed and justified.

The layout of the chapter will be thematic. At first, the theme will discuss the construction of the theoretical basis for this research. This section will explain the research processes starting with the selected paradigm for this research. As previously stated, a successful research topic needs a strong framework, and this can only be achieved by proceeding with the ontological and epistemological questions, which will be discussed in this section of the chapter. The methodological process was informed by the ontological and epistemological questions and it was important to understand their role and position within this paradigm. Before entering the discussion of methods, this chapter will demonstrate prominent authors who were featured in certain books, journals, and articles that were consulted in the preparation of this chapter and the theoretical basis of the study in general. In the following section, the method for data collection will be explained and justified. The methods, which will be discussed, are interviews, focus groups and netography. One cannot

proceed with the aforementioned methods without taking an ethical stance, which will be included in this section. Ethical consideration was necessary to ensure steps were taken to prevent any distress to any participant during the interview process.

The next section will focus on the sample collection process. To ensure that the data gathered was sufficient for the research topic, the sample selection process needed to be pre-emptive. A smaller sample group was selected, which gave the researcher time to do in depth research on a one-to-one basis with all her participants.

The subsequent section will discuss how the research instruments were formulated to gather quality data. The formulation of research instruments is vital for a successful research outcome. This section will look at the different research instruments this thesis used for its data collection. Lastly, the chapter will justify the participant selection.

4.2. Construction of a Theoretical Basis for the Study

At first, we need to look at the paradigm that was chosen for this research to understand the theoretical basis of this thesis.

The paradigm of this thesis was chosen from a social constructionism standpoint, which informed the ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions. Social constructionism and organisational theory were used, both of which are broad theories underpinned by other specific theories such as social identity theory and symbolic interactionism.

To enable social constructionists to successfully research a phenomenon, they need to shape their method for collecting data according to the questions asked from an ontological and epistemological perspective (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Krauss, 2005, Terre-Blanche and Durrheim, 1999). Only after the ontological and epistemological questions have been answered can an appropriate theory or theories be selected, thus a deductive approach was used in this thesis (Gray, 2009).

To understand the reason why this thesis drew from the social constructionism and organisational theories, the researcher's motivation for selecting them must first be understood ontologically and epistemologically (Gray, 2009; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). It is important to note that the ontological statement influences the epistemological questions,

which in turn affects the methodology. In other words, they are interrelated. The methodological methods are not the actual methods used to gather information, but rather to debate what methods are subscribed by the epistemology. Only then can the method be selected (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Gray, 2009).

At first we need to understand the nature of ontology. Gray (2009:19) states that, “ontology is the study of being, that is, the nature of existence and what constitutes reality”. This thesis took a relativist stance, as prescribed by the constructivist/ interpretivist paradigm (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Ontologically, this research strived to know the ‘being’ of seafarers: how their identities were constructed and how working in the merchant navy impacted on the identities of the South African seafarer in particular. Further to ontologically determine social constructionists’ research on the extent of how people designed and reconstructed their own world through action and critical reflection (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Krauss, 2005; Terre-Blanche and Durrheim, 1999).

Epistemological questions, asked within the social constructionism paradigm, are concerned about knowledge that is the relationship between the knower and what should be known (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Questions that were asked in light of this research was how knowledge was created through lived experiences, the social relations that structured these experiences and how events was understood within social and economic contexts (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Krauss, 2005; Terre-Blanche and Durrheim, 1999). Thus, the knowledge of seafarers was determined by the questions asked epistemologically by investigating the underlying structures, such as culture, language, gender and race/multiculturalism.

Epistemologically, research within the social constructionism paradigm can be viewed as successful when it can solve the problems presented within the merchant navy context. If the research was successful in unveiling illusions of seafarers working in the merchant navy the research outcome can also be applied in other research fields, such as fishing vessels (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Krauss, 2005; Terre-Blanche and Durrheim, 1999).

The ontological and epistemological questions discussed above informed the methodology in respect to the identity construction of South African Seafarers working in international waters.

Since the theories mentioned above are based on ontological and epistemological questions they are interlinked with the methodological stance, it prescribes that qualitative methods

are used to collect data. The social constructive/ interpretive paradigm does not dismiss the thought that one could implement a triangular research method within the methodology. Gray (2009) argues that qualitative and quantitative methods each have their strengths and weaknesses, and that triangular research can help balance out these weaknesses. However, this thesis, after careful consideration, only used qualitative methods. The premise from, which this methodology was selected was that quantitative methods tend to silence the participant's voice, and consequently that their experiences become muted and meaningless, whereby qualitative research gave the participants a platform (Burr, 2007).

It is through qualitative research that a participant can be viewed in what Gergen (2012) construes as a 'conscious social actor' who is capable of controlling his/her performances or behaviour. Burr (2007), in turn, argues that the qualitative researcher must take a subjective stance when researching reality as seen through the participant's eyes. To understand the qualitative methodology this thesis will lay out the methodological stance regarding qualitative researchers.

Qualitative researchers study the contexts of a research topic and provide insight into cultural activities found in the area of study (Tracy, 2013). This was especially relevant for this research study, as South African seafarers not only come from different cultural backgrounds but are also employed in a multicultural environment, which is the norm in the merchant navy. Thus, not only did the research consider the individual cultural backgrounds of South African seafarers, but also the seafaring culture wherein they are located. Moreover, qualitative methodology allowed the researcher to establish a level of trust with the participants, which revealed in-depth participant-focused data, which allowed the researcher to acknowledge and interpret the nuances of the participant's local meaning, viewpoints and stories (Tracy, 2013).

Tracy (2013) states reasons for the importance of qualitative research and this includes the researcher's stance on the research topic. Qualitative methodology can provide knowledge that targets societal issues, questions, or problems and therefore serves humankind.

In summary, qualitative research:

- Is rich and holistic
- Offers more than a snapshot – provides an understanding of a sustained process;
- Focuses on lived experience, placed in its context;
- Honours participants' local meanings;
- Interprets participant viewpoints and stories;
- Preserves the chronological flow, documenting what events lead to what consequences, explaining why this chronology may have occurred;
- Celebrates how research representations (reports, articles, performances) constitute reality and affect the questions we can ask and what we can know;
- Illustrates how a multitude of interpretations are possible, but how some are more theoretically compelling, morally significant, or practically important than others (Tracy, 2013:5).

If the quote above (Tracy, 2013) is taken and applied to this research topic and substantiated by international research documents, there is justification for the use of qualitative research. According to international research documents, books, journal articles, and web-based articles suggests that seafarers live and work in a complex environment. This complex environment consists of diverse cultures, genders, race, all of, which impact on the coping strategies available to them (Dawson and Chapman; Thomas, 2012; Dickinson, 2011; Diederichsen, n.d.; Hansen and Jensen, 1989; Herwadkar, 2014b; Hesse, 2003; Hetherington et al., 2005; Horck, 2006, 2008; International Labour Organisation, 2006; International Transport Workers' Federation, 2002, 2012a; Iversen, 2010; Jensen, 2002; Kitada, 2010; Klein, 2002b; Nautilus, 2013).

4.3. Consultation with Authoritative Sources of Information

This chapter was drawn from several resources, books, journal articles and web based articles. Theoretically, classical authors were scrutinised as a foundation for this thesis. Authors such as Marx (1886) and Weber (1991, 1992, 2008) and contemporary authors laid the foundation for the social constructionism theory for this study. The primary authors used were Burr (2007); Durrheim (1997); and Gergen (2012). It must be noted that these authors were not the only theorists consulted, but were also the authors responsible for planting the seeds for the formulation of this research.

Other literature, which were intensely researched included international and national journals, articles and books informing the, methodology, sociological, and organisational theories, and also provided research material on the merchant navy, all of, which was necessary to ensure that the thesis is well rounded and presented holistically.

4.4. Methods of Data Collection

Neuman (2000:207) describes qualitative research methods as:

Any social science research that produces results that are not obtained by statistical procedures or other methods of quantification. Some of the data may be quantified, but the analysis is qualitative. It can refer to research about people's lives, their stories, and behaviour, and it can also be used to examine organisations, relationships, and social movements.

Several methods are underpinned by the qualitative research paradigm, which were utilised in this thesis. These methods included face-to-face interviews, focus groups and social-media-focus groups.

4.4.1. Interviews

Interviews are the most often used method in qualitative research. Face-to-face interviews were the preferred method of this thesis, as it allowed the participant to reflect and allowed for interaction between the researcher and participant. The questions were open ended, allowing for a natural flow of conversation and allowed the researcher to guide the interview to stay on the topic, but it did not adhere to a strict interview schedule, thus it allowed for a more in-depth interview strategy. Open ended interviews must be approached cautiously as it is easy for the researcher to ask leading questions, thus prompting the participant's answer to be less reflective but more on what he thinks the interviewer wants to hear. Listening skills are very important, and the interviewer has to acquire these skills, as it allows the research to be participant-orientated, and not researcher-orientated (Babbie, Mouton, Vorster and Prozesky, 2001).

The participants were selected according to availability. The sample group consisted of thirty-four participants. The participants were divided into three groups. The first group consisted of twenty participants in face-to-face interviews. The second group of participants comprised nine participants who were working offshore. The third group consisted of two focus groups, with four participants each.

4.4.2. Focus Groups

Babbie et al. (2001) describe a focus group as the way of “getting-ten-for-the-price-of-one”. In other words, a focus group consists of a few participants being interviewed at the same time. They argued that focus groups save time and money, and subdue individual perspectives in favour of the group perspective but that the quality of data is much lower than that gathered in an individual interview (Babbie et al., 2001).

This researcher would like to contradict this remark as this research and her previous research experiences found that focus groups were very helpful as participants prompted each other for answers and they debated the question asked. It provided a much richer data in comparison to data gathered in individual interviews. Focus groups were also very important as the researcher could observe the social interactions between the participants. The first focus group was unscheduled and naturally formed because of two friends and the husband of the interviewee joining the discussion. The interviewer redirected the discussion to become a group discussion. The racial composition of this focus group was one black female seafarer and three white male seafarers.

The second focus group developed when the researcher taught a STCW 2010 maritime course at a University of Technology, South Africa, and the students, all male officers, had group discussions during lunch breaks, or after class. The racial composition consists of two white officers and two black officers.

4.4.3. Netography

Netography is a term coined by Ofcom (2008), and is described as a research tool mostly employed by utilising the internet to gain access to participants. Social network research, or netography, allows users to register on an online account, creating a profile and developing an online social network. The social network profile used in this research included personal information, for example, age, sex, religion and place of origin (Ofcom, 2008). The social network users or ‘friends’ were either invited to ‘befriend’ the profile or requested to be ‘befriended’ by the owner of the profile (Ofcom, 2008). According to Ofcom (2008) social networks consists not only of friends and family of the profile user, but the ‘friend’ group can be extended to people that are met through common interests, or even common friends.

Markham and Buchanan (2012), mentioned a very important point about focus groups - that focus group discussions can take place over the electronic media and are therefore not location bound. Responses to questions asked on social media such as Facebook, can be considered as focus group discussions since the researcher can initiate a debate and social media interaction takes place. In this process the researcher can also respond to the answers and direct the discussion to address specific topics (Markham and Buchanan, 2012).

This research made extensive use of social networking sites to gain access to participants. To access international seafarer participants initially proved to be problematic. At first the researcher used her personal Facebook profile to contact or 'befriend' other maritime Facebook groups. After two months, she registered three Facebook groups under the names of '*Seafarers' Forum*', '*Women at Sea*' and '*South African Seafarers*'. All three groups and the researcher's personal profile were used and made accessible to these seafarers. The *Seafarers Forum* Facebook group has more than 12 000 international members. *Women-at-Sea* Facebook group has 118 women seafaring members and the *South African Seafarers* Facebook group has 113 members. The researcher's personal Facebook profile, under the name of 'Lydia Dekker' has more than 800 'friends'. The majority 'friends' on the researcher's personal profile consist of groups such as: eThekwinini Maritime Cluster; World Maritime News; Offshore Energy Today; SeamanOnlinePH; IMO International Maritime Law Institute; Seafarers' House; North American Maritime Ministry Association; Safety4sea; Splash; Maritime and Offshore News; World Maritime News; Nautilus International; Maritime Safety Training and Development-Pty Ltd; Infomarineat Sea; Seafarers India; Maritime Union of Australia; WarsashMaritime Academy; Apostleship at Sea; Maritime News; Humans at Sea; Seafarers; Subsea World News; ITF Press; Lloyd's Register; Port Technology International; IFSMA; and Crewtoo, and so forth.

Over sixty South African participants were contacted via Facebook and asked if they were willing to participate. Twelve participants responded and the researcher sent out and received nine completed interview schedules through email. One Facebook participant chatted with the researcher online through Facebook and agreed to a face-to-face interview.

4.4.4 Surveys

Surveys are mostly seen as a quantitative method for research (Cozby, 2003). But in the context of the merchant navy, a qualitative survey method was found to be helpful. This thesis used a survey website to initially gather international data to use later on as a comparison of the local data to be gathered. A survey website, *SurveyMonkey* (2013) was registered and surveys were constructed by using open- and closed-ended questions. From the researcher's perspective, it was mildly successful, as the qualitative survey reached 100 seafarers during six months with a response rate of 12 percent. These responses gave the researcher a glimpse of the industry as a whole. However, the survey website's name "*SurveyMonkey*" was a deterrent for many seafarers and they were reluctant to participate in the research as they saw it as insulting. Nonetheless, may be a great tool for future research.

Cozby (2003) argued that there are two ways of managing surveys. The first is as an open-ended survey whereby the respondents are, as previously mentioned, forwarded a Survey electronically as part of an interview tool. If it is sent electronically, the interview survey will be completed by the participant him/herself (Cozby, 2003). The survey can also be used in a structured interview, where the interviewer asks the respondent the questions and fills it in as part of the interview structure (Cozby, 2003). Cozby (2003) maintains that by using the electronic survey one has the advantage that it is cost saving. However, the researcher found that it can be costly, as one needs to pay a fee to access the website's survey service. The advantage is that once access have been established, electronic surveys provide a link whereby communication can continue through email, or posted on a social media site such as Facebook for easy access for the participants. Surveys sent electronically have the benefit of reaching seafarers who are working offshore, or as indicated by Markham and Buchanan (2012) over a large geographic area and that it also allows the participants the flexibility to go through the survey in their own time. A total of 100 survey schedules were sent out with a response rate of 12 percent.

4.4.5. Additional Data from Seafarer's Wives

The wives of three male participants sat in while the researcher interviewed their husbands. These women asked if they could contribute to the discussion. After careful

consideration the researcher asked the wives to answer a few questions regarding their coping mechanisms whilst their husbands were at sea. This was done in writing and submitted to the researcher. These contributions were not originally planned to be incorporated into the thesis, but kept for possible data for an article. However, after some consideration the researcher realised that the coping mechanisms of seafarers also relied on their family structure, thus some of the wives' comments were deemed important and included in the data analysis.

4.4.6. Ethical Considerations

One cannot discuss internet research, be it through social media, email, or any other means of obtaining data through the electronic media without considering the associated ethical issues. According to Markham and Buchanan (2012), traditional ethical issues do not cover the new-age electronic media and therefore requires the use thereof to be approached with great care. Although the internet is perceived as a public domain, the researcher cannot presume that the data gathered online is free to be used without any ethical consideration (Markham and Buchanan, 2012). In addition, one cannot proceed from the premise that all ethical standards are suitable for all research, as in the case of internet research. However, ethical considerations are different and more complex in the electronic domain (Markham and Buchanan, 2012).

Ethical issues regarding internet research include issues of privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, consent and potential harm (Markham and Buchanan, 2012). The common presumption that if you post online, private information is no longer private, as it has entered the public domain. In this regard, Porr and Ployhart (2004:138) noted that up to 70 percent of the respondents of their research are “more concerned about internet privacy than with any other medium”. They assert that privacy is defined as “either presumed or stipulated interest that individuals have with respect to protecting personal information, personal property, or personal space” (Porr and Ployhart, 2004:138).

Markham and Buchanan (2012) argued that the lines are blurred as to what is public and what is private space on the internet. For example, if something is posted in a blog or a Facebook group it cannot be presumed that it is available to be used as research. These blurred lines become more problematic when users of blogs, Twitter accounts or

Facebook, or even online chat rooms do not always consider their shared experiences or information as public.

This issue becomes more complicated when the law, as in South Africa, states that your private social media activities, for argument's sake, private information that you posted can be used in court, even if your account was hacked into by a third party (Rajoo, Beharilal, and Epstein, 2016). A judge, in a South African court, handed down a verdict that your privacy “shrinks as you move further into communal space, be it physically or digitally” (Rajoo et al., 2016:1). So the question needs to be asked what is the ethic regarding accessing Facebook or any other social network data.

Markham and Buchanan (2012) suggest that certain ethical guidelines should be used when doing research on the internet. Markham and Buchanan (2012) propose that the researcher must ask themselves if the data gathered will harm the participants, are there rules in place regarding the use of information from the site?; what methods, if any, will be used in obtaining informed consent? Internet ethics are not set in stone, but great care must be taken to ensure that ethical principles are taken into consideration throughout internet research (Markham and Buchanan, 2012).

This thesis used information from three different Facebook groups and one personal Facebook profile. The researcher is the administrator and creator of all the groups, namely *Seafarer's Forum*, *South African Seafarers*, and *Women at Sea*. The personal Facebook profile is under her personal name. The researcher identified the groups she created as research groups and often reminded the members of these groups that all information posted in any one of the groups might be used in the research. The smaller groups have the same warning, but they are personally asked in their online chatroom if their information can be used, with a detailed description of the reason for the research. The larger group has over 12 000 members, whereas the smaller groups collectively consist of about 800 members. To protect anonymity, the data analysis chapters do not mention from, which group the information was obtained. Out of the 12 000 Facebook members, a daily response rate to posts averages approximately 300 members. These responses vary from topic to topic and who has Facebook access at the time that the posts are posted.

4.4.7. Pilot Study

According to Babbie et al. (2001); and van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) pilot studies are often neglected in the social research domain. Thus, they identify important aspects of the importance of pilot studies. They stated that a pilot study is a mini version of the full scale research, otherwise known as a feasibility study (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). Ravitch and Carl (2016) refer to a pilot study as a formative design. It is specifically developed to pre-test a particular research instrument, for example an interview schedule (Ravitch and Carl, 2016; van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). They also observe that although pilot studies are a crucial element for a good study design, there is no guarantee that the research will be successful, but that it will increase the probability of a good and successful research paper (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). Another important aspect of a pilot study is that it can pre-warn the researcher of potential problems regarding the selected research methods. This can be corrected prior to starting the data collection, such as the wording of the questions or even the order in, which the questions asked in the interview schedule (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001; Ravitch and Carl, 2016). Ravitch and Carl (2016) added that a pilot study helps the researcher to note and examine any personal bias that might have slipped into the survey.

This researcher had the initial advantage of being part of a group researching different aspects within the merchant navy. Thus the group carefully scrutinized the interview schedules prior to the pilot study. Thereafter the researcher took a two-step approach to the conduct of the pilot study. One was to ask two seafarers to look at the interview schedule and to fill it in and thereafter to report to her any problems they could detect. Thereafter, the researcher purchased a survey programme, *SurveyMonkey*. This survey's link was sent to five different seafarers who were asked if they could answer the questions and report any problems regarding the research method. In total, seven seafarers were used for the pilot study, and the researcher's initial cohort of five members scrutinized the schedule, and the electronic version of the interview schedule.

The following areas were found to be problematic.

- The survey was found to be too lengthy.
- The link to the online survey did not always open
- Some of the seafarers' internet onboard ship was too slow to open the link, due to bandwidth restrictions.
- The seafarers were not impressed about the name of the survey '*SurveyMonkey*'. They commented that they are not monkeys. It was demeaning to them.
- The one seafarer, well known to the researcher, pointed out that the questions are not 'touchy or feely enough', in other words, it does not prompt the participant to expand and elaborate on the question. In other words the words of 'how do you feel about....' Should rather be used than 'can you elaborate on....'; and rather than 'Is it possible to give an example', to use 'can you describe why it happened'.

After a short trial run and subsequent to these responses the electronic survey was dropped for two reasons. One was that onboard seafarers have a limited bandwidth and it took them too long to access and download the electronic survey. Secondly, the survey was found to be too lengthy and consequently took too long to complete in the limited time available to them.

The survey and the interview schedule were also adapted to include more 'touchy-feely' type of questions.

4.4.8. Choice of Study Locality

When the researcher was approached by her initial cohort to join their research initiative, she was already well versed in the context of the research, since her spouse was a seafarer for close on twenty years. However, only after intense reading of information in the form of articles, books, maritime journals, and so forth, that she realised that the bulk of the information available was from a European perspective. There was very little information available on South African seafarers. Since she is geographically situated on the East Coast of South Africa, she initially decided to concentrate on seafarers in the port city of Durban. On the realisation that there are less than two thousand seafarers listed with the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) she decided that it would be necessary to expand the research to the rest of the coastal areas in South Africa.

4.5. Selection of Sample

There were two sampling techniques, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is used for “large, representative samples for social science research” (Babbie et al., 2001:166). Large sample size is more likely to give more accurate population data (Cozby, 2003). On the other hand, non-probability sampling, is used when a small sample group is used for the research data (Babbie et al., 2001). There are different non-probability sampling techniques that are available for social research.

The research technique, which was considered as most suitable for this thesis, was convenience sampling or otherwise known as haphazard sampling. Convenience or haphazard sampling is appropriate when the sample group is difficult to locate or when they are not geographically accessible (Babbie et al., 2001; Bryman, 2004). Cozby (2003) further argued that the negative side of convenience sampling is that the data is not representative of the total population, and that the data cannot be generalized. However, this thesis was based on a limited population of South African seafarers working in international waters. Hence, their experiences in the international context allowed for a measure of generalising but it hindered this research from being exclusively representative of the South African seafarer population since it was difficult to reach the different gender and racial groups represented in the South African maritime population. The positive side of using convenience sampling is that the seafarers who were on shore leave made it easier to interview than those working at sea at the time of data gathering.

4.6. Formulation of the Research Instruments

The research instruments, which were used in this thesis, was open ended qualitative survey and interview schedules. Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated that research instruments otherwise known as protocols or guides, are fundamental tools a researcher uses in the collection of data.

There are three types of survey schedules: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. Structured interviews are interviews that ask the same questions to all of the participants, whereas semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to use the interview structure to guide the interview into a certain direction in order to prevent the participant from wandering off the topic. The unstructured interview is open-ended as it allows for conversation to take place between the researcher and the participant on the research topic (Ravitch and Carl, 2016).

This thesis was partial to semi-structured and unstructured interviews, thus allowing participants to be more reflective in answering the questions posed to them. It also allowed the researcher to observe the reaction of the participant when certain questions were asked. Reactions included pauses, tone of voice, or even silences that occurred during the research process. Reflexivity played an important role in the research.

Gilgun (2011) equates reflexivity to awareness by saying that a researcher must be aware of the influence she/he can have on the research and the research on him/her. Gilgun (2011) also argues that researchers must become reflective in three areas. The first area is to become more reflective on the topic, which they are going to investigate. In other words, they must justify the meaning that the topic has for them personally and professionally. Secondly, the researcher must reflect on the perspectives and experiences of the participants with whom they are doing the research. Thirdly, the researcher must reflect on how the data is presented to the audience, this includes the way in which it is presented and the language, which the audience can understand. Researchers must also reflect on the impact of the power dimension, experiences, and perspectives they will have on the participants and consequently on the research generally (Gilgun, 2011).

Reflexivity is not only applicable to the role of the researcher towards the participant and the research, but also to the participant. Riach (2009) coined this 'participant-situated reflexivity'. Participant-situated reflexivity involves both parties - the researcher and the participant involved in the interview (Gilgun, 2011). Gilgun (2011) continued by noting that if we look further into participant-situated reflexivity that some form of change must emerge from the reflexive processes since we question not only ourselves and the world, but also our position in the world. This is not only a researcher-situated process, but also a participant-situated process, as the participant also has to reflect on his or her knowledge of the world through the questioning-answering process (Gilgun, 2011). To enable this reflexivity to take place, certain questions need to be asked.

Ravitch and Carl (2016) stated that there are six kinds of questions or sets of questions, which should feature in surveys and interview schedules. The first set of questions relate to background and demographic information, which allows the researcher to place the participants within their social contexts. The second set of questions should include the participants' experience and include behavioural questions. These sets of questions should

focus on the person's past, future, and current activities. The third set of questions relate to what was described in the pilot study section as 'touchy-feeling' questions, which explore the emotional side of the participants. Fourthly, the survey should include opinions or values questions, which will explore the interviewee's perspective on the topic, or event and what value the participant places thereon. The fifth set of questions should concentrate on the participant's knowledge. In other words, these questions must seek facts and information about the topic being researched. Lastly, the survey should include sensory questions; questions of the participant's experience on a sensory level, such as hearing, touch, taste, or smell (Ravitch and Carl, 2016).

This thesis used all three formats of surveys: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. The justification for using all three formats was related to the availability of the seafarers and their geographic situation when they are asked to participate. However, all three formats was open-ended. At the time of the pilot study, it was determined that the structured survey could be sent to seafarers working offshore. Although the questions were identical, it must be noted that these surveys were balanced between closed questions, such as age, cultural-language, rank, and so forth, and open questions, where the seafarer was asked to give descriptive information. Semi-structured interviews were found to be more effective with seafarers who were willing participants, but 'men or women of few words', which is common amongst seafarers. Lastly, it was also found that seafarers speak easier and more openly when they were in the company of other seafarers and an opportunistic focus group could be formed. These focus group interviews were led by unstructured interview schedules.

4.7. Choice of Research Subjects

The initial goal was to reach a sample group consisting of twenty South African seafarers. However, the sample group grew to thirty-seven participants. Since the researcher resides in the port city of Durban, South Africa, South African seafarers residing in or passing through the port city of Durban were approached to participate. The seafarers who joined the Facebook group, *South African Seafarers*, were contacted individually and asked if they are willing to participate. Depending on where they were situated geographically, a survey schedule was sent to them; some seafarers were working offshore or lived in a different geographical area than the researcher. However, if they were onshore and in the same

geographical area at the time then the researcher made contact with them to undertake a face-to-face interview.

4.8. Discourse Analysis

Discourse is rooted in Michel Foucault's theories of how knowledge is constructed and understood (Burr, 2007). Hall (1992) explains discourse as being the way people talk, how they think, or how an object is represented through language. Knowledge, as represented by discourses has an impact on how social sciences see and research social identity construction (Burr, 2007). Discourses form social categories and these categories include the positions of individuals, their relations to other individuals and the identities of the individuals in these categories (Tuori, 2009). This chapter specifically concentrates on the categories of culture, cultural-language, language, gender, race and social constructionism, and how these influence the coping mechanisms of seafarers.

Foucault argues that discourse is also imbedded in power, and this power lies in the hands of the experts or the 'knowers' who are able to enforce it on those whom they perceive to have a lesser knowledge (Hall, 1992). Burr (2007:67) further explains Foucault's theory of discourse by saying that "there is an intimate relationship between discourse, knowledge and power". This power increases as knowledge increases. It is within western societies that the increase of knowledge brings with it the increase in power for both individuals and organisations (Burr, 2007). It is this power relation that has an influence on how the social categories inform and construct social identities (Tuori, 2009).

4.9. Conclusion

The research methodology is only one part of a process to formulate a research thesis. To understand this methodology chapter, one needs to understand the foundation of the research topic.

The foundation of this thesis lies with the chosen paradigm, which in this case is the social constructionism paradigm. It is only after the research foundation is laid that one can investigate and formulate the ontological questions, which inform the epistemological questions, which in turn inform the methodological debate. Ontologically this thesis looked at the being of the seafarer and took a relativist stance. This stance allowed the researcher

to explore the identity construction of the South African seafarer. The epistemological questions, in the social construction paradigm, seek to determine the relationship between what the knower is and what should be known. This was done by investigating the underlying structures, which formulate the South African seafarer's identity, which are the seafarer's culture, language, gender, and race or the multicultural environment the seafarer works in. Methodologically, the qualitative method is the preferred method for doing research under the social construction paradigm.

Although a combination of qualitative and quantitative research is possible and not frowned upon by social constructionist researchers, this thesis used only qualitative methods. The methods, which were most suitable for this research, were interviews, focus groups, open ended qualitative survey and netography. When the methods are selected, a researcher has to take an ethical stance to protect the participant from harm and give him or her anonymity. To ensure that these methods are appropriate for the research topic a trial run is recommended in the form of a pilot study. A pilot study is a very important part of any research, to determine the do-ability of the research. A pilot study also helps to iron out all the creases in the survey schedule and to eliminate any bias that may occur.

The sample size of qualitative research is much smaller than that for a quantitative research as this allows for in-depth interviews, and participant-situated reflection. This research utilised the non-probability method, using convenience sampling, which was ideal when working with participants who were geographically distributed globally and thus made the availability of seafarers difficult for the researcher to study. Once the sample was selected, the researcher's attention turned to the formulation of the research questions.

If research questions are poorly formulated, the data collected will be substandard and affect the research in its entirety. A mix of structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews was used, each dependent on the availability of the seafarer. In other words, the seafarer's availability was dependent on whether he or she was working offshore, passing through, or living in proximity of the port city of Durban. If the seafarer was offshore, a survey was sent to him/her or, if they are passing through the port city of Durban, a semi-structured interview was more appropriate as the seafarer's shore leave was short and a semi-structured interview was a quicker option than an unstructured interview schedule. An unstructured interview schedule was considered ideal when the seafarer was on leave

and had time for a longer interview. Seafarers often visit each other when on leave and impromptu unstructured focus groups was formed using an unstructured interview schedule.

Chapter Five

Data Analysis and Interpretation: Part One

5.1. Introduction

South African seafarers introduce unique cultures into the seafaring community. This is due to their distinct perspectives, which are characteristic of the diversity of South African society.

South African seafarers form part of the international maritime community. However, their identities are rooted nationally and culturally in South African soil. South Africans have a different perspective of the world, and how they act and react when placed in an international and multicultural environment is an important aspect to address.

Prior to the start of this chapter the researcher wishes to revisit the research questions and the focus areas of this thesis.

The main objectives of this chapter are to understand and analyse how the South African seafarers' identities are constructed in the international merchant navy context.

Seafarers, national or international, mostly work in a multicultural environment, thus being exposed to diverse culture, languages, genders and race. It is this exposure and interaction that play a large role in the identity construction of seafarers'. This diversity is one of the pillars that shape the ship's culture. Failure to assimilate into the ship's culture will result in negative consequences for the seafarer. The second and third pillars are the work- and organisational-culture. The ships culture rests on these three pillars.

To enable the researcher to analyse the identity construction of the South African seafarer this chapter will draw on national and international literature, the theoretical framework and on participant narratives. This part of the thesis will also introduce international participants' viewpoints to substantiate the data gathered. South African data is drawn from interviews, surveys, two focus groups and the social media.

Chiefly, this chapter will briefly revisit the social identity construction theory to frame this chapter. Thereafter, this chapter will continue with an overview of discourse analysis, looking at the important role that language plays in discourse. Discourse analysis also looks

at how discourse is embedded in power, which is relevant in the global merchant navy. Then, this chapter will continue to analyse the training of South African seafarers prior to their entering the merchant navy, as it is in this context that the merchant navy culture shapes the identities of the future seafarers.

Next, social interaction in the merchant navy from the South African perspective will be discussed. Social interaction is imperative in the construction of identities and is linked to the way merchant navy culture; ships culture and safety culture are constructed. The next section will consider each culture individually and analyse it from the South African seafarer's perspective to determine how they are encultured and integrated, and amalgamated into these cultures.

The following section will concentrate on language, cultural-language, and maritime language. Language is the vehicle of culture and cannot be eliminated in the analysis of the South African seafarers' identity construction. Language is also an important process in the social construction of gender identities. This section will debunk the gender/sex phenomenon and look at how South African seafarers' construct, and are constructed in the gender context. Similarly, race is also socially constructed through intergroup perceptions. This construction process not only stereotypes the 'other' cultures, but through stereotyping 'other' cultures and races can result in the seafarer being isolated from the organisational and ship cultures.

5.2. Identity Construction

Identity construction must be approached holistically and take into account culture, cultural-language, gender identity and racial identity. A person's identity is rooted in the culture she or he was born into. Since South African seafarers are born into a unique national culture, where multiculturalism is the norm it is important to discuss this separately from the merchant navy culture. Cultural-language forms part of the holistic study of social identity construction as it gives meaning to the symbolic values, tangible and non-tangible, which is unique to each culture.

Gender identity construction is socialised and internalised by individuals in every culture. Each gender role is expected to be conducted according to the norms of their ethnic cultures. Within the cultural boundaries, gender construction is perceived as fixed and each

is expected to perform their identities within these boundaries whilst language and gender social construction occur primarily within the mother-culture. Racial social construction is the result of 'outgroups' constructing the 'other'. In other words, racial-social construction occurs between groups, rather than within group contexts. This construction process usually occurs by the perceived dominant cultures negatively constructing the marginalised cultures.

Within the human sciences, and specifically the social constructionism theory, identity construction is recognised as being fluid, in other words it is a continual construction process. This continuing construction occurs through the process of interaction with the 'other'. In other words, this occurs when the personal identity interacts with other individuals and group identities.

These identities are also constructed through the cultures' individual identities in, which they are located. These cultures also include the seafaring industry's educational, work, and structural cultures, which will all be discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, identity construction is not only something that is bestowed upon a person, but as people perform, to use Goffman's (1959) terminology, they perform different roles, they are actors, or agents of their own life (Stets and Burke, 2009). Agents are people who take on different roles; they are able to take control of whom they want to interact with (Stets and Burke, 2009).

It is important to remind the reader that social identity construction does not occur in isolation, and that one cannot research the South African seafarers' social identity by just looking at the process, but that it needs to be researched holistically by researching social identity through the culture, language, gender, and racial discourses. Therefore, there will be an overlap of information throughout the chapter in each section analysed.

5.3. Culture in the South African context

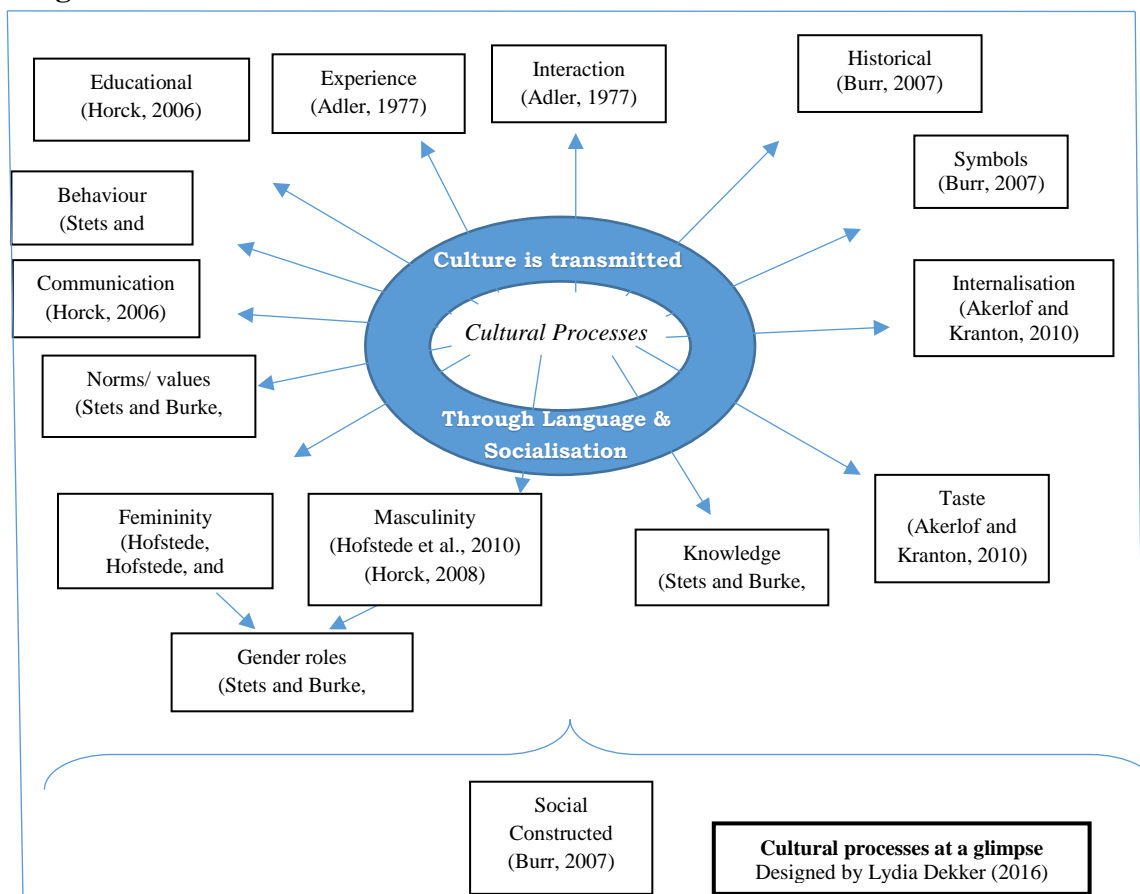
Defining culture is complex, as it consists of many processes, as can be seen in the diagram below. Moloi and Bam (2014) explain that culture includes race, gender, sexual orientation, religion and age, just to mention a few. Furthermore, cultural-language and culture-related behaviour allow people to adapt to living and working in a certain geographical area with a group of people who share the same social characteristics. Hofstede, Hofstede and

Minkov (2010) further explains that cultural socialisation starts within the family, at birth, and continues throughout one's lifespan. It is this socialisation process, which gives a person the ability to adapt in different context, starting at primary and secondary education, the work environment, and so forth. This socialisation process only ends with one's death (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010). Burr (2007) further explains that the 'acquiring' of culture is through language and imitation. Children imitate their peers and are socialised into their culture (Burr, 2007).

To understand culture, one needs to understand the processes involved within the cultural concept, as it is not only applicable in one's personal culture, but also present in merchant navy, organisational, ship and safety cultures. In combination, these processes construct social identities.

The diagram below is a visual representation of the reasons identity construction needs to be researched holistically. The diagram illustrates that culture is transmitted through language and socialisation.

Figure 6: Cultural Processes



Social constructionists argue that a person is “born into a world where the conceptual frameworks and categories used by the people in our culture already exist” (Burr, 2007:6).

South Africa is unique in that it consists of many different cultures, each with its own conceptual frameworks and categories. MacDonald (2006) explains the racial composition, as structured during apartheid, by stating that people were classified according to their race during apartheid as either white or non-white. 'White' encompassed English and Afrikaans speaking people, whereas 'non-white' was an amalgamation of many cultures, which include Xhosa, Zulu, Tswana, Sotho and many other ethnic groups (MacDonald, 2006). Post-apartheid has now added racial categories to include, White, African, Coloured (mixed races), and Indian/Asian (Stats SA, 2015).

5.4. Maritime Education in the South African Context

Maritime training was fragmented during the apartheid era. Officers and ratings' training were based on race. The South African maritime institutions only trained white men as officers and coloured and black men as ratings (ordinary seamen) (Ruggunan, 2005). The training received by the ratings, was not accredited by international standards, limiting their career paths (Ruggunan, 2005). The segregation in maritime training ‘seemed’ not to have had a huge impact on the South African merchant navy, however, it was entrenched in power, by training whites only as officers, it automatically gave them power over the ratings. Ruggunan (2005) pointed out that during the 1970s and 1980s South African maritime companies trained their own crews to meet their own specific needs. This trend of South African maritime companies to train their own seafarers could be seen in the establishment of the Unicorn Training School and the Portnet Training Academy; other maritime training institutes that implemented maritime training were: Durban Institute of Technology (DIT), Cape Technikon, and Wingfield Technical College, Cape Town (Bonnin and Woods, 2002).

The Durban University of Technology (DUT), formally known as DIT, had its maritime studies mainstreamed in 1979. During apartheid and up to 1996 DUT only catered for white students who were trained to become maritime officers (Bonnin and Woods, 2002). Bonnin, Lane, Ruggunan, and Woods (2004), called this training apartheid racial-Fordism, in other words training was racially divided with white people being given opportunities and structures to further their education.

Post-apartheid changes were noted in the maritime landscape in South Africa. South Africa is rapidly rising out of the inherited apartheid legacy and a positive expectation is envisioned for the future of the South African merchant navy. But this optimistic vision of the merchant navy contributing to the government coffers and creating ample job opportunities seems to have evaporated as the post-apartheid years rolled on. Mokhele (2013), SAMSA's CEO, also voiced his concerns on the slow transformation of the maritime industry, which includes training. This concern was again voiced by SAMSA, at a function where they received recognition for empowerment and transformation:

An apparent and 'disturbing' poor intake of post-graduate students by South Africa's business sector is at best, an unusual and unacceptable anomaly given both the students' significant academic knowledge depth but also vast economic opportunities especially in the country's maritime economic sector (The 10th Province, 2016).

Although there is an increase in African men and women seafarers in South Africa, the numbers are still unevenly spread. All of the participants interviewed were South African trained. The only woman in these focus groups was a Zulu speaking South African and the first in her community to enter a male-dominated work environment. She is married to a white Afrikaner cadet who is currently completing his training to become an officer, which is out of the norm for both partners' cultures. Although intercultural socialisation is fostered in many schools and tertiary institutions, black-white relationships are becoming more common although it is still generally frowned upon in most cultures in South Africa. This resistance to change tends to carry over from one generation to the next and so infiltrates the work environment.

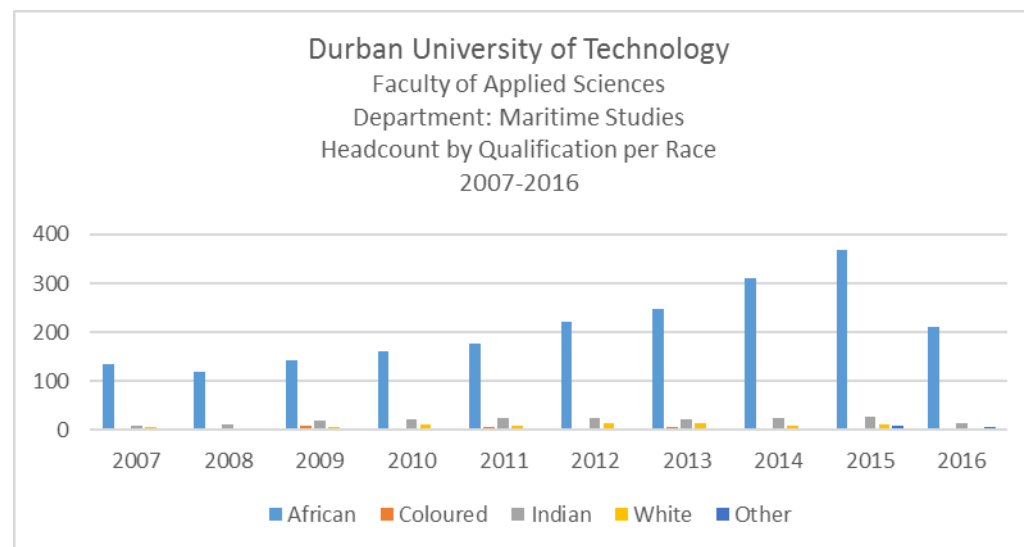
As the South African schooling and tertiary training are becoming more multicultural, South Africans from all walks of life are increasingly interacting with different cultures from a young age. All participants indicated that, compared to other national groups who are not exposed to multiculturalism from a young age, South Africans found it easier to adapt to working in a multicultural environment

However, the highly racialized maritime training was, at least in theory, intended to change after apartheid to a situation where gender and race equality would be fostered to offer lucrative job opportunities for everyone in the merchant navy (Bonnin et al., 2004). The Graph below, supplied by Durban University of Technology (DUT) indicates how they

have addressed the oblique racial maritime officers' training, by encouraging Africans to consider seafaring as a career option.

This Graph shows a steady increase of African enrolment from 2007 to 2016 for maritime studies in DUT.

Figure 7: Marine Enrolment Per Race at Durban University of Technology



However, it was evident from interviews that fragments of imperialist and apartheid thinking remain in the way participants viewed the hierarchical structure onboard ship. All participants in one focus group were male officers, equally represented by white and African seafarers. The researcher raised the topic of segregation of officers and crew onboard ship. They explained that officers do not mix or socialise with the crew at all to uphold the distinction between officers and crew. When the researcher pointed out that the majority of the international merchant navy abolished the separate officers and crew messes and lounges the participants were adamant that discipline would suffer if the boundary between officers and crew was abolished and officers and ratings integrated socially. This lack of social integration between the South African officers creates a distinct power distance between officers and crew.

The researcher noted that most of these participants received their officer training at the same maritime institution. The international trend to abolish separate crew and officer bar and messes was an attempt to incorporate officer and crew social activities and prevent officers from being isolated.

Viljoen (2016), a pastor at the Seafarers' Mission, Bayhead Road, Durban, South Africa related that he observed that on some international ships cadets do socialise with the rest of the crew, as it is expected of them to do so. This provides them the opportunity to get to know the crew and acquire soft skills through practical experience. This is in stark contrast to South African officers and some international perceptions of leadership. The South African seafarer training can be equated as being embedded in the historic imperial and apartheid past.

A South African cadet officer explained his experiences of the segregation between the officers and crew and the effect that the officers' imposing way of thinking had on him:

The Captain told me that I may not socialise with the crew, I often sit alone in the officer's lounge. I am not able to socialise with the senior officers, due to their seniority attitude. If I could, I would rather sit with the crew, who are more social.

The different perspectives of this segregation seem to be enculturated in the training institutes South African officers attended. A South African cadet who supported this officer/crew segregation justified his view on the importance of sticking to the officer – crew boundaries:

As an officer you need to keep the boundaries. For example, if you get to know the crew and you stand inside and look outside and it is cold (temperature) you feel like I know this guy from the time that I was a cadet and send him inside. Then after a few days the captain will start fighting about the rules about the guy standing on the inside (not doing his work).

Another South African seafarer explained that in the international merchant navy social interaction differs from ship to ship, but that he observed that social interaction between the international officers and crew members was common and occurred on a regular basis.

However:

It all depends on your crew. So after lunch or after supper we all sit in the mess, like with the Koreans, there are no separate messes for officers and crew. You eat with your captain in the same mess. There is still a hierarchy, because the officers will sit at the one table, which is the right thing to do, but still you communicate with your captain on an equal level. Like the guy I worked with (captain) would make small talk and say, ok, I got your email and I will next week... it is the general camaraderie... you know? The guys will watch TV together. Some of the Ukrainian officers watch TV with the crew.

A combination of responses along the same lines from South African seafarers confirms that the extent of integration depends on the attitude of the officers. If the officers are South African or British, segregation exists. However, if the officers are from mixed nationalities, they eat in the same mess with the crew, but the officers have their own table. Beuse (2015) confirmed that although the officers are not encouraged to socialise with the crew, they do share the same messes and lounges. Similarly, Viljoen (2016) said that he has never seen this to be a problem, but that it always depended on the nationality of the crew. He further observed that if the captain is of Filipino descent he would cross the segregation barrier and socialise with his Filipino crew, rather than with his fellow officers from other nationalities.

The researcher asked a South African seafarer if social interaction is the same on all the ships:

No, they are different. You get very aloof officers. The one Korean ship that I was on ... strange that the chief mate, the chief mate is just below the captain, he was a Filipino he ate with the crew. The Korean officers ate by themselves.

5.5. Social Interaction in the Merchant Navy from a South African Seafarers' Perspectives

Stets and Burke (2009) stated that social interaction is one of the social processes necessary to construct social identities; this interaction occurs intragroup and intergroup and both are needed for social identity construction. Furthermore, Mead's (1934), theory on symbolic interactionism explains that it is through daily interaction with each other intra- and intergroup that people construct their own and other's identities. Similarly, Burr (2007) states that it is through this interaction process that knowledge is forged. If one considers, as previously mentioned, that the majority of South Africans interact with other cultures from a relatively young age, it can be assumed that their knowledge of other cultural groups is much stronger than those nationals who are not exposed to this type of interaction. Multicultural interaction creates multiple identities.

When interviewed on how well South African seafarers get along with 'other' seafarers, one seafarer responded:

We mingle better, we get along with anyone. The only thing that comes across is the language barrier. The Koreans mix with anyone. The Chinese are very nice, they are a bit dirty, but they are very nice. The Filipinos, mostly they can speak a bit of English, we get along, I love the Flippies [Filipinos], they are just nice, you know what I mean. The Bangladeshis and the Sri Lankans, the Indians, they have a problem with English, some speak English. But the South Africans, we try, and we swap music and movies. As South Africans, you need to get along with anyone.

Stets and Burke (2009) explain that individuals do not belong to a single cultural group or have a single social identity, but are members of multiple groups, where individuals develop multiple identities. These groups are broadly classified into gender, race, cultural and national groups (Burr, 2007; Crowther and Green, 2004). However, there is also a multitude of subgroups, which can exist alongside and inside the broader groups. Burr (2007) and Hilgert (1964) explain that one's identity cannot be singled out as one characteristic, but that culture, language, gender, race and subgroups are interdependent of each other, they all produce multiple identities.

South African seafarers identified some subgroups such as the smoker's social group, where interaction takes place on smoke breaks outside on the deck; the heavy drinkers group, who go out on shore leave and get drunk together, and visit the ladies of the night. Then those who separate themselves from the latter group - go out for a drink and sightseeing together. These groups are joined by commonality of its members. South African seafarers also accentuate the 'them' and 'we'. This distinction can either refer to different cultures, different departments, or rank, officers vs. ratings. A South African seafarer jokingly told the researcher:

The smokers group is mostly men, who all stand in the designated smoking area on the deck. Once a woman joined the ship, but never stood with the men, she isolated herself by standing on the opposite designated smoking area on the deck. When the smoking male group asked her why, she just said "I am my own smoking group"

Some seafarers spoke about interaction with other seafarers through socialising. Their responses varied from "Never" to "occasionally", and "As often as possible when circumstances permit". The level of interaction is dependent on the rank of the seafarer. Officers socialise less with crew members than ratings do.

A black female seafarer's response to the question of socialising was:

I choose who to socialise with. Somewhere along the lines of growing up I learnt to trust my instinct and my judgement of characters. On most occasions I would get along more with my fellow Xhosa speakers and would never really allow visitors in my personal space - my cabin because that would be where I just shut the rest of the world out and be me. On some ships you'd play games and others you wouldn't have that fun atmosphere and socialising was just minimised to hellos down alleyways.

To return to a previous argument about the imperialistic and post-apartheid thinking in the maritime context, South African seafarers are adamant that officers must not interact with non-officer crew to ensure that they can enforce their authority or be able to 'flex their muscles' when needed. But this lack of social interaction can have diverse effects on the officers, such as being isolated.

The South African seafarers are not only restricted by their rank to socialise, but also due to busy schedules:

Being a Master, socialising is difficult. These days most socialising is done during meals and during the occasional braai. With reduced manning, people are extremely busy and the opportunities to socialise are limited.

The question that arose was whether the South African seafarer's knowledge of the multicultural 'other', which they acquired at their primary and tertiary educational levels, and subsequently, in the work environment, was sufficient to acquire the necessary soft skills needed for working in the merchant navy.

Participants stated that interactions are dependent on the nationality of the officers and that the officers set the mood of the ship. In other words, the ship's culture is influenced by the officers' soft skill knowledge and the ability to apply this onboard.

South African seafarers also observed the difference of social barriers onboard international ships. If no interaction takes place, they themselves tend not to interact, as they find that the atmosphere can become toxic if you try to make friends. A South African seafarer working as a 'gun rider' (a 'gun rider' is an armed guard employed when ships sail through high risk piracy areas) on various ships described his and other South African seafarers' reception:

We are normally well received BUT it all depends on the Captain! Some Russians, Ukrainians, and Koreans “resent” us! We normally eat with the officers, but they [Russians, Ukrainians, and Koreans] make us eat with the crew!

Not all seafarers work on the same ship and with the same company all the time, especially if they work on short-term contracts. Some South African seafarers will move from one company to the next, depending on where their services are required or employment is available. This makes social integration even more complex. Thus, Rubington and Weinber (2003) theory on how migration affects the migrator is also applicable to the seafaring industry.

Seafarers’ effectively migrate from their home country into a multicultural ‘host country’. In this case, the ‘host’ is the maritime company and the ship he or she is allocated to. Rubington and Weinber (2003) state that integration into an established work culture can be difficult for a new employee. Similarly, with the merchant navy, the South African seafarer moving from one ship to another can on the one hand encounter resistance and hostility with very little social interaction, and on the other hand find a warm welcoming ship - it all depends on the ship culture.

A participant gave two different versions of ships he worked on:

The last company that I was with, it was a French boat, because of my position, I had internet, so I could email my kids, ... I could speak on WhatsApp, they also said that if you want to phone, phone. My company pays for it. So that was no major problem. It also depends on the ship, because, Christmas day is a normal working day. Christmas Eve, for the Ukrainians that was a big thing. So we had a real fantastic meal there was a good vibe, although you had to work. New Year’s Eve too. New Year’s Eve, the chef made a hell of a spread. So it was good.

On some ships you are on, you do not get internet, you do not get anything.

Even though participants did state that they do interact with ‘others’ when working at sea, they also stated that they feel more comfortable in the company of South Africans with whom they have more in common. The one South African officer shared his need for companionship with his own ‘kind’ as follows:

With multicultural crews it is often difficult to find common ground for social interaction. For example, at present I have around my dinner table: Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Indian, Chinese and Myanmar officers. In the past, I have also had Sri Lankan and Romanian as well. So discussing the merits of a recent rugby or cricket test is all but impossible. Even soccer is not a strong subject amongst East European and Asians. Happily, I do also have a few South African junior officers to help me keep my sanity.

However, cultural differences amongst white South African seafarers can also be problematic. As English-speaking South African seafarers mentioned that they find that some Afrikaans-speaking seafarers obnoxious and walk around with a “chip on the shoulder”. Even the one English speaking South African participant, who worked on a cruise liner said that there was an Afrikaans-speaking South African girl she was ashamed to be associated with. “This girl was very promiscuous and if I was her mother, I would have given her a spanking of her life”.

An Afrikaans-speaking male participant said that he worked with another Afrikaner seafarer, and he gave all white South Africans a bad name as he was racist, rude, and obnoxious. It was so bad that all the crew started ignoring the rest of the South Africans onboard and refused to socially interact with them. Stereotyping is actually another way to say that people are labelled according to their perceived social identity construction. In the narrative mentioned above, all South Africans were stereotyped as racist, due to one South African’s behaviour.

Stereotyping goes both ways. Some male seafarers discussed the different cultures onboard ship. According to some of the participants, the Filipinos are messy eaters, and nobody wants to join them at their table at meal times, because they eat with their hands and the whole table becomes a big mess. The same South African seafarers argued that the Filipinos seafarers are not able to fix mechanical faults on the ship, they fix one thing and break five, leaving it for the competent seafarers to fix their ‘stuff ups’.

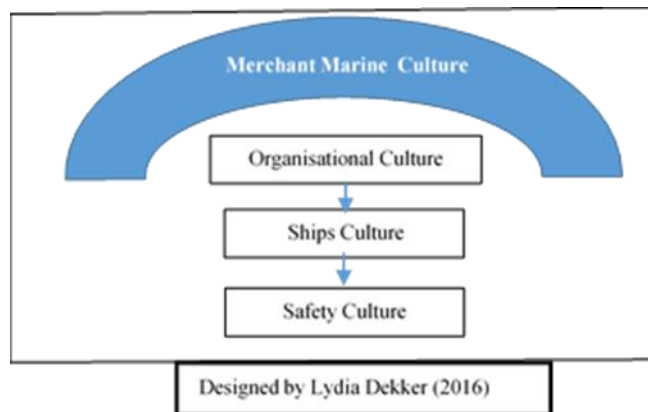
Horck (2006), states that stereotyping is not only the result of lack of cultural awareness, but also poor communication onboard a ship, which can be part of the domino effect and lead to accidents at sea.

5.6. Merchant Navy, Ships and Safety Culture

5.6.1. Merchant Navy Culture

After careful observation of the participants' responses, the researcher concluded that four distinct cultures exist within the merchant navy. Of the four only three are acknowledged in the seafaring literature. The figure below represents these four different cultures. These cultures are interrelated and will be discussed as such.

Figure 8: Representation of the Merchant Navy Culture



Land (2002:412) defined maritime culture as being “based on the shared experience of danger, confined living spaces, in an all-male dominated community”. However, the researcher found Land's (2002) definition lacking and more applicable for defining ship's culture. It is through her observation that she came to realise that seafarers have a maritime culture, which umbrellas and supersedes the organisational, ship, and safety culture. The researcher reasoned that all seafarers globally are linked together by their experiences of being seafarers in general.

The researcher defines merchant navy culture as:

A group of men or women, who speak the symbolic seafarers' language, and who can narrate their experiences through social interaction regardless of age, culture, gender, race, and/or nationality. This camaraderie is formed by their seafaring experiences. The social cohesion can occur through physical or social interaction or through social media. (Carol-Dekker, 2015)

This merchant navy culture was observed throughout the data collection process, where seafarers formed a cohesive front, regardless of their experiences at sea, age, gender or nationality.

During the face-to-face interviews and Facebook discussions, the researcher found that she was ‘othered’ by the South African seafarers. This ‘othering’ process was part of the seafarers’ perceptions that the researcher did not share their understanding of seafaring, their lingua, and their experiences. This made the interviews difficult in most instances. To combat this problem, the researcher invited a male seafarer friend to some of the interviews and to one of the focus group. During these interviews and focus groups, it was obvious that they only accepted the researcher due to her association with her seafarer friend. The interviews went from shop talk to answering a question, then back to shop talk. The seafarer friend assisted by prompting or leading the conversations in the right direction, when he saw that the participants became unresponsive to the researchers’ questions.

The same ‘othering’ occurred in the netography research. After *SurveyMonkeys* (online surveys) were sent out, one of the participants, Beuse (2015) created a female seafarers’ only group to assist with the researcher’s data collection. Beuse (2015) invited many of her female seafarer friends and acquaintances to join the group. She used her own initiative to ask the questions as presented in the online survey. The participants only answered the questions or participated in the discussion when she posted the question. When the researcher asked the questions, the group grew silent. The researcher was ‘othered’ as not belonging to the seafaring community; although the participants knew that the purpose of the group was for research purposes. Similarly, another South African Facebook group consisting of current, unemployed, and retired seafarers welcomed the researcher into their Facebook group, but one of the seafarers stated that the researcher was not part of their group and became very sarcastic; reminding the group that she had no idea of what life at sea is about.

Regardless of his sarcasm, this specific participant continued to contribute to the discussions. Only a few Facebook members were happy to participate the moment they realised that the researcher was not a seafarer, even though she was always open to the fact. All the participants were informed of the purpose of the researcher’s presence online, and by participating in the discussions, they knew that their contributions could

be used in the thesis. This specific group members' solidarity was due to the fact that they all spent time at sea, some being retired; employed but more senior, or unemployed. Unemployment seems to be a threat to the members' identities as seafarers. They needed the space to talk about their experiences to people who 'know' seafaring and this particular Facebook group provided that platform for them.

The interaction on Facebook maintained their identities in an industry, which dominated their entire career. Hofstede et al. (2010) explained that the modern age phenomenon of electronic communication allows us to spend a significant amount of time on social networks and have contact with people globally, even though they might never have met face-to-face. Hofstede et al. (2010) continue by saying that social media relationships can be very meaningful for these cyber friends. The researcher used the scholarship of Trotter (2010) to further Hofstede et al.'s (2010) statements above by explaining that netography has not only become the main communicative tool for millions of people, but it is also a space where users express their identities.

The researcher selected Edgell (2012) to explain the Facebook phenomenon as described above. Edgell (2012) looked at the deprivation theory in the context of the 1980s mass unemployment era and argued that work is not only income generating, but also serves the purpose of time structure, social contact with co-workers, the feeling of contributing to collective purposes, structured activities, identity and achieving status. To analyse the South African group, which consisted mostly of men, who communicate with each other on a daily basis, it is necessary to compare work to unemployment or even retirement.

According to Edgell (2012) unemployment can foster the feeling of deprivation and the lack of psychological well-being. Edgell (2012) further explained that unemployment can lead to the feeling that a person has lost his sense of purpose. As soon as the seafarer becomes unemployed or retired, the bond is broken with the daily interaction with people who share common interests. This is especially true since some seafarers spend up to thirty years in a seafaring capacity. The particular Facebook group, created for South African seafarers only, seems to give retired and unemployed South African seafarers, who frequent that group, a sense of belonging, and their seafaring identity does not get lost. Trotter (2010: location 606) argues that:

Social constructionists would argue that users collectively decide to employ digital media for specific purposes, and these purposes are a product of a self-branding culture.

5.6.2. Organisational Culture

The next identifiable culture in the merchant navy is the organisational culture. Organisational culture is defined as:

An organisation that is collectively with relatively identifiable boundary of normative order, ranks of authority, communication systems, and membership coordinating systems; this continuous basin in an environment and engages in activities that are usually related to a set of goals; the activities have outcomes for organisational members, the organisation itself, and for society (Coffey, 2010:18).

Such organisations also consist of individuals with different identifiable individual identities, cultural identities, and their own set of histories (Aritz and Walker, 2012). When workers' identities amalgamate with the organisational culture, the influences on each other are reciprocating and a work culture develops (Berger and Luckmann, 2011; Burr, 2007). The organisational culture regulates the ship culture and safety. A ship is only one segment in a larger organisation. Although the organisational culture has a strong influence on the ship culture, 'us' and 'them' groups can develop between the segment to such an extent that resentment can develop between the two. A participant explains this phenomenon:

The company [organisation] consists of people who never have been to sea, and do not have any knowledge as how it is to work at sea. This is very detrimental to the wellbeing of the seafarers

And:

The companies are run by accountants, who know nothing about the work at sea.

Another participant wrote an email to the researcher, wherein he explained his work during a shift. He stated that the first time he walks on the ship he can quickly see the quality of the workmanship executed onboard. This is evident in tools that are used for the wrong purposes or are damaged and stripped bolts and nuts that are painted over to conceal mistakes. He also explained that all tools onboard a ship have to comply with specified specifications; the right tools have to be used for the right job and failing to

do so causes damage to the tools and to equipment. Instead of adopting a 'no blame' policy companies look for scapegoats. In this case, the scapegoat became the suppliers and they were blamed for supplying inferior equipment. Instead of addressing the problem, which essentially is the fact that they are employing cheaper, but incompetent workers, they try to place the blame on an outsider.

This is reminiscent of Marx's theory of the role organisations play in the identity construction of workers (Woodward, 2004). This construction process lies in the relationship between worker and employer. In the merchant navy this relationship is not always virtuous, especially when the experienced and seasoned worker is not valued for his services and replaced by cheaper paid and less experienced workers. Or, as Marx (1886) argued, the company does not value the more seasoned worker's service and that the labourer's value cannot be equated to the service rendered or the product produced. This argument is substantiated by the participants who related that problems do exist where the participant feels that his work and technical knowledge is not valued within the company. A participant explained how European seafarers are laid off and replaced by cheaper labour from developing countries such as the Philippines. According to the company's perspective "my knowledge and experience is too expensive".

Marx (1886) explained that a commodity's value is three fold. The first value is the cost of the product (or service) to the manufacturer, the second is the value of the product (or service) to the client, and the third is the value of the worker's labour (Marx, 1886). The value of the worker's labour reduces as industries become more technically advanced and the worker's labour becomes dispensable (De Genova, 2006). Edgell (2012) states that the worker's perceived value in relation to his work and paid labour is an identity bearer. There is ongoing negotiation between the worker and the employer, and it is usually the worker who has to forfeit certain aspects of his identity for the sake of a salary and in this context, the worker often has to forfeit his creativity, dignity and autonomy (Edgell, 2012). The organisational culture in the merchant navy is mostly static, not taking into account the need seafarers have to grow to their full potential within the ship's culture. These organisational regulations strip the captain of his or her autonomy to run the ship to the full benefit of the seafarers and the company. This results in organisations having to replace competent seafarers with adequate

experience and skills with less qualified and even incompetent seafarers at lower salaries.

Onshore workers have replaced many of the captain's job functions and the captain has limited autonomy. All the captain's actions are monitored by onshore personnel, most of whom with little or no offshore experience. The captain also has no legal authority as this has been assigned to the Designated Person Ashore (DPA). A classic example is that of a tragic maritime accident involving the limitation of the authority of the captain to make decisions. The captain of the *El Faro* allegedly had limited authority onboard the ship but supposedly did not have authority to change course without the DPA's permission. The DPA has the legal authority to determine the state and course of ships. It was alleged that the ship could not establish contact with its DPA and the *El Faro*, which was travelling between Jacksonville, Florida, and Puerto Rico early in the morning of September 30, 2015, was caught in the tropical storm Joaquin and went down with all 33 hands onboard (CBSNews, 2016; Liston, 2016). Purportedly the incident could have been avoided if the captain had full autonomy to make the required changes without relying on the DPA. The investigation of this maritime accident was still ongoing at the time that this thesis was submitted.

In the ship's culture, the right of privacy can also cause friction between the seafarer and the organisation. Animosity can develop between the maritime organisation's culture and the seafarer, when the organisational culture does not respect the seafarer's right to privacy. When privacy is breached, the seafarer loses trust in the organisation.

A participant declined to join the researcher's Seafarer Forum Facebook group and explained that he had a Facebook profile, but shut it down after he received an email notification from the company informing him that he posted a photo of the ship on his Facebook and he must please remove it. When he enquired about how they knew about it, he was told that organisation 'hacks' into their employees' social media accounts to ensure that they keep to the company policies and this is considered as an invasion of their privacy. In other words, their identity is threatened. Trotter (2010) substantiated the above participant's remark by acknowledging that the IT staff of an employer can uncover information on the internet and on the employee's social media account, even though it is regarded as a blatant violation of privacy by Facebook management. As

mentioned earlier, netography is a space where users perform and shape their identities to a selective audience, and an uninvited guest can disrupt this performance and threaten the actor's identity (Trotter, 2010).

5.6.3. Ship's Culture from The South African Seafarer's Perspective

Ship's culture, or what Land (2002) coined 'maritime culture', is defined as the shared experiences of danger, confined living spaces and in an all-male community in, which the seafarer finds himself. The unique environment wherein seafarers work, live, and socialise all contribute to the ship's culture (Borovnik, 2005). Although a ship's culture is regulated by the organisation's work ethic and policies, the seafarers construct their own ship's culture. Daily interaction in the course of operations onboard give the crew members a sense of belonging to a culture away from home (Bhargava, 2013a). A healthy ship's culture largely depends on the officers' ability to address problems, such as harassment and bullying, onboard (Dickinson, 2011, 2013). A South African female officer, said:

At one stage I had a female cadet... She was a pretty Filipino girl and one of the officers was harassing her. So I had to deal with that. If you try to go to the captain, the captain would also ask if you said anything to this person [who harassed you] and then if you say "I did not say anything" then it is oh, and so on. It also creates the impression that you cannot take care of your own problems and that you have to run to other people to take care of your problems. The officers onboard would call the person that reported it [the harassment] a cheat. Eventually, everyone on the ship knew, where only the captain was supposed to know. It is such a small environment that everyone will find out. She lost all the respect of the crew.

The captain has a huge impact on the ship's culture and the seafarer's social identity construction onboard. If he does not stand up and enforce the company's policies regarding sexual harassment, bullying, and conflict amongst the multicultural crew the ship's culture becomes gender, culturally, and racial/nationality unfriendly and instead of a cohesive ship's culture, 'othering' can occur. An unhealthy ship's culture is a threat to the seafarer's identity. Hofstede et al. (2010) stated that group identity is very important, and that people will fight to retain their identities, be it to confirm or refute it.

A South African white female seafarer related to the researcher how the ship's culture onboard their ship was very healthy.

We were like a big family; we knew each other's family. We were there for each other emotionally, and an added advantage was that our company has always been very supportive. When I fell pregnant out of wedlock, only the captain, agent, and the owner knew about my situation. They allowed me to work up till my 5th month of pregnancy. And after my child was born and I gave her up for adoption they welcomed me back without prejudice.

A South African white male seafarer related problems regarding the training of South African cadets, where the ship's culture was not training-friendly.

Even though training policies are in place, some captains use cadets for cheap labour and they have to do work such as chipping and painting, thus not learning any of the required material. At the end of their 'training' the captain just signs off all of the presumed training and the result is cadets who become officers and qualified on paper, but incompetent and inexperienced.

As becomes evident from these examples, the officers, and specifically the captain determine the ship's culture. A poor ship's culture can lead to animosity amongst crew members, where the opposite is true when the captain is supportive and the seafarers feel that they have the backing of the company. Hofstede et al. (2010: position 501) argued that "people feel related to people whom they share a symbolic group membership, not necessarily a genetic one". In the maritime industry the seafarers construct a ship's cultural identity if they feel secure within this group context.

A good relationship between the organisation and crew starts with the organisation's attitude towards their crew's wellbeing. This includes physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. The understanding of the multicultural crew's needs is dependent on the soft skills in an organisational culture (Dorsey, 2004). One aspect of soft skills is cultural awareness (Horck, 2006).

Dorsey (2004) contends that soft skills are essential to run a successful organisation. Soft skills are not innate to an individual, but something that needs to be acquired (Dorsey, 2004; Kuokkanen et al., 2013). Soft skill knowledge includes understanding the multicultural employees' cultural symbols, signs, norms, and values (Kuokkanen et al., 2013; Dorsey, 2004). Just to quickly recap, hard skills and soft skills cannot be separated; hard skills is the knowledge you need to do the job, but without soft skills

this knowledge cannot be executed, as you need soft skills to communicate with multicultural employees and co-workers (Shakespeare et al., 2007).

One of the required STCW 2010 courses is the Human Element Leadership and Management (HELM) course. This course was developed to train officers to be more culturally aware, also how to motivate a multicultural crew. Officers are also taught to recognise that different cultural groups respond differently to motivation. The HELM course focuses on the learner, to ensure that he/she acquires the ability to manage the ship, care for the crew at the same time by applying management skills, and promote teamwork (Crowley, 2014). The course is also constructed to limit the human element related accidents, which are usually caused by fatigue, stress and the lack of communication skills, a common factor in a multicultural crew (Crowley, 2014). Another soft skill that is needed is the ability to understand the importance of encouraging social interaction. This tends to motivate the crew to be more productive and to understand their co-workers.

The researcher presented the HELM course to South African seafarers and explained that accidents have never been due to one cause, but can be described as a domino effect where one problem-domino knocks over the next until the whole row collapses. This motion can be initiated by a mechanical problem, exacerbated by a language and communication problem, intensified by cultural misunderstanding, and so forth, culminating in a disaster. Lack of soft skills has been a prominent topic in discussions amongst South African and international literature on the causes of near misses and maritime accidents. Safety culture at sea starts by possessing hard and soft skills.

5.6.4. The Need for Recognition within the Organisation and Ship's Cultures

Maslow's (2012) *Theory of Human Motivation* identifies five different levels of human needs. By fulfilling these needs, a person can be motivated to increase his/her productivity. To stress the argument of autonomy, this section will briefly refer to the fourth level of Maslow's pyramid of human needs. The fourth need is the need for self-esteem, and this can be achieved through internal and external factors (Maslow, 2012). The internal factors are the need for self-respect, autonomy and the feeling of achievement in their work or social life (Maslow, 2012). External factors are the need for status, to be recognised and the need for attention (Maslow, 2012). This section will

only focus on the internal factors: the human need for self-respect, autonomy and the perception of achievement, which all are important to motivate a person to be productive in his or her work. The merchant navy has experienced rapid changes in the course of two decades. These changes reduced the autonomy of the seafarer, which shrunk to comply with the organisational regulations, which were enacted to ensure a safe working environment. The working environment has been structured to the point where there is little space for human error to occur.

During a focus group discussion, participants discussed how they never had autonomy onboard a ship as everything has to be done by the book. Even to change a light bulb requires a certain amount of paperwork to ensure that the job is done without any possible margin of error and/or injury. Where, in the past, the electrician would change the light bulb on his own initiative.

The focus group participants argued that the lack of autonomy also leads to the seafarer losing his sense of creativity that enables him to initiate creative methods to complete a job quickly and effectively. However, some South African officers said that they are aware of the need for seafarers to be able to solve problems on their own. They facilitate this by using the morning meetings or 'toolbox talks' to discuss the work for the day and during these discussions seafarers are encouraged to inform the group on what he or she thinks is the best way to do the job at hand. This not only reintroduces a sense of achievement, but also the sense that the seafarer's opinion and ideas are important to the ship and the organisation. However, the participants stressed that not every ship's culture or organisational culture is the same, but that it varies from ship to ship and from company to company and that the captain in charge plays a large role in how much autonomy, if any, is allowed onboard the ship. A limiting factor is the safety culture, which has to be strictly adhered to at all times. The safety culture is controlled by the company and international organisations such as the IMO.

5.6.5. Safety Culture from the South African Seafarers' Perspectives

Safety culture entails following safety policies, but when these policies are not complied with, they can clash with the seafarer's cultural interpretation of how the job should be done. Their cultural lens can influence this interpretation. Members of a

diverse group of seafarers, working alongside each other, can interpret the safety rules differently and behaviour thus influences the outcome of the rule.

A safety culture can be defined as a culture in, which there is a considerable informed endeavour to reduce risks to the individual, ships and the navy environment to a level that is 'as low as is reasonably practicable'. Specifically, for an organisation making efforts to attain such a goal, economic and social benefits will be forthcoming, as a sound balance between safety and commerce will be maintained (Drouin, 2010:4).

Drouin (2010) argues that the behaviour of the crew is influenced by the safety policies that are in place. It is, however, the crew's attitude towards these policies that determines the safety culture. A positive safety culture is cultivated by a good relationship between employees and crew; a poor relationship between the organisation and crew leads to non-compliance of safety policies (Drouin, 2010). Safety culture can be cultivated by implementing procedures such as team meetings, which allow crew members to broaden their understanding of what is expected of them regarding safety; work schedules; procedures; interdepartmental communication and technical operations (Bhargava, 2013). However, safety culture overlaps cultural awareness, or soft skills, English language competency and tolerance towards each other in a multicultural crew. A South African officer who was in charge of the firefighting team said:

One of my frustrations is working with some of the Filipino crew, whose English is very poor. They do not understand the commands fast enough and end up doing what they think they must do, and not what they should do.

There are cases where South African seafarers mention safety culture and disrespect towards the ship culture in one breath:

Yes, because sometimes the language barrier can lead to misunderstanding of instructions, which can lead to safety issues. The cultural differences can cause problems regarding personal hygiene and table manners.

When a South African seafarer was asked about safety on a multi-cultural crewed ship he said:

Yes. Giving orders and instructions can often be misinterpreted. The industry we work in is a dangerous one if safety steps are not followed. Sometimes if an instruction is not followed then safety could be of concern.

Another South African seafarer said that the safety culture has a lot to do with your perception of the importance of your work. For instance, if you are in charge to protect the ship from pirates, then you must take it seriously; it is about your attitude towards safety. A South African ‘gun-rider’ said that they received a compliment from a ship's officers when they said that “You South Africans are totally different from the last security people we worked with, as you do not sit inside and play games on your phone”. To this a South African replied, “We have not seen a pirate below deck but only outside”.

South African officers gave the researcher their job descriptions, which varied from “I am in charge of the cargo and make sure that they are within the legal requirements and the equipment is in good working order for emergencies” “I also have to make sure that the safety of all personnel involved is of the highest quality”. A captain said that he is responsible for the safety, security and welfare of the ship and crew. Each function of the ship focused on the safety of the ship and the crew. However, soft skills, such as cultural awareness are essential for ensuring the safety of the crew.

All the participants were aware that a healthy ship and safety culture is important onboard. However, for the officers to police the rest of the crew is very time-consuming. Some ships have put a ‘hazop’ system onboard. This system allows any crewmember to report a fellow seafarer or a hazardous situation to the officers. This often leads to antagonism between departments and/or individuals.

When asked what their expectations were when they joined the ship and if their expectations were met, a female participant said that she expected lots of adventure, but it seldom happens now because of the strict safety laws. Even social events are restricted by safety concerns: Having a barbecue on deck (health and safety permitting) does sometimes lighten the atmosphere onboard the ship.

It must always be kept in mind that safety is reliant on communication onboard ship. Communication can only be as effective as competency in the maritime language, which is English.

5.7. Language in the Merchant Navy

Poor communication is a major concern for the IMO and policies have been put in place to bypass the cultural-language used by multicultural crews on ships. Poor English competency leads to poor communication, which in turn can present a safety hazard for the mental and physical wellbeing of the seafarers and for the safety of the ship (Horck, 2006).

Different participants gave different viewpoints regarding language barriers onboard their respective ships. One participant told the researcher that, “Language barrier and cultural differences make understanding instructions difficult at times”. Another participant said: “...it [language] is always difficult when orders are not understood and complied with. It can lead to delays in work or even accidents happening”.

English became mandatory since STCW 1995 policies were set in place and it was recognised that English language courses were essential, especially for officers (Horck, 2006; Mukherjee and Brownrigg, 2013). The importance of having a standardised maritime language is strongly emphasised by authors such as Horck (2006); Mukherjee (2015); Visan and Georgescu (2012); Chirea-Ungureanu and Visan (2011) just to mention a few. The South African seafarers shared their frustration regarding the non-officer crew’s poor English language skills: “They suck in English”; “If you speak proper English, they do not understand you”. However, on the other side of the coin a participant experienced a situation where the officers pretended not to understand English and used it to avoid interaction with him:

I’ve had and been told by others where ships' captains, chief mates, etc. Won’t speak to you in English as they “CAN’T”, but then you hear them on the phone or radio speaking FLUENT English!! So, I swear at them in Afrikaans!!!

The above quote not only demonstrates the resistance of officers to communicate and interact with the South African seafarer, but also how cultural-language is used to ‘other’ the out-group, which in this case was the South African seafarers.

It was observed by the participants that the moment a crisis arises, emotions tend to flare up and the crew starts to communicate in their cultural-language, which is problematic in a multicultural environment. Without a common work language crises can turn into life

threatening situations if the rest of the crew cannot understand what is happening. A female seafarer told the researcher her reaction towards such incidences:

If somebody makes a mistake at a very critical moment, they start shouting in their language and then I start shouting in my own language [Zulu]. I do not know what the Indians are thinking, but eventually you hear them mumbling under their breath.

Theoretically, language is the vehicle whereby culture is transmitted (Burr, 2007). It is through our cultural-language that individuals are able to interact with each other within their in-group (Burr, 2007). Furthermore, it is only through language that identity construction can occur (Burr, 2007). The moment that the individual moves outside his or her familiar culture and comes in contact with outgroup members cultural-language can be misconstrued by the outgroups who do not understand the symbolism, norms, and values that his cultural-language conveys (Burr, 2007; Hofstede et al., 2010). When an individual moves out of their mother-culture and is exposed to a new culture, a feeling of loss of cultural-identity can occur (Hofstede et al., 2010). An identity shift is necessary to integrate into the new environment, which can be complicated if the new environment is multicultural (Taylor, 1994). Hofstede et al. (2010) further explain that language within the global work context is multi-dimensional and that when workers from diverse cultures interact with each other it is important that they find common ground to work from. This common ground will forge a work culture, with a common language, which will allow understanding the rules, and behaviour in this work context (Hofstede et al., 2010).

To successfully fit into a new culture, workers must adhere to the organisation's culture and symbolic language (Hofstede et al., 2010; Aritz and Walker, 2012).

Participants explained how they manage and cope with a crew with a poor command of English whilst offshore:

I have learnt to manage the stress by adapting my manner of giving instructions and obtain feedback that they have been understood properly.

And;

[I] always look on the funny side, humour conquers all.

Very often [language barriers is a problem] ... it's something we have all learned to live with.

Aritz and Walker (2012) observed that English is no more than linguistic imperialism. This is interesting when viewed both generally and in the maritime context. Considering language, it must be understood that the ability to speak a language is so much more than just knowing words (vocabulary) and phrases but includes the interpretation of differing inflections and nuances in speech that create dialects within various geographical groupings and first language speakers.

English, for non-English speakers causes inequality, contradictions, and ambiguity (Aritz and Walker, 2012). English is recognised as a world business language but continues as the cause of continuing identity struggle for non-first language English speakers in a multicultural business world (Aritz and Walker, 2012). A South African seafarer narrated the problems he had experienced supervising Filipino crew members in his department:

They do not take kindly to being corrected as they believe they know the right way and will ignore any suggestions. They hide their incompetence in discussion in Tagalog with each other in the presence of the supervisor. They do not read or follow manufacturers and safety instructions. My opinion is that I would rather do the work myself or, if help is needed, only use one Asian and send the other one to do something else.

A female participant said:

It is frustrating to try and understand someone who is not an English speaker, all the more if the person is high ranking and asks you to do something, which you hear nothing of. I've sailed with many nationalities, of, which Romanians take the crown for being the least understandable yet get aggro when you ask them to repeat themselves. It has caused some barriers, and personally I developed a low tolerance for them and would end up not engaging them in a conversation but speaking to them only when I really had to.

South African seafarers often find that they are socially excluded due to the crew's insistence in speaking their cultural-language in their presence. However, when South African English speaking seafarers converse among themselves, it automatically gives the 'other' seafarers privy to their private conversations.

Yes, it can cause problems. English is the main language, but some nationalities battle and if there are a few of the same nationality and you can feel left out of a conversation.

On the other hand, another participant said:

We will speak Afrikaans when a group of Afrikaner South Africans stand together, but when one of the other joins us, we switch to English, it is just the right thing to do.

The merchant navy organisational policies, if properly enforced, do not allow any unprofessional behaviour. Thus, seafarers tend to put a guard to their mouths and answer carefully to protect themselves from possible problems from their companies. The participants who filled in surveys are observed to be very professional in the manner in which they answered their questions. However, as soon as the participants were interviewed and they started to relax, they let their guard slip and revealed their cultural identity and their true opinions about the true nature of their lived experiences onboard ship. Their cultural-language and symbolism revealed their cultural social identity. The participants in the surveys say that they get along with everyone onboard the ship, and they sound very professional:

The Filipinos, mostly they can speak a bit of English, we get along, I love the Flippies (Filipinos), they are just nice, you know what I mean

But when interviewed and away from their workplace, they allowed their real identity to come to the fore through their cultural-language, and they dropped their professional mask, to reveal their true selves.

We got flipflops (Filipinos) that sit on the Skype video. It just crashes it for everybody. You cannot teach a Filipino not to use Skype, they do not understand the concept of bandwidth related to video

Burr (2007) and explanation on how language performed differently in different contexts, accounts for the South African seafarers' multiple social identities. Goffman (1959) uses the stage to explain how people perform identities differently when they are before or behind the 'curtain'. This performance is only made possible through language (Goffman, 1959). As mentioned earlier, the participants who completed the surveys were very professional when they answered the questions in writing and started their interviews very professionally, but as soon as they began to feel more comfortable and at ease with the researcher they opened up and the mask of professionalism was dropped.

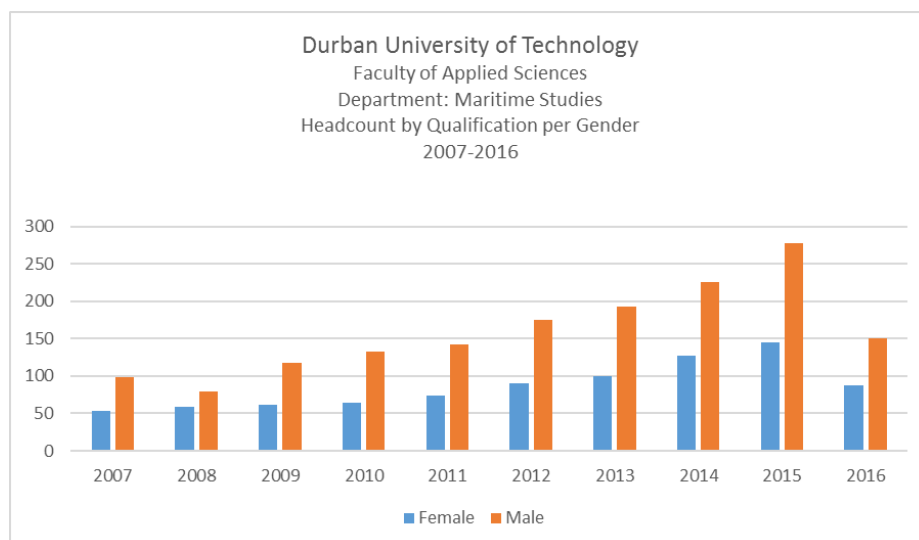
This professionalism is on the front stage but the performances on the back stage can also be analysed in the process of analysing gender identities in the merchant navy.

5.8. Gender Identities in the Merchant Navy

Gendered identities are not just assigned to women. Sex and gender identities are often confused and used interchangeably. Sex refers to the anatomical body parts (Lindsey, 2011; Wodak, 1997). On the other hand, gender is the “psychological, social and cultural differences between male and females” (Wodak, 1997:3). Gender is a social construct, a verb, whereby the individual self-identify preform their chosen lifestyle (Giddens, 1991). As in the popular media, the merchant navy uses the word 'gender' to describe the female seafarers, without regard to the influence male gender has in the seafaring industry.

This section will mainly refer to the gender identity construction of female seafarers, with a brief reference to the male gender. Even though the ‘other’ genders, such as lesbianism and homosexuality is a taboo topic in the merchant navy, it does not dismiss the fact that this can be a reality and problematic. Nonetheless, the topic of female seafarers in the merchant navy is and has been a contentious subject for many decades starting with the myth that a woman onboard spells bad luck (Welsh, 2015). Female seafarers constitute 2 percent of the global maritime industry and even though SAMSA is dedicating itself to correct this imbalance, female seafarers are far and few between (SAMSA, 2014). The figure below refers to the 2007-2016 DUT intake according to gender.

Figure 9: Enrolment per Gender at Durban University of Technology



To provide an international background to female seafarers, references are drawn from a few research sources on this topic. Thomas (2004a) refers to the negative attitudes women encounter when they join the merchant navy. A seafaring career is often regarded as being

a man's sphere, and that this is a career that is not appropriate for women (Thomas, 2004a). It is worthwhile to revisit Chin's (2008a:46) quote used earlier in this thesis to bring female seafarers into perspective:

... The social construction and use of oceanic space remains distinctly masculinised despite the changes... Gendered attitudes and expectations persist indicating the terms and conditions of women's labour on ships in general and deck and galley departments in particular.

Generally, men do not see themselves as gendered; it is as if their gender identity has become invisible to them and to the public in general (Kimmel and Messner, 1998). How do men and women see themselves? A visual representation comes to mind around this concept: An overweight middle-aged man and a younger slim female both look into a mirror. The man sees a reflection of an attractive, muscular, younger man, whereas the female sees a wrinkled, overweight, less attractive woman. This metaphor can be explained by Cooley (1902), where he theorised that the self is not the true reflection in the mirror, but rather how we perceive other's perception of us (Cooley, 1902).

This 'looking-glass' self is very pertinent in the merchant navy, where men see themselves as capable and strong, but in contrast view women as weak and pathetic. This 'looking glass self' is not only reserved for women, but also for men who are perceived as less of a man, or even those who are perceived as 'gay'.

Since none of the participants were prepared to respond to the question on gay men and women, the researcher will only briefly visit this issue by stating that it is not only women who are constructed as the 'other' but also lesbians, gays and bisexuals who are marginalised, victimised, and bullied in many societies and in the work environment, even though national and company policies are set in place to protect them from unfair treatment (Einarsdóttir et al., 2015). The lack of response amongst South African and international respondents could be attributed to the mask of professionalism, previously discussed in this chapter. In cases where company policies on sexism are deeply ingrained, they are not prepared to voice their true opinions.

Despite the silence regarding those men who are regarded as part of the out-group, Fajardo (2011) focused on the way Filipino males are emasculated and feminised in the merchant navy. This phenomenon has its roots in the period of imperialism, when Filipino men were

employed in traditional female roles such as houseboys (Fajardo, 2011). This phenomenon continued in the merchant navy as Filipino men are often employed in housekeeping roles on cruise lines and as stewards on other merchant navy ships (Fajardo, 2011). The Filipino men are often regarded as being gay, whether or not it is the case (Henson and Rogers, 2001).

A white South African seafarer shared his knowledge of a Filipino clerk working with him on the same ship. The Filipino man mostly kept to himself as he said that he knew that he was stereotyped as being gay, and that the other men avoided him for this perception and consequently he became very isolated.

wa Africa (2010) reported on a South African incident where cadets, male and female reported being sexually harassed and raped by officers during their cadet training on South Africa's only training vessel, the SA Agulhas. The former male cadet who was allegedly raped said: "I really don't want to talk about it. Bad things are happening at sea and I am one of the victims" (wa Africa, 2010).

Collinson and Hearn (2004) state that organisational policies are mainly asexual, the majority of organisations are however run by hegemonic males. Collinson and Hearn (2004) expanded their argument by saying that hegemonic males not only marginalise women, but also men; these men are those who are perceived as not part of the hegemonic male ingroup. Collinson and Hearn (2004) refer to masculinity and hegemonic masculinity as roles men perform. Whitehead and Barrett (2004) continue by arguing that masculinity and hegemonic roles are not culturally specific, but are performed differently in different contexts. Masculinity and hegemony are not only a social identity social construct, but also an identity marker, which is also responsible for the way women are socially constructed.

Captain Beuse (2013), an international Facebook participant, shared some of her experiences working with men in the merchant navy:

I found that there are three kinds of men working on ships:

1. Those who tell you at the first chance that they have no problem with women on ships - they DO have a problem with this. They will push and mob you as much as they can, but always argue it had nothing to do with the fact that you are a woman - only you not able to do your job...

2. Those who tell you that in their opinion women should not work on ships. It will take some time to convince them that you are not one of those girly-girls, but when they see that you are a good worker they will finally accept you.
3. Those who do not make any remarks towards your sex. They ignore the fact that you are female (no matter what they secretly think) and behave professionally and treat you like everybody else. Unfortunately, there are only a few of them around...

Both male and female South African seafarers were very vocal on their opinions of female seafarers during the interviews.

Male seafarers responded and said that the maritime industry is not an easy job for men, and that including females onboard makes it more difficult for the male seafarers. Another South African white male seafarer said:

I am a male but from what I have observed the most common problem is an acceptance and an attitude problem. Many males don't believe that women should be at sea and many males won't listen to the orders females give. It takes a special type of woman to be able to handle this situation.

Other seafarers acknowledge that sexual harassment is a huge issue on ships and that it is difficult for women to be accepted as human beings and not to be treated as sex objects adding that women always have to try and prove themselves to their male colleagues.

A South African male captain stated that he had some issues regarding female seafarers that he had to sort out:

I have sailed with numerous women cadets/officers over the years and to be honest have had very few problems ever brought to my attention. I have once had a complaint by a black female cadet about alleged sexual harassment, but on investigation, it seems the lady concerned was somewhat confused about who was harassing whom.

Other participants indicated that they have no problems working with female seafarers and have the highest respect for them: "On my watch they are treated exactly the same as anyone else, with dignity and respect". Another male participant said: "I do believe that all women seafarers I have sailed with, both single and married, are treated with the respect they deserve, not because they are women but because they are seafarers"

van der Walt (2007) observes that gender is always constructed in relation to men. Women are socially constructed as being the home-keeper, wife, mother, and care-giver (Lindsey, 2011). Men are socially constructed as the breadwinner, disciplinarian, handymen and decision maker (Lindsey, 2011). These social gender roles can become very rigid in certain contexts especially with women being stereotyped and expected to perform their socially assigned identities (Lindsey, 2011). Men often stereotype women as being unreliable, not able to make decisions and that they are controlled by their hormones and are very emotional (Lindsey, 2011).

A South African female seafarer responded with the following quote:

To me, that's a very general and subjective statement. Surely it depends what rank the women are - are men still likely to "chit chat" with them as Chief Officer or Captain? Also, not all women experience mood swings at "that time of the month", and these can be limited with hormonal contraception etc. I think in 15 years on vessels, I've only ever cried onboard in public - once - I've also seen grown men crying onboard so not sure what that says?!

These socially constructed roles often carry over into the workplace (Lindsey, 2011). These stereotypes leave women vulnerable to being bullied, harassed, and sexually abused in the workplace (Freeman and Lindsay, 2012). This is no different in the merchant navy as can be seen in the men's responses. Again, it must be noted that some male seafarers tend to keep their answers politically correct, while others were not afraid to speak their minds on this topic, the different responses can also be due to the fact that the researcher herself is female. The researcher observed the different responses and she concluded that the male seafarers who knew the researcher did not hesitate to answer the questions. On the other hand, the other seafarers hesitated and carefully constructed their answers. A male participant said that he had no problem working with female seafarers, as long as they pulled their weight and did not expect special treatment. Another response was that "merit and ability are what is needed to be a good seafarer".

As mentioned previously, a person, as an actor, or agent, can choose the role he or she wants to play and then also when he wants to play it. Similarly, women's perceived roles are not static, but these roles also give the women agency. South African female seafarers' constructed social identities in the context of the merchant navy can play different roles depending on, which contexts they find themselves in. Even though they are influenced by

how the male seafarers perceive them, they have the choice when and how to react and interact with their male counterparts.

An African female seafarer narrated her experience of feeling degraded by male seafarers:

Depending on the nationality, sometimes you will get people who will disregard you and rather deal with men, like Arabs. And even worse when you're a black female, especially in places like a mission - you'll have people mistaking you for a prostitute - in more than one occasion have I experienced that while in other African ports, even South Africa actually.

It was problematic that she not only was degraded by being unfairly stereotyped as a prostitute and thus as a lesser female, but that she also had to fight to be accepted on an equal footing as 'one of the men' in a traditional work environment.

Maslow (2012) understood the need to belong to a cultural group. This need to belong has a strong influence on an individual's social identity construction (Leonardelli et al., 2011). Some female seafarers go to extremes to be accepted as one of the 'boys'. They even downplay their femininity and act and dress as a man in an effort to be taken seriously. Kitada (2010) who noted that female seafarers often have to perform masculinity by dressing as men, acting and talking like men, shouting, and showing aggression, confirmed this. Hansen and Jensen (1989) researched how female seafarers adopt the high risk, unhealthy lifestyle of male seafarers, to be able to fit into the male dominated environment.

Beuse (2015), an international Facebook group participant, acknowledged that she originally cut her hair short, wore baggy jeans so that she would be taken more seriously. But as she moved up in the ranks she could return to being 'more female'. But she still does not wear makeup and fancy clothing onboard the ship. Other international female seafarers agreed that perfume and sexy clothing is a no-no whilst working offshore. But this approach is only applicable onboard tankers and cargo ships. Working onboard a cruise liner as an officer requires both male and female officers to dress in white uniforms and to present themselves as neatly as possible.

An African participant spoke of women down-playing their femininity to be accepted as "one of the boys":

Some women feel the need to emulate men and forget their femininity and that never did seem like a plausible option to me because irrespective of where I am, looking like I stepped out of a Versace closet is a priority and

choosing to slouch and dress like a guy won't up my chances of being heard or "taken seriously".

Also, when sailing with men, one needs to understand the workplace, they're in because you'll sail with people who will be fine with you around and next thing a month or two away from their wives, they start with their tricks and thinking you'll fall for their desperation, not all of us get that, but those who do usually have a smooth trip because understanding the opportunistic behaviour of some men will help you deal with them easier and not be taken aback by their sudden complimenting and attempts.

South African female participants mentioned that male seafarers treat married female seafarers very well, but you still have those men who are opportunistic and feel that female seafarers are there because they want the men to notice them. A white South African female seafarer also said that there are men who keep on pushing themselves onto the women. This intense harassment continues and sometimes the female seafarer will reluctantly give in. Then there are the case where female seafarers, married or not, will attach themselves to a man as protection against other male seafarers. The sexual harassment will then stop as she is seen as 'taken'.

An African officer spoke about some of the problems she encountered at sea:

One South African AB tried to harass me and I told him that I will choke you and I will stab you and I will do anything else to hurt you. And afterwards I will report you. I think that is why they are scared of us [black women]. Because we say what we have to.

A white female participant explained how difficult it was for her to stay out of the way of 'misbehaving' men. Because of her culture, she was never taught to stand up for herself against men, as she was taught that women must be subservient. She was a very timid girl when she joined and over time had to learn how to stand up for herself.

International policies and training are in place to protect men and women against bullying and sexual harassment (Nautilus, 2010). One of these courses, *Guidelines to Shipping Companies on Eliminating Workplace Harassment and Bullying*, was translated into 15 languages and combined with a training video to make it more accessible to officers working offshore (Nautilus, 2010). But is it enough to change male seafarers' perspectives of women?

To protect female seafarers, the IMO addressed female seafarer's rights (Singla, 2012). The IMO states that female seafarers cannot be discriminated against in the workplace; they have the right to be protected from sexual harassment and have the right to paid maternity leave (Singla, 2012). Female seafarers must have access to sanitary facilities, contraception and medical assistance (Singla, 2012). Even though the IMO policies are in place to protect female seafarers, it is not necessarily enforced as it is dependent on the company, the ship culture, and the soft skills training the employees in the company and onboard ship receive.

But what are female seafarers' needs from their own perspective? The researcher asked the following question: If you were a female seafarer and had a say in the design of a ship, what would you change, add or recommend making a ship more accommodating for female seafarers? The answers came from men and women; men's answers being mostly condescending.

Women:

A mirror in the cabin. Having one in the bathroom is no good when you have to dry your hair. Hairdryers often don't reach into the bathroom. Seems like a really trivial item, but every cabin I've had I've had to buy my own mirror or try to find a reflective surface.

What really annoys is when they are not able to provide working clothes or uniforms that fits female bodies. On the onboard library or video shelf you find only stuff that guys would like.

A different locker room...Sick of having to wear clothes under my overalls because we all got our gear off in the same room.

Hi, thanks for your post, great question... The obvious answer would be some sort of segregation without creating an "us and them" environment... Things like a separate gym and amenities and the sanitation system could be made more convenient for obvious reasons.

Men:

Ladies Room
Labour room
Gossip corner
Makeup room cum bitching corner

Shipping companies often overlook the needs of female seafarers. To allow women to be successfully incorporated into the ship's culture, it needs to take the physical needs of female seafarers into consideration. If female needs are ignored, it can be said that to be

accepted into the ship's culture women have to adapt. There is little reciprocation between the ship's, and organisational cultures and the female seafarers.

Aritz and Walker (2012:16) argue, "social reality is constructed through discursive symbolic interaction". When one looks at the male seafarer's answers in the quote above, Aritz and Walker's (2012) argument on symbolic language comes to mind. Aritz and Walker (2012:16) looked at the way:

Language is inherent to social interaction and enshrines meaning that over time become institutionalised, affirmed, or challenged through social interaction.

In other words, how gender is socially constructed within the seafarer's inherent cultures, can be carried over to the ship's culture. Aritz and Walker (2012:10) continued to explain that "Discursive reality construction is hegemonic, biased in favour of dominant interests". This quote highlights the point that although female seafarers are on the increase in the merchant navy, the hegemonic power is still present in this context, and that the power is unlikely to change from what it is, and that it will always benefit male seafarers and give them power over their female counterparts.

This discursive power is also evident in the multicultural context onboard a ship.

5.9. Race in the Merchant Navy from South African Seafarers' Perspectives

MacDonald (2006) researched race in South Africa and pointed out that the apartheid government associated race with culture. As with gender, race is prone to being stereotyped. It is more often than not that organisations do not recognise diverse cultural identities, but expect diverse cultures to conform to the companies' cultural identities (Gutmann et al., 1994). The researcher would like to point out that race is not an intragroup construct, but an intergroup social construct. Gutmann et al. (1994) stress that members of diverse cultures need respect and recognitions for their unique cultural practices, activities and world views. Recognition validates their individual and cultural identities (Gutmann et al., 1994). It is only when organisations and other groups recognise and respect cultural identities that individuals will feel that they 'belong'. Without this recognition, their cultural and individual identities are threatened (Gutmann et al., 1994).

Respect and recognition are vital human needs (Taylor, 1994). Although it was previously stated that South Africans are more accessible when working in a multicultural environment, there are those South African seafarers who do not tolerate other races, as can be seen in the following account by a participant:

We had a South African second mate, when a Filipino second mate took over they usually do a handing over procedure with paper work etc. This South African refused to help the Filipino, he refused to answer any question and even went onto the computer and deleted all the info about the work that he had done. This guy [Filipino] had to struggle. Even me, I told him [the South African second mate] that I had to learn stuff and he refused to teach me.

During apartheid, and even now post-apartheid, white people identify themselves as belonging to the European culture (MacDonald, 2006). Kimmel and Messner (1998) argue that white people often see themselves as being 'raceless' and everyone else as the 'other'. However, although the process of change is slow in post-apartheid, the new generation of South Africans is more susceptible towards a multicultural nation. But the participants observed stereotypical behaviour in the international contexts.

A Black South African female seafarer said:

I sailed with a 3rd Officer, she was white and the treatment was a bit different, not a big difference, slightly different. The way they treat us, I think they stereotype us. In a way I think that they are scared of black women. The non-officers were scared of me. I think that it is easier to approach the white female than it was for them to approach me and the other lady, who was also black. Once I spoke to an Indian captain and he told me that he found the black women fierce. OKAY, but that was also a problem with regards to communication it is very difficult.

Her husband, a white officer cadet spoke of covert racism, where he was favoured above a black male cadet:

I was with a Polish chief mate, I thought he was a little bit racist, because of a black cadet, (sailing with him) and then, I do not know if it was because of my navy experience, or that we understood each other better. But the other guy (black cadet) was totally ignored, was not getting the attention. He (Polish Chief Mate) did not ask him questions to develop his knowledge. So I become his (black cadet's) gopher, so if he need something, he started to come through me. I do not know of other nationality issues. I do not know. The Filipinos seem to get along better with him than with me.

There were South African participants who said that they never experienced racism onboard their ships, but that the whole crew was very professional in this regard. One participant said that onboard the ship people do their job and it is based on merit and ability.

But, on the other hand, it was pointed out that:

It has happened that superiors recommended a member of less experience for a promotion as well as members of certain race being allowed certain leeway where the others were reprimanded.

A South African Facebook participant said that:

Funny thing, always found that people on ships always tended/tend to band together irrespective of race or nationality, against what they generically like to term 'shore-side people' - especially ones in the [head] offices of shipping companies!

The general feeling of the South African seafarer is that there is little racism onboard the ships, as the majority of the seafarers are enculturated into the ship and organisational culture, with some exceptions. The majority said that their cultural ship identity lends itself to a feeling of camaraderie, regardless of race. Stets and Burke (2009) explain the feeling of comradeship as an ingroup, outgroup phenomenon, by arguing that when the ingroup, in this case members of a ship's culture, perceived that they are not appreciated by the outgroup hostility can develop. Seafarers and their organisations are often at loggerheads with one another when it comes to the way management runs the ship in contradiction to the reality of being at sea and doing the job. When people feel a sense of self-worth, they feel comfortable and at home in a particular group where their particular identities are being verified (Stets and Burke, 2009).

5.10. Conclusion

Culture is not just one entity and cannot be researched as such; culture in the merchant navy context is complex. This chapter focused on innate culture; cultural-language, and work language, which is the vehicle to understanding symbols, the social construction of gender, and race. Identity construction can only take place through interaction, imitation, and socialisation with other cultural group members. The lack thereof can lead to physical and psychological harm, which will be further discussed in the next chapter under coping mechanisms.

The South African seafarers' identity formation process starts within the maritime training context. It is here where they receive the theoretical training for being a seafarer. But once they enter the reality of seafaring the theoretical training can be carried over to the practicality contained in the seafaring industries. These seafarers' identities are open to change through agency. But, as with one's ethnic culture, remnants of the theoretical training find their way onto ships.

The merchant navy culture consists of a group of men or women who speaks the 'seafaring' language, regardless of what position they hold or held, and regardless of, which type of ship they worked on. They understand and can relate to each other's experience. Their identity construction gives them a sense of belonging; it maintains their social identity as seafarers. When retired or unemployed this merchant navy identity can be threatened and they will seek other ways to stay in contact with other seafarers. This connection can either be physical or through netography. Seafarers' social identities are also constructed through their interaction with the organisations they work for.

Organisational culture consists out of a group of people from different backgrounds, cultures, and cultural-language. The organisational group members have their own symbols, and they share the same goals and world view within the seafaring industry. Organisational culture influences the ship's culture and its safety culture.

Ships' culture members consist of a group of people who share the same values, experiences, dangers and who interact with each other on a daily basis. They form a cohesive group, when necessary, but the multiculturalism onboard the ship can lead to many different problems, which in turn can impact on the ship's safety culture.

Adherence to organisational safety protocols are necessary to ensure that all of the crew members understand the consequences their actions can have if they do not strictly adhere to them.

Chapter 6

Data Analysis and Interpretation - Part Two

6.1. Introduction

Stress is ubiquitous (Aldwin, 2004). All people will suffer from work and home stressors at some time or other in their lives. But stress is also magnified in certain contexts, such as working in the seafaring industry. Seafaring is described as a unique industry where seafarers work and live in the confinement of a ship for extended periods. This working and living environment is complicated by several factors such as lack of social interaction; fatigue; loneliness and isolation; harassment and bullying, just to mention a few. Seafarers need a coping equilibrium that will enable them to successfully work and live in this environment. Aldwin (2004) states that coping strategies are culturally shaped and explains how each person acts and reacts to different stressors is dependent on their cultural social identities.

Coping mechanisms are essential to identity construction. Lack thereof can lead to the perception that the seafarer's identity is under threat.

Theoretically, this chapter will look at people having a need to receive feedback from the organisation and the ship management as part of their coping strategy. Failing to receive feedback can trigger stress and this can be perceived as a threat to their socially constructed identity. To preserve social identities in a culturally diverse context, seafarers' diverse identities need to be recognised within the organisational and ship cultures. Furthermore, identity recognition is only a part of cultivating coping strategies in the maritime industry. This chapter will concentrate on the causes of stressors of life at sea; what facilities are available for them to assist them in coping with home and work stressors. Moreover, this chapter includes seafarers' narratives on life at sea, how they cope and what tips their coping equilibrium.

This chapter will discuss what factors can orchestrate stress, and the psychological effects of long term stressors.

To give the reader a broader understanding of this chapter it will introduce the reader to the term 'coping mechanisms'. Thereafter, this chapter will look at the symptoms of stress to give an overview of what is regarded as abnormal reactions related to stress. The next

section will concentrate on coping mechanisms and how the lack of social interaction can deteriorate the available coping skills of seafarers. Additionally, this chapter will concentrate on the importance that efficient communication has on the well-being of seafarers. Seafarers need to be emotionally supported by their families at home, their friends onboard the ship, the officers, and the maritime organisation they work for. Seafarers also need to know that should a problem at home arise they can rely on their maritime organisation to assist their loved ones. Support on the ship in the form of organisational support is also of utmost importance for the seafarer's well-being.

The sections following will discuss how fatigue; loneliness and isolation; bullying and harassment can upset the seafarers coping capacity. The last two sections will discuss the Seafarer Mission's support systems available to the seafarer, and the possible psychological problems South African seafarers can experience whilst working on a ship.

6.2. Symptoms of Stress Experienced by Seafarers

Stress has physical, mental and behavioural consequences, which can cause serious long term problems (Sea Health, 2011). Stress can escalate into serious problems affecting aspects onboard ship, such as personal safety, safety of fellow crew members, and even the safety of the ship (Sea Health, 2011). Human error related accidents contribute up to 90 percent of all maritime accidents (Rothblum et al., 2002). Sea Health (2011:10) broke down stress symptoms into three categories: Physical symptoms, mental symptoms, and behavioural symptoms.

Figure 10: Physical Symptoms, Mental Symptoms, and Behavioural Symptoms caused by Stress

Physical symptoms	Mental symptoms	Behavioural symptoms
Tense muscles in neck, body	Bad mood	Sleeplessness
Frequent colds and flu	Endless worries	Increased intake of alcohol, coffee and tobacco
Allergy	Irritability/anger	Drug abuse
Raised pulse	Less desire to socialise with others	Anger and aggression
Cardiovascular disease	Loss of/increased appetite	Isolation, lack of emotion
Head/stomach aches	Feeling pressurised at work	Reduced motivation and commitment
Shaking/nervous tic	Difficulty concentrating/remembering	Reduced performance
Sleeplessness	Depression	Increased sick leave

6.3. Stressors and their Effects on South African Seafarers

Stressors in the merchant navy include:

Fatigue, which can lead to burnout and can lead to work related accidents; Lack of social interaction amongst crew; physical illnesses, which can stem from work and home related stressors; lack of, or limited shore leave, which deprive seafarers from socializing and relaxing away from the work environment; poor communication with loved ones at home, home sickness; isolation, due to inability to integrate into the ship's culture (Carol-Dekker, 2015:1).

Stress can result in mental and physical burnout. This affects how seafarers manage to cope with extended periods at sea (Oldenburg et al., 2012). Oldenburg et al. (2012) defined burnout as the seafarer's prolonged exposure to work related stress. These stressors have different origins, all of, which can eventually be clustered together and the result could lead to burnout. A South African officer who stated that four out of five officers are using antidepressants and other anxiety suppressing medication highlighted the extent of this problem. When questioned on how he arrived at this number, he said, "when officers join the ship they have to declare their medications, and it is a lot". When asked whether he himself was on medication, he replied that he smokes a lot, and when on shore leave he drowns his sorrows in a bar. Two South African officers explained the stress they experienced in working in the onboard environment:

The job is demanding, often working long hours and on immediate call 24 hours per day. The job can be very challenging and regardless of how much experience you have.

I am responsible for almost all work onboard, except the engineering side. This includes maintenance, delegating of crew and ensuring cleanliness. I am also in charge of all seamanship activities and also act as safety officer

Another officer explained to the researcher some of the stressors a captain faces:

With the reduction in manning, routine tasks have had to be relocated, most to the Master and instead of navigating ships he is overburdened with paperwork and such issues as catering and accounting for, which he has no qualification.

Seafarers who work on long contracts and are away from their family support systems are known to have poor coping mechanisms (Oldenburg et al., 2012). Participants indicated that the length of their contract adds to the stress of working offshore. Adler (1977) researched stress from a theoretical viewpoint and stated that people who emigrate

from their ethnic culture into a host culture are subject to extreme stress. Seafarer's life onboard a ship can be equated to that experienced by emigrants and the 'host' country can be equated to the ship. Hostility can develop onboard a multiculturally manned ship due to the differences in the norms and values of the seafarer and his 'migration host' (Rubington and Weinber, 2003).

A South African seafarer stated that he found his job function both interesting and challenging:

But it's quite challenging sometimes, especially having to deal with different nationalities and trying to understand that as people we're all the same and yet so different.

Another participant explained how he now seldom sails with other South African seafarers. But in the past:

Many crews were 'single nationalities', from galley boy to master. These days, crews and [in the company I work with] ratings are usually of a single, dare I say it, 'Third World' nationality. The officers/engineers are a hotchpotch league of nations – usually from East/West European or Indian.

It is these differences, as mentioned in the above quotes that concerns Gutmann et al. (1994), who assert that if differences are not acknowledged by organisations it can cause an identity threat in a multicultural context. Workers in an organisation are expected to conform to the organisational identity, but it is within this organisational culture that respect for diversity can be ignored (Gutmann et al., 1994). Respect and recognition of different cultures validate the individual social identities in a multicultural context (Gutmann et al., 1994). Recognition of individual's cultural identity will help the worker to feel at home and part of the organisational culture (Gutmann et al. 1994). Taylor (1994) and Gutmann et al. (1994) stress that a lack of respect of cultural identities can lead to long term stressors and that identity recognition is a basic human need. A South African seafarer said that "seafarers are generally treated like second grade citizens". Thus the lack of respect does not only come from organisations, but also from the general population as well.

Stets and Burke (2009) stated that people who subjectively categorise themselves as being of a certain typecast need feedback to validate their social identity. Failure to receive feedback can lead to stress.

A South African female seafarer said:

When it comes to working... Maybe that [feedback] would help a bit. Because I would like to know... it is so difficult, I asked one Chief, actually, “Chief, I have been here more than 6 weeks, I would like to know how I am doing”

A female seafarer automatically falls into the ‘other’ category, she not only needs to feel accepted, but also she needs her social identity to be validated. The sentiment in the above quote clearly indicates that feedback from the captain would have provided her with this validation.

Officers who are aware of problems regarding the wellbeing of seafarers under their command reported that due to their confined working and living environment, the crew are in each other’s company for extended periods (Sea Health, 2014c). When officers do not have the necessary soft skills, and do not deal with conflicts as soon as possible. Procrastination can cause the stress onboard the ship to escalate (Sea Health, 2014c). Ratings look to the officers for support, and recognition and failing to receive this they can fail to cope with the stressors of working and living in the onboard environment (Sea Health, 2014c).

The researcher perceived that the question of social support from officers was a contentious issue. Participants made certain remarks, which were ‘red flagged’ by the researcher:

What happened was that we could not tell the captain.

[The female officer] had to take time off work to deal with the sexual harassment case.

If you try to keep peace onboard the ship, it would not work, [more trouble than worth getting involved in].

If you try to go to the captain, the captain would also ask if you said anything to this person... if you say “I did not say anything” [to protect yourself] ... It also creates the impression that you cannot take care of your own problems and that you have to run to other people to take care of your problems.

The officers onboard would call the person that reported it [harassment] a cheat [have no respect].

As an officer you need to keep the boundaries.

The crew comes to you [cadet] to complain about the captain or other officers then you get bogged down with other people's problems, sometimes it is not even a serious problem. The smallest thing becomes a big problem. If you were on land it would not be a problem, but when you are on a ship people get sensitive

The rules and regulations governing seafarers and the ship's operations have increased to the level where they become almost unmanageable. Each port call brings with it the possibility of internal or external audits of systems/procedures; vetting inspections; class surveys and port state control inspections. These have increased the burden on officers, especially the master beyond comprehension.

The concern the researcher is raising here is that despite the officers' training in soft skills they either do not have the time or inclination to address the crew's personal problems and/or conflicts aboard the ship.

6.4. Coping with the Lack of Social Interaction Onboard Ship

Giddens (1991) states that there are mechanisms to help people cope with day-to-day schedules. One of these mechanisms is adherence to a daily schedule (Giddens, 1991). Giddens (1991) quotes Goffman's theory of interaction and links it to day-to-day interaction with others. Furthermore, Goffman's theory of interaction in, which he states that the way that people interact with each other include both language and body language in other words the way and manner we communicate with each other (Giddens, 1991). These interactions provide social and emotional security (Giddens, 1991). If the interaction is perceived as a threat by 'others' it can disturb a person's day-to-day schedule. Alderton et al., (2004) state that in the merchant navy the lack of social interaction has an impact on the seafarer's wellbeing. Social interaction was a topic that all the South African seafarers could relate to. The lack of social interaction female seafarers experienced, lead them to feeling isolated from the rest of the crew. Another South African seafarer shared that when one works in multicultural crew it is difficult to find common ground for social interaction. A South African female seafarer stated that she does not socialise at all.

Alderton et al. (2004) said that the fact that seafarers work and live in a confined space with a multicultural crew where they have little in common with their co-workers tends to isolate them from both the outside world and from the crew onboard ship. Social interaction amongst seafarers has been significantly reduced since the imposition of the ban of alcohol on ships (Kahveci and Sampson, 2002). Before ships became 'dry', seafarers interacted

with each other over a drink after hours. This interaction over a drink diminished the cultural, gender and race barriers, which are commonplace onboard ships (Kahveci and Sampson, 2002). One South African cadet said that their ship is 'wet', but that this did not necessarily increase social interaction between officers and ratings, as there are two bars, one for the officers and one for the crew:

Ja, [yes] we have a bar, we are allowed two beers each per day. I have been there once or twice to have something to drink. The crew bar is a lot more social, but the officers, [will not enter the crew bar]. The ratings play karaoke; they play darts - it is fun there. It also depends on the captain. Our Capt. said that we [cadets and officers] are not allowed to go there.

The fact that the officers do not socialise and join the social activities with the rest of the crew members creates its own set of problems. Burnout syndrome occurs more often amongst officers, who are burdened with extra responsibilities (Oldenburg et al., 2012). A South African Captain related his increased responsibility and stress over 30 years of working on international ships:

Earlier [years] most crews were South African or South African/ British, now it is not uncommon to have up to 10 different nationalities on one vessel. Communications between ship and shore have increased dramatically, leading to a massive increase in paperwork and administration. Most ships now, are dry and the social life onboard is severely limited.

One of the participants of the focus group explained the problems associated with working on a 'dry' ship.

Dry ships are not dry. Alcohol gets smuggled onboard and the crew drinks in secret in the cabins, thus it cannot be controlled. The smuggled alcohol is usually hard liquor e.g. spirits/vodka. As it contains a high percentage of alcohol. It is easier to smuggle a few bottles of hard liquor than beer onto the ships.

Another participant also spoke about 'wet' and 'dry' ships:

Ships with active bars tend to be happy ships, as after dinner the crew gather in their respective saloons and have a few beers and have fun. On those ships without bars the crew tend to live hermit life only seeing fellow crew on watches and meal times - these ships tend to have issues. Filipino crew, however, is very social and even on dry ships tend to gather in the messes and have fun, even the Filipino officers don't segregate themselves from the crew, which other nationalities do.

A female seafarer gave the researcher her viewpoint about ‘wet’ and ‘dry’ ships:

On my first ship there was still alcohol allowed onboard vessels, but that phased out probably 24 hours after I joined and all the company ships were said to be dry. Socialising around alcohol did seem to work for people, but I wouldn’t quite bet on returning to it much because I’ve witnessed how most seafarers abuse alcohol, maybe it’s because they’re not allowed to drink onboard, but I also feel that it’s easy for people onboard who are away from their loved ones to drown their sorrows in a bottle so yes it helped socialising but it wasn’t a solution to many problems and instead brought on a few rowdy spells.

The lack of alcohol onboard the ships are not the only reason for the reduction in social interaction in the merchant navy.

6.5. Internet Connection and Communication with Family and Friends

The introduction of internet on ships has changed the maritime industry landscape (Herwadkar, 2014a). One respondent said “prior to the internet we corresponded via slow mail, and when we were in port we all ran to the closest phone”. Internet access allows seafarers to chat to their families from their cell phones, email, and if the bandwidth allows it, on Skype (Herwadkar, 2014a). The result is that seafarers isolate themselves in their cabins, rather than interacting with their co-workers. A participant described tea, breakfast, lunch, and suppertime onboard his ship as follows: “Everyone sits with their cell phones or tablets on their laps. No one speaks or communicates with each other”. He continued by saying that the Filipino crew said to him that they do not need friends onboard, all their friends are on Facebook.

It is Jensen (2002) view that seafarers can become physically and mentally isolated onboard ship. The physical isolation is due to the physical limitations of the ship and the mental limitation occurs due to the limited contact they have with the outside world (Jensen, 2002). The isolation can be intensified when seafarers are not able to communicate with the outside world. The following participant explained his life onboard the ship without internet:

We do not have the luxury of internet onboard unless you are using your personal mobile device. We do, however utilise movies as a tool to socialise as members will get together to decide what to watch.

A participant said that internet costs could run into 8000 thousand US dollars a month. To preserve some of the bandwidth for work purposes, the company has to restrict the data usage allocated for the crew (Herwadkar, 2014a). Due to the capping of the internet, usage hostility can develop amongst seafarers (Herwadkar, 2014a). The internet can also become very slow if the seafarers use Skype or try to stream a movie (Herwadkar, 2014a). A seafarer said:

We have approximately 20 people onboard connected at the same time with their devices - the system tends to freeze and hang and sometimes the connection is very slow and you have to wait a while for messages to be sent.

A South African seafarer in charge of the internet maintenance explains that they have up to 150 crew members onboard the ship and that the company blocked porn sites, large downloads, such as movies, and Skype.

It is generally expensive to make calls and data connections are not always available and are only able to make use of them when alongside in a port. We are afforded limited, but regular emails to family whilst underway, but it is controlled by an individual and perused at their will before sending, almost like you sending letters from prison.

Seafarers' Rights International indicated in 2013 that up to 80 percent of seafarers globally had no access to internet (Gorrie, 2013:1). This percentage was further defined by Gorrie (2013:1), who indicated that 97 percent of ratings have no access to the internet and when in port only 68 percent have limited internet access. Gorrie (2013) expressed his concern that the International Labour Organisation's Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC) did not deem internet access as a human rights issue. He continues to argue that for seafarers as an isolated population, "access to the internet is an empowering tool for seafarers" (Gorrie, 2013:1).

Despite the continuing problems regarding communication with the outside world, some participants praised their companies for considering their emotional needs:

Today it is awesome comms wise - all ships have email, Skype, ship to shore phones etc. Some companies offer this service for free to crew or others ships carry pre-paid phone cards crew can use, and the comms is as good as what you are sitting at home or in an office.

And;

Luckily, our company has provided us with internet onboard. This means that we are able to keep contact via social media such as Facebook and messenger applications such as WhatsApp and BBM. We are also allowed to Skype onboard. If the internet crashes onboard we also have a backup mail system where we can email our families.

Contact with family and friends is the foremost method to help seafarers cope with life at sea (Viljoen, 2016). The internet is seen as a luxury onboard ship, but companies are becoming more aware of the importance of the wellbeing of seafarers (Bhattacharjee, 2014; Herwadkar, 2014a).

One of the South African participants, a male cadet expressed his frustration about the poor communication onboard his ship. Since he is married to a female seafarer their schedules seldom coincide. His wife was already on leave for three weeks prior to him coming off his trip. They simultaneously attended STCW 2010 courses, which gave them some precious family time together. Prior to this, they had not seen each other for about 7 months, “It is tough, but in the end it is about *vasbyt* (perseverance)”. Another seafarer stated that he was very lucky to have good communication with his family and friends:

Yes – it is probably without equal in the industry [communication]. I am fortunate that the company I work for regards family contact as very important and consequently provides all internet based communication free – unlike most other companies

When you are in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean communication with family and friends provides comfort to the seafarers. Even an email gives them joy and satisfaction (Bhattacharjee, 2014). The seafarer’s family is never very far from their minds and communication helps to relieve the loneliness at sea (Bhattacharjee, 2014).

All ships have a satellite telephone onboard; however, private phone calls have to be paid for by the seafarer. It is a very expensive method to contact one's family, but there are times that seafarers need to hear the voices of their loved ones (Bhattacharjee, 2014). A participant explained to the researcher how access to the satellite phone works. When there is a crisis at home the satellite phone calls are covered by his company. When a seafarer is in the ship’s hospital there is a satellite phone connection in the room, which is free of charge. No permission is needed for the sick seafarer to speak to his or her family.

The researcher asked the participants how the lack of communication with family and friends would affect them and how the lack of communication, (present or past) affected their work and emotions? The responses were:

At sea you are isolated and as you grow older your friends change due to the nature of this job of not seeing your friends on a regular basis. As you grow older I find I become bitter.

I have had to deal with lack of communication a few times due to systems crashing onboard. One begins to find it quite difficult as you are unsure of the situation at home and naturally worry. This means you are worried about your family and can't give 100 percent attention on your work

Having started my career at sea 18 years ago, the lack of communication was the hardest part of being away. Your biggest fear is something happening to your loved ones and you are unable to help or indeed not knowing.

To allow her to understand the full extent the lack of communication has on them, the researcher asked some of the participant's wives the same question. These were some of the responses:

When my husband was at sea and I was at home, I used to even call the captain or the ship's agent to find out if my husband was ok. They used to joke to my husband that his wife called and wanted to know when he was bringing the bacon home.

20 years ago I used to drop my husband off at the airport and would not see or hear from him for up to three months, until he phoned from the Johannesburg airport [South Africa] to let me know when he would be returning to Durban. The lack of communication was very, very difficult and had a long term effect on our marriage. But even with better access to internet, WhatsApp, and Skype, if I have not heard from him for a few days I become worried and anxiety builds up.

The researcher asked the participants what effect their seafaring identity had on them on their return home and if it overlapped with their cultural identity. Some seafarers said that when they are at home that they do visit with family and friends, but others said:

Funny enough, I was a people's person before I got to sea, I'd be the one always on the phone and always instantly responding to call-backs from family and friends because I was always willing to just talk and cared about their wellbeing. But being at sea made me appreciate my own company more nowadays and because on most occasions my cell phone was just an alarm clock, I got very used to not talking on the phone and shutting the world out. Unfortunately, those closest to me would notice, but just deal with it and

called it “growing up”. Oh, and I appreciate my sleep much more nowadays- something I could never do before.

Another said:

Yes, very definitely and my wife complains about it often. In recent years I have become much less sociable.

6.6. Family Support and Support for Families by the Maritime Company

Baker (2006) stated that a person’s ability to cope under stressful circumstances is dependent on his identity development and how he perceives his social support. Baker (2006) continues by saying that people who have a strong support system at work or at home have better coping mechanisms.

6.6.1. Family Support

Although communication with the outside world has become easier, seafarers can still experience problems on the home front, which can become very stressful when far from home (Kristiansen, n.d). Stressful events can be due to family conflict, crises at home and the constant need to cyber-manage these problems over the internet and social media (Kristiansen, n.d). Furthermore, Carotenuto et al. (2012) argue that interaction with family over the cyberspace cannot be substituted for physical presence. Internet access cannot eliminate all the homesickness and loneliness the seafarer experiences (Carotenuto et al., 2012). Homebound stress influences a seafarer’s work as it becomes very difficult to stay focused at work when you know that there are problems at home (Raunek, 2012). The powerlessness seafarers feel when a family crisis arises at home induces the seafarers' stress and worries, which can lead to frustration, anxiety, and insomnia (Raunek, 2013).

Two of the participants’ wives wrote to the researcher regarding their South African seafaring husbands and the stressors both had to endure when their husbands were at sea:

It is Murphy’s law that the moment my husband steps onto the airplane that something happens at home, for example, the car breaks down, a water pipe bursts, the washing machine breaks, his mother is hospitalised, and so forth. I cannot contact him with every little thing, but sometimes when something serious occurs I have to and I know that he feels the stress and frustration of not being able to do something about it himself.

It seems as if the day that he leaves the fridge will break or there will be a problem with the electricity and I am not able to do these things.

When asked how she coped being at home alone when her husband was away at sea she responded:

I did not cope. I was not happy when he went to sea and when he came back, I went to the ship and said to him I want a divorce and he said to me I must look at what I will gain if we divorce. I will still have the responsibility of the children and added responsibility to provide for all the needs alone. In the end he had to accept that I will have a life of my own without him and I had to accept that he will not be able to solve the problems and challenges I have at home. I must deal with it the best I can and he had to accept that him coming home is not solution to the problems I had to face. He has to trust me and that I will manage affairs, whether it be the financial side or the emotional side as he cannot do it from the ship.

It was very difficult in the beginning and it was very tough, especially with his eldest son who was a teenager and a drug addict and when our son was in a car accident.

When the researcher asked the seafarer participants if the family supported their chosen career, the majority answered that their family supported them fully. A South African female seafarer stated that although at first their family was sceptical about her work in a male dominated industry, they were still supportive of her career choice. Nevertheless, two male seafarers replied, "she left me" and "Divorced. Does that answer that question?"

Seafarers are likely to be exposed to stressors such as divorce and the death or sickness of a family member (Thomas, 2004b). The researcher asked a South African seafarer about his very ill father, and what arrangements he made with his family in the event of his father passing away if he was at sea.

That is all taken care of, once when I got back from overseas, my father was in hospital, and my sister never told me. They did not want me to stress. There is nothing that I can do when I am away on the ship. If my father dies, I do not want to know, because then I would stress.

The same participant told me about his South African friend, who was offshore when his one son was murdered, and a few years later his other son was involved in a car accident. However, he also explained that the company found a replacement for his friend to return home as soon as was possible.

Thomas (2004a), stated that seafarers do cope better after traumatic events if they have support from their friends onboard the ship as well as family and friends at home.

6.6.2. Ship Support

Seafarers who have friends onboard the ship are more likely to cope with traumatic events, be it in the work environment or on the work front (Thomas, 2004a). Participants said that they speak to their fellow crew members when problems tend to overwhelm them. However, problems on the home front do affect the seafarers work. However, Sea Health (2011:43) quoted an example of one of their participants who related how officers can create a support system onboard a ship:

But having a chat and giving some support usually helps a lot. I talk a lot with people and listen to their problems. I call them in, close the door and tell them that nothing gets repeated outside the room.

Nevertheless, Sea Health (2011) also states that it is seldom that a seafarer will come to you and say that they are not happy. It is then important that the officer must observe the seafarer's body language (Sea Health, 2011). If a seafarer says that he is ok, but his body language contradicts it, then something most probably is wrong (Sea Health, 2011). Sea Health (2011) continues on this subject by quoting a chief engineer who said that as a leader it is easy to ignore the signals of distress, and that it is important to ask them if there is something wrong or if there is something they would like to talk about. In this way, one provides an opportunity for the seafarer to open up, but cannot pressure him to do so (Sea Health, 2011).

A South African participant said:

If you are friends with someone onboard talking about it can help, but any serious problems at home must be brought to the attention of the captain so that the company can review the situation to send you home or receive counselling.

Friends and the officers should be the first support system onboard when a seafarer is experiencing a crisis at home. A female seafarer who worked on an international cruise liner said that the officers are trained in counselling, and in the hospital onboard the ship counselling is also available. However, not all seafarers are willing to accept help from the onboard ship support system:

I never really disclosed a lot to my fellow colleagues because they are just as helpless as I am in situations involving emergencies at home and if anything, I don't really like being sympathised with because I can get over things myself without heading a pity party.

Ship support comes in different shapes and forms. A South African seafarer explained how she supports fellow seafarers:

I find that as a female I'll have fellow colleagues confiding in me and asking for advice because they feel that talking to men about sensitive issues might make you come across as a sissy so I had to find the Oprah in me to try and help them out more than I would be the one reaching out to them.

6.6.3. Organisational Support

According to von Dreele (2007) there are many maritime companies and captains who have a paternalistic attitude towards the seafarers. von Dreele (2007) said that on a visit to a specific ship the seafarers were asked if they needed something. They replied no, thank you, as they had access to resources that makes them comfortable onboard ship. In this instance, every seafarer onboard had 20 minutes of free satellite calls a day and internet services in their cabins (von Dreele, 2007). When the CEO of the maritime company was commended for this service, he replied that it was cheaper to retain seafarers than to replace unhappy seafarers ever so often (von Dreele, 2007).

Some of the participants praised their companies for their support systems, saying that if there is a crisis at home that they will assist you in getting home as soon as possible. Another South African captain said:

It becomes essential for your company to respond quickly when you lose a loved one and make immediate arrangements for you to fly home. Unfortunately, it often happens that it takes a few days before you arrive home, sometimes after the funeral.

These company services are often extended to the seafarers' families. Participants narrated that his family could contact the company when a home-bound crisis occurs; “and at all times the company offered assistance to my family”.

Other seafarers' comments about the company support was:

The company has a very seafarer-friendly system.

The Cape Town Office has a helpline and offers free counselling.

Captain's authority normally allows phone calls on ships' account if needed.

They also have access to medical facilities, social workers and chaplains.

I am lucky that the manning office in Cape Town is very helpful and I am confident that in an emergency they will also try their best to help at home.

We have a chaplain onboard the ship when we are at sea and I am able to communicate via cellular phone depending on where we are.

However, not all companies have a support system in place for the seafarers. A South African seafarer gave a long description of problems he observed due to the lack of a sufficient support system set in place.

One of my friends only knew that one of his parents died when returned home. One big thing... I said it before... internet, and wifi, is going to become a human rights issue, it is. One of the guys, I was on the ship with him, his wife did not get paid for two weeks. So by the time he found out, it took another week. Some ships that I have been on, there was a computer set up in the ship's office. You could not search, download or Skype anything, but you could email and do Facebook, so you could communicate with your family. For example, the seafarer who did not get paid, by the time he knew, he let the captain know, it was on a Friday night, I was standing on the bridge. The captain had to email Greece, so he could only take action on Monday. The seafarer's wife only got paid on the Wednesday.

A wife of one of the participants also related her experiences of the available company support:

It was difficult when our daughter had a breakdown and the Helpline from the shipping company could not help as they are only focused on the wives and not the children. However, they did put me in contact with somebody who could. It would have been better if there was support for all the family, especially the children.

The IMO and ITF are bringing the welfare of the seafarers under the attention of the maritime companies by highlighting the associated problems that go with a poor welfare system (International Maritime Organization, 2006). These problems include fatigue; loneliness; isolation; bullying; and harassment (Carotenuto et al., 2012; Oldenburg et al., 2012; Dickinson, 2011).

6.6.4. Fatigue

Fatigue is the main reason for maritime accidents and for the deterioration of the seafarer's well-being (Carotenuto et al., 2012). It is a major concern for the maritime industry as it is cited as being the highest reason for the decline of seafarers' mental health; personal injury and maritime accidents at sea (Carter, 2005; International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012b; Ottosen, 2012; Raunek, 2012). Symptoms of fatigue include; inability to stay awake; clumsiness; headaches and giddiness; loss of appetite; insomnia; moodiness; poor judgement; slow responses, and poor concentration (Carol-Dekker, 2015).

Another participant, an officer said, "Fatigue – far too much. Despite regulations, most senior officers do not get enough rest".

The researcher asked Viljoen (2016), for his observation regarding fatigue and how it affected the seafarers. He explained that:

The moment you are tired you become agitated and irritated, it causes a lot of problems. The concern is that they are more prone to making accidents. Typically it is also a dangerous situation.

Viljoen (2016) explained that the first thing seafarers want to do if they have some time off in the harbour is to rest and to contact their families.

A participant explained that fatigue onboard a cruise liner is often self-inflicted, as the young people party and drink after their shifts. But mostly fatigue is work-related (International Transport Workers' Federation, 2012b).

Fatigue on cruise lines was observed by a participant as:

The people, mostly Filipinos, are worked to death. They work long hours and do not get shore leave as often as the hospitality staff, which also leads to depression and fatigue.

There are IMO and ITF policies regarding resting and sleeping hours, which maritime organisations have to comply with. There are South African officers who said that there were circumstances, which cause fatigue such as bad weather that is beyond their control. Once fatigue has set in, it is difficult to catch up on sleep again. A South African seafarer said that one of the problems he experienced onboard the ship was: "The

introduction of the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 has helped with the fatigue issue, although sometimes it is unavoidable”. Some participants explained that because they work in shifts that the noise levels often are very high: “My cabin was next to a cabin used as an office. I could hear every word, argument and movement of furniture”. Another explained that because the cabins are not sound-proof, the constant noise level of workers interferes with the quality of sleep.

STCW 2010 has set in place a ten-hour rest in every 24-hour cycle (Sekimizu, 2010). Despite the STCW 2010’s policies regarding resting hours, compliance is still a concern as some ships resort to ‘fudging’ resting hours; resting hours are entered incorrectly to cover the fact that the ship is not complying with the maritime regulations (Bhargava, 2013). Viljoen (2016), a South African pastor working at the Seafarers’ Mission, Durban Post, explained how he observed seafarers becoming fatigued. He said that when the ship comes into the harbour, it is all hands on deck, even those who are not on shift. The ship downloads and/or uploads its cargo, and it is because the turnaround times in the harbour have been reduced over the last two decades it is seldom that the seafarers get shore leave. He continued to explain that prior to the ship setting sail all hands are on standby, which can be a long time as the ship has to wait for the pilot. Even though the pilot has been booked, they are very seldom on schedule. The seafarers take naps where they can while they are waiting for orders, but that does not compensate for a full night’s sleep (Viljoen, 2016). Another South African seafarer explained that when they are on a cabotage vessel they visit two ports a day, which adds to all the crew becoming easily fatigued.

6.6.5. Loneliness and Isolation

The ripple effect of the lack of social interaction is the feeling of isolation and loneliness (Carol-Dekker, 2015). Loneliness and isolation can lead to anxiety disorders, stress and depression (Seafarers' Rights, 2012). Furthermore, loneliness and isolation can lead to suicide. Suicide is four times higher in the merchant navy than in any shore-based industry (Sea Health, 2002; Seafarers' Rights, 2012). A participant said that he found that being South African makes him acutely aware of racist attitudes, especially of East European officers. He is the only South African onboard the ship. He had no social interaction with the other crew and was very lonely on his sea trips.

According to Swift (2015) social isolation is an involuntary action, which has a negative psychological effect on seafarers. Feelings of marginalisation, exclusion, anger, despair and sadness, can all be psychological symptoms of isolation (Swift, 2015). Isolation has been exacerbated because close friendship and the sharing of problems have never been common at sea (Swift, 2015). The multicultural crew does not share the same backgrounds and the lack of a common cultural-language prevents seafarers from becoming friends (Swift, 2015).

A participant explained how a multicultural crew can isolate certain groups:

Lack of cultural integration and socialisation – Always. When you have a crew of, say, 20 people with 8 different nationalities, any socialisation is going to be a problem

One female seafarer said that she became more reclusive since she became a seafarer, mostly keeping to herself.

6.6.6. Bullying and Harassment

Dickinson (2011:7) defined bullying as:

[Bullying is] a threatening or intimidating work environment in, which a group of people or an individual may become fearful or intimidated because of the negative or hostile behaviour of another group of people or individual.

And;

[Harassment is] a form of discrimination when unwanted conduct takes place, which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Dickinson (2011) continues to argue that bullying in the merchant navy is about the abuse of power; it is also unpredictable, vindictive, cruel, and malicious. However, all forms of abuse could be categorised under the two definitions - bullying and harassment (Dickinson, 2011). Most often the bullies do not realise the effect their abusive behaviour has on their victims (Dickinson, 2011). Furthermore, bullying and harassment are often directed at victims that are 'othered' due to their gender, race, nationality, religion, and or age (Dickinson, 2011). Bullying can also be used to marginalise a person by ignoring them, as observed by a participant:

The admin clerk, for example, is a Filipino. I used to have long chats with him about his family, his future plans and life in general, but because he is seen as “only a clerk” he is basically ignored by the rest of the crew.

Sexual harassment is not often reported. Dickinson (2011:5) states that in a union’s survey (NUMAST), 75 percent of female seafarers said that they were victims of sexual harassment, but 73 percent stated that they did not report these incidents. A South African female seafarer explained that she was sexually harassed by an officer. But when he became verbally aggressive, she went to report it to the human resource manager who only shrugged his shoulders and said that this officer hits on all the women to see who will take the bait. This is a disturbing indication that despite merchant navy policies on bullying and harassment, that when reported management does not take it seriously.

Dickinson (2011, 2013) states that it is important for navy management to address harassment and bullying through regular training, thus constructing a healthy ship's culture. Failing to train seafarers in this regard will result in them leaving inattentive companies for greener pastures (Dickinson, 2011). Training guides and videos are distributed amongst maritime organisations and seafarers to provide tools to recognise and manage these problems (Nautilus, 2014).

The South African male officers in a focus group said they knew that the crew were not familiarized with policies regarding sexism, bullying and harassment. The new crew members are given material to read, regarding expected conduct, mental and physical health, but they very seldom peruse them.

Viljoen (2016) related to the researcher an incident of physical and emotional abuse on one of the international ships. The seafarers came to the Seafarers’ Mission and refused to embark on the ship again. The problem escalated to such an extent that the seafarers preferred being arrested by the South African police and deported rather than returning to the ship.

6.7. Seafarers Mission Support

The Mission to Seafarers (MtS) and Sailors Society have as their objective taking care of the spiritual, physical and legal needs of all seafarer's regardless of race, gender or religious affiliation (Viljoen, 2016). This is done by visiting each ship entering a harbour where there is a chaplain (Viljoen, 2016). They also visit ill or injured seafarers in hospital. In most ports, there is a centre where the men and women of the sea can go and relax, and find a home away from home (Seafarer's Mission, 2014).

The Seafarers' Mission, Durban, South Africa, is regularly visited by international seafarers (Viljoen, 2016). The mission makes phone cards available for the seafarers as soon as their ships dock so they can contact their families. However, Viljoen (2016) observed that due to the new security measures in the port it is becoming increasingly difficult for the visiting seafarers to leave the port in order to have some time off and relax at the mission. This is because the seafarers have to go through emigration with their passports.

When the researcher asked the South African seafarers if they visit mission stations when abroad, their answers varied from "sometimes" to "all the time". They appreciate the transport the missions make available for them to visit the local shops. At Christmas time the seafarers are treated to special meals and a small gift. It makes Christmas time less lonely for them. Although there are counselling and pastoral services available, very few South African seafarers take advantage of this.

Viljoen (2016) explained that very few seafarers open up on their personal problems, they know that they have X amount of time left at sea and have to grin and bear it. However, the seafarers know that there are pastoral services available when they need spiritual, emotional and psychological support (Viljoen, 2016). Even if they do not need spiritual assistance, the physical presence of a pastor gives the seafarers the opportunity to speak to them (Viljoen, 2016).

An example of spiritual, and emotional support provided by a seafarer's mission was when the Richards Bay, South African seafarers' mission posted an event on a Facebook. The mission was contacted by ship owners requesting them to visit the ship and to offer support to the crew after the loss of a fellow crewmember in a work-related accident (Richards Bay

Seafarers Mission, 2016). A priest at the mission offered a blessing and held a mass for the deceased and for the deceased's co-workers (Richards Bay Seafarers Mission, 2016).

Religiously, the majority South African seafarers indicated that they are religious and that religion helps them to cope when at sea. A minority of South African seafarers stated that they are not religious, but that they use the seafarers' missions' services, transport service. But one of the participants said that one of the missions in the USA stopped supplying transport as most of the seafarers wanted to be dropped off at bars.

Viljoen (2016) described that the first thing that seafarers want to do, once they docked, is to contact their families. The seafarers are able to cope with long periods away at sea if they have regular contact with their loved ones. The South African seafarers who can call Durban their home are in a position to see their families on a more regular basis, which gives them strength to continue working in the merchant navy. Seafarers' coping mechanisms are contingent on the contact that they sustain with their families (Viljoen, 2016).

The female seafarers' coping mechanism is slightly different from that of their male counterparts in that they are professional at all times, keeping men at a distance, even with the male pastors from the seafarers' missions. According to Viljoen's (2016) experience as a pastor, female seafarers are not very communicative and seldom speak to pastors at the mission station about their spiritual, mental, and physical needs.

6.8. Psychological Problems Experienced by South African Seafarers

Seafarers are more vulnerable to experiencing mental health problems (Carotenuto et al., 2012; Swift, 2015). Seafarers are especially prone to suffer from mild anxiety and depression (Swift, 2015). Mental health problems are linked to smaller crews, higher workloads, and longer working hours (Swift, 2015). Long separation from family and friends have also been cited as causing high stress levels. A South African seafarer recounted:

The vessel required a seafarer to relieve their current seafarer on short notice for health reasons. Upon arrival the current seafarer was found to be sitting in the bottom office just staring at the wall. I introduced myself - he mumbled his name and walked out and I did not see him again. Later I enquired from the other crew what the problem was and they said that he had not worked

for the last two weeks just sat in the office during his shift looking at the wall. Much later I could sort of piece the story together. The guy had worked on other vessels where he had been part of a team for many years. When he arrived on this vessel he was on his own in the department and totally out of his depth. As the trip progressed the other crew were getting more and more frustrated with him and obviously applying pressure to get work done, for example faults repaired and so forth. The person being in the mid 50's age group could not adapt nor accept his inability and admit that he is incapable. Ultimately, it led to a complete breakdown and he was hospitalized. Later it was told to me that he was on suicide watch the last two weeks. On his arrival at home, his career at sea was over. This incident was substantiated by the participant's co-worker and an international officer on board the ship, Mr. Wootton, (2016).

Isolation amongst seafarers can lead to despair and depression, and in the worst-case scenario suicide (Carotenuto et al., 2012; Oldenburg et al., 2012). The merchant navy has the second highest suicide rate of any other industry; up to 6 percent of deaths amongst seafarers are classified as suicide (Swift, 2015). This high suicide rate has been attributed to the means available for seafarers to commit suicide, mostly by drowning (Swift, 2015). The seafarer suicide rate might be much higher than documented, as some seafarers are reported missing at sea, which could not be confirmed or denied as accidents or suicide (Roberts, Jaremin, Chalasani, and Rodgers, 2009).

The perceived threat of piracy is also a concern regarding the seafarers' mental health. A male security officer onboard a ship spoke to the researcher about four piracy encounters they experienced. They only had South African security officers on the ship. The moment they waved their arms (weapons) at the pirates the pirates backed off and waved back at them. But the presence of armed security officers does not necessarily relieve the anxiety of the other crew members.

Seafarers who had been attacked or had close encounters with pirates expressed their fears and mood changes after the event; they all showed symptoms of psychological stress (Garfinkle, Katz, and Saratchandra, 2012). All in all, clinical researchers have observed higher stress levels among seafarers due to piracy concerns (Garfinkle et al., 2012).

6.9. Conclusion

The researcher wanted to focus on the way South African seafarers cope when working in the merchant navy. The responses regarding the questions on what coping mechanisms

seafarers use vary from participant to participant. However, there are several similarities regarding the importance of effective communication with their families, as their families can ‘make or break’ a seafarer, strengthen or deplete his or her coping mechanisms.

What the causes of stressors are, and what effect stress has on a seafarer has been studied and highlighted continuously in the merchant navy as a safety concern for the individual seafarer, the crew, the ship, and ultimately the cost to the maritime organisation in cases of injury and maritime accidents.

The field of study on the different stressors and their effects in the merchant navy is very wide and justifies a study in its own right. Thus, the researcher selected the issues of stress and coping mechanisms, which are most often discussed in the maritime scholarships, maritime web posts, and other maritime research groups. These selected questions were asked in the interview and survey schedules. These questions focused on what coping mechanisms enable the seafarer to work in the seafaring industry. The seafaring industry not only separates the seafarer from his family, but also requires him or her to work and live in an emotionally and physically volatile environment.

Chapter 7

Conclusion, Summary, Findings, Recommendations

7.1. Introduction

In this final chapter, the researcher would like to repeat the opening comment made in the introduction to this thesis:

Money, Travel and Women?
Is that what they told you?
How about homesickness.
Sea sickness.
Maintaining relationships.
No-good crews.
Bad supervisors.
Hard work.
Unpredictable accidents and deaths.
Prisoner-like life.
No proper sleep and rest.
Unforgiving seas and oceans, etc.
So do not make like you know us, and you never will.
(Anonymous)

The researcher viewed this quote as a summary of the entire research as it addresses some of the perceptions that the uninformed South African has about seafarers. It addresses the problems that the South African seafarer have to deal with on a daily basis. The last remark, “do not make like you know us ... you never will” strikes the researcher as significant. To know someone is to understand his or her identity. To research someone, you need to understand the underlying processes that are part of the person’s social identity construction. However, even through research it is difficult to understand the seafaring industry, without being a seafarer yourself. The purpose of this thesis, then, was to analyse the identity construction of the South African seafarer from their perspective. In other words, to give them a voice.

This chapter breakdown will be approached by summarising the thesis before offering recommendations and motivate possible future studies.

7.2. Summary

One of the questions the researcher addressed is highlighted in the quote introduced in the first chapter of this thesis. The question is, do we know the seafarer? To address this question, the researcher approached the research by investigating the South African seafarer's social identity construction, and what coping mechanisms they use whilst at sea. The quote's words; "So do not make like you know us, and you never will" is a veiled question that was in the background throughout the whole thesis. To understand a seafarer requires a person to 'walk a mile' in the seafarer's shoes, or to row a nautical mile or two with him in his boat. The researcher was unable to do so, at least to some extent. To do so the researcher approached the seafarers directly to give them a platform to share their viewpoints and experiences. Many international maritime research papers fail to give the seafarer a voice. In other words, the voices of the seafarers' personal opinions and experiences are muted. It is through their voice that the researcher analysed how their social identities are developed in this unique working and living environment.

Very little literature is available on the South African seafarer thus much of chapter two, the literature review, draws mostly from international scholarship. This chapter not only addresses the culture, language, gender, and race, but it researched the foundation of maritime organisation, which is presented in a flow diagram. The diagram of the development of maritime organisation was researched by studying many different articles and books. The researcher wanted to give the reader a visual representation of the history and structure of international maritime organisation. It may be noted that although the structure remains the same, there is a continual improvement and implementation of new policies. Most of these policies were put into place as maritime accidents highlighted shortcomings and mistakes that could have been prevented. One of the important policy implementations was that of the establishment of STCW in 1995. This stated that seafarers have to comply with minimum training. In its wake various training courses were created, which included focus on safety training to prevent human error at sea.

Chapter two also addressed the current maritime policies on maritime training. The current STCW 2010 came into force in December 2015. The development of the international maritime structure is the foundation on, which safety, human rights, and environmental protection are based. This foundation ensures uniformity in merchant navy training,

enforcing safety policies, and ensuring that seafarers are protected against human rights abuses. Flag of Convenience ships (FOC) are notorious for avoiding the International Maritime Organisations' policies on human rights abuses. As discussed in chapter two, FOC-flagged ships are registered in developing countries where labour laws, minimum wages, high taxes, and so forth are avoided to increase profit margins. However, it also provides these ship owners the opportunity to treat their seafarers in less humane ways. FOC ships tend to add to the stress seafarers have to work under, and can be perceived by the seafarers as a threat to their social identity.

Seafarers also face challenges that are not often recognised by the public. In the poem quoted in the introduction to the thesis, the writer pointed out that being a seafarer is not all about travelling and pleasure, but riddled with dangers, challenges and problems. To enable a seafarer to work long periods away from home, he or she needs coping mechanisms. Without coping mechanisms, seafarers will not be able to adapt to life at sea, and can encounter psychological and physiological difficulties. One of the physiological problems commonly encountered are health related such as heart disease. Due to excess stress, seafarers tend to smoke and drink excessively and take unnecessary risks on the job. If the seafarer is unable to perform his or her work effectively, he or she can compromise their own safety as well the safety of their co-workers and that of the ship. This phenomenon of human nature influencing the safety of the work environment is referred to as the human element. The human element phenomenon is addressed by the IMO policies that seafarers have to adhere to.

Some of the factors that chip away at the seafarer's coping mechanisms are fatigue, lack of social interaction, isolation, bullying, sexual harassment, and, most of all, the lack of contact with their loved ones. Although sufficient material to assist seafarers to address these issues this remains a major contributor to human element accidents and psychological and physiological problems.

The researcher theoretically addressed how a seafarer's social identity develops, drawing from social constructionism and organisational theories. The researcher describes these theories as 'umbrella theories', as many different theorists' theories are nested under this 'umbrella'. Social constructionism and organisational theories overlap greatly, with the

only difference being that organisational theories' focus is embedded in the organisation. Since both approach their theories from a social constructionism paradigm, the researcher encompassed the two.

Social constructionism states that a human's identity formation starts with the culture he or she is born into. This culture socialises the individual to understand the cultural symbols within their said context. The knowledge of the importance of symbolic knowledge of their cultures is deeply embedded in their social identity. However, socialisation cannot occur without language, as it is through language that culture is transmitted. The researcher differentiates between cultural-language and language for communicative purposes inter-culturally. It is important to note that social identity construction is a fluid and continued process, from birth to death.

Language is not the only determinant of social identity construction, but supersedes the other characteristics, which work together to construct social identities. Without social interaction and language, social identity cannot be constructed, be it intra- or inter- cultural social interaction. A person can have many different identities, or as Goffman explains, identities are performed, depending on the audience. Thus, an individual has agency, whereby he can choose how to act, interact and perform in different contexts. Due to the fact that the participants came from different cultures such as English, Afrikaans, Zulu, and Xhosa speaking backgrounds, it was not possible to present the cultural research and insight of each culture individually.

Due to the diversity of cultures in South Africa, South Africans are generally exposed and interact with different cultures within the educational system and in the workplace. All of the participants said that they found that being South African made their adaptation from land to sea much easier, due to the tolerance they learnt through social interaction with the prevalent cultural diversity in the South African context. However, this statement cannot be generalised as a portion of South Africans still shrug off the reality of the apartheid legacy by clinging to their social laagers and resist social interaction with the 'other'. Identity construction in the maritime workplace is complex and it present the same characteristics as those stated in Karl Marx's theory of alienation. With the tightening of IMO policies, the seafarer, has become alienated from the product or service produced or

provided. This results in a sense of loss of autonomy and of creativity in the solving of problems in the execution of their job functions. The seafarer is conditioned only to follow orders from his or her superiors and maritime organisations. This results in a threat to their unique socially constructed identity.

Work identity is better described by comparing employment to unemployment. The loss of employment or retirement often leads to the sense that the worker has lost his socially constructed work identity. The loss of work identity due to unemployment or retirement can be severe because family and friends have very little understanding of what seafaring entails. Seafarers find that unemployment creates a loss of solidarity that their unique work environment provided. The experience of working and living in the same environment in rough seas and so forth provides seafarers with a unique bond regardless of culture, cultural-language, gender and race.

The researcher observed that some seafarers whether currently employed, unemployed or retired find that connecting with other seafarers on the social media helped them to retain their cherished seafaring identity by sharing their experiences and or memories with each other. The sharing of seafaring identity in the social media provided them with a sense of solidarity. This lead the researcher to offer a different definition of merchant navy culture as explained in chapter five. To refresh the reader's memory, the researcher defines merchant navy culture as:

A group of men or women, who speak the symbolic seafarers' language, and who can narrate their experiences through social interaction regardless of age, culture, gender, race, and/or nationality. This camaraderie is formed by their seafaring experiences. The social cohesion can occur through physical or social interaction or through social media. (Carol-Dekker, 2016)

The researcher argued that organisational culture, ships culture, and safety culture are covered under her umbrella definition of merchant navy culture.

As discussed in chapter three and chapter five, there is a distinction between sex and gender. Sociologically sex refers to the body's anatomy, whereby gender refers to the agency of a person born of a certain sex, be it male or female. How a person performs, his or her gender

is not necessarily on par with their sex. Gender identities can be performed in the maritime context or their chosen gendered lifestyle, as per the given example: homosexual and/or lesbian. This performance of social identity can also affect female seafarers who might find that being a female in a male dominated work environment can make them vulnerable to sexual harassment and bullying. To combat the hostility of the majority male co-corkers, all of the female seafarers indicated that they down-play their femininity by cutting their hair short, talking and acting like a man so that they can become 'one of the boys'. Female seafarers find it difficult to break away from the stereotypical perspectives of women endowed by their male colleagues.

Gender is not exclusively used in relation to the female sex, but also refers to the male gender. According to international scholarship and social constructionists, men who are not part of the hegemonic male group may find themselves ostracized, feminised, and isolated from the social interaction of the dominant group. The feminisation of men from certain nationalities originated from a colonially embedded stereotype when men were employed as house workers, a job usually assigned to women. This hegemonic male hierarchy persists in the maritime industry.

The researcher embarked on the research with the presumption that a small number of homosexual seafarers would be encountered in the maritime industry and that the participants would be willing to discuss their encounters and/or observations on homosexuality. However, in analysing the data, she realised that, both male and female seafarers preferred to remain silent on this subject. This is difficult to analyse as there are also very little literature available on this topic in the maritime industry. There is an abundance of literature on female seafarers in the merchant navy but again without any mention to lesbian relationships or alternative lifestyles.

The majority of ships are crewed by multicultural seafarers. Seafarers are recruited from all over the world, creating a diverse environment. This type of travelling and temporary employment away from home is coined 'temporary migration'. This temporary migration has an effect on the majority of seafarers, as this is a move from their familiar cultural and national contexts into a multicultural environment and they are exposed to new cultures: organisational culture, ship culture and safety culture. This temporary migration is not only

problematic for the novice seafarer, but also for seasoned seafarers who frequently are required to move from ship-to-ship albeit within the same maritime organisation or between different organisations as culture differs between ships and between different maritime organisations.

A few of the male participants indicated that often they are the only South Africans onboard the ship and that this leaves them with little commonality with the other crew members. If the South African is not accepted into the ship's culture he or she can feel isolated and sometimes hostility develops because the other crew members exclude the participant by speaking in their ethnic cultural-language, rather than the supposedly enforced maritime English. The same holds true with the South African female participants, who often find themselves as the only female in an all-male dominated community. The female participants related that it is very difficult to be accepted and included into the ship's culture. This rejection often leads to the feeling of loneliness and eventually isolation. The female seafarers stated that it is not only onboard ships that they are ostracised, but also when they go ashore to visit some seafarer's mission. One specific seafarer said that she was labelled as a prostitute, because she was black.

Xenophobia can develop in the maritime context, if the newcomer is viewed as an outsider or even perceived as a threat to those seafarers who have been working on the same ship for a long period. As the maritime recession escalates, maritime owners are resorting to employing cheaper labour from developing countries, to cut labour costs. This perceived invasion of cheaper labour escalates the feeling of hostility towards seafarers recruited from developing countries and even towards the maritime company employing them. South African seafarers also fall victim to these labour cuts, and know that as soon as seafarers from the developing countries are employed on 'their' ship, they will soon be without a job.

To enable seafarers to understand the diverse cultures onboard and eliminate xenophobia, they require soft skills. Soft skills are not native to a person but something that must be assimilated. Officers are required by the STCW 2010 to complete a course on soft skills. This course, Human Element, Leadership and Management (HELM) addresses the different cultures and the need for seafarers to feel that they belong to the ship's culture.

This requires the officers to integrate and socialise with the rest of the crew, which is becoming more common with internationally managed ships. However, the South African officers interviewed strongly disagreed with this social integration as they felt that it compromises their authority as officers, which makes it difficult to enforce discipline. Two of the officer cadet participants related to the researcher that due to the fact that they are not allowed to interact with the rest of the crew that they felt very isolated. Not only are the cadets isolated by being allowed to socially interact with the rest of the crew, but they feel that due to the seniority of the senior officers they do not feel comfortable to socially interact with them either. This is in contrast to many other international ships where it is not uncommon for an officer to cross the authoritative barrier to spend time with his fellow compatriots of lower rank. Social interaction is widely discussed in the international literature. This literature encourages social interaction and explains that it helps seafarers to cope with life at sea and helps them to socially construct a healthy ship's identity.

To enable a seafarer to adapt to life at sea they have to develop strong coping mechanisms. Coping mechanisms or coping strategies, are not only culturally specific, but are also reliant on family, ship and organisational support. Family support supersedes ship and organisational support. There are certain aspects, which corrode the ability of seafarers to cope at sea. These are the lack of communication with family and friends; the need to receive recognition of work well done; lack of social interaction; fatigue; stress; continued bullying, harassment and both emotional and sexual and isolation. Continued stress, and fatigue can lead to burnout and this is cited as being more prevalent with officers than crew. The higher stress levels amongst officers could be due to the lack of social interaction with crew and the heavy workload.

Maritime literature has gone to great lengths to highlight the problems of the above-mentioned factors, which affect the coping mechanisms of the seafarer. Seafarers may feel that their identity is under threat if they are excluded from regular interaction with other crew members, which can lead to emotional and physical isolation. This, in turn, can lead to anxiety, which again can be perceived as a threat to self-identity. To combat this threat to social identity, the seafarer needs a set of coping mechanisms. As mentioned previously, the most critical coping mechanism is contact with family and friends. This contact can most effectively be achieved with the availability of electronic media. Not all ships offer

electronic media facilities to their crew as it is a very expensive commodity for the maritime company

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All the participants, international respondents and international literature stressed the importance of internet facilities onboard. The participants spoke of the availability of internet, one seafarer stating that their company's ships had no internet access for the crew; another stated that they only had a few computers available, which were very slow, which made it very difficult to communicate with their loved ones. Social media, such as Facebook, was the preferred method of maintaining contact with family and friends. WhatsApp and Skype were also used. However, Skype uses a lot of bandwidth and causes the internet to slow down to such an extent that it can create conflict amongst crew.

There also is a downside to the availability of the internet. Seafarers who have access to the internet tend to spend most of their leisure time online and consequently neglect to socialise with their colleagues. If this facility is available in their cabins they isolate themselves and communicate with their family or watch television. The lack of social interaction eventually leads to the lack of communication and limits the opportunities to acknowledge diversity on a social level.

Seafarers whose social identities are validated within the ship and maritime cultures have better coping mechanisms than those who lose the sense of their social self. The perception that co-workers, ship management or organisational management does not recognise their cultural uniqueness can lead to the feeling that their social identity is under threat. Other ways to cope is to consciously make an effort to fit in with the ships culture. As mentioned before, female seafarers find that if they emulate the male seafarers, that they gain their respect and are accepted into the ship's dominant 'male' culture. The performance of identity is not only unique to female seafarers, but also is common amongst most of the crew. This performance helps them to fulfil the need to belong to the ships culture. Thus performing their identity to an audience gives them the chance to 'fit' in with the ship's culture. If the seafarer does not succeed in being integrated into the ship's culture, the only remaining strategy is to withdraw thereby exacerbating the situation by totally isolating themselves from social interaction from the rest of the crew.

Participants shared that if the maritime organisation they work for supplies a strong support structure, they felt secure by knowing that if needed they could rely on their employer's physical and psychological support. The support includes assisting the seafarer to return home in the case of a family emergency, such as the death of a loved one. As mentioned previously maritime companies are increasingly setting up a 24-hour helplines to support them when needed

7.3. Findings

7.3.1. Maritime Training

The researcher attended conferences, had contact with different training institutes such as the DUT and taught the HELM course and did extensive reading on the South African seafarer's education. The researcher observed that the South African maritime training is of a high standard. The African young people are encouraged to consider seafaring as a career choice and if one studies the statistics provided by DUT, the intake of African students especially women, has increased dramatically.

The motivation for the South African government to promote maritime training is multifold. Firstly, they rightly envisioned that by training seafarers, especially females would empower African people. Secondly, it was anticipated that it would attract international shipping companies to register under the South African flag. These attempts to relaunch the South African maritime industry are and were problematic and there are few visible signs of transformation. In addition, the global maritime recession and low oil prices resulted in thousands of seafarers being laid off. As this thesis is limited to qualitative research of the South African seafarer's lived experiences, it did not concentrate on the South African merchant navies structures in depth. However, Shaun Ruggunan, has written about the global maritime changes from the South African labour market's perspective (Ruggunan, 2016).

The researcher raised one concern regarding the hierarchy system onboard ship with South African officers. That is the strict policy of segregation between the officers and the ratings. South African officers are adamant that officers should not socially interact with the rest of the crew. The cadets are told from day one that it is taboo, as officers need to keep the authoritative distance to enable them to discipline the crew when needed.

Internationally that barrier has largely been broken down to allow officers and crew to interact socially. This allows officers to become more in touch with the crew's cultures and wellbeing needs.

This enforced segregation amongst South African officers and crew is viewed by the researcher as imperialistic and a remnant of apartheid, which was carried over from one generation to the next finding a foothold in maritime education. A change of attitude will be needed to break this cycle.

7.3.2. Maritime, Organisational, Ship, and Safety Culture

Maritime culture was redefined by the researcher as being the glue that binds all the seafarers together due to their occupation at sea. This maritime culture was evident when the South African seafarers 'othered' the researcher. If one refers to the quote used in the introduction and concluding chapters, which stated "So do not make like you know us, and you never will", it is evident why they 'other' people who have never experienced working at sea.

Seafarers who socially constructed themselves as such, find that because their family and their non-seafaring friends do not understand their seafaring experiences, their social constructed seafaring identity is under threat. To protect their seafaring identity they seek out social media communities such as in Facebook, to reminisce about their time at sea. It is in these communities that they feel that they belong and that their experiences are valued.

According to the researcher, the maritime culture supersedes the organisational, ship's, and safety cultures. The captain of the ship is the organisation's representative, but also sets the tone and influences the ship's culture. The participants tend to 'other' the company culture, as they do not see the organisational culture as sharing their norms and values thus neglecting the seafarer's needs.

On the other hand, the safety culture is regulated by the international maritime organisations such as the IMO, which in turn influences and control the maritime organisations' implementations of the safety culture. However, the adherence to the safety culture is negligible if it is left to be culturally interpreted by the multicultural crew. Participants mentioned that it is a continued struggle to enforce the safety

regulations. One of these safety regulations is that of enforcing English as the maritime working language.

7.3.3. Language

English language competency seems to improve with higher rank. According to the participants the ratings' English, generally is very poor. Poor understanding of English can lead to individual and ship accidents. The participants were all fluent in English, but still mentioned that communication is problematic. The researcher's evaluation of the maritime language competency is that because the companies are hiring seafarers who are willing to work for lower wages, they hire seafarers who do not have the ability to communicate adequately in English. Participants also mentioned that by speaking in ones cultural-language excludes other seafarers from their conversations.

Cultural-language preserves the seafarer's cultural identity. However, they are made aware of the dangers of speaking in one's cultural-language onboard. All participants spoke of the frustration of crew members who do not adhere to the working language policy. Attempting to enforce this policy tends to create animosity between the participants and the multi-cultured crew.

7.3.4. Gender

South African seafarers mostly come from traditional patriarchal communities and have been socially constructed as women are required to be submissive and consequently seafaring women have to face many challenges. One of these challenges is to break the stereotypical perception of their culture, the public and that of the industry that women are not capable to work in a traditional male orientated environment. For female seafarers to adapt to the traditional male environment, they have to reculturate their socially constructed identities. If their social identities reflect their feminine side, they are not accepted as part of the 'male' group. National and international female seafarers said that they have to dress, talk, and behave like men to 'earn' their place onboard ship. Female gendered South African seafarers argued that despite the fact that they adapt their identities to match that of their male counterparts, they still have to resist sexual harassment. The sexual harassment is a threat to their seafaring social identity as some of the male seafarers stereotype the female seafarers as 'easy targets'. Other male

seafarers continuously challenge the female seafarers' seafaring identity by making their work very difficult by verbal harassment and bullying.

Despite all of these challenges, the South African female seafarers are experiencing difficulties in finding employment. Firstly, the availability of positions is limited. Secondly, the maritime industry's reluctance to accept female seafarers. Thirdly, finding training berths for South African seafarers, both male and female is problematic.

Companies who do not realise that female needs are different from male needs further challenge women's gender identities in the merchant navy. One example is that the coveralls are all designed for male bodies, but do not fit the female physique, which makes their working clothes extremely uncomfortable, which they have to wear for 12 hours a day. The researcher summarised the female experience as being: if you want to work like a man, you will not receive any 'female' privileges such as comfortable working clothes, protection from sexual harassment, bullying, and so forth.

7.3.5. Race

The researcher interviewed seafarers from Zulu, Afrikaans, English and Xhosa cultures. These cultures all have their own unique characteristics, such as their own set of cultural-language, symbolism, worldview, norms and values unique to each culture. However, they are united in the fact that they are from the same nation and most importantly, that they share the same maritime culture. The maritime culture is the factor that constructs their seafaring identities, regardless of culture, language, gender or race. Very few South African seafarers felt that they were on the receiving end of racism, but they observed racism amongst the multicultural crew members.

7.3.6. Coping Strategies

The first most important coping strategy that South African seafarers face is the contact they receive from their families and friends. Regular contact with their family and friends verify their cultural-identities. South African seafarers stay in contact with their family and friends mostly through social media, be it via the internet, Facebook, or WhatsApp. This can only be done if the maritime organisation supplies the facilities. If they have poor internet facilities onboard the ship, their first action, when they dock, is to find a phone or buy a phone card to phone their loved ones.

The seafarer's missions play an important role in facilitating contact for the seafarers, by making available airtime cards that the seafarers can purchase. Alternatively, if it is possible for the seafarers to leave the port, the mission has internet connection and telephones facilities available to them. The seafarers' missions globally ensure that there always is a pastor available if seafarers feel a need to speak to someone confidentially. These services include spiritual guidance, and if needed, to ensure that an injured seafarer is taken care of in a hospital. When a ship experiences death onboard, spiritual guidance and grief, counselling is provided. However, the majority of the South African seafarers interviewed indicated that they do not use these facilities other than transport to shops as most maritime companies have set in place a 24-hour helpline to assist seafarers with emotional needs.

In addition, officers receive training to assist seafarers with their problems, but due to their heavy workload they seldom have the time to sit down with the crew to resolve conflict or personal problems that inevitably occur on the ship. Some South African seafarers feel that the officers intentionally avoid social contact with the crew, to avoid getting to know them personally. This avoidance also prevents being approached with petty problems.

7.4. Recommendations

Acquiring soft skills in the merchant navy is problematic because it is only compulsory for officers to do the HELM course as prescribed by the STCW 2010. The researcher is of the opinion that soft skills must be a compulsory subject in the curriculum for everyone from the onset of training. This should be taught as an extra humanities subject, such as sociology. Sociology teaches the fundamentals of intra- and intergroup interaction, culture, social constructionism, and the importance of cultural-language that plays such an important role in these processes.

The second recommendation would be that the poor command of English in the global merchant navy should be addressed. STCW 2010 has strict policies about English competency amongst officers, but only requires a fundamental understanding of English amongst the rest of the crew. To combat this problem a disciplinary system should be put in place to force the crew to communicate with each other only in English whilst on shift.

The third recommendation is about female seafarers. The researcher recommends that female seafarers should be employed in pairs. By having more than one female seafarer on board a ship can solve many problems, such as providing companionship and possible protection against sexual harassment and bullying. The lack of basic needs such as providing coveralls that fit the female body, and other basic utilities in the cabin, which men usually do not need, for example a full length mirror and a better sanitary disposal system.

The fourth recommendation is about race and multiculturalism, which can also be linked to gender as discussed in the third recommendation. The lack of training in cultural, racial and gender diversity in the maritime training institutes should be incorporated from the onset of training and not only as short courses, as is currently done. When training is incorporated at an early stage, it becomes ingrained into the learner's mind and they would enter the workplace with the soft skills knowledge of the 'other' and enable them integrate and understand their co-workers from the first day of entering the seafaring workplace.

The fifth recommendation is about coping strategies. Officers have indicated that the lack of time prevents them from giving full attention to the emotional and psychological needs of their crew. At first, the researcher wanted to suggest that a designated trained counsellor or social worker is allocated per ship. However, it was pointed out that the newer ships are designed with minimum cabins, just enough to fulfil the minimum crew listings per ship category. The researcher realised that all ships have a medic on board the ship and would recommend that the medic receive the necessary counselling training and have the authority to contact the company's dedicated person onshore if the need should arise. This will relieve the officers of the duties of managing the mental, psychological, and personal problems that occur on all ships. The researcher observed that certain companies advertise on social media that they have help lines dedicated to assist seafarers in their employ.

The sixth recommendation specifically focuses on the South African officers and is a conscious effort to break down the imperialistic-apartheid hierarchy amongst them that exists between officers and crew. This can also only be achieved through adding a subject that addresses these problems in the maritime educational curriculum.

The seventh recommendation regards the issues of social interaction in general. The lack of social interaction is a relatively new phenomenon, which will require more research to

address this problem. The lack of social interaction is addressed in numerous international pamphlets distributed amongst seafarers. However, it will not be easy to implement, as access to internet on board the ship has become more of a necessity for the seafarers than interacting with co-workers.

The last recommendation is one suggested by a seafarer and concerns the length of sea trips. Long trips are one of the major reasons seafarers develop psychological and physical problems. Trip lengths vary from officers to ratings. Officers often have relatively shorter trip lengths than ratings. In the cruise line industry the hospitality staff's contract is nine months at a time. This has a huge effect on keeping healthy home based relationships. Trip lengths should be addressed by the IMO and ILO and viewed in a serious light. Trip lengths longer than 12 weeks cause long term stress, fatigue and burn out. The 12-week trip must be rotated with equal time off at home.

7.5. Future Research

There are many different research directions open for future research. The researcher picked up cues from participant and non-participant's remarks during her fieldwork. She made a list of possible future research areas.

1. Fishing vessels are not classified being merchant navy. However, the participant from the Durban based seafarer's mission indicated a high percentage of human right abuses on board these vessels. These ships are also not currently under the protection of international policies. Thus researching fishing vessels entering South African ports, can highlight these human right abuses and suggest possible solutions.
2. There are indicators pointing towards some ships going back to being more single-national crewed ships. In other words, in Brazil only Brazilian crews are allowed to work on ships. This can form the base for future research.
3. Research on how a South African seafarer's family copes with the absence of a spouse for a long period of time, as this also affects the seafarer him or herself to cope whilst working at sea. If a seafarer's family does not have strong coping mechanisms, this can lead to heightened stressors for the seafarer.

4. Isolating ship types and researching them individually, rather than clustering them under the merchant navy can isolate possible phenomena unique to individual ship types. For example, researching the crew's lived experiences working on cruise lines, entering and operating from South African harbours during summer months.

7.6. Conclusion

This chapter summarises the main points of the thesis to give the reader a short overview of the thesis as a whole. This is followed by data analysis, starting with the South African maritime system and how they attempt to empower South African nationals. The maritime educational system continues to inculcate officers with an imperialistic-apartheid and militaristic hierarchy system where officers are motivated to keep a distance from the crew.

The researcher continued by presenting her findings on maritime organisations, ship, and safety culture and how these affect the seafarer's social identity construction, within the said cultures.

In this concluding chapter, the researcher looks at her findings on English language competency and the problems poor English competency inflict on the seafarer's work environment. However, she stated that the South African seafarers' English is of a high standard.

The researcher analysed the problems associated with gender identities and how working in a historical male-orientated industry tends to threaten the female seafarer's identity. Furthermore, the research investigated issues involving qualified South African female seafarers, and how the unaccommodating working environment can be detrimental to the female seafarer.

In the section dealing with race, the research analysed the South African seafarers' diverse racial identity and how this affects their seafaring identity.

Finally, in the summary section, the research revisited the importance of coping strategies seafarers need in order to survive working and living on board a ship for months at a time. The importance having continued contact with family and friends through the electronic social media, such as Facebook and chat sites such as WhatsApp were highlighted. This

was continued by validating the important role that Seafarers' Missions globally play in assisting seafarers when in need of spiritual, mental, and sometimes physical help.

The final section of this chapter presented the researcher's recommendations based on her data analysis chapters and her findings of the data. She suggested that an additional subject be included in the maritime students' education with a specific focus on cultural sensitivity.

Thereafter, the problems related to maritime English was presented, pointing out that South African seafarers are mostly well versed in English. Recommendations regarding the gender issues included that maritime companies employ female seafarers in pairs to avert issues such as isolation on board the ship. It was further recommended that more attention should be given to specific female needs such as supplying coveralls designed for the female physique.

The researcher's recommendations for resolving race issues on board ship concur with the previous suggestions that maritime students should be trained in the humanities.

The researcher's recommendations regarding coping strategies suggested that an additional trained counsellor be brought onboard to deal with the seafarer's psychological wellness. Where this is not feasible the medic on board should be given additional training to be able to counsel seafarers. This will not only relieve officers of this duty, but also allow the seafarers to build trust relationship with someone other than an officer.

Finally, the researcher recommended that the maritime governing bodies revisit the length of the seafarers' contracts and suggested that no contract should exceed 12 weeks and that seafarers should be given an equivalent time off to spend with their family.

The maritime industry is wide open for qualitative research. There is so much that the industry is not publishing. The researcher attempted to give the South African maritime industry a glimpse of the problems that affect the South African Seafarers and will continue to work on these in shorter articles in the future.

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9. Appendixes

Appendix 1: Research Ethics Approval



12 June 2015

Mrs. Lydia Carol Dekker 205508081
School of Social Sciences
Howard College Campus

Dear Mrs. Dekker

Protocol reference number: HSS/0404/01SD

Project title: The Social Construction of the South African Seafarer's Identity and Coping strategies, in the International Merchant Navy.

Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 22 April 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

cc Supervisor: Dr M. Seedat-Khan

cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Sabine Marschall

cc School Administrators: Mr N Memela

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Appendix 2: Research Ethics Approval



Dear Participant,

Informed Consent Form

My name is Lydia Dekker (Student number: 205508081). I am a PhD candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College. The title of my research is: The Social Construction of the South African Seafarer's Identity and Coping strategies, in the International merchant navy. The aim of the study is to investigate the identity construction of South Africans, from the seafarer's perspective. The area of investigation is culture, language, race, gender, and coping mechanisms that South African seafarers draw on to enable them to work in the international merchant navy. I am interested in interviewing you to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such action.
- An audio recorder will only be used with your permission. If an audio recorder is used, you have the right to request that the recorder be turned off at any time during the interview.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.
- The interview will take about one hour.
- Pseudonyms will be used to protect participants' identities.
- The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to my supervisors and myself. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.
- If you agree to participate, please sign the declaration attached to this statement

I can be contacted at: The School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus, Durban. Email: lydiacaroldekker@gmail.com Cell: 0728977246

My supervisor is Prof. Sultan Khan, who is located at the School of Social Sciences, Howard College Campus, Durban of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Contact details: e-mail khans@ukzn.ac.za

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Ms Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za, Phone number +27312603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

I, have read (the informed consent form) and have had the purpose of this research explained to me. While I consent to participate in this study, I understand that I have the right to refuse to answer any question, or request the interview to be halted at any time.

Participant's signature

Date

Researcher's signature

Date

Appendix 3: Survey Questions.

The same questions were used to guide interviews and focus groups.

Survey Schedule

Please note that the permission form at the bottom must be signed. If not possible, please give written permission to use this data for the research:

The Social Construction of the South African Seafarer's Identity and Coping strategies, in the International merchant navy.

If possible, can you be descriptive and also if applicable give examples. Please feel welcome to add to the survey schedule if you feel that I left something out.

Biographical Data	
Which category below best describes your age? 18-20 21-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60 or older	
How would you categorise yourself. You can mark more than one. White Black Asian Other Other (please specify)	
What is your nationality?	
What is your gender? Male Female	
5. Which of the following categories best describes your marital status? Single Married Divorced Widowed Long-term Relationship	
How many children do you have?	

What are the ages of your dependent children?	
If you have children, who looks after them when you work offshore?	
When you work offshore, how do you stay in touch with your loved ones?	
Do you find the communication method you use to keep in touch with your loved ones sufficient? (Can you please give examples of any problems you might have experienced in the past regarding communication problems, and how it made you feel)	
How would the lack of communication with your family and friends affect you? Can you please give examples of how lack of communication, present or past) affected your work and your emotions?	
Maritime Qualifications	
What position do you hold on the ship?	
Why did you decide to pursue the maritime industry as a career?	
Who or what influenced you to start a career at sea?	
How many years have you been at sea?	
What would your job description be?	
What were your expectations of this profession before becoming a seafarer?	
Are they any different from your experience now that you joined the profession? If so, can you elaborate? / Give examples?	
Social Support and Coping Strategy	
Is there any kind of social support for your family when you are working offshore? Can you list them please?	
What coping strategies do you use when you 'get homesick'?	
If you are presented with a family emergency whilst working offshore, what facilities are in place for:	

<p>a) You to cope with the problem;</p> <p>b) For your family onshore to cope with the problem?</p>	
<p>When you are at sea, and you experience personal problems at home, be it marital/ health of partners, parents or siblings, etc., How does it affect your work?</p> <p>How does it affect you emotionally?</p>	
<p>How does your partner feel about your career choice?</p>	
<p>How do your children feel about you working as a seafarer?</p>	
<p>How long are your sea trips?</p>	
<p>Do you find that belonging to a religious group help you cope with</p> <p>a) Your work;</p> <p>b) Absence from home?</p> <p>Can you please substantiate your answer(s) with examples?</p>	
<p>Have you ever visited a seafarer's mission?</p>	
<p>Do you know what services are offered by a seafarers' mission?</p> <p>Can you list them?</p>	
<p>Have you ever used the facilities offered by the seafarers' missions?</p> <p>Why or Why not?</p>	
<p>What are the most common problems women experience whilst working offshore?</p> <p>Can you please share some personal incidences, or incidences you observed regarding problems with seafarers?</p>	
<p>Do you have a problem working with female seafarers?</p> <p>Why or why not?</p>	
<p>To what extend do you socialise with the other crew members?</p> <p>Can you give examples of under what circumstances you socialise?</p> <p>Or if not, can you explain why not?</p>	

Do you find that the internet and movie access in your rooms prevent you from socialising with other crew?	
Do you find that if you isolate yourself in your cabin with internet/movies that you become unsociable when you are at home?	
Do socialising with crew members help you to cope with working offshore? Can you elaborate?	
Did or Do your ship has a crew bar?	
Do you think that a dry ship has an impact on how seafarers interact with each other?	
<u>Females:</u> Have you been ever been pregnant whilst working offshore?	
<u>Females:</u> What is the company policy regarding pregnant crewmembers?	
How are married women seafarers treated by male crew?	
How do male seafarers treat single women seafarers?	
<u>Females:</u> Do you have to buy sufficient sanitary products for your whole trip, or does the crew shop keep some in stock	
<u>Females:</u> How do you dispose of your used sanitary products?	
How long do you see yourself working offshore in the marine industry? And what will you do if you decided to change careers?	
If you had a daughter/ son, would you advise her to become a seafarer? Why or why not?	

Your work environment	
<u>Have you experienced or observed the following problems at sea?</u>	
Fatigue Can you please give some examples?	
Language barriers Can you please give some examples?	
Communication problems due to working with other cultures whilst at sea. Can you please give some examples?	
Racism Can you please give some examples?	
Lack of cultural integration Can you please give some examples?	
Lack of socialising among people who come from different nationalities (Cultures) Can you please give some examples?	
Sexual harassment. Male on Female? Male on Male? Can you please give some examples?	
Other (please specify)	
How do the above problems affect your work? Can you please give some examples?	
Do you feel that working on a multinational ship can cause stress in the workplace due to language and cultural differences? Can you please give some examples?	
Do you find that language barriers cause stress on board the ship? Can you please give some examples?	
Do you find it problematic if other seafarers approach a task from a different perspective? Can you please give some examples?	
Do you socialise with seafarers from another race?	

If no, can you elaborate on why you do not socialise with seafarers from another culture?	
Do you mix in the dining room with other cultures	
Does the kitchen take into consideration the different 'cultural' meals?	
Have you ever experienced any accidents or 'near misses' on board the ship due to a language or cultural misunderstanding? Can you please give some examples?	
Is there tolerance towards language and cultural difference amongst seafarers?	
If no, can you give some examples of intolerance towards language and cultural differences amongst seafarers?	
Does the company provide training to encourage tolerance between seafarers?	
If yes, what type of training do they provide? And who receives the training?	
Have you ever been on the receiving end of racial intolerance whilst working on board the ship? Can you please give some examples?	
Do you have any friends on board? If not, Can you please give me some reasons as to why you think you do not have any friends?	
Can you briefly define yourself? Identity. Who are you at home? Who are you at work?	