

Below Deck on the “Love Boat”: Intimate relationships between
cruise ship workers in a globalized environment

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
The University of Manitoba
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Anthropology

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Winnipeg, MB

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Susan Frohlick and my committee members Dr. Liz Millward and Dr. Anna Fournier who took time to review the thesis and offer constructive, thought provoking feedback and questions. I am grateful for their valuable contributions and respect their professional opinions.

I would like to acknowledge The Government of Manitoba for their belief in my academic abilities in awarding me a Manitoba Graduate Scholarship. As well, I would like to acknowledge The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for presenting me with funding to continue my research.

Through this whole, at times endless, process my parents who have supported me through the good and the bad.

I would like to thank Jane Ledwell for her editing skills that helped me towards the finish product.

I would also like to thank the people who have been there for me throughout the past years. They have many things to support me throughout the writing of this thesis.

Especially: Dr. M. Jean Mitchell, who kept me from giving up and Julie R. Bull, who read the beginnings and gave me many tips and hints on how to write a thesis.

Abstract

This study was conceptualized from my own experience working on-board cruise ships and from the lack of studies of relationships on-board cruise ships. This thesis examines the question: how does globalization in the form of accelerated capitalism and interconnectedness through the sharing of food and drink across national identities that takes place in the space of cruise ships affect intimate relationships of cruise employees?

Through the examinations of narratives of nine ex-crewmembers, developed through qualitative interviews, by using both the phenomenological and narrative methodology a couple of prominent themes appeared. The interviewees described working on a cruise ship as “intense” and the passage of time appears faster on-board ship. It appears throughout the narratives, the nature of accelerated capitalism in the cruise ship industry affects the way the majority conduct their relationships.

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Chapter 1: Welcome Aboard

In 2002, when I left the cruise industry after almost ten years of work, I really did not think about or discuss life on-board that much with friends and colleagues on-land. While I was working on cruise ships and was asked what I did, the conversation usually ran something like this:

Person: Oh, you worked on cruise ships? That must have been so much fun, with all the travel and such.

Me: Visiting the ports and meeting so many people from so many different countries was great, but the work was not great.

Person: Do you miss it?

Me: The people and travel, yes, but the work not so much.

The conversation would usually go on to describe long hours of work and the political nature of the job and would end with the inquiring person finishing the conversation a bit disillusioned about the nature of cruise ship work, which they had often thought of in very romantic terms.

Then, in May 2006, I participated in a forum in the city of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, about the cruise ship industry and its effects on tourism, economy and environment. Ross A. Klein, who has written extensively on the downside of the cruise ship industry, was a speaker. Participating in this forum challenged me to think not only about the perceptions of the people outside of the industry but about cruise ships and cruise ship life and also to think more deeply about my experience of this world.

After the forum, I began thinking in particular about another side of cruise ship life, apart from tourism, economy and environment – the social side. Social interaction among cruise ship staff is not very well documented, except in a few memoirs written by ex-cruise ship workers. However, there is more to life on a cruise than the long hours and hard work; crewmembers establish wide-ranging emotional and sexual relationships while on-board, from the entirely platonic to the strictly sexual, with many forms of friendship and romance in between.

During the nine and half years I spent working on-board ships for two cruise lines and in positions that included photographing the passengers (and sometimes the crew) and work as a photo lab technician, I observed and experienced how quickly crewmembers formed friendships, sexual relationships, and other relationships of an intimate nature, and I was always fascinated by the phenomenon.¹ My interest in this area has led me to this study about social relationships on-board cruise ships and media representation of cruise ships.

My experience has led me to see that the social life on-board cruise ships is different from what is experienced on-land. My study of intimate relationships and friendships of crewmembers adds a currently missing component to tourism studies and studies of social relationships. As a window into the social life of cruise ship workers, my research will help broaden currently limited knowledge about the social side of a crewmember's life, considering also the implications of globalization for intimacy more generally, for the cruise ship, which brings together many nationalities, represents a type of globalization. The crew comes on-board, each member with their culturally bound

¹ This includes the previous company/ship I worked for and Cruise Line A.

ideas of love, sexuality, gender and intimacy. As Padilla states “love traverses many of the conceptual levels of globalization ... allowing researchers to examine how various kinds of global scapes intersect to shape local and global meanings and practices of intimacy” (2008: xi). This understanding will open up an avenue for further studies of other aspects of the social life of cruise ship workers such as community, ethnic relations and transnational space.

My main argument is that due to the intensity and fast-paced environment of the social worlds of crew members living and working aboard cruise ships, friendships and sexual/romantic relationships form more quickly than what crew members would understand to be normal in their relationships on-land. My own experience as a crew member has led me to hypothesize that several factors influence the effect of having quick, intense relationships on-board cruise ships. These factors include having to work, live and play in a confined space where time is of an essence; having to work twelve-hour days (the minimum average shift for most crewmembers is twelve hours, the exception being musicians, dancers, art auctioneers, and specialty entertainment, e.g. comedians), seven days a week for eight to ten months at a time; and not knowing the exact length of one’s contract and stint on a specific ship and therefore not knowing how long one would have to stay involved with a person while dwelling together on the same ship.

This thesis is situated amid ideas and theories related to intense interactions and intense work (Altork 2007), time-space compression (Harvey 1989; Warf 2008), and socializing over food and drink (Mintz & Dubois 2002; Chatwin 2001). In her study of fire camps located remotely in the mountains of Idaho during an outbreak of forest fires, Altork (2007) observed similar effects to those I experienced on-board cruise ships. She

found that the fire camps were physically isolated from towns and settlements and that the intense experience of being in the camp was “an intoxicating world within a world” (2007:101). Altork observed that the intense situation creates a sexual tension between fire camp workers (2007); this also applies to cruise ship workers with their intense work lives. The time-space compression discussed by Harvey (1989) can also be used to analyze the intensity of relationships on-board cruise ships. Harvey believes that in today’s society, accelerated capitalism has affected the social aspect of people’s lives, causing a need for instant satisfaction. Warf (2008) expands on the time-space compression theory by stating that time and space are “social constructions [and] every society develops different ways of dealing with and perceiving them” (2). Warf (2008) also goes on to say that with expanding volume and speed of social transactions in time and space, time and space have diminished or compressed due to the phenomenon of time-space compression. The cruise ship is a modern money-making business that caters to people who expect fast service and instant satisfaction; crewmembers experience this fast-paced work environment, and their work life and social life are seemingly one and the same. Such as it is, since they perceive their work to be fast-paced, they live their social lives in the same manner. The universal need for food and drink also aids the quick development of relationships and the rapid growth of community. The sharing of food helps establish and maintain relationships (Mintz & Dubois 2002), and drink, especially alcohol, helps relax and lower inhibition, thus helping conversations flow (Chatwin 2001). These theories are the building blocks from which I will argue my position on why crewmember relationships develop so quickly in the confined and intense environment of

a cruise ship compared to what people believe to be the normal pace of such relations that develop during social life on-land.

History of Cruise Ships

Modern-day cruising has its origins in the cargo shipping industry. Before the late 1800s shipping companies were more concerned with carrying cargo than transporting passengers. But in 1818 the Black Ball Line, based in New York, saw a need to have regularly scheduled service between the United States and England (Boyd 2008; Forth 2010). With introduction of steamships in the 1830s, the English led the way in transporting mail and people across the Atlantic (Boyd 2008). The British and North American Royal Steam Packet, now known as the Cunard Line, was the premiere company in England (Boyd 2008). In 1840, *Britannia* (a Cunard vessel) was the first ship to sail with a live cow on-board so the passengers could have fresh milk during the 14-day transatlantic voyage (Boyd 2008; Forth 2010). In the 1850s and 1860s the passenger ship industry improved the quality of service in their transatlantic voyages by introducing things such as electric lights and comfortable passenger cabins. (Boyd 2008; Forth 2010). During the 1880s, cruising for pleasure began to take hold. “The endorsement of the British Medical Journal of sea voyages for curative purposes in the 1880s further encouraged the public to take leisurely pleasure cruises as well as transatlantic travel” (Boyd 2008).

The first ship built solely for carrying passengers was the steamship *Prinzessin Victoria Luise*. In 1901, this ship entered into service under the Hamburg America line (de Gooney 2005). The beginning of the twentieth century also saw companies such as

Cunard and the White Star Line begin offering cruises on ships that had the same amenities found on cruise ships today (Boyd 2008; Forth 2010). Their ships had such things as tennis courts, formal dining rooms, and swimming pools (Forth 2010). While this kind of luxury cruising had an auspicious start, unfortunately World War I put a stop to the construction of any new ocean liners (Boyd 2008, Forth 2010). During this war, many ocean liners were used as troop transport (Forth 2010).

Following the end of World War I, transatlantic voyages once again became popular (Forth 2010). The 1930s saw transpacific cruises arise (Forth 2010) as well as luxurious transatlantic voyages that served a richer clientele (Boyd 2008; Forth 2010). Once again, with the beginning of World War II, passenger ships were turned into troop transport, and cruising was halted until the end of the war (Boyd 2008; Forth 2010). At the end of the war, business was again on the upswing with the transport of refugees to North America and tourists and businesspeople to Europe (Boyd 2008). But in the late 1950s and early 1960s the advent of commercial flying caused a decrease in transatlantic cruises (Boyd 2008; Forth 2010).

The loss of market share caused the cruise lines to reinvent themselves. They had to offer something new or risk going bankrupt. Rather than remaining focused on simply transporting people from point A to point B, they decided to develop the luxury aspect of cruising (Forth 2010). The cruise companies focused on Caribbean cruises (Forth 2010), and by the mid-1960s modern-day cruising had begun (Boyd 2008; Forth 2010). The expansion of the cruise industry had come almost to a standstill by the mid-1970s because cruising at that time was thought to be for the rich and the elderly. At this time the cruise companies wanted to start appealing to a younger, more middle-class market

(de Gooney 2005). Fortunately, in 1977, a show called *The Love Boat* started airing on television (Boyd 2008; de Gooney 2005). The show (which ran from 1977 to 1986) brought new life to the cruise industry, as it depicted people of different walks of life enjoying the exciting, romantic, and exotic cruise vacation (de Gooney 2005). In the mid-1980s the cruise companies started expanding quickly, with existing cruise companies merging or experiencing takeovers and also building larger cruise ships (de Gooney 2005).

The historical shifts in the industry affected cruise ship workers. In the 1960s and 1970s, with the industry focused on luxury, the crews on-board luxury liners were mainly made up of Europeans; however, with the later explosion of the cruise industry there was a “shift in the nationality of service personnel aboard cruise ships” (Klein 2002: 120). The cruise companies started hiring from non-industrialized countries for service positions because it is cheaper to hire from those countries than it is from Western Europe and North America (Klein 2002; Lane 2001).²

The expansion of the modern cruise ship industry has caught the attention of researchers such as Klein (2002, 2005) and the Seafarers International Research Institute (SIRI). As well, there are market surveys of cruise ship passenger conducted when they disembark in different ports of call, including those in Canada, where the surveys are done by various provincial and federal departments of economic development, tourism and culture. Furthermore, Klein discusses the cruise ship industry with some focus on crewmembers and their working conditions; however, his research focuses mainly on passengers and the industry itself (2002, 2005). Research being conducted about cruise ships and cruise ships employees tends to fall into one of three categories:

² Service positions on-board cruise ships include: waiters/waitresses, cabin stewards/stewardesses, bar personnel, and laundry.

working conditions, environmental concerns (Klein 2002, 2005), and social organization of crewmembers (Thompson 2002, 2004). While research on these topics is very important for understanding impacts on the environment and workers' rights, there is a lack of research on the social lives of workers on-board cruise ships. There are some studies done by Seafarers International Research Institute (SIRC) around family of seafarers, sexual habits of seafarers (especially all men crews), and ships with international crew, but these studies are mainly on all seafarers, not just cruise ship workers. By researching the social lives of cruise ship workers specifically, we can gain unique insight into how social lives on-board ship are different or the same as crewmembers' lives on-land. While cruise ship as a whole can be seen as a microcosm of greater society with different classes (or price points) that passengers can afford; I argue instead, due to what is being stated in the narratives of the interviewees for this thesis, that the space in which crew members live while working onboard is more accurately seen as a space on the margins of society with informal rules and ways of living different from society on-land.

My Story

As with some people in their late thirties or early forties, my first exposure to cruise ships and cruising was watching the 1970s television series *The Love Boat*. The show depicted a romantic and glamorous lifestyle that seemed to only happen on-board the "Love Boat." Looking back at it now, with my own personal experience working on a cruise ship, I find the show exaggerated in its depiction of life on-board ship even though it took place during the 1970s, even before the expansion of the industry to include more kinds of passengers and more diversity of workers. For example, the crewmembers were allowed

to roam freely and engage with passengers when not working and all crewmembers had large spacious cabins with portholes. As well, the show was a comedy with exaggerated situations for comedic effect.

My first paid job was on-board a now-defunct ferry from Nova Scotia to Maine. The experience of working on-board overnight ferries out of my hometown (where I got to see family and friends every once in awhile) was far different from working on a cruise ship far away from home. Once Cruise Line A hired me, I had to fly to Miami. There, someone from the company was supposed to meet me to drive me to the hotel where, in those days, the crewmembers that were designated as staff stayed while they were waiting to be placed on ships.³ Upon landing at Miami International, I noticed there seemed only to be transport for passengers. I was told that someone would be around eventually and to wait. After waiting for an hour or so, I decided to take a taxi to the hotel, the name of which had, thankfully, been provided in the work documents Cruise Line A sent to me when I was hired.

Once I reached the hotel and checked in, I figured out that the employment letter that stated the name of the ship I would be joining was just a formality to get me through United States Immigration.⁴ In fact, people could be sitting at the hotel anywhere from one day to one week waiting for their name to appear on the wall of crew lists for each ship. One man, possibly from the Philippines, had been waiting longer than a week and was getting pretty upset and scared. The majority of people were a long way from their native country, so to pass the time most people became acquainted with other people

³ For reasons of privacy I have lettered the individual cruise lines.

⁴ I was told to check the crew lists everyday until your name appeared on a list and that would be the ship you would be joining.

from their native land. Being Canadian left me at a disadvantage, as there was a noticeable lack of Canadians or Americans waiting to board a ship to work. But my wait was relatively short; I arrived on a Thursday afternoon and boarded a ship on Saturday morning.

When the day came to join the ship, I boarded a van with the other “staff” joining the ship.⁵ One other stop was made to pick up “crew” at the hotel where they were staying and then we were whisked to the Port of Miami to the awaiting ship. As this was in the pre-9/11 days, when security was still quite lax, the driver took us without much formality through the security checkpoint right up alongside the ship. We were left to board the ship with little instruction on what would happen next. I felt very lonely and nervous at this time, with no idea what I was supposed to be doing.⁶ The experience of being sent one place and then another, having to give over my passport, and then being left in my cabin with no idea how to get back to my work area (or anyplace else for that matter) was fairly daunting.

Once I was able to navigate (somewhat) my way around, the only way out of the feeling of being alone was to become involved with my fellow workmates and crewmembers. I had to quickly adjust to ship-life: Both work life and social life on-board a cruise ship are fast-paced and intense, and work and social lives flow together. Crewmembers use the expression “that’s ship-life” when explaining something that happened or they did on-board that would not happen or they would not normally do on-

⁵ The designation of crewmembers as “staff” and “crew” had to do with the type of job a crewmember held and the privileges that came with the job as described in this section of the thesis.

⁶ This became much easier after subsequent contracts, but it was very isolating as a first-time crewmember for this company.

land. Having no one “know” them like family and friends gave crewmembers a sense of freedom. They had the chance to be someone different or act differently than they would in their hometown, and some took advantage of this freedom. This is similar to “people who take on a temporary ‘vacation identity’” (Stein 2011: 290) meaning they take on a persona different from who they are at home.

I learned the ins and outs of living on-board a cruise ship (e.g., to maintain a good relationship with security personnel so they would overlook certain minor infractions a person may commit). I had previous experience on-board ships, where the only real difference from cruise ships was the fact that when I worked on the ferries, I was able to see my friends and family when I was in our homeport. On the cruise ship, far from Canada, to make up for this lack of contact, I would have to make friends very quickly; otherwise my eight-month (or longer) contract would be particularly lonely and quite possibly miserable.⁷

It became important to understand the hierarchy of workers on the ship and how that affected their work and social life. The designation of crewmembers as “staff” and “crew” had to do with the type of job a crewmember held and the privileges that came with the job (e.g., “staff” were allowed in passenger areas after work hours, whereas “crew” could only be in passenger areas for work purposes). The jobs designated as “crew” included bar servers/tenders, dining room personnel and housekeeping personnel. The jobs designated as staff included entertainment personnel, pursers (now known as guest service personnel), photographers, gift shop personnel and spa personnel. As a

⁷ A crewmember would work the length of their contract before being allowed to go on vacation for a period up to two months (sometimes shorter or longer depending on the length of the contract).

photographer, I was considered “staff”. The living quarters for employees classified as “staff” could be of two different types: a nine foot by twelve foot cabin, no porthole, with sink, shower and toilet shared with one other person; or, for a small number of “staff” (e.g., managers, fly-on specialty acts) a slightly larger cabin, not shared, with facilities and a porthole. The employees classified as “crew” could share a nine-foot by twelve-foot cabin (with only a sink) with two to four other people. Each hallway of cabins (approximately six to twelve cabins) shared showers and toilets. As a member of “staff,” my cabin was under the waterline with no porthole with the amenities described above. At times I shared with another photographer and other times I, like when I was the only woman photographer I lived alone. When I did share my cabin mates were mainly women and during special circumstances I had shared with a gay co-worker who was a man or with my boyfriend.

As far as relationships with co-workers, at first I became involved in platonic relationships with both men and women co-workers but then, quite soon afterwards, began sexual relationships with crewmembers who were men. My social world thus soon became focused on fast-paced intimate relations with men as friends, lovers and work mates as all other forms of relationships and intimate ties, such as long term, time built and tested relationships, were difficult to cultivate within the detached spaces of the cruise ship.

Cruise Ship Life

The popular imagery of cruise ships invokes sun, exotic ports, relaxation and possibly romance between passengers as key elements. These images evidenced in brochures, television shows (notably *The Love Boat*, as mentioned above) and other media, do not

tend to include the labour pool of workers from many different countries that live and work on-board to keep the cruise ship running. Against the media representation of the largely white, Euro-North American passengers' love affairs and the "glitz and glamour" of cruise ship holidays are lesser-known sexual relationships between crewmembers. For crewmembers living together in close quarters and separated from family and friends for weeks at a time in a confined space, the line between work and leisure is especially hard to distinguish. Globalization is having an effect on land-based employment as well. There is more emphasis placed on work and time spent at work and less on leisure activities (Haworth & Lewis 2005). Romantic encounters on-board are as varied as encounters on-land one-night stands, friends with benefits (meaning long-term emotional intimacy of friendship with occasional physical intimacy but no commitment), short-term relationships (which for the purposes of this study means relationships of several weeks), long-term relationships (which for the purposes of this study means relationships of several months or can last for years) and extra-marital affairs, and include, opposite-sex, and same-sex. Two characteristics of cruise ship relationships that differentiate them from what is perceived as land-based relationships (that are also subjected to globalization, however, and these are also under change in late modernity) are their intensity and the rapid speed at which they are established.

For crewmembers, there an assumption that life on-board ship and life on-land are different. This will be seen later in the participants' comments. There is a physical difference between being on a ship and being on-land and this carries over into their experiences on-board and "on-land". It may not be different from what happens "on-land" but from their perspective it seems to be something new to them. The people I

interviewed shared similar experiences and perceptions of relationships— the beliefs that “land” relationships are homogeneous and develop the same way.

The shock of going to work in the fast-paced environment of the cruise ship and being separated from family and friends affects their attitude towards practices of sex and intimacy. To justify these changes in they disconnect “land” and “ship” into two separate experiences, classifying them as different even though there are similar situations happening in both places. There is no actual binary between “on-land” and “on-board” but for crewmembers what they perceive and imagine the differences through their own experiences.

Thesis Objectives

In this study, I will be examining the social relationships between crewmembers working on-board cruise ships, with a focus on sexual relationships. These relationships and encounters can begin quickly and end just as quickly. They can last hours, days or years but those hours or days, and are perceived by crewmembers to be quite intense (I use “intense” here to mean “existing in a high degree; extremely strong” or “requiring a great deal of emotional, intellectual, or physical effort concentrated in a short period of time” according to The Canadian Oxford Dictionary definition) when living in an enclosed environment. People become very attached in a short period of time when they work, eat, sleep, and socialize with the same people day after day for months on end. The purpose of this study is to examine how the “compression of time and space” (Harvey, 1989) affects the way intimate and sexual relationships are formed by crewmembers when on-board cruise ships—and how time-space compression is embodied as lived experience. Time–space compression is the accelerated turnover time in commodity production that

has bled over into all areas of living. This has “emphasize[d] values and virtues of instantaneity... and disposability...” (Harvey 1989: 289) in people’s social lives. A cruise ship is in the business of instant gratification, it is a place that where a person can find food 24 hours a day, where (depending on cruise length) you are brought to many ports, often in several different countries in the run of a cruise, and where the cruise ship will cater to any whim if at all possible. This can and does flows into the crewmembers lives outside of work, the need for immediate gratification in many aspects of their lives especially with constant turn over of workers a need for quick attachment is felt.

In Chapter 2, I go into this theory in more detail. How does this compression in the hectic environment of cruise ship life intensify and speed up the “getting to know you” part of relationships or dating, a part, that is supposed to be slow according to cultural norms of long-term relationships in Western societies? In some land-based relationships there is a getting to know each other time where people can decide whether the other person is a good match. For some people, this is the “proper” or “moral” way to start a relationship; while for others it is a time to assess the other person in terms of compatibility and, sometimes, personal safety (Blumstein & Kollock 1988). There are times on-land that there is an instant connection with another person but the environment on-land does not involve the enclosed and intense working/living space of a cruise ship.

As part of my methodology for this study, in order to reacquaint myself with cruise ships, I took a seven-day cruise as a passenger on-board a medium-sized cruise ship I will call Cruise Line A.⁸ While on-board, I told the crewmembers that I met that I was an ex-crewmember. They accepted that fact and felt comfortable enough to continue talking. If

⁸ The same cruise line I worked for previously.

the conversation went beyond superficial topics, I did tell them I was doing a study but said we were having an informal talk. I chatted with crewmembers to get a sense of what life was like on-board for present-day crewmembers. These conversations verified that indeed some things had changed (for example, stricter alcohol/drug policies and tighter security) but, overall, the fast-paced life on-board appeared not to have changed in any noticeable ways. I observed and was told that relationships between crewmembers happened quickly and social activities were the same as always (for example, going to the crew bar, onshore bars and beaches). This time spent reacquainting myself with cruise ships and crew ship life informed me that I was on the right track with my inquiry and I continued my investigation by recruiting former crewmembers for interviews.

The majority of this thesis is based on crewmembers' accounts of working on-board cruise ships. As stated above, the majority of respondents were former crewmembers. There were more men who answered my recruitment query to be interviewed than women. This reflects a similar ratio of men to women on-board (Klein 2002) and also gender differences in the willingness to talk about the subject. The interviews focused on sexual and platonic relationships between crewmembers (both men and women) and the odd crewmember-passenger encounters, how time and space affected the establishment of these relationships and how food and drink played a part in building these relationships. I also examine media representations of cruise ships, particularly how they portray life on-board a cruise and especially how crewmembers are represented (when they are represented). Media tends to represent crewmembers as stagnant and never changing, as though their existence is only to serve the passengers (which is their job). They appear to have no other life beyond the job. To illustrate that

work is not the only meaningful activity in crewmembers' lives and to humanize the understanding of their experience on-board beyond what is depicted in some media about cruise ships, this thesis delves into the social lives and social worlds of crewmembers.

Thesis Format

This thesis is arranged into seven chapters: the introduction, a methodology section, a literature review, a section on media, a participant introduction, a results section, and the conclusion. The stories told by former cruise ship workers are the foundation on which this thesis is built.

Methodology Chapter

The title of this chapter is "Approaching the Dock: Methodology" because when docking a cruise ship there are many instruments used to guide it safely into the wharf. Similarly, methodology of a thesis has many instruments that guide it through to its conclusion.

This chapter lays out the methods and theories used throughout the thesis. This section includes a discussion of qualitative interview methods used and autobiographical/reflexive anthropology. As well, the theoretical framework, phenomenology and narrative anthropology are examined.

Literature Review

This chapter, "What Other People Say: A Literature Review", reviews the different pertinent theories and ideas about community social relationships, ideas of how people socialize and maintain relationships, as well as ideas related to the theory of time-space compression. These ideas build upon each other and support the main question posed for this thesis.

Media Chapter

This chapter examines the representation of crewmembers in different types of media: books (memoirs), documentaries and web sites. The purpose of this chapter is to scrutinize the narrative presented about cruise ships and, in particular, cruise ship workers. Do the various media types show crewmembers as social beings or do they fade into the background?

Participant Introductions

The intention of this chapter is to acquaint readers with each of the participants before being immersed in the results chapter, hence the title “Meet the Crewmembers”. Each participant is presented in a mini-biography or case study as an individual before being grouped together for the rest of the study. By contemplating each participant as an individual, I ensure that his or her differences and similarities are apparent and humanize their experience.

Results

In this section, I include some of the participants’ views on social relationships on-board cruise ships as they expressed them to me during our interviews. I highlight aspects of their stories that reveal something of their experiences as social beings while working in a small, fast-paced environment. I analyze these narratives within the framework set out in the methods chapter and supported by the various literature discussed in the literature review.

The following chapter sets up the framework that was used for the remaining five chapters in this study: the methods of obtaining participants, the means of data

collection, the way the data were organized and analyzed, and the theories drawn upon.

Chapter 2: Approaching the Dock: Methodology

In this chapter, I will describe how I recruited my participants, the techniques used in this study (to collect data), analysis of data and theoretical methods. I will also reflect on my own involvement in this study because my experience of working on-board cruise ships and the knowledge I gain as a crewmember are integral to this research. I include myself as part of the research so as to not hide any involvement, experience or bias I may have, or any friendships I had with participants and more importantly to show how theory, method, and knowledge (or praxis) are closely interlocked.

The Deck Plan

As I explained in Chapter One, the idea for this study came from my own relationship experience (friendships and sexual relationships) on-board. During my time on-board I noticed that all social relations, especially sexual relationships, formed and became more intimate at a quicker pace than what I perceived to be the case for similar kinds of social relations formed on-land. The intensity of the relationships was stronger than anything I experienced on-land. I also witnessed people who joined the ship and did not "get involved" in ship's life. These people did not remain in their jobs on-board very long and usually they ended up quitting because, I speculate, they were not able to or chose not to fit in. What I mean by "fit in" is they did not try to adapt to working/living on a ship and expected life on-board to be the same as on-land. People who did not try to adapt to ship life tended to not get along very well with their co-workers and sometimes isolated themselves or quit, or sometimes were fired. One of my participants, Michelle, is a good example of what happens when a crewmember isolates themselves but in her case she

decided to change her outlook and went on to make many friends and work many contracts.

I wanted to examine this phenomenon of fast intimate connections between people brought together in a mixed gender confining and remote space (working and living space in the same location, with no physical links to other places) over a period of time because it is different than everyday life (working space and living space separated) where people are free to move around or at a remove from the culture and society they had been living in due to their choice of employment. There are the few that use working on ships as a way to “runaway” from their life on-land and the crewmembers who have worked on-board for so long that ship life seemed more like “home” than their life on-land ever was to them.⁹ Also, the idea of romance and casual sex as part of the cruise ship experience intertwines with the intense environment in which the crewmember lives and works.

The Crewmembers/Participants

When first designing this studying, I was hoping to recruit ten to twelve crewmembers or ex-crewmembers. I knew that presently employed cruise ship workers would fear losing their jobs if they talked on the record to an outsider about any aspect of their jobs. There were no criteria to include or exclude anyone except that the participants had to have finished at least one contract. The reasoning behind this is that if they had not finished their contract (if they had either quit or been fired) they would not have had the “full”

⁹ On-land is a term crewmembers use to distinguish between the two parts of their lives-on-land and at sea/on-board ship. It is a literal distinction describing the actually physical states of being on-land and being on-board, but it also a state of mind – their perception of to distinct (to them) ways of life. As a researcher I understand that in reality there are many ways that on-land and on-board are similar and there are ways they are different.

experience of relationships on-board or may have been more likely to report only the negative aspects.¹⁰ (That is, if they had quit they likely would not have found pleasure in the experience of working on a cruise ship.) I was seeking out a range of aspects and not only the experiences perceived to be negative.

After I received ethics approval from the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, I started recruiting by e-mailing or contacting people on Facebook and e-mail that I worked with on-board Cruise Line A. From the nine inquiries I sent out I received six responses and received no response from three of my inquiries. Next, I left notices on many Facebook profiles that are designated specifically for former cruise ship employees. These included: “Carnival Cruise Lines Crew Bar”, “I worked on a cruise ship and lived to tell the tale”, “Carnival Cruise Line Photographers”, “Did Shiplife Fuck up your Sense of reality?”, “Carnival Cruise Line Crew”, and “Cruise Ship Members (Past and Present)”. I also put up a notice on the website www.crewparty.com, a site for cruise ship crewmembers to find and communicate with each other. I received one response to requests for participants through all my postings on websites and web pages. As well, I contacted directly two ex-crewmembers who had written books about their experiences: one through Facebook and one through his own website. In total, I recruited nine people to participate in my study.

I continued to recruit for four more months after my first round of interviews but no more recruits responded to my inquiry. As time and financial resources limit a master’s thesis. I utilized the Internet in order to reach the largest number of people in the shortest

¹⁰ What is meant by “full” experience is that it takes a few months to settle in and become acclimatized; if someone quit or was fired before they adapted to cruise life they may not have had enough experience to be able to comment on ship life.

period of time. Advertising in printed material (i.e., newspapers, magazines, etc.) would not be financially feasible on a master's student's budget, because to reach enough people there would have to be many ads placed in at least one newspaper per Canadian city, and I would have had to reach even farther outside of the country to get the international sample that I was looking for at the time.

Among the nine participants, their narratives were quite similar and their answers to questions resembled each other. "Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend sample selection 'to the point of redundancy... In purposeful sampling the size of the sample is determined by informational considerations. If the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming... ; thus *redundancy* is the primary criterion' " (Patton 2002: 246). Thus, considering this, I felt it was time to end the data collection phase because of the amount of time that had passed and because, in my assessment, saturation of data had been reached. I also had difficulties in recruiting more participants, especially women.

As well, the relatively low numbers of people (notably, very few women) responding to my call for participants for this study could be explained by the nature of the study: sexual relationships on cruise ships. As will be seen later in the thesis, there were many instances of holding back from fully discussing the acts of sex and, even possibly, the number of sexual relationships had on-board. I am guilty of this myself; in this thesis I speak in general terms about sex and the number of partners I had while working on ships. While the men were more forthcoming, there was still a degree of sexual secrecy among their responses. The women were more sexually secretive than the men: by not responding to the request for participants, by only generally discussing the

act of sex (or not at all), and as one participant described having sex and drinking alcohol as “being bad” in the eyes of her family. The fear of judgment by others seemed very prevalent.

The labour force working on cruise ships tends to be diverse in terms of gender, age and nationality (Klein 1999), and from my own experience they hire more men than women. For this project, my goal was to match this diversity of gender, age and nationality with a diverse set of study participants; including participants with a range of these attributes would result in a range of experiences. In the end I had nine participants—seven were men and two were women. This ratio reflects a common ratio of men to women on-board cruise ships, according to Zhao (2002) women make up 18-20% of cruise ship workers. There was a range of nationalities represented in this study: two British, two Canadian, two South African, two Filipino, and one American. The age range of participants was between twenty-nine and forty-four years of age. The actual divergence in their ages comes from how old they were when they served their time on-board as a crewmember. The youngest was eighteen, the minimum age requirement for working on a cruise ship, the next youngest was nineteen and the rest were mid-twenties to mid-thirties when they joined their first ship. Some of the participants “grew up” on-board the various cruise ships and others were older and had more life experience prior to their time on-board that affected their on-board experience.

The crewmembers' pre-ship background

Even though the participants were from different countries and backgrounds they all graduated from high school (or the equivalent in their country) before working on-board. The majority, seven of the nine, had some form of post-secondary education, in the form

of university, college or technical school before working on ship. Those who did not have post-secondary education prior to working on cruise ships did complete it after leaving ship life. Before starting their jobs on cruise ships seven of the participants in this study were single or newly divorced whereas two had long-term partners. The participants who had partners when they commenced their jobs eventually broke off their long-term relationships because of the difficulty of maintaining a long distance relationship. Having a long-term relationship waiting for them on-land did stop some from engaging immediately in sexual relationships on-board; on the other hand, those who lacked long-term attachments in their native land were usually readily available to engage in sexual relationships.

The ship's bridge: Instruments used in this study

For this study, I used qualitative interview methods. The reason to use this style of interviewing participants was “to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe” (Patton 2002). I worked with an open-ended interview schedule, for three reasons: the interview schedule is available for viewing, time is used efficiently, and “analysis is facilitated by making responses easy to find and compare” (Patton 2002: 346).¹¹

Along with interviewing present and former crewmembers, I decided to include myself in this study. I chose the auto-biographical/reflexive ethnographical approach because I could be considered a type of “complete participant” (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 82). I was completely “immersed in a native culture” (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 82), or, in broader terms, I was a native in this particular environment. At the time

¹¹ In some qualitative research studies this is called an interview guide (Patton 2002).

of my participation in the phenomenon, I may not have been doing a study but my observations and experiences from that time do inform my study. I wanted to recognize the link between my participants and myself, some of whom I worked with or was friends with during my tenure on-board cruise ships. “The concept of reflexivity acknowledges that the orientation of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them” (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007: 15). According to Davies (2008), reflexivity is how the people involved affect research and the way the research is conducted. As well, by including myself in this study in the form of autobiography I concede Okely’s (1992) argument “that the emotional and the personal cannot be so easily separated from intellectual endeavor” (5). While my time on-board could not be considered fieldwork at the time, I was a participant and have knowledge I gathered while on-board, which I reflect in my study.

As mentioned above, before I began interviewing or recruiting participants, I took a cruise on Cruise Line A to refresh my memory, observe crewmembers, and see if anything observable had changed in the seven years I had been away. Before I began interviewing or recruiting participants, I conducted participant observation while on this cruise as a paying passenger, after receiving approval from the university ethics board to do so. To receive permission from the Cruise Line A to interview crewmembers during my cruise would have been a long and drawn out process that would have consumed too much time. Instead, while on-board, I observed and had casual conversations with some crewmembers. These conversations were not used as data; only as validation that I was on the right track with my study. The crewmembers that I had in-depth conversations with knew I was conducting a study but knew they were off the record.

As part of the informed consent process, the people who were formally interviewed were asked to sign an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix A). I e-mailed the consent form as a file to the participants and they either e-mailed it back or sent it by regular mail. When I received consent, I then set up appointments with the participants for telephone interviews. According to Aday (1996), telephone interviews are a cost effective way to contact interviewees who are globally dispersed. The downside of telephone interviewing includes lack of telephone coverage in certain areas of the world (Aday 1996; Bernard 2006; Groves 1990), the interviews tend to be short in duration (Aday 1996; Bernard 2006), and without face to face interaction an interviewer cannot see nonverbal or visual signals (Aquilino 1994). Since the majority of my participants were not living in North America, this led to odd interview times. I called each participant at the arranged time. After the preliminary introductions or time spent reacquainting ourselves, we proceeded with the interview.

I used the Interview Schedule (see Appendix B) only as guide and a prompt if the interview started to flag. I asked a variety of questions, from those concerning general background of the participants (such as their current age and their age when they were on-board) to more specific questions about their relationships on-board (such as how many relationships and of what length). Many of the participants' answers led to other questions and discussions that were not part of the interview schedule. This led to getting richer stories and gaining a better understanding of their personal experience on-board ship. Each interview was recorded on a digital recorder and once the interview was over it was downloaded onto my computer in a password-protected file on my password-protected computer to which only I have access. I transcribed six interviews myself and

hired a fellow anthropology graduate student to transcribe the other three. The hard copies of the interviews and other notes are kept in a locked file cabinet to which I have the only key. After this thesis is complete the interviews will be destroyed.

After the interviews were transcribed I began to analyze the data. I used the interview schedule as a guideline. I looked for answers to the initial questions in each of the interviews and manually marked them according to a colour code for each particular question/answer and then did the same for miscellaneous topics that came up that were not from the schedule. At the same time I created an Excel spreadsheet and entered the participants' aliases across the top and the questions/topics in shorthand down the side. I entered the page numbers where the answer could be found and if it was a one-word answer or not applicable I entered that information as well. Any answers outside the scope of the interview schedule were added at the end of the list of regular questions. This type of analysis is what Patton (2002) considers content analysis. “[C]ontent analysis is used to refer to any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (Patton 2002: 453). My analysis included what Patton (2002) calls pattern recognition and identifying themes. He defines the term “pattern” as a description of a situation and a “theme” as a category or classification.

The Engine Room: Theoretical Framework¹²

¹² Van Gennep's theory of rites of passage and liminality can be used here to describe some aspects of working on a cruise ship: the separation from their previous way of life and into a new social structure with new rules and ways of acting. But the cruise ship worker is not completely cut off from their family and their previous “life”, they are still in contact (almost daily with the advent of e-mail and cell phones) with family and friends. They are still making decisions about things happening in their life off ship (e.g. financially – like major purchases or how

My main research question is: How does the “compression of time and space,” as defined by David Harvey (1993), affect the way intimate and sexual relationships are formed for crewmembers aboard cruise ships? Harvey has used this idea to articulate how the change from modernity to post-modernity in the context of the collapse of the Fordist-Keynesian system has led to the need of societies to adapt to a more flexible accumulation of capital. In 1973, capitalism entered a period of flux and rapid change and there was a need for more flexible labour practices, markets and changes in consumption.

The interweaving of simulacra in daily life brings together different worlds (of commodities) in the same space and time. But it does so in such a way as to conceal almost perfectly any trace of origin, of the labour processes that produced them, or of the social relations implicated in their production (Harvey 1989: 300).

Harvey argues that the accelerated pace of production causes a lateral acceleration in consumption and exchange of goods produced. The mass production of goods has affected the way society consumes the products, the faster they are produced the faster the public will consume them. Society, no longer has to wait for something to be produced by hand. In turn, this speedy mass production of now-disposable goods trickles into our social relationships. Living in an environment of “temporariness” affects the way people live their lives. The way society mass produce and consume goods moves into other areas of peoples lives the need for instant gratification flows into the way social relationships are conducted. I argue that the intense and fast-paced environment demanded by the cruise ship tourism industry for it to turn a profit increases the intensity

to invest money- or emotionally- like a birth of a child or possibly divorce). There is a separation but not enough to fit in a clear way with the notion of liminality.

and speed of intimate relationships and friendships in a particular way on-board the enclosed space of cruise ships.

In the cruise ship industry the bottom line is making revenue (Klein 2002).¹³ The way that they make their revenue is not really through the cost of the ticket, but rather it is through their bars, specialty restaurants, spas, gift shops, and photo galleries (among other smaller concessions) on-board ship (Greenberg 2009). To keep their profit margins up, the cruise lines, hire cheap labour mainly from developing countries (Klein 2002, 2005). The passengers come on-board and through their “ship card,” which is their room key and is connected to their credit card while on ship, they can buy beverages, photos, souvenirs, and other “extra cost” items.¹⁴

If working in a money-making venue, the cruise ship workers’ job is to push the product they are selling to make money for the company (Klein 2002, 2005). From my own personal experience a crewmember can be reprimanded for not “pushing” their product and not bringing in enough customers. In turn, crewmembers can spend the money they make on-board as well. They receive discounts in the gift shop and the drinks in the crew bar are highly discounted in comparison to the drinks in the passenger bars. As will be seen later in the comments by the interviewees in this thesis, the crewmembers spend money when they are off ship in a port-of-call. They go shopping, eat in restaurants, and drink in bars in the places that the cruise ship visits. As well, from the interviewees, this is their way of socializing- they buy rounds of drinks or take a potential sexual partner (or just a friend) out to dinner. These relationships can be seen as based on

¹³ As well, the television documentary *Cruise Inc: Big Money on the High Seas* captures this statement.

¹⁴ From personal knowledge and from various cruise lines websites.

consumption (both monetary and emotionally) especially the interviewees who spoke of many “fast-paced” relationships. Even the terms used like “had something” or just generally “having relationships” all speak to consumption or possession. These are some important examples of how shipboard relationships can be seen as taking place within uniquely capitalist contexts and shaped by wider processes of capitalism and late modernity.¹⁵

It is not only the close confines of cruise ships as work/sleep environments and also the fast paced lifestyles of long workdays that shape relationships amongst crewmembers but also the factor of disposability. Harvey (1989) believes that the world has been experiencing time-space compression since the late 1960s. The development of technologies in the past forty years has caused an acceleration of time and the compression and connection of previously distant and disconnected temporal and spatial distances. The time-space compression that marks late modernity has affected economics (i.e., the way business is conducted), travel (i.e., cruise ships, cars, jets, bullet trains etc.), and communication (Internet, cell phones, video phones) (Harvey 1989; Decron 2001); these economic, communication and travel processes and technologies that have been “speeding up” and shrinking time and space distances since the 1960s have, in turn, had an impact on social and cultural life (Harvey 1989). While time and space are represented by clocks, calendars and maps and technically we cannot “speed up time” but the way it is used such as in the arena of production, the acceleration of turnover time in producing products results in an acceleration of exchange and consumption (Harvey, 1989). The

¹⁵ While the participants described how they socialized through capitalist relations and it can be seen how this affects relationships, it really is not realized by the participants’ ruminations.

decrease in production times has caused society to value instant gratification and disposability. This disposability extends beyond the realm of products to affect lifestyles, values and attachments to people, places and things (Harvey 1989). Bell and Coleman (1999) agree that social and economic forces can affect the formation and maintenance of friendships.

While society has been re-organized by the changes of time space compression, the cruise ship industry, as part of society, has been caught up in these changes as well. The cruise ship industry depends on serving as many people as possible, as quickly as possible. There is a fast turnover time in disembarking passengers from one cruise and embarking passengers for the next cruise (Klein 2002). Whether it is two days or two weeks long, during the cruise practically every waking hour is filled with activities to amuse the passengers (Klein 2002). The cruise ship is also a vehicle that transports passengers to many places/countries in a short period of time. It is possible to visit up to five different places in the course of a seven-day cruise. The short time that the crewmembers have to meet the passengers' expectation of instant satisfaction causes an extremely fast-paced working environment. I argue that the intensity of working in such a fast-paced environment undoubtedly affects the way that crewmembers conduct their social lives.

There are many factors that contribute to the perceived intensity and speed of shipboard life, especially for crewmembers but also at times for passengers as well. These include the following: having to work, live and play in a confined space where time is valuable; having to work twelve-hour days, seven days a week for eight to ten months at a time; awareness of time that is marked by departure and arrival; and the

indeterminate length of face-to-face relationships. All these complex temporal factors in turn affect how “community” is framed and understood, how and what space is used for (social spaces such as crew bar, crew and staff messes, and cabins), and how structured and delimited time affects the ways in which crewmembers socialize. In this study, I examine these aspects in relation to the fast-paced and limited-space environment and the effects these have on intimate relationships and friendships in comparison to relationships formed in a land-based environment. To get a better understanding of these relationships, I examine the following questions: How does being in an enclosed space with no family or support physically co-present affect how quickly crewmembers form intimate relationships? Does knowing that people will leave suddenly (be transferred to another ship on a moments notice or go on vacation) affect people’s choices to become emotionally close? What parts do food and drink (especially alcohol) play in socializing for crewmembers and how do these contribute to the time-space compression? Does being so entirely physically cut-off from their native country, which for some crewmembers means freedom and lack of domestic/familial responsibility, play a part in intimate relations formed on-board ship?

In my analysis, I draw upon two methodologies. First, I apply phenomenological analysis. Phenomenology is based on the philosophical idea that states phenomena should be understood from the actor’s own perspective (Patton 2002; Bernard 2006). According to Jackson (1996) “the domain of phenomenology is *being-in-the-world*” (1). He also states that phenomenology “does not give up on empirical rigor... it refuses to invoke cultural privilege as a foundation for evaluating worldviews” (1996: 1). Jackson

questions why some experience is considered knowledge while other experience is ignored (1996). Phenomenology focuses

...on exploring how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning. This requires methodologically, carefully, and thoroughly capturing and describing how people experience some phenomenon – how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others. (Patton 2002: 104).

As well, because of the stories being told by participants, my ethnography draws upon narrative methodological literature. Narrative anthropology notes whether the delivery of an ethnography is mainly written or oral as well as being descriptive and telling a story (Reck 1983). According to Habermas, “narrative makes it possible for people to create coherent scenarios which articulate *shared* meanings” (in Jackson, 1996: 38). Narrative plays an important part in phenomenological anthropology (Jackson 1996). By concentrating on interviews, which include the stories crewmembers share, I received a wide variety of viewpoints to analyze. These interviews revealed shared experiences of the former crewmembers, even among participants who never encountered each other while working on-board. According to Hammersley and Atkinson there are two ways that participants’ narratives can be used in ethnography:

First they can be read for what they tell us about the phenomena to which they refer. Second, we can analyse them in terms of the perspectives they imply, the discursive strategies they employ, and even the psychosocial dynamics they suggest (2003: 97).

My thesis will be focusing on the use of narratives to tell about the phenomena, while only skimming the surface of how narratives tell us about perspectives, discursive strategies, and psychosocial dynamics. By soliciting interviews from past and present crewmembers I obtained a better social understanding of social relationships on ships.

Since I interviewed crewmembers of different nationalities, genders and ages, there was a range of different viewpoints in the stories they revealed in their interviews.

Crewmember/Researcher

I play a dual role in this study as both a former crewmember with my own experiences and as a researcher conducting a study. As stated above, phenomenology focuses on how the individual makes sense of an experience as a single person and as part of a group (Jackson 1996). As explained in the Theoretical Framework section, phenomenology is the idea of understanding phenomena from the actor's own perspective (Patton 2002; Bernard 2006). Since I am an "actor" as a crewmember and a researcher, my narrative will inform how I interpret my study.

To reiterate, my employment with two different cruise lines for nine and half years gave me the idea for this study. I had many friendships with both men and women, some that I have maintained to this very day. I also had many sexual relationships with men over those years. These included a wide spectrum of relationships that could be labeled in many ways, from "one-night stands", to "friends with benefits", to serious long-term relationships. For convenience and companionship, I also kept one long-term serious relationship going long after it had run its course. Through my own experience I developed a particular view of on-board intimate relationships and the role of time and space compression, which I try to make explicit rather than take for granted or left unexamined. While my familiarity helped me pose questions and to gain a greater understanding of the subject, I let my participants relate their own experiences. At the beginning of each interview, in order to obtain a full understanding of the taken-for-granted aspects of their social worlds as crewmembers, I asked each participant to try and

leave aside their knowledge that I had worked on cruise ships. But even with this I sometimes got a “you know” or a “you remember this.” While I did try to remove myself from the position of crewmember/co-worker, my past experience did help me ask questions when the interview ventured into “unscheduled” territory.

My own story is that I started working on a cruise ship/ferry (the ship carried cars) that catered to the “24 Hour Cruise”. With this type of cruise a passenger got on in one port and made a round-trip, getting off in the same port twenty-four hours later after they ate, gambled, drank, took in a Vegas-type revue and rented a cabin for the night on-board. This ship also carried car passengers that used the ship mainly as transportation between the United States and Canada; however, many still partook in the same amenities as the “cruise” passengers. For me, working on this ship was the same as working on the cruise ships I later worked on except it was only for a six-month season, and we actually got one day off each week that we could spend off the ship. But the lifestyle was still fast-paced and relationships happened quickly. I had many one-night stands during my four seasons/contracts on-board, while working with the men for the rest of the season. We had to continue to see each other everyday until the contract ended so there was unspoken acknowledgement of no regrets and move on to the next encounter, which may or may not be another one-night stand. I also had a relationship that lasted one whole season/contract, but it did not last when we returned to land. There was what would be described on-land as adultery or moral indiscretion according to the respondents in this study (and myself), but what happened in my life on-board did not matter when on-land so I don’t see those occasions as adultery. Different moral judgments were made on-land

versus at sea, which presumably encouraged transgressions. There is a saying that crewmembers share, “what happens on-board stays on-board”.

Four months after my last season and employment contract on the cruise ship ferry, Cruise Line A hired me as a photographer. Because I was one of the few Canadians (and an even rarer Maritimer), I had to make friends among co-workers from many different countries. During my five and a half years, my social life ran the gamut from extremely active (out in the crew bar or disco almost every night and going ashore for meals and shopping at every port) to very slow (out to the crew bar once a week and rarely getting off ship) categories that many of my peers would agree with.¹⁶ There would be crewmembers that do not go to the crew bar but do socialize by sharing meals or hanging out in their fellow crewmembers’ cabins or getting off ship for meals and shopping. There are also crewmembers that go to bed early and sleep during ports if they have it off.

While I have not experienced all the situations that some of my participants had, for instance meeting their husband/wife/life partner on-board, I have observed many of these circumstances. My years working on cruise ships gave me insight and understanding; however, I feel that my years away, eight years as of this writing, have given me time to reflect and put my experience into perspective. The concept of reflexivity (discussed in the methods section above) recognizes that a researcher’s experiences and knowledge can reflect upon their research (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007). Also Hammersley & Atkinson state that “‘common-sense’ knowledge” (in my

¹⁶ The categories of active and very slow in going out to the crew bar would be very similar to going to bars on-land.

case the knowledge of cruise ships because of my life experience) cannot be avoided when we are studying social interactions.

Chapter 3: What Other People Say: A Literature Review

There is very limited literature available about crewmembers and living on-board cruise ships, although I review the available literature below. I draw the bulk of my literature review therefore on research and social theory that deal with themes pertaining to community, space, and food and drink as part of social relationships. I focused on these themes because I wanted to show how relationships were formed and why they are formed so quickly. The combination of these theories and the intensity of capitalist demands bleeding into a crewmember's social life in the confined space of a cruise ship will be the centre point of my thesis. I will also examine what part food and especially drink help in forming these relationships and a sense of community.

Initially, the formation of community, on-board a cruise ship, is based on work but as time goes on social connections are made. In Benedict Anderson's theory of community the common thread that builds a community is language and an ability to communicate, which is used in print media and other technologies to promote a sense of community. Depending on the company, English is the working language of most cruise ships and the English language provides a way of communicating among the majority of cruise ship workers from many different countries. But besides a common language as a means of communicating there seems to be one commonality that crewmembers hold in common and that is food and drink. According to many theorists, when people gather to share a meal or beverage (especially, alcohol), it helps people relax and bond in way that

only working together does not allow.¹⁷ Many of the interviewees would agree with this statement and said that a lot of their socializing was done in the presence of alcohol.

On cruise ships, I argue, the formation of community and social bonding is done within a space that is both a working and living environment. This differs from life on-land and can be a more intimate and fast-paced way of living. As Altork (2007) discusses in her work in fire camps, cruise ship are almost a world unto themselves. Additionally, Harvey (1989) argues that the time-space compression of modern life has created the need for instantaneous satisfaction with regard to consumer goods and services and this need has bled into our social lives. The expectation of instant gratification from consumerism can be seen in the fast-paced work life of cruise ship workers overflowing into their social lives and the need for an immediate connection. The majority of the participants who were interviewed for this study alluded that the pacing of the work ship affected the way they conducted relationships on-board ship. But out of all of the participants John described it best when he said that work on-board was extremely intense and that, along with the speed of the job and the constant coming and going of people (crew and passengers), you seemed to rely on your fellow crewmembers for support more than you would on-land. John believed that life on-land was stable and time flowed differently than the accelerated pace of ship life. All these ideas about community, social bonding through food, space and relationships and time-space compression build on each other to help form a framework in which to examine social

¹⁷ Caplan (1997), Counihan (1999), Paulson (2006), and Mintz & Du Bois (2002) are a few scholars who hold the idea of food as a social bonding unit. Chatwin and Valentine (2002) also argue alcohol plays a large part in social relationships.

relationships between cruise workers on-board ship. I discuss these subjects and how they inform my thesis.

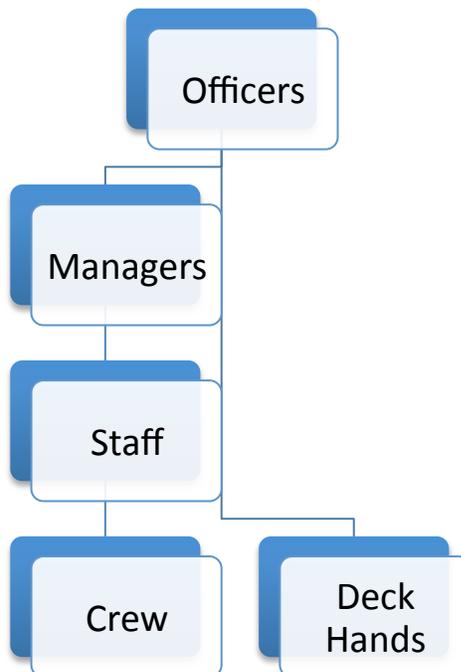
Cruise ships and gender hierarchical structure

The research that has been done on cruise ships and crewmembers is limited and focuses on working conditions, environmental concerns and the social organization of crewmembers. According to Thompson, the area on cruise ships where “category membership and role assignment converge most strikingly is in the mess area” (2002: 332). He finds that managers on-board cruise ships accomplish category membership and role assignment by establishing positions that have a particular status (for example, the distinction between, crew, staff, management and officers), by assigning people to these positions by ethnic groups and assigning each status set to their own mess (2002). Officers have the highest standing, followed by staff with crew having the lowest standing. That managers assign position by ethnicity or nationality is backed up by the International Transport Worker’s Federation’s (ITF) study *Sweatships* (2001) and studies by Seafarers International Research Centre. These studies report that the majority of service jobs are given to people from developing countries and the majority of higher-status positions are given to people from developed countries (Zhao 2000; ITF 2001; Wu 2005;).

This social organization of space through ethnicity and nationality and along political economic divisions between the developing and developed countries can affect whom crewmembers would be forming relationships with since their first contact would be with the people in their department. If crewmembers worked in a department where

staff or crew were predominantly from their home country or spoke their language these are the people with whom they would mainly associate and they may not look elsewhere for friendship. However, my own experience provides an example of how this does not always hold true. In my experience, while I was the singular white Canadian in my part of my department, I became friends with mainly Filipino lab technicians. It is a corporate manufactured structure- if certain nationalities are placed in certain jobs they may get along better or work better together, as well make money for the company. But, on the other hand, in practice people of different nationalities and ethnicities did work side-by-side in some departments. Therefore cross-cultural friendships and social interactions did occur in spite of attempts by the cruise ship company to maintain boundaries according to nationality and ethnicity.

As described above, there is a hierarchical structure to cruise ships, (from the top down) as follows, and I want to add here how gender plays into this hierarchy:



Seafaring, as a whole, is a male-dominated profession dominated by men (Kitada 2010). Men hold most of the positions and especially most of the top positions of power and authority. There is a lack of women in officer positions (Thomas 2003). This is the same on-board cruise ships. From my own experience, it is rare to find a women officer on the bridge of a cruise ship. In management positions, from my experience it depends on the department. During my time on-board, in Company A there was only one woman who held the position of Hotel Manager (in charge of all hotel services) but yet there were several women held positions of Chief Pursers (now called Guest Services Officers), which were a rank below the Hotel Manager. In my department, the photo department, there were no women who had made the highest rank of fully promoted managers only one Acting Manager and one woman Head Manager from the “Office” on-land. With the exception of the one Acting Manager all my managers were men. The women who held these positions seem to have more masculine characteristics, some physical- broad shoulders, stocky- or took on what could be conceived as masculine personality traits- loud, aggressive etc. In the dining room, the Maitre d’s were men and at first mainly men waiters because of the so-called strength needed to carry the large loaded trays. Now, there are more women working in dining rooms and according to my participant Michael it was almost half women working in the dining room before he left ships.

Gender affects all aspects of work, including what work one will do, who works and for whom, whose labour is valued and whose remains invisible, who manages production and coordinates economic transactions, who consumes, and how much one is paid” (Mascia-Lees 2010: 132).

This statement holds true onboard cruise ships. As discussed above and below in this section, gender and nationality and race/ethnicity play a big part in who works where and how much they are paid. Also gender, together with nationality and ethnicity/race, affects the power balance in relationships. The officers, mainly men, used their position to date people below them but there were people in lower positions who dated “up” for the perks (e.g. larger cabins with no cabin mates) people in higher positions had that they did not. How visible people are in their jobs also affects whom they meet and “date”. For example, laundry personnel (we called it the Chinese Laundry) were never seen unless a crewmember goes to the laundry and tended to not to socialize with other crewmembers; whereas crewmembers who worked in public areas are more visible to each other. As well, socializing tended to involve spending money, such as drinks in the crew bar, eating in restaurants on shore, or shopping, those who did not make a lot of money or sent remittances home tended not to join in on such activities.

The staff and crew are mainly service positions and a mixture of men and women holds these positions. Some positions are held by more women than men; dancers, gift shop, youth counselors, and spa; while others are held more by men like the photo department. The more service oriented the position the more women are present (Kitada 2010). “Traditional” women’s roles (nurturing and caring for people) (Spencer & Podmore 1987) like child-care, spa services, and housekeeping tend to have more women managers and workers. I am very critical of the idea of essentialized gender roles. In Western Society, there is a tendency to correlate sex with gender and what is natural for a woman is determined by her sex (West & Zimmerman 1987). Gender is a socially scripted display not a biologically determined role. So, what may seem as ‘natural’ is not

necessarily what different people, regardless of sex and gender, portray (West & Zimmerman 1987). At sea, there is a “common misconception related to the ideas of ‘appropriate’ jobs for men and women” (Thomas 2004: 27). As can be seen, the further a person advances up the hierarchical structure the more gendered the division of labour and the more power is held by men. In Chapter 6, there will be further discussion on how this impacts intimacy and sexual relationships on-board.

The gendered division of labour tends to be based on the naturalization of gender, that is, what is seen to be naturally linked to men’s and women’s bodies and their capabilities, and what are considered feminine and masculine characteristics according to cultural beliefs. The gendered differences vary across cultures, especially when it comes from to labour. There is variability in the activities done by men and women (Wood & Eagley 2002). As well Mead (1935) found that gender was shaped by culture, so various cultures would interpret gender differently. “Gender refers to those culturally assigned behaviors and meanings, such as sex roles, attributed to the distinction all human societies make between male and female.” (Barfield 1997). The officers of the company, I worked for, were mainly Italians who consider themselves very macho men. Another company has only Greek officers another nationality known for their masculinity. An officer has to be strong and authoritative- which are perceived to be masculine traits or masculine stereotypes. The feminine traits (or stereotypes) of caring and nurturing are seen in the hiring of women for the positions of youth staff but there were also men that had these “feminine” traits who were hired as well. Even within departments, for example the photo department where I worked, the on-shore management was from Colombia and they had their own beliefs on what they felt that men and women should

do in the department. They believed that women do not fix machinery, so they could not work in the photo lab. Women did not have the strength or spatial relations – considered masculine traits by management- to do the job. There were men that were considered too “feminine” for the job of photo lab technician and they did not stay in the lab and remained as photographers. I was stubborn and felt that I had what management considered “masculine” traits and stayed until I got a promotion (albeit it was only Assistant Photo Lab Technician not a full promotion).

All of the different nationalities and ethnicities make the practice of gendered labour quite complicated. Mascia-Lees (2010) makes the point that just as women and men are accorded labour based on gendered stereotypes and therefore they are made into men and women through Labour. It is also the case that work is coded by gender based on who works that job, for instance, if women work in a position it is feminized (Mascia-Lees 2010). This means that in some places in the world some jobs are feminized while not in all places, and that labour is organized by and through gender changes across time and place, As was stated at the beginning of this section, while women were not working on-board ships at one point in history now that more women are migrating internationally for work (Pyle 2006) there are more women working on ships so this would indicate a feminization of cruise ship work. There is a trend toward more women in positions of authority and control and in turn men not holding these positions of power means men cannot use (or abuse) their authority over lower positioned women. There are more women working in management and other men-dominated areas. So the gender power relations are changing albeit slowly.

Community

According to Lane (2001), when a ship has a crew a community is formed. Here, “community” is used in the sense that people are living together with rules and customs that are flexible enough to make room for differences but strict enough to preserve unity. While there is flexibility to accommodate the different nationalities on-board there are very strict rules in place to maintain order, such as the “no tolerance” policy in regards to sexism and racism.¹⁸

As stated by Rodman (1992), there is a tendency to discuss “community” and “place” as tangible objects that have immovable borders. Each concept is thought of as a fixed and unchanging object that belongs somewhere like a town, a city or even a building; however, this conceptualization is problematic. My framework borrows instead from Rodman’s notion of place as constantly in flux. She argues, “Places are not inert containers. They are politicized, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions” (Rodman 1992: 641). As well, place can be a concept or a metaphor. For example a person can have a “place” in their society, someone can know their *place* or someone can be put their “place” (Harvey 1993). That in today’s world of globalization, mobility and fast communication the lines of community, place and space have become blurred is one argument by Goldmacher (2008) and Walmsley (2000). Indeed, with the Internet, place and community now exist virtually in cyberspace. While cruise ships are not virtual reality, thinking of them as a place means that while ships are physical entities, they are also imagined as an idealized and romanticized place. As I will

¹⁸ In my own experience, while working in a man-dominated position, the no tolerance policy towards sexism was only loosely followed.

show in my thesis, it is a “place” of happy times or of hard work and its conception is different for different people.

Of the many arguments about community and how it is formed the two most important arguments for my study are those of Anderson (1991) and Cohen (2000). Both of their theories suggest that communities are imagined or constructed by the people that inhabit them. Anderson believes that large communities (and possibly small) are imagined and the communities are differentiated from each other by how the community is imagined by inhabitants. He believes that a group can be imagined as a community despite otherwise measurable amounts of inequality and hierarchy because of the perceptions of equality between group members that are more important. Anderson also argues communities and nations are imagined (thought of) based on language and print capitalism (1991). By contrast, community for Cohen is based on a set of common beliefs or traits rather than equality and these similarities differentiate one community from another (2000).

When he is discussing “imagined” communities, Anderson is mainly talking about the building of nations and nationalisms. He felt that a commonly used language brought a nation together and being able to read (or hear) about their nation brought people together even though the majority has not met face-to-face (1991). The community imagined by cruise ship workers cannot be fully explained by this argument because, as the multicultural crew speaks many different languages, a shared common language is not one of the main factors that helps them think of themselves as a community. I use the idea of ‘imagining’ a community in the sense of people unknown to one another through face-to-face relations nevertheless feeling a sense of collective identity. Former and

present cruise ship workers identify as crewmembers it is something that informs who they are in their lives. In my experience, it is not very common to meet someone who has worked on a cruise ship and when it does happen there is a common bond. There is a sense of camaraderie because of the shared experience of working on a cruise ship, even though individuals may not have worked together directly during their time on-board. The Internet has many web pages and Facebook groups where former and present-day crewmembers can *meet* and share their stories and commiserate with each other.¹⁹ I argue that these are imagined communities because they are virtual – that is, formed online – and also because the majority of the people involved never meet face-to-face. Some have not met because they worked on different ships or for different companies. Even within individual cruise ships and cruise companies, many crewmembers have never met their fellow crewmembers. This can be due to many factors, such as working in different departments, working different shifts, working on different ships, and the sheer number of workers employed by cruise lines. I speculate that many crewmembers still feel a sense of belonging and camaraderie because they have worked and lived in the same circumstances. In these virtual groups, individuals express a sense of commonality that is defined by their shared experience on cruise ships and is not shared with non-crewmembers. There is a sense of “surviving the war” (for a lack of better phrasing). There is even a Facebook group called “I worked on a cruise ship and lived to tell the tale”. The nature of the job is such that most crewmembers must work long days for months at a time, away from their native countries and far from their families. From what

¹⁹ A quick Google search for former cruise ship crew members gets two million plus “hits” of which a few hundred pertain directly to cruise ship crew members whereas a Facebook search for crew member groups finds a dozen plus groups for cruise ship crew members. The search I did was in June 2010.

I read on the website and user groups and what my interviewees said, it is often a struggle to maintain energy, focus and a sense of well being in an environment that can be both satisfying and frustrating.²⁰

Cohen argues that community members by definition have similarities that keep them in opposition to other communities. He states that communities have boundaries.

Some may be physical, expressed by a mountain range or a sea. Some may be racial or linguistic or religious. But not all boundaries, and not all the components of *any* boundary, are so objectively apparent. They may be thought of as existing in the minds of their beholders. This being so, the boundary may be perceived in rather different terms not only by people on opposite sides of it, but also by people on the same side (2000: 12).

Another part of Cohen's argument is that boundaries mean different things to different people. The meanings people give to boundaries are a symbolic feature of community (Cohen 2000).

The one common element among those who identify as a "community" with cruise ship workers is that all have worked on a cruise ship. On the broadest level, one can talk about a community of all cruise lines and cruise ships, but this definition can also be broken down even further into definitions of small communities, to become cruise-line specific, ship specific or even specific to the smaller, more intimate communities of people that are formed on-board a certain ship. There, workers identify with their department as part of their community, and many also identify with other people from their native country or people who speak the same language. These different kinds and levels of identification with others help them bond as a community. Most, if not all of the

²⁰ The work environment on a cruise ship being rewarding or frustrating depends on the quality of co-workers and the passengers on-board at any given period of time.

interviewees have stated they tended to socialize with their fellow department employees, crewmembers of similar nationality (or language), or a combination of both.

Food and Drink

Food and drink play a large part in social and symbolic relationships in human society. The sharing of food and drink in many cultures promotes a sense of community. Coming together as a group to celebrate a momentous occasion reaffirms the social relationships between people inside and outside of a community (Counihan 1999; Paulson 2006). Mintz and Du Bois (2002) agree with the statement that “[I]ike all culturally defined material substances used in the creation and maintenance of social relationships. Food serves both to solidify group membership and to set groups apart” (109). Communal eating is not just about maintaining family relationships; it is about initiating and preserving all human relationships as well as holding a society together (Powdermaker 1932; Farb & Armelagos 1980; Mintz & Dubois 2002). From a functionalist perspective, Powdermaker argued that the eating of food and the customs related to the sharing of food have two social functions: “(1) to maintain the cohesion of the society and of groups within it; (2) to determine, in part, the relation of the individual to the society and to the smaller groups within” (1932: 236).

Eating on cruise ships is communal for the passengers but even more so for the crew. Typically, there are three daytime dining areas (or messes as they are called on ships) for the workers: the officers’ mess, the staff mess and the crew mess (Thompson 2002). During the three main meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) workers can only eat in their designated messes. This changes at night. On the ships that I worked and lived on, a

late-night meal was served in the crew mess. It was a buffet set up with foods from different cultures. This meal was intended for the late-night or overnight workers, which are mainly crew and a few staff. At the midnight meal, everyone can eat in the crew mess (Thompson 2002). This is the one meal where anyone can go to the crew mess, which is a larger space than the other messes, and eat. The only other social space that is shared by staff and crew is the crew bar.

In greater society feasting and family dinners can build social cohesion and form new relationships, and the same can be said about crew members on cruise ships. While crewmembers arrive from different cultures and countries and speak different languages, eating is something they are compelled to and perhaps want to do in social groups without needing to communicate through language. Crew members work different shifts in different departments and during the regular meal times will eat with a few fellow workers from their own department, who are sometimes from the same country or nationality but not always (Thompson 2002). But at night when crew and staff can gather in the crew mess to eat (Thompson 2002) or the crew bar to drink, they do so with people they do not get to see during the workday. This is where people get to know each other, learn about each other's cultures and are informally *taught* the *ways* of the ship by the more experienced crewmembers. Newer crewmembers learn from more experienced crewmembers how to navigate life on-board: what behaviour you could get away with, how to conceal bad behaviour (for instance, how not to get caught sleeping with a passenger), who to see for certain needs, who to ask for favours. (Those who did favours were called *mafia* on the ships I worked on). This is also where they hear the latest

gossip. Naomi, an interviewee, spoke of receiving the latest gossip when sitting down to a meal in the staff mess.

In the workplace, food and drink play a part in establishing and maintaining relationships. Food and drink can play different roles for different people in the working environment (Valentine 2002). Valentine (2002) found in her case study of a nurse in a hospital that there is a spatial division regarding who eats together and also a food quality difference between the senior staff dining area and the junior staff canteen. The dining areas were described as very hierarchical. Thompson (2002), as well, discovered a hierarchical dining system (in the ship messes) in his study of cruise ship organizational methods (as discussed above). But he believed that the ship's management manufactured the hierarchical system. In the prison studied by Valentine and Longstaff (1998) food is part of social relationships for inmates. A meal means a break from their cell and their cellmate, and sharing a meal with a fellow prisoner is a way of making a connection to another person besides their cellmate.

Working on a cruise ship can be likened to a cross between an on-land business and a prison. On cruise ships eating with fellow workers/inmates is a social activity as well as a biological need to keep the body fuelled. Food on-board a cruise ship is an ethnic identifier, and it is identified with time to socialize, as well as occasions for a reward or a celebration. A regular mealtime is seen as a time to sit with friends and workmates to enjoy some food and some downtime away from the guests. There is a hierarchy involved in who sits together in the staff mess (Thompson 2002). The tendency is towards sitting with one's own department, but this also depends on when each crewmember gets their meal break: at night, the structure is less strict.

Drinking and social relationships

The drinking of many types of beverages can help establish social relationships. Whether it is sharing a cup of tea or going out to a bar to consume alcohol, these are ways of getting to know others better. While some researchers like Mary Douglas argue that

[d]rinks are generally available to strangers, acquaintances, workmen *and* family. They are thus more democratic and have wider social applications. Meals, by way of contrast, are reserved for family, close friends and honoured guests (Wood 1995: 50).

In de Garine (2001), Chatwin concurs that drink is more of a socializing agent than food. Valentine agrees with Chatwin about drinking being a socializing agent, but only as it refers to alcohol. Valentine states that “[t]he transforming properties of alcohol – relaxing people and making conversation flow – are important in uniting colleagues and creating a temporary intimacy or sense of belonging...” (2002: 12). Rohlen (1974) states drinking

alcohol allows workplace tensions to be diluted, permitting everyday antagonisms and uncertainties to be recognized and acknowledged without challenging the status quo, while also serving as a convenient excuse if any ‘social norms’ are transgressed (Valentine 2002: 12-13).

O’Carroll reinforces this statement by adding that German tourists who visit Irish pubs feel drinking Irish beer and whiskey is “a gateway to relaxation, sociability, spontaneity, intensification of social relations, and informal, fact-to-face human contact” (2005: 53).

Drinking tends to be a much more informal social activity, in which groups of people can get together and socialize. The “after work drink” at the local bar can produce a better work relationship by presenting a sense of knowing one’s employer or fellow employees (Valentine 2002). This statement reflects what I observed and experienced in the crew bar aboard cruise ships. The crew bar is exclusively for crewmembers, but it is

open to all crewmembers regardless what rank they hold on the ship. It is where crewmembers gather after work (and sometimes before and during work) to drink and socialize away from the passengers who are on-board ship. In a way, the crew bar gives crewmembers a sense of community with other crewmembers who go to the crew bar. There are regular bar-goers who are in the crew bar every night and who are well known by other people from different departments. The crew bar is also a site where people meet and start intimate relationships. As in bars on-land, some of these relationships are one-night stands, but other relationships last anywhere from few weeks to a few years. While Mary Douglas does not find drinking to be intimate in an emotional way, as mentioned by Wood (1995), on a cruise ship drinking can end up being intimate in a sexual way! Many of the participants in my study would agree to this statement. A few have turned an average trip to the crew bar into an intimate encounter or into a longer-term relationship.

As can be seen by the discussions above food, meals, drinking and commensality play very important parts in human social relationships. The sharing of food and drink has deep meaning in all cultures. Whether it is to initiate or maintain group social relationships or to promote family unity, a feast or a meal has a way of bringing people together. Despite many differences of background, sharing food and drink is one thing that cruise ship workers definitely hold in common. The sharing of meals promotes feelings of togetherness, companionship and community for crewmembers. While drinking is not as intimate an act as eating, it also plays a large part in the socialization of cruise ship workers. While crewmembers will “go for coffee” or other beverages; it is more likely that crewmembers will “go for a drink” in the crew bar. Gathering in the crew bar with fellow crewmembers for alcoholic drinks and de-stressing

after a long day working among the guests on-board helps establish camaraderie and a sense of community. In Chapter 6, I will be looking at what part drinking alcohol played in the social lives of the former crewmembers that I interviewed for this study.

Passenger – Crewmember Contrast

A cruise ship is made up of two groups: crewmembers and passengers (Zhao 2001).

Passengers see the cruise ship as a floating hotel visiting foreign ports. Crew members also visit foreign ports but see the cruise ship as a working environment that has strict rules to regulate both their work and *living* on-board (e.g., the requirement to be back on-board a half hour before the ship sails) which do not exist at home (Klein, 2002) as well as lack of rules that exist at home (for example less restrictions on sexual freedom). As well, crewmembers are working and living with peers from different countries (Thompson, 2004; Zhao 2001), which can be different from what occurs in their native country.

While the crewmembers are hired to work, they also live on-board for a specified period of time, called a contract; this contract can last between six to ten months (Klein 2002). This makes cruise ships spaces of employment and everyday living. Throughout their contract, workers work, sleep, eat, drink and socialize on-board ship (Aubert & Arner 1958). During everyday socializing and daily contact with one another, arguably, they seem to engage in the act of forming a large community and smaller communities within in their various departments on-board based on the above conceptualizations of community.

Media representations of cruising demonstrate that people imagine cruise ships as places of relaxation and exotic travel. The images of passengers enjoying their “exotic” cruise vacation tend to mask or erase what really happens behind the scenes to make the passengers’ “dream cruise” vacation occur (it is good to remember that these are media constructed images not necessarily the ones of passengers). For a cruise ship to be able to carry these passengers on their voyage, a multitude of workers must make this happen. Crewmembers are an integral part of the “cruising experience”. If there were no crewmembers, the passengers would not have all the services currently found on-board a cruise ship. A cruise ship is very similar to a resort in many ways, but at a resort the guests do not find themselves in a new country or port almost every day. MSC Starlight Cruises and Oceania Cruise Lines make these claims on their websites. (Accessed November 2, 2011).

Space

The spatial dimension of cruise workers’ living spaces aboard cruise ships plays a key role in cruise ship relationships. For crewmembers to be able to come to work on cruise ships, they have to leave their friends and family behind. Some couples work on-board together, but that is frowned upon. Some cruise lines, Cruise Line A for example, do not allow couples to work together, especially in the same department. Upper management told me that they had this policy because they felt that married couples working together caused problems with morale and loyalty in the department, especially if the couple met on-board. Many crewmembers come on-board feeling alone and displaced because they are separated from spouses and other intimate partners (Thompson 2004).

Here, I return again to the fieldwork by Altork, which I introduced in Chapter One. In her work on remote fire camps in the forests and back country areas of the United States, she explores the sexual intensity that develops between fire fighting crews when fires break out, Altork describes fire camps as “an intoxicating little world within a world” (2007:101). Cartier has a similar take on tourist spaces as seductive (2005). The fire camps where Altork did research are similar in some ways to a cruise ship: her description of fire camps as being a world isolated from the outside world (2007) rings true with cruise ships as well. Both are places where people work, socialize and live away from their “regular” lives. The “space” of a cruise ship is different from the “regular” lives led by crewmembers and passengers outside of the ship. If a crewmember works several contracts or many years for a cruise line, they tend to reverse this. What is considered “regular” is life on-board and life on-land becomes odd or foreign to them. This is discussed later in Chapter 6.

Chapter 4: Media Representation of “cruising” and the cruise industry

It has been well documented that tourism representations in general play a powerful role in myth making and creating images about place (Crouch and Nübbren 2003). Media representations of the cruise industry and cruise lines are very influential in constructing a popular imaginary and in shaping people’s experiences of the cruise ship as a mythical place. Many people take cruises after seeing, hearing, and reading about cruising but some of the representations that inspire their decision are romanticized to make cruising look very exotic and sometimes erotic. For example, most fictional representations of cruise ships tend to present ship life in a way that advances the plot of the story, and the reality of the situation is secondary. By contrast, non-fiction representations (documentaries) about cruise ships tend to be factual in their representation but, in most cases, the cruise company controls what is presented. This next section will examine how crewmembers portray themselves and are portrayed in media, such as books, documentaries and websites.

Books

There are many books written that take place on-board cruise ships. There are non-fiction books about cruising, memoirs about working on cruise ships and novels set on cruise ships. This section will focus on memoirs written by ex-crewmembers and non-fiction books examining the problems within the cruise-line industry.

Many memoirs written by people who worked on-board cruise ships offer a realistic glimpse of work on a cruise ship. These books and many more like them give an insider’s view on what happens on-board cruise ships and function as a snapshot of the

time period in which they are set. Jeraldine Saunders' book *Love Boats: Above and Below Decks with Jeraldine Saunders* looks at her time on cruise ships in the late 1960s and early 1970s when cruising was still focused on the luxury market. Her book focuses on her experiences as the, self-proclaimed, first woman cruise director. The book is full of humorous anecdotes and stories of strange situations she experienced during her time on cruise ships. Her book gives readers a glimpse on the beginnings of modern cruising.

James R. Spencer's book, *Cruiseline Confidential*, describes his time as a waiter on the Oceania, one of the last old ocean liners, during the late 1980s and early 1990s. James calls himself and his fellow waiters the "kings of the ship" on-board the S/S Oceania. He tells stories about their drunken debauchery and how they survived on-board. While it is a book about the exploits of a "freewheeling" (no responsibilities) young man working on-board a cruise ship, it also gives the reader a taste of what it is like to leave native country to work in a strange place. This book gives the reader a look into crewmembers' lives before September 11, 2001, when there were less restrictions on-board.

Another book by a former crewmember is *Cruise Confidential: A Hit Below the Waterline* by Brian David Bruns. In his memoir of ship life in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Bruns claims he was the first American to finish a contract as a waiter on-board a cruise ship. He goes into detail on why he took the job of waiter on a ship, a position usually held by people from outside North America places such as the Philippines, India, or Eastern Europe, (explaining that he fell in love with a dining room waitress), and he recounts the many trials and tribulations of being the only American waiter amongst a crew from many other countries. In the end, the management position he was promised did not materialize, and he found a better shipboard position at the end of his contract as a

waiter. Bruns' book gives the reader some insight into what it is like to be a cruise ship worker in a hierarchical system where managers often define roles by country of origin.

In addition to personal memoirs, numerous non-fiction books expose the negative side of the cruise line industry. One prominent author, Ross A. Klein, a sociology professor at Memorial University, discusses the crew working conditions, the environmental problems and other questionable practices aboard cruise ships. He has written three books on the topic: *Cruise Ship Blues: The Underside of the Cruise Industry*, *Cruise Ship Squeeze: The New Pirates of the Seven Seas* and *Paradise Lost at Sea: Rethinking Cruise Vacations*. His investigation into the practices of the Cruise Industry started after he found out he was “not welcome to return to Radisson Seven Seas Cruise” (Klein, 2002: 158) after making complaints to the CEO of the company of loud, unwanted music and passive-aggressive crewmembers. While this back-story makes it sound like he is taking out his frustration on the whole industry after not getting the solution he expected to the problem he reported (which could be true), the problems he raises and documents in these books are verified by other sources and similar to the reports in my interviews. Klein also maintains a website (www.cruisejunkie.com) that gives similar information to what is in his books, documenting, for example, accidents, health issues, labour problems and environmental issues. His books hold an extremely negative view of cruising and the wider effects of the cruise-line industry.

Documentaries

The purpose of documentary films is to film unscripted action as it happens; a documentary should give the audience a non-fiction representation of the truth. However,

the filmmaker still controls many of the choices of what “truth” is presented. The first choices that influence the representation are the selection of what scenes, people and stories to follow. Editing the raw footage also changes what is presented in the end product. Therefore, it is important to look at the reason behind the documentary and who is involved the film. One important question is: does the cruise company have a say in what is shown in the film? If they do, then it is very likely that they wish their brand to be shown in a positive light. Three documentaries about cruise ships are worth analysis to illustrate biases: *Up the Yangtze* (2007) by Yung Chang, *Cruise Inc: Big Money on the High Seas* (2009) by CNBC Originals, and *Mighty Ships: Oasis of the Seas* (2010) by Discovery Channel.

Up the Yangtze is a documentary about the change that happened along the Yangtze River in the name of progress during the building of the Three Gorges Dam. During the time this documentary was being filmed, areas along the river were already starting to be flooded due to the building of the dam, and the film explores how the building project affected the millions of people living on or near the river. The luxury cruise ships that cruise up and down the Yangtze River are the focal point of this film. During the time the director/narrator Yung Chang was filming, these cruises were called “farewell tours” so that people (tourists) could “wave goodbye [to the features of life on the river’s shores] before it all goes away.” Yung uses the cruise ship as a tool to compare the haves and have-nots. The tourists from more “developed” areas, such as North America and Europe, are shown in contrast to the cruise ship workers, who are from less *developed* areas along the banks of the Yangtze River.

In *Up the Yangtze*, the depiction of working on-board a cruise ship seemed to match the experience former crewmembers describe in interviews and was realistic, according to my own experience. Nothing appeared stylized or exaggerated to seem exotic and exciting. The film depicted the hard work and long hours the crew put in and showed how hard it can be for crewmembers to adjust to being away from their native country. It did not shy away from difficult subjects. Chang showed how the new recruits were trained to deal with the passengers (who seemed to be mainly Americans) and were taught “hotel” English. The crew living spaces were shown, and they appeared in stark contrast to the luxury accommodations of the passengers; this is true on any cruise ship. While the documentary was not about cruising *per se* and the cruise ship was a vehicle or tool used to propel his film about the destruction of traditional people’s lifestyle by “progress” and modernity, cruising seemed to be depicted in a blunt and forthright way. The cruise line was not involved in the production as a funder and had no say in the footage Chang used.

Cruise Inc: Big Money on the High Seas, as the title indicates, is a television documentary about the moneymaking business of cruising. This CNBC documentary takes an in depth look at what a cruise ship spends and how it earns money. The documentary takes place during a week-long cruise on the Norwegian Pearl, a Norwegian Cruise Lines ship. On-board the Pearl, we meet the Hotel Director, who is the man in charge of most of the money making on-board the ship. Once all passengers and supplies are on-board, he states they are “ready to makes some money.” The documentary takes the viewer into some of the crew areas and most of the public areas. The viewer sees the

galley, the storage areas and the “I-95,” the main corridor that runs the length of the ship on the main crew deck on-board ship.

In *Cruise Inc*, the ship looks pristine, and the passengers are shown having a great time drinking tropical drinks, swimming in the pools, sunning themselves on deck and participating in other activities. The crew plays a background role; the only people that are featured are the managers in charge of the ship (Hotel Director, Captain, Cruise Director) and the cruise line executives. There is an appearance by one crewmember talking about working to support his family. Otherwise the crew is mentioned in passing, with reference for example to the entertainers, who do not make direct money for the ship but play an essential part in getting the passengers into the lounge and possibly buying drinks. The viewer is told that “working on a cruise ship is no vacation,” and the documentary states that some crewmembers work ten-hour days, seven days a week, for ten months at a time. (While the ten-hour day may be the “official” statement there are other sources [Klein 2001] that would say it is more like twelve hour days.) But otherwise the focus is on the passengers and their role in the moneymaking business of the cruise industry. It is stated in the documentary that the on-shore management of NCL refused to answer any questions that would paint them or their business in a negative light. Overall, *Cruise Inc.* is an effective piece of company marketing that celebrates the many ways of profit-making on a cruise ship and shows that the passengers have a good time spending money.

Mighty Ships: Oasis of the Seas takes place on the maiden voyage of the Oasis of the Seas out of Fort Lauderdale. The program focuses on the positive and negative events that occur during the first sailing of the world’s largest cruise ship. The voice-over tells

us that the ship is 360 meters long, has a 48-meter width and carries 5400 passengers and 2200 crew. While this program depicts the challenges of taking this extremely large cruise ship on its first trip, mainly it serves to promote the Oasis of the Seas. It does give a behind-the-scenes look into the running of a cruise ship, albeit a superficial view.

During the course of this hour-long program we meet a handful of crewmembers. We are introduced to Julie Sheridan, the Guest Services Officer (formerly known as Chief Purser); William S. Wright, the Captain; David Adams, the loading crew manager, and various other crewmembers in higher-ranking positions. We are never formally introduced to lower-ranking crew even though we see them working throughout the ship. Even as it depicts some cruise ship workers, the *Mighty Ships* program never discusses any personal details about the crew. At best, it just says who they are, what their job is on-board and sometimes where they are from.

Web media (blogs, company websites, etc)

John Heald's Blog (<http://johnhealdsblog.com>)

John Heald is the senior cruise director at Carnival Cruise Lines. While it was not part of his original job description, he has taken on the task of writing a semi-regular blog about working on-board a cruise ship. It is written from his point of view as a senior cruise director/brand ambassador. He writes about daily events on-board whatever ship he is on at the moment, shares company news, and features guest bloggers from other ships and sister companies owned by Carnival Corporation. While his job is to promote Carnival's brand in a positive light, he also states what appear to be his own opinions even when they may portray his employers more negatively. Heald has a warts-and-all

attitude about what he writes, but he does have to have his blog posts *approved* by the powers that be or the “people with beards” as John calls them.

As one interesting feature of his blog, Heald posts incident reports from the ship he is on. Incident reports are usually complaints made by passengers about some event that happened on-board. On the one hand, I think Heald is trying to inform and educate people about cruising through showing the “silliness” of some passenger complaints, but if the complaint is truly serious he also is careful to demonstrate that Carnival does take action to resolve the problems. Heald also answers people’s (potential or previous cruisers) questions and grants people’s requests for special services on-board ship.

In his blog, Heald does highlight the hard work and long hours that the crewmembers endure and does discuss the partying and “hook-ups” that happen between crewmembers. While he does not shy away from many topics, it does seem he is regulated by certain Carnival standards. In answer to certain questions, he does reply with the customary Carnival answer, but it seems that if he personally does not agree with the company policy, he will say so. He avoids writing about fair work practices, environmental practices and other potentially controversial topics.

Norwegian Cruise Line® (<http://www2.ncl.com/>)

At first glance, the Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) website gives the impression that NCL is a higher end cruise line. The highlight on the website is the soon-to-be-launched ship the Norwegian Epic, which features entertainers including the Blue Man Group and a Cirque Du Soleil show at dinner, and has luxuries such as an Aqua Park on-board.²¹ While the focus audience seems to be couples, there are many photographs of couples

²¹ I accessed the website in June 2010.

doing activities, there is a large family section with the emphasis on the Nickelodeon™ at Sea Program for kids.

Every cruise line has something they think separates them from the rest, and for NCL it is Freestyle Cruising. This means clients are free to choose the experience they want for their cruise. They can choose from: Freestyle Accommodations, Freestyle Dining, and Freestyle Fun. There is also a section on Weddings and Romance, with choices of different wedding and romance packages.

Visually, the website gives the impression that there are not many crew on-board. There are photographs of entertainers and there is one photograph of a chef, but otherwise the crew is missing from this cruise line's website promotions. A link named "careers" at the very bottom of the page clicks to a page with options to find out about corporate or shipboard positions. The shipboard employment link clicks to a page that has three photographs of crewmembers and other links that take the reader to pages that explain life on-board and answer frequently asked questions. Only readers who are searching for this particular section of the website will get the feel that crewmembers exist on-board this cruise line. It is clear that this is first and foremost a website for potential and current clients.

*Royal Caribbean International*²² (www.royalcaribbean.com)

The first thing that greets visitors to the Royal Caribbean International (RCI) webpage is a pop-up of the animated character Shrek swinging on a rope announcing the pairing of RCI and DreamWorks on-board their soon-to-be launched ship, Allure of the Seas. Once the pop-up closes, the site features photos of the ship and crew and a video called

²² Accessed in June 2010.

Postcards from the Nation of Why Not announcing the arrival of the Oasis of the Seas. Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines have “declared” their ships “nations” where their passenger can try something new – as in “Why not try mountain climbing?” The cruise line is another higher end cruise company that, according to the visuals, is for families and couples. Their section headers offer options for “new cruisers,” “experienced cruisers” and “families” and a section called “romance at sea.” This section covers all the romantic things couples can do on-board a Royal Caribbean ship and also offers romance packages similar to those offered by NCL. There is an easily accessible section called Behind the Smiles, which has profiles of numerous crewmembers. While they are mainly people in managerial positions, including a few officers and a captain, there is one profile of a stateroom attendant. The crew is a little more visible on RCI’s website than on NCL’s site. One does have a feeling that crewmembers, not only entertainers, work on-board Royal Caribbean ships without having to hunt down a small link at the bottom of the page. Like other cruise line websites, information about on-board opportunities is located by clicking on a link to take you to another webpage devoted to shipboard careers.

*Holland America Line*²³ (www.hollandamerica.com)

On the first page of the Holland America Line (HAL) website, the first impression visually is of the Nieuw Amsterdam, their soon-to-be launched ship. At first it seems that the website is all about the ships; it is not until the visitor clicks on the “shore excursion” link that they get their first real glance of people. Even here, the people are on shore, not on-board the ship. The “Video” and “Virtual Tours” links finally show people actually

²³ Accessed June 2010.

working and playing on-board ship. These links show some middle-aged and older couples enjoying the ship; they also highlight smiling crewmembers and officers at work. There is a quick mention of Club Hal for children and teens, but the overall impression from the images and text is that Holland America is for well-off couples, possibly without children. While the crew is visible in the videos, it does not go beyond the crew serving the passengers, and it does not humanize them the way that RCI does on their website. There is information for potential crewmembers about obtaining a job on-board that is accessed by clicking on a link.

*Carnival Cruise Lines*²⁴ (www.carnival.com)

The themes evident on the Carnival Cruise Lines website are saving money, attracting new cruisers and having fun on-board Carnival ships. One of the first slides on the home page asks: “Are you new to cruising? Warning: the side effects are awesome.” Carnival Cruise Lines are promoting themselves as the fun-for-everyone cruise line: “everyone” being families and couples – both old and young. This is another website in which the crew does not appear in the still photographs, but the Carnival website offers something that the above websites did not: they feature blogs written by on-board personnel that give a glimpse into life on-board Carnival ships. A captain, a youth director, and a few cruise directors write these blogs, which humanize the people working on-board. They write about things that happen on their ship, on their vacation, and in their personal lives. This feature lets people see there is more to crewmembers than their jobs. Along with the blogs there is a link for careers on-board ship as well as careers working for the cruise line in their land based operations.

²⁴ Accessed June 2010.

*Princess Cruises*²⁵ (www.princess.com)

Princess Cruises, according to their website, is promoting escapism. Their home page tag line asks: “Welcome Aboard: How can we help you escape completely?” The visuals are of happy couples relaxing and enjoying their cruise. The promotional images suggest Princess is more couple-oriented than family-oriented. While the videos show glimpses of families, the rest of the website does not show many kid-oriented things to do on-board. This makes sense given that Princess Cruises’ biggest claim to fame is that the show *The Love Boat* was filmed on-board their ships. They even have a section called the “Department of Romance,” promoting their “legacy of romance”.

Visually, crewmembers are seen in still photographs mainly in the background, in soft focus behind happy couples. As on other websites, crew are much more visible in the videos showing what it is like on-board a Princess Ship than in the still photographs. This is another website that offers a better look at crewmembers and their life on-board through a “Careers” link. In the “Careers” section, there is a video that explains what it is like the first time a person-boards ship. While it is a very basic look at what to expect when joining a ship, it is more information than other cruise line websites give potential employees.

*The Yachts of Seabourn*²⁶ (www.seabourn.com)

The Seabourn website greets visitors with three pictures in a slide show. The first slide is of two couples and a waiter serving them wine, and the script says, “Welcome to the Yachts of Seabourn.” The second slide shows the same two couples leaning on the railing on deck drinking what looks to be champagne, and the description says, “Life is better on

²⁵ Accessed June 2010.

²⁶ Accessed June 2010.

the deck of a yacht,” The final slide shows one of the couples either inspecting or greeting a lineup of crewmembers on a pier beside the ship, and the tag line states, “This is your Yacht.” The couples in the slides appear to be in their late thirties/early forties and are quite well dressed. Since Seabourn is one of the high-end cruise lines this is to be expected. Notably, the crew is quite visible in the promotional photographs and seems to be part of the Seabourn experience. Seabourn’s website has a blog as well, where they give ship news and announcements about new “Seabourn cadet” graduates. All in all, it seems that the crew is visible, though only in a work capacity. Like other cruise line websites, there was also a link leading to information about careers on-board ship.

Conclusion

Non-fictional media representations of cruise ships, whether they are memoirs, documentaries or websites, reflect the realities of life on-board, according to my experience and my interviews with former crewmembers; however, the depictions fall into one of two camps: they either remain superficial and avoid the difficult parts of cruise ship life, or they look beyond the surface and present the challenges alongside the benefits. The degree to which the representation is superficial appears to depend partly on how or if the cruise line depicted is involved in the decision about what is shown and what is not. Books written by crewmembers reflect the specific experiences of their time on-board. Documentary films use cruise ships as the setting for the stories they want to tell. Websites are interactive advertisements, designed mostly for potential and current clients.

All in all, the impression of cruise ship life left by media representation is mixed. It depends on who is controlling the representation. The reader of the book, viewer of the

documentary or visitor to the website has to decide: Is this representation created by someone with something to gain (such as a cruise line, recruiting new customers, or an author or filmmaker wanting an audience)? What is portrayed affects how people imagine life on a cruise ship to be. I can guess there are quite a few people who were surprised, after taking a cruise or starting work on a ship, to find that the ideas they gathered from media were different from what they really experienced on-board. The gaps between real experience and representations, and between expectations and reality, are important reasons behind my study on crewmembers' relationships on-board cruise ships.

The superficial view of crew in representations shows the importance of highlighting relationships between crewmembers, and even more importantly humanizing cruise ship workers. Most importantly for this thesis, these representations must be understood as one part of the many processes of globalization that affect people working on cruise ships; more generally, such representations take "the cruise ship experience" as universal and thereby erase localizing processes and local specificity as they circulate widely in global media spaces. Moreover, these representations provide helpful contextual information on how globalization affects the intimate relations of cruise ship workers by creating myths and globalizing images. Globalization deterritorializes experiences that would once be localized (Scholte 2000) (through telecommunications and various other technologies, including cruise ships). There is also a sense of interconnectedness felt through the ability to "witness" distant events. The transmission of the representations of cruise ships are widely circulated and this has some effect on cruise ship workers. If they held any beliefs of how working on a cruise ship would be from advertisements from cruise lines they would only have half the picture though if

people searched deeper they would find actual accounts from crewmembers who have worked on-board. While none of the interviewees in this study mentioned how representations of cruise ships formed their idea of how working on a cruise ship would be, but there is the possibility that some crewmembers perceptions were affected by such representations. Now I will turn to the voices and experiences of the interviewees who actually occupied these spaces.

Chapter 5: Meet the Crewmembers

In phenomenology, the actor's perspective is the basis to understanding a phenomenon (Patton 2002; Bernard 2006). So to better understand their perspective, we should become better acquainted with the people involved in the circumstance that is being studied. This chapter is an introduction to the former crewmembers who took part in this study. Chapter 6 will look at their narratives about their personal lives on-board cruise ships.

Michelle

Michelle was 24 years old when she was hired as a bar waitress on a ship owned by Cruise Line A. She was a graduate from a hotel and restaurant management program in her native Philippines. When she started her first position on-board she was not prepared for having to sell drinks all day long. She found that she was not suited to be a bar waitress. While she was friendly and loved to chat with passengers, she could not bring herself to push them to buy drinks. Her job made her very unhappy, and she isolated herself. For the three months that she had the job she went to work, ate her meals, and spent her time in her cabin away from everybody else. She was contemplating quitting her job when she started spending social time in the Food and Beverage (F&B) Coordinator's office. After observing the coordinator's work, she decided she liked this job and started to learn the Coordinator's duties in her time off. It was Michelle's good fate when the F&B Coordinator was ready to go on vacation and her replacement did not show up, Michelle was offered the job.

Before she joined Cruise Line A and started working on cruise ships, Michelle had had three boyfriends at different times and all were long-term relationships (lasting a year

or longer). In the four years she worked on-board, Michelle had only one relationship, and she ended up marrying him. Her job as F&B Coordinator brought her into close contact with the majority of the crew on-board, (the Food and Beverage Department is the largest department aboard Cruise Line A's ships), and she had many men interested in relationships with her. However, she was very careful about who she would date. One man was very persistent about dating her. She said since she had access to all F&B employees' records, she checked this particular man's file and found out he was married. This ended this man's chances immediately. Of all the people that I interviewed, Michelle's story stood out because she had an actual courtship on-board (meaning she and her partner took their time and got to know each other). Michelle said that when she first met her eventual partner Michael when he was signing on, she was actually rude to him. Months later, when he heard that Michelle was going on vacation, he brought her a going away gift. When she came back to the same ship he was still there. They became friends, then dated, and eventually married. Michelle is a devout Christian with moral standards that she holds on to. She made the choice not to give in to "ship life" when it came to relationships. She was given many chances to conform to "ship life" (like the man above) but she held on to her idea of how relationships should play out. As with life on-land, life on-board cruise ships comes with choices. Michelle made a choice that most people who work on-board do not make.

Michael

Michael was 25 when he joined Cruise Line A as a dining room waiter. He left the Philippines in order to earn money to help support his family, which he could not do if he stayed in his native country. Little did he know, when he joined the cruise line, that he

would also meet the woman he would later marry. He was single when he boarded his first ship. He said he had one “fling” before he met Michelle but he would not elaborate any further. During our interview, he kept reiterating that Michelle was his only serious relationship. On-board ships, dining room waiters do not have a lot of time to meet people. The servers in the dining work some of the longest shifts on-board. Michael said that because of their hours of work, his friends were mainly others from the dining room. During his time off, Michael went out with his friends to lunch, to the beach or sometimes to a bar to have some drinks.

Michael’s relationship with Michelle was much more conventional than many relationships that began on-board ship. His memory of meeting Michelle was a bit less vivid than her memory of meeting him. Michael stated that he met Michelle when he signed on the ship.²⁷ After a few months, he began visiting her in her office. They talked and got to know each before he finally asked her out on a date. They dated for quite awhile before eventually getting married. Michael and Michelle have been married for more than ten years and have a daughter together.

While it seems that Michelle and Michael’s relationship refutes what is being said in this thesis, in Michael’s narrative he is unclear. He does admit to one involvement on ship before he met Michelle but he would not go into detail. He did not want to discuss it because, I believe, he felt that Michelle would find out. I do know Michael and Michelle personally and she is the “dominant partner” in this relationship (meaning she makes most of the decisions and Michael tends to be shy and reserved). So the possibility that he avoided conflict by avoiding the discussion of other relationships in his narrative is

²⁷ “Signing on a ship” entails handing over your passport, signing your work contract and receiving your cabin assignment and keys.

there. His interview was different from the other interviewees (including Michelle). Everyone was willing to discuss anything, whereas Michael was not so forthcoming. During his interview he would refrain from discussing any other relationship but the one with Michelle but he would openly discuss other people's behaviour on-board ship.

Nigel

Nigel graduated from college with a diploma in Hospitality Management in his native country of England. In 1989 when Nigel was nineteen years old, Cruise Line B hired him. Nigel was in a relationship when he started working, but given that he was nineteen and was not looking for long-term relationships at that time, it was not very serious, and it did not last. On his first cruise ship the majority of his sexual relationships were with passengers. The relationships were "one-night stands" or lasted the length of the cruise (three or four days). On his second ship, the passengers were mostly older people, so he did not seek to have relationships with passengers. He did have a girlfriend, a fellow crewmember, for five months during that time.

He said, on both ships, there was heavy drinking of alcohol every night, on-board ship and off. It was a usual occurrence for crewmembers to go to work drunk or hung-over, especially if they were in port overnight. For example, Nigel and his fellow waiters would go out drinking in Nassau in the afternoon after the lunch seating and then come back for the evening seating and continue drinking so as not to become hung-over during their shift. Once the evening seating was over they would head back out to the bars onshore until the wee hours of the morning.

Nigel worked on a smaller ship. At the time, a lot of his co-workers were from the United Kingdom. He said that there was a tendency to form friendships and spend time

with others from the U.K. in his department and with people from other departments. Nigel found that he did spend social time with his fellow waiters; they had a core group of people that went out together and drank together. He managed to meet new people when someone in the core group would invite a new person along on their drinking excursions. He mentioned that through the years he had lost contact with many of the people he was once so close to, but he found some of them again on Facebook and is starting to reconnect.

Naomi

Naomi had barely graduated high school and was just eighteen years old when she went to work for Cruise Line A. She left her small Canadian town just months after graduating from Grade Twelve. When she was hired, she was the youngest person ever hired as a youth counselor (in charge of running programs for passengers aged two to seventeen), and the company hired her on a trial basis to see if she could handle the work and being away from Canada at what they felt was such a young age.²⁸ She had a six-month probationary period, during which she was evaluated every month until her trial period was over. She made it through the six-month trial and ended up staying on-board for six years as a youth counselor.

Since she was only 18 when she joined the cruise line, it would be three years before she could legally drink alcohol on-board. She did not let this legality stop her from drinking as part of her social life. I worked on the same ship as Naomi for one contract, and during this time I observed she was a “social butterfly”. She admits that she is a very social person and enjoys making many friends. She used to come to the photo lab (near

²⁸ She was just a year older than the cut-off age for the teens she could be supervising.

the youth counselors cabins on this particular ship) to visit me on formal nights (which were late nights for photo lab technicians) after drinking in the crew bar or at the passenger disco. On several occasions, she was being a bit too sociable (that is, she was interfering with work production) to the point that the lab technicians had to close the lab door so we could get our work done and go to bed.

As a youth counselor, Naomi worked a maximum of eight hours during the days and additionally worked maybe one or two nights a week babysitting, so she had a lot of free time in comparison to other crewmembers. Naomi knew a lot of people; especially other crewmembers who had a lot of free time to party in the crew bar and disco. She used her free time to go the crew bar, go to the disco and attend crew parties. She also spent a lot of time off the ship when it was docked in port. She explained that on days that the ship was in port she would get up around nine or ten in the morning (because she was usually in the crew bar the night before) and go ashore. She and her friends would usually head to the beach or go on a shore excursion and then do some barhopping before heading back to the ship.²⁹ If they were staying late in Cozumel, for instance, the mini-putt was the place to go because they served alcohol. As Naomi exclaimed, “they gave you a walkie-talkie and they’d deliver drinks at whatever hole you were at” (Feb. 2009).

Socializing for Naomi and her friends involved alcohol and partying during their time off, but not during work hours. During work hours, their gathering place was in the staff mess at meal times. She and her friends would gather and share a meal and the latest gossip. She said that this is where people could find out who was sleeping with whom

²⁹ A crewmember could take a passenger shore excursion/tour for free if there was space available.

and whose partners were cheating on who.³⁰ This was a place to connect with people who did not spend a lot of time in the crew bar and disco or who worked different hours than other people. Naomi claimed that she ate in the staff mess with “everybody” and got caught up on all the ship’s news.

Naomi had three long-term relationships and a few short-term relationships. Her first long-term involvement was with a dancer named Brendan. Naomi was in the ship’s main show lounge watching the show when she spotted Brendan performing on stage. She leaned over and told the friend she was with that she was “going to have him” (January, 2009).³¹ After work that night, she went to her cabin, changed out of her uniform, and went to the passenger disco. She states, “By the end of the night he was mine” (January, 2009). Their relationship lasted fourteen months. Naomi extended her usual eight-month contract to stay on-board with him when Brendan’s replacement was injured and he could not go on vacation until they found someone to take over his spot in the show. They stayed on-board together for thirteen months before going on vacation. Prior to returning, they both got permission from their individual departments to be placed on the same ship after vacation. While Naomi’s department followed through, Brendan’s did not and they decided it was too difficult to maintain their relationship while on different ships. Brendan was from England, and Naomi added that this put a strain on the relationship because she did not make enough money to travel during her

³⁰ In my experience, gossip played a part in social interaction and how people related to each other on-board. It is how “unofficial news” was passed on from person to person. Like on-land cheating on your on-board partner with other on-board personnel was not considered okay if you got caught; however, people looked the other way if the person was cheating on a land partner with someone on-board. The unwritten rule seemed to be that what happens on-board stays on-board.

³¹ As a youth counselor part of Naomi’s job was to take the group she was supervising to the big production show on formal night.

vacation. This is an example of how easily relationships form and break apart on ships. They are intense when the couple is in close proximity, but once they are separated the relationship cools quickly.

At the end of her time on-board ship Naomi went back to Canada, graduated from an Early Childhood Education program and opened her own daycare in her hometown. She started dating men from her area, but she found it difficult because it was not as easy to have a relationship with someone on-land, as it was on-board ship. She became an adult on-board ship and learned how to form relationships on-board and has found it did not translate well into life on-land.

Andrew

Andrew worked a series of dead-end jobs in factories in Northern England before he received a redundancy package that gave him the chance to go back to college, in London, to get his diploma in Natural Photography. He eventually obtained a job as a photographer with Cruise Line A and worked for them off and on for twelve years. This was not his first time to leave his native country of England; he had been at boarding school in Scotland for two years and said that this experience helped him adjust more quickly when he joined his first ship.

Andrew considered drinking alcohol to be an important part of socializing with fellow crewmembers. The crew bar was the one place that all crewmembers could go and socialize. This is where Andrew met most of the women he ended up dating. He believed that after a couple of drinks he began to relax and the walls that people put up would come down so it became easier to get to know people. But he also brought up the staff mess as another place where he would approach women that he was interested in, and in

the staff mess alcohol consumption was not a factor. Andrew would join a table with women he was interested in and during a meal would get to know them better.

At the time of our interview, Andrew remarked that he had a recent friends-with-benefits relationship on-board. He said it was a new experience for him, and he had found it quite difficult. He was told “seedy stories” about this woman after she had been fired from the company. He had suspicions before that she had been sleeping with a number of men aside from him. His longest relationship on-board was with a musician and it lasted two years. During that time, they managed to be placed on the same ships by requesting to be placed together or asking for a transfer. When they were not together they communicated through e-mail and phone calls. They also tried to finish their contracts around the same time so they would be free to then go on vacation together. When they went on vacation, he found that there was more freedom in the relationship. They could have a bit of space that did not exist when they were on-board. But in the end, the relationship did not survive them being placed on different ships, and they both moved on.

Andrew believed that some crewmembers have extramarital affairs while on-board because of the close proximity with crewmembers and the common feeling of loneliness. For others, having affairs was something to pass the time. Andrew witnessed married men who came on-board and behaved as if they were single. As well, he knew a man who lived a completely different lifestyle on-board compared to his life in his native country. At home, the man was married to a woman, but on-board ship he had sex with men.

Since Andrew had worked from 1997 to 2009, he had some insight into how cruise ships had changed in that twelve-year period. He believed that the rules and regulations on-board ship got stricter after the attack on the World Trade Center in New York in 2001. He found that in the last four or five years he was on-board, crewmembers were more reserved and less wild than they had been when he first started working. The bar staff had begun limiting the number of drinks they would sell to one person at one time. Before, there had been no restriction on the number of drinks sold to an individual; now crewmembers had a four-drink maximum. He also noticed crewmembers who were wild and liked to party extensively quickly lost their jobs; whereas pre-2001 these crewmembers would be given a little leeway as long as they were performing their duties to a certain standard.

At the time of his interview Andrew was trying to decide whether to retire from Cruise Line A. He informed me in a later communication that he made the decision to leave the cruise ship industry. He said that the final push was doing the interview, and participating in the interview gave him the confidence to quit. He realized how unhappy he was on-board ship and that his health was suffering. He is now working on-land and readjusting to the “outside” world.³²

³² A person living and working on a cruise ship needs a time of readjustment. The person is going from an environment where the necessities of life are provided for them (room and board), and one could even say their friends are provided for them, and their job is outside their cabin door. When crewmembers leave this environment they must reconnect with friends and family. They sometimes need to make new friends; they must find a job and possibly a place to live. Sometimes a person cannot adjust and returns to cruise ships, as Andrew did the first time he left ships. His 2009 departure was his second time leaving ships.

Steve

It was Steve's first time outside of his native South Africa when he started working for Cruise Line A. He had just ended a twelve-month long relationship before he left South Africa to take up his job as a photographer on-board ship. Steve had a couple of year-long relationships before he started working on ships, but otherwise his relationships had tended to last two to three weeks or were one-night stands.

Steve's first friendships on-board were in the photography department, but soon he was going to the crew bar and the passenger disco and making friends with people from other departments. Even though he found it was easier to make friends with other South Africans, he also tended to gravitate towards crewmembers whose first language was English since it was his first language as well. Many of his friendships were made over alcoholic drinks. Steve and his friends spent time in the crew bar, in the passenger disco, in bars on-land and at the beach. Steve believed that drinking was a common bond that many crewmembers on-board ship share and that people are more relaxed when they are drinking and more receptive to meeting people.

Steve did not date many crewmembers, but when he did he mainly met them in the crew bar. He had the most encounters with passengers on-board, and these he met in the passenger disco.³³ The majority of his relationships were one-night stands, especially the ones he had with passengers. He did have a couple of long-term relationships with crewmembers. These relationships were more conventional than his one-night stands; they got to know each other before they had sex. One relationship lasted six months and

³³ As A photographer, Steve was considered "staff" and as such he had the privilege of going to the passenger disco as long as he was dressed appropriately and was wearing his nametag.

the other lasted four months on-board before he and his dating partner left ships and got married. The reason they left ships to get married was that the woman was pregnant with a baby girl.³⁴ The marriage ended in divorce and shared custody of the little girl. He has been working and living in Australia since he left Cruise Line A.

Victor

Victor was still in a relationship with a man when he left South Africa to begin his first contract on Cruise Line A. He maintained the relationship in South Africa during his first contract on-board, but when he returned to his hometown for vacation the relationship ended. Victor was in his mid-thirties when he worked on ships and had a lot of life experience behind him in comparison to people who went to work on ships in their early twenties. He remained single for his year-and-a-half on-board. When I worked with Victor he was not much into the drinking and partying scene. While he did enjoy a drink or two now and again, it was more to be friendly and socialize than to pursue a sexual encounter.

He said that he made friends with people in his department but also with people he met in the crew bar. His friends were mainly from English-speaking countries because he felt it was easier to communicate with people with whom he had a language in common. Victor maintained his friendships by going for drinks after work at the crew bar, going to restaurants in port or eating together with friends in the staff mess. His experience was that there was not enough time to do much else, so socializing had to be combined with necessities such as eating and resting. He and his friends would share a table during meal

³⁴ The only freely available birth control on-board ship was condoms that were left in a box in the crewmember waiting room at the ship's Infirmary. There were no other services (morning after pill or abortion information) available on-board ship with regards to birth control. Women were sent home as soon as they were discovered to be pregnant.

breaks and catch up on news. As well, the people in the photo department had their cabins in the same hallway and during breaks or after work they would spend social time together in the hallway, talking and having fun.

Victor believed that relationships happened in an exceedingly quick fashion on-board because crewmembers do not know anyone when they get on-board, which carried several implications. He felt they were lonely and needed to make a connection to fight off this feeling of isolation. Along with this need to stave off isolation, Victor felt that crewmembers also experienced a sense of freedom and lack of responsibility that allowed them to behave differently than they did in their native country. His perception was that the confined space on-board ship intensified relationships and that the closeness and togetherness crewmembers experienced on ships together for a such short periods time forced crewmembers to try to fit aspects of their relationships into hours or days rather than the weeks and months that similar experiences would take to attain on-land.

Since his experience on cruise ships, Victor approaches relationships differently now that he is back in South Africa. He saw that most relationships on ships were superficial and temporary, and observing this caused him to look for a relationship with substance. Victor's perception of shipboard relationships versus "land" based relationships is his way of separating what he saw on ship, the "superficial and temporary", and what he sees as the "better" (or possibly morally acceptable to him) land based "substantial" relationship (of course there are superficial and temporary land based relationships). It made him more cautious about committing to a relationship and wanting a more solid foundation before becoming serious with someone. At our last

communication he was involved in a serious relationship, and he and his partner were moving in together.

Doug

When Doug left Canada to join his first ship, it was not his first time travelling away from Canada. He had travelled overseas and other places, but those trips were neither as far nor as long as his contracts for working on-board cruise ships. Doug had had some short- and long-term relationships in his life prior to joining ships, but he was single when he boarded his first ship. In his pre-ship work life he was a DJ and bartender at a few bars and clubs around his hometown, but originally he was hired as a Sound and Light Technician by the cruise line.

After he worked on-board a short time, he became the ship's DJ. The ship's DJ mainly works at night and during wedding receptions, so Doug helped out the art auctioneer in his free time. When the art auctioneer called in sick, Doug stepped into the job. He was much better at the job than the regular auctioneer, and he was given the job. The position of art auctioneer was a well-paid job that came with a lot of privileges, including living in a passenger cabin. But before he entered into this position, when he was still a DJ, he had to share a cabin like other crewmembers.

Doug stated that since he was a "department of one" in both his jobs on-board, he went out to the crew bar or the passenger disco to meet people. He believed that drinking alcohol was a common bond that mostly everyone shared, but the one common bond that everyone shared was eating. Both activities brought people together in one room and he found that from there people started to bond. When the ship was in port, the main activity for Doug and his friends was going out to restaurants to eat. He also mentioned shopping

at Walmart and going to the other side of the island in Cozumel but these activities were port-specific.

Doug stated he met the women he dated around the ship or in the crew bar. When he was a DJ, he met a lot of women crewmembers that had privileges and could go to the passenger disco. He also said he dated a few photographers, and he met them while the women were working on the gangway.³⁵ He maintains that the majority of his relationships were one-night stands, though some lasted two or more weeks until the woman went on vacation. He said the latter relationships were short but very intense. He felt that relationships on-board were so intense because the dating partners worked together, ate together, and slept together – they saw each other morning, noon and night.

Doug tried dating two women at once, but it did not turn out well. The women were not in the same department, so he thought they would not find out. But one day they were talking, and both mentioned that they were dating a new man on-board and that his name was Doug. They both became suspicious and started comparing what tattoos he had. The women realized they were dating the same man and both broke up with him.

Doug continued dating women who worked in the spas (“Steiners”) and dancers until he met his current wife, Penelope, during what turned out to be his last contract on-board a ship. He was working as an art auctioneer on Cruise Line C.³⁶³⁷ He and his future wife, a Super Shopper, were joining the ship on the same day, and she needed help

³⁵ Photographers would shoot photographs of passenger exiting the ship in different ports of call.

³⁶ The spas on-board a lot of ships were run by a concession called Steiner Leisure Ltd out of England and the women who worked in the spa were called Steiners.

³⁷ Art auctioneers worked for a concession called Park West and they worked on many different Cruise Lines.

with her heavy luggage.³⁸ Doug helped her aboard, and from then on they started spending social time together. They were on-board together a month before Penelope was transferred to another ship for a few weeks before going on vacation. Before she left, they planned on going on vacation together, driving from Chicago to Los Angeles. When they met for vacation, she told Doug she was pregnant. He asked her to come and work with him on-board as his assistant until he finished his contract. When they finished the contract, they left the ship, moved to Penelope's home country, Australia, and got married. Doug joked that they did things a little "backwards": they got pregnant, went on their honeymoon, and then got married. Doug describing his ship board romance as "backwards" can be seen as a way of categorizing it as different from the heteronormative "land based" relationships where people meet, get married, go on their honeymoon, and then have a family. They are still living in Australia with their two sons.

John

As far as he knows, John was the only American to last a year working in the dining room on Cruise Line A, where most dining room workers came from countries in the so-called developing world. How did he end up with this distinction? He fell in love with a woman, Jade, who worked as a dining room waitress on a cruise ship. He met her when she was on vacation visiting a friend who happened to be John's business associate. They had a whirlwind few days getting to know each other, and when she flew back to Transylvania to finish her vacation, John followed her there.

After Jade returned to work on-board ship, she arranged for him have an interview with two of the on-land supervisors on-board her ship when it docked in New Orleans

³⁸ A Super Shopper did presentations and recommendations about shopping in each of the ship's ports of call.

after its first transatlantic crossing. John was hired with the warning that no American had made it through their contract in the dining room. The only other American the supervisors remembered working in the dining room transferred to another department after just a couple of months. The plan was for John to finish the training school for waiters on one ship and then transfer to the ship on which Jade was working.

Unfortunately, this did not happen, and they could never get on the same ship at the same time. He did make it to the ship Jade had been working on, but by then she had already been transferred to different ship. The relationship ended because they could never spend more than a few days together and could not get on the same ship.

As he finished out his contract as a dining room waiter, John managed to get himself a job as an art auctioneer, giving him a range of experiences as crew, as a waiter, and as staff, as an art auctioneer. As a dining room waiter, there was little time to be social so many of John's friends, from this time period, also worked in the dining room. In contrast, as an art auctioneer, a position with a lot of freedom and privilege, John felt he had a hard time making friends because of the status gap between himself and other crew. He said he ended up being friends with the entertainers because they worked similar hours.

When he worked the dining room, John states, there was very little free time – just little snippets of time here and there. What little free time they did have they spent sleeping, drinking, going to the beach or some combination of all three. While he did have a girlfriend (but she was on another ship) during his contract as a waiter, he did say he had intimate relationships with several women he worked with in the dining room.

While he did not have sex with these women, he nevertheless considered the relationships emotionally intimate – dating without the sex.

John felt that working on ships was a pressure cooker and that relationships on-board were very intense.³⁹ He believed these relationships were “faster, deeper, harder, and ended sooner” because of the nature of cruise ship life. John’s perception of shipboard relationships revolves around the overwhelming pressure of working on-board that affects the way relationships develop on ship. The way crewmembers conduct relationship reflects the nature of the job. His perception of shipboard relationships is they happen faster, the emotions surrounding them feel more intense, they are harder because of the possibility of separation, and they end sooner because of the temporary nature of the job (e.g. transfer to another ship or end of contract). He believed that on-board ship crewmembers are constantly being assaulted with the intensity of the job and to cope they rely on the people they work with, more so than on-land. John describes the intensity of ship life by outlining these aspects: a person has settled on-board ship, is working away at their job, has great friends and then all of sudden they are told they will be transferring to another ship where they will have to start all over again.

After four years of working on different cruise lines, John left the cruise industry. He is now married, living and working as a writer in Las Vegas. He has had a book published about his experience as a waiter on Cruise Line A and is working on a second about his time as an art auctioneer.

³⁹ There is a lot of pressure on crewmembers to provide perfect service under extreme pressure to keep supervisors and passengers, especially the difficult ones, happy. For example, the dining room waiters must serve the meal in a timely manner but not make the passenger feel rushed. At the same time, they have more than one seating and the dining room must be set up between seatings. They are under a lot of pressure, and this could lead to a blow-up if things go awry.

As can be seen from the above profiles, each participant had a different background before becoming a crewmember. Some were very young and inexperienced, while others brought more life experience with them. What they brought with them in terms of lives lived will have had shaped their experiences on-board. This, as well as the type of job they held (especially its influence on their exposure to ship-life and other crewmembers), influenced their relationships and their perspectives. Their varied backgrounds inform their telling of their experience on-board ship. By understanding the individual actors we can be aware of the circumstances they came from and they acted within and the effects on their views of social relations on-board. Their life experience affected how they perceive, describe, understand, discuss and feel about what they experienced on-board (Patton 2002).

Chapter 6:

Crewmembers Talk Social Relationships on Cruise Ships

The oral telling of the interviewed crewmembers' experiences about their social relationships is the basis for this thesis' methodology and analysis. The participants' narratives contain the answers to the questions being investigated. Such as: How does being in an enclosed space with no family or support physically co-present affect how quickly crewmembers form intimate relationships? Does knowing that people will leave suddenly (be transferred to another ship on a moments notice or go on vacation) affect people's choices to become emotionally close? What parts do food and drink (especially alcohol) play in socializing for crewmembers and how do these contribute to the time-space compression? Does being so entirely physically cut-off from their native country, which for some crewmembers means freedom and lack of domestic/familial responsibility, play a part in intimate relations formed on-board ship? As per Hammersley and Atkinson (2003), their stories will be analyzed for what they reveal about social relationships on-board cruise ships.

As argued by Jackson (1996), narrative and phenomenological methodology go hand in hand. The participants' stories and their telling of them explain the phenomenon of accelerated social relationships on-board. The building block of this study is the analyses of how they viewed social relationships with regard to the speed of formation of relationships, and how they developed and maintained relationships. This chapter is broken down into five sections discussing the major themes being explored in this thesis.

Community

Jobs on-board cruise ships fall into two categories: “crew” and “staff” (as explained in Chapter 1). Obtaining staff or crew positions with a cruise line depends upon one’s nationality, proficiency in English (Klein 2002) and particular skill, for example, background knowledge or experience or training in Information Technology, Accounting or Hospitality. It is uncommon for workers to move from one job category to another, from crew to staff or vice versa, because of the difficulty in doing so. As it was, the majority of the participants stayed in the job that they were hired for. However, three people in this study changed their jobs on-board ship more than once because they made themselves available at a time that a position needed to be filled immediately. These three people moved up from their initial jobs to higher ranking and higher paying jobs.

Michelle started out as a bar waitress, which is a highly stressful job, and managed to move up the labour hierarchy to an administrative position as Food and Beverage Coordinator. Doug was originally hired as a Sound and Light Technician on the stage shows, then advanced to a position as DJ, and finally became an Art Auctioneer. John moved up the employment ladder from dining room waiter to Art Auctioneer as well. A woman, Michelle, did achieve a higher position but in a position of Food & Beverage Coordinator, basically an administrative assistant, normally held by women. The men (both white), John and Doug, stepped into highly prestigious positions mainly held by mainly American and Canadian (sometimes British) men.⁴⁰ As well, Doug used his position to keep his girlfriend (now wife) on-board with him as his assistant when she

⁴⁰ I would have to say that ethnicity and gender had to do with the positions they achieved. As cruise ship work tends to be racist and sexist from my own observations and experience.

was pregnant, which normally would have meant that she would have to leave her job. A woman I worked with who was pregnant was sent home as soon as the management found out. She was only 3 or 4 months into the pregnancy at the time, which for many women is a time when they have no problem carrying out their regular work duties.

There is a hierarchy among passenger and crew cabins. The passenger cabins are ranked by the cost of the cabin, which in turn depends on where the cabin is positioned. The inside cabins without a view are the cheapest cabins for passengers. The costs rise for a cabin with a porthole with an obstructed view (a lifeboat or some part of the ship in the way) and rise again for a cabin with porthole, then a cabin with balcony, and up to the more expensive suites and then the most expensive penthouse. The higher the deck number, the higher the price of the cabin rises, as well, all the way up to the top where the penthouse suite is found. Cabin price can range from a few hundred dollars to a few thousand dollars, and the highest end can run into the tens of thousands of dollars.⁴¹ The crew cabins are also arranged hierarchically in a similar fashion, but instead of money it is rank that places a crewmember in a cabin on a certain deck. All workers designated as crew are in cabins on the lowest deck (above the engines). In a different area on the lower deck, the majority of staff are assigned cabins with no porthole. The next level up usually included dancers, youth workers and some casino staff, in shared cabins with no porthole. In another section on this deck level there were also managers, featured entertainers, and fly-on acts in single cabins with portholes.⁴² The ship's officers and the captain, the highest ranked people on-board, had cabins on the bridge. There were exceptions to the

⁴¹ This information can be found on any cruise company website such as Royal Caribbean, Princess, Crystal Cruises, Carnival, and Holland America.

⁴² Entertainers (comedians, jugglers, etc.) who flew to a certain port to join a ship, perform a couple of shows and leave the ship at the next port.

rules, especially sometimes when there was a lack of cabins; then, management, art auctioneers or higher-ranking people were placed in passenger cabins.

An individual crewmember's position leads to a number of important implications. Most importantly for this study, the location where workers live on-board the ship can greatly influence their interactions and relationships with others (Thompson 2002). People in management positions, officers or special entertainers receive private living quarters. On the other hand, those people who do not hold management positions must share their living quarters with one or more people. Employees deemed as "crew" usually share a cabin with one or more fellow employees of the same rank and same gender. "Crew" share toilet and shower facilities with the other cabins in their hallway. However, employees classified as "staff" usually share a cabin with only one fellow employee of the same gender, usually from the same department (e.g. gift shop, photo, youth staff), and they have the privilege of a private bathroom in their cabin. Where a crewmember lives and whom they live with can affect whom they meet on a daily basis and how they socialize (for instance, their freedom to bring someone to their cabin).

An employee is assigned a cabin when they are hired. This cabin assignment is generally fixed and can only be changed in extreme cases (e.g., severe roommate problems that affect work performance or quality of life), if an employee has an "in" with the person in charge of cabin assignments, or when an employee is promoted to a higher-ranking job. Cabin mates are matched according to department and gender, not nationality or other aspects of identity, which has an affect on job placement. Though there are exceptions, I was allowed to share a cabin, during a cabin shortage, with a man from my department that was not my boyfriend only because he identified as gay. There

are general rules about cabin living for crew, whether they are in a single or shared cabin: no cooking (hot plates) in the cabin, no storing of fresh food in cabin (without a refrigerator), only some packaged food for personal use, noise levels must be kept low especially at night, no passengers in the crew cabins, no rugs on the floor and no overloading of electrical sockets. From my own experience, there are bi-weekly or monthly cabin inspections to ensure compliance with health and safety rules. If rules are found to have been broken, the follow-up included written warnings or confiscation of an offending article (e.g., power bar which is considered fire hazard and rug which is considered a slipping hazard during rough seas).⁴³

As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, the hierarchical structure of the cruise ship is based on gender. Gender, therefore, affects where men and women are placed in their cabins. The officers, who are usually all men, have their cabins on the top deck near the bridge. The managers, once again, mainly men, occupy single cabins with windows. I have witnessed women in crew or staff positions initiate sexual relationships with upper management men for the benefit of being able to stay in a better cabin, the possibility of moving up into a better position, or be assigned better shifts if the he is her manager.

What I found as a cruise ship worker was that cruise ship workers sharing living quarters were generally from different countries. Naomi, a Canadian, shared a cabin with other women from Canada, United States, Ireland and Scotland. Andrew, from Britain, had many different cabin mates in his thirteen years working on-board cruise ships, including cabin mates from India, Philippines and the United Kingdom. Steve had cabin mates from many countries including the Philippines, the United Kingdom, South Africa,

⁴³ If a person has three written warnings they are to be fired.

Trinidad and Tobago, Chile and Romania. Doug, while working as a Sound and Light Technician, shared a cabin with men from El Salvador, Poland, United States and Canada.

In talking about his various cabin mates, Doug highlighted some of the differences he understood to be associated with nationality:

I don't know why but the toughest people to get along with was the Yanks... but... everybody else was really cool. The Polish guy even, his English wasn't the greatest, but by the time we left like one of my kids' middle name was [named] after this guy... we were close like brothers. (February 2009)

Another participant, Nigel, a 39-year-old from Britain, also discussed his cabin mates and his relationship with them, drawing out their similarities rather than differences; particularly similarities associated with alcohol consumption practices:

I stayed with alcoholics (laughing)... Dutch, Indian, Croatian, Serbian, Jamaican,... Portuguese, English, Irish also Austrian. I had all sorts of cabin mates and generally most of them were alcoholics. [We got along] perfect. (February 2009)

For some crewmembers, "getting along" with people had more to do with personality traits or personal habits or social practices such as alcohol consumption than having a common culture or language. The people I interviewed did not find the language barrier to be a problem with being able to relate to other people of different nationalities.

Yet, for others, "nationality" was associated with traits and habits revealed in the intimate practice of sharing living quarters on cruise ships and being "cabin mates." The interviewees came to associate their cabin mates' practice of everyday intimacies such as brushing teeth and other hygiene routines (or lack thereof) as related to "nationality". For an example, I return to Nigel and a statement he made about sharing a cabin with men from other countries:

There was one Jamaican guy who used to go to the disco every night and pick up a woman and bring her back. I only lasted three weeks with him because it was quite noisy on the top bunk. He was with a different woman every night. I hadn't been on-board that long. I needed a little bit of sleep. I shared with an Indian guy... he used to gargle in the morning with Johnny Walker whiskey. I love curry, I love it. Where I'm from in [place in England] we have a really big Asian community, so we have a lot of... lots of different types of curry. All my clothes and everything stunk of curry because they used to eat curry and drink whiskey in the cabin. So, that didn't last long. But apart from that, really, there was nothing. (February 2009)⁴⁴

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, when Nigel worked on-board, the rules about “dating” passengers were not as strict as they are now. The crewmembers were unofficially expected to “entertain” the passengers – more so the men crewmembers with women passengers, due to the small number of women who worked on-board cruise ships in this time period. So bringing a passenger back to your cabin was not an infraction at this time. It would be up to the people sharing the cabin to negotiate the terms of what would happen inside the cabin (e.g., “entertaining guests”, smoking inside the cabin, hosting parties). Nigel reported that even in his cabins where sex in the cabin was agreed on as allowed, if one cabin mate did not want the other to have sex in the cabin that evening the person would speak up and say something (Nigel, February 2009).

I was curious how the people I interviewed handled the situation of themselves or their cabin mate bringing someone back to their cabin. Michelle did not have to worry about that situation because she only had to share a cabin for three months when she worked as a bar waitress and the question never arose during that time; after she switched to Food and Beverage Coordinator she no longer had to share her cabin. Naomi stated

⁴⁴ Nigel's statement is racist and based on stereotypes. A study by Kahveci, Lane & Sampson (2002) that found that the more exposure to a nationality the more crewmembers realize that their beliefs were just stereotypes might shed light on how racism amongst cruise ship crewmembers changes over time.

that as a youth staff worker she had access to crafting materials and the youth staff made “Do Not Disturb” signs to hang on their cabin doors to warn their cabin mates. She made the observation that

[y]ou knew as soon as somebody was leaving the crew bar [because] they’d leave together... you knew who was getting laid [and]...you could hear them when you walked down the hall. Nobody had to be a dummy. Cabins were very close together and they weren’t soundproof. (January 2009)

The men I interviewed seemed to negotiate these rules differently, suggesting gendered dimensions of onboard sexual practices and relations. They did not seem to be as affected by need for privacy or by the “act of sex” as the women. The most common answer to the question about whether or not they had an “agreement” or “arrangement” with their cabin mates was they just had to be quiet and respectful of what their cabin mate wanted. Nigel stated:

Yeah, I was made sure there was a little rule that was if you’re going to bring a passenger down to the cabin or whatever. You finish your business by three in the morning, so you’d get at least three hours of sleep. (February 2009)

John speaks about not having an agreement per se but making a statement about or having a discussion about the need for quiet:

I didn’t bring it up. They didn’t bring it up. If there ever was a problem... You just assumed that anything goes and if you wanted some quiet you would make it clear... ‘hey tomorrow, I just need some quiet’, you know. Or if it is in the middle of the night and someone brings in, you know, a guest and I’m not in the mood for it I’d say: ‘hey guys, take it to her place’, you know. If I ever said that people always respected that. (February 2009)

Doug asserts that bringing a “guest” to your cabin was not a problem: “If it happens, it happens. As long as the curtain is drawn and you’re quiet.” (February 2009)

Sharing a cabin with such little personal space can dictate whether a person can have an intimate life, and in a shared cabin, a cabin mate’s sexual activities in the cabin

has an immediate impact upon the person with whom they share the cabin. The combination of factors, that is, lack of privacy and close quarters, can affect a crewmember's sexual activities and their relationships with cabin mate/ possible co-worker/possible close friend. Power dynamics come into play. There can be positive effects on the relationship between cabin mates if they can negotiate sharing the space fairly for both parties or there can be negative effects if one person takes advantage of the other.

Space and Friendship

For crewmembers, cruise ships are spaces where they live out their daily lives alongside their work lives, and where the border between “work” and “private life” is very porous, if it can be said to exist at all. The ship is an unusual environment where job and “home” become intermingled (Thompson 2002). Crewmembers wake up in their “bedroom” and then go to work by walking out to the elevators or stairs and going up, in most cases, a few floors to reach work. This makes for an interesting – and proximate – way to make friends. This is different from other land-based live-in jobs because the cruise line holds the crewmembers' passports until their contract is over, they quit or they are terminated. So they can leave the ship in ports but they must always return because to leave permanently they need their passport.

It is a common understanding among cruise ship workers that everyone who is a crewmember is permanently at work even when not “on the job”. This raises questions for this study. Does this mean that all friendships made on-board are work-related? As Carrier (1990) explains, a “work-related” relationship is a friendship that would not have happened if the two people did not work together; by contrast, a “non-work related”

relationship is a friendship when someone finds an affinity with someone outside of their workplace (e.g., church, gym). An argument can be made for and against on-board relationships being considered “work-related.” What if a crewmember made a friend who was not directly related to their particular job? Sometimes a crewmember formed a relationship after they met a person at the crew bar, as a few of my participants have stated, or maybe he/she was a cabin mate.⁴⁵ However, it is possible to argue that if the crewmember did not have a job on-board to begin with, then the two people never would have met in the first place. Ultimately, like in land-based relationships, no matter the place of meeting these friendships are based on emotion or feeling of kinship between two people. While on-board, the nature of the employment necessitates a certain level of decorum between crewmembers, yet at the same time not everyone is expected to be friends. Although work has brought people together, it is the emotional connection they make that makes people friends (Carrier 1999).

Joining a cruise ship can be a lonely prospect given that a crewmember is leaving land-based family and friends for an unspecified amount of time (Zhao 2001). If they do not make friends it can be a very lonesome and depressing time. As Michelle related:

Actually, during my first few months on-board I didn't have any friends, but I was isolating myself because... I don't know how to relate. I don't know, I was really homesick. I just wanted to go home. That's all I had in mind. So, I've been trying to isolate myself. When it's my free time, I just stay in my cabin, you know, listen to music, you know, that type of stuff. And then when I was transferred to a new position, it actually... it took a lot of time for me to adjust, and I think it took me almost six months before I finally, you know, found some friends, close friendships from the same department. When I was already a Food and Beverage Coordinator, that was the only time I has really, you know, had friends.

⁴⁵ People sharing a cabin are usually from the same department, but there are times when a crewmember is required to share with someone outside their department due to a shortage of cabin space.

The majority of the participants stated that they met their friends through work, like Michelle stated above, or at the crew bar on-board ship. Co-workers are the first point of contact for most working on-board, and the long hours of working tend to lead to socializing as well. For crewmembers, the crew bar was one of the main spaces for socializing outside of the work environment. Many of the participants mentioned the crew bar when asked where they met friends outside of their departments.

The crew bar is a liminal space for crewmembers, a place that is in between work and going to their cabin, which, for some crewmembers is more than a dwelling space, it is regarded as a “home”, too. The crew bar is a place to socialize and to meet people that they usually would not meet “on the job” because of the department that they work in, the exception being the crew bartender for whom the crew bar space is both a work and social space. Beyond the usual bar activities, such as drinking, talking and dancing, and games such as darts, foosball and ping-pong, the crew bar is where crewmembers go to buy water, snacks and cigarettes before heading to their cabins.

Naomi mentioned several times that she met people at the crew bar. She reported that as a youth worker, “our personal life was the crew bar.” Victor stated that if he met people from other departments, “most of the time it was in the crew bar after work.” Steve, another South African photographer, agreed with Victor by saying that “outside the department we tended to meet in the crew bar or the ship’s disco or I met some of them in the bars on the islands we visited.” Doug also agreed with the assertion that he met people at “the crew bar or disco or wherever, that’s the usual places.”

Participants in my study had varied access to different places on-board ship due to the status they held (staff or crew) or their work hours or sometimes both. Andrew, who worked on-board for 13 years, talked about having a lot of freedom to move around the ship to meet people:

Usually you can meet people through work, you know, usually just being a photographer you're quite, sort of, exposed to a lot of people. You're always round the ship and communicating with people on different parts of the ship. So you get to meet people through the job as well as also the crew bar, staff mess, crew mess, so, these kinds of places really. I guess it's lucky being a photographer, that you have a lot of accessibility to a lot of people at different times. (February 2009)

The participants who worked as dining room waiters told a different story: Dining room waiters work long hours and are restricted in their movements around the ship. Usually they are allowed in passenger areas for work only and otherwise are confined to crew areas in their limited off hours. Michael, a Filipino who worked almost 13 years as a dining room waiter, remarked that his friends were "most of the time from work." John made the point that as a dining room waiter all of his friends were from his department, but there was "a tremendous difference between being an art auctioneer and being a waiter." When he was an art auctioneer, he made friends from the entertainment staff due to working similar hours and because, as he states, "art auctioneers lived in a guest cabin. We stayed entirely in guest areas for the most part. I mean we could go into crew areas [but] we just usually didn't."

Working and living on cruise ships creates a situation where people are in close proximity with fellow employees and co-workers, which is an implicit agreement in the employment contract, e.g. they have made a choice to live in this manner when signing on. This is classified by Harre (1997) as a "structured" group brought together for a specific purpose and connection. Even when crewmembers keep to themselves, as

Michelle did at the beginning of her first contract, when she basically went to work and back to her cabin, they still have to be around other people when they go to eat in the staff or crew mess. People can isolate themselves but, by the nature of the environment (working in hospitality and living with co-workers), it is hard to completely cut oneself off from the population. People normally seek out proximity to other people for comfort to reduce stress and threats (Lavy, Mikulincer, and Shaver 2010), so it would make sense that people who have left their families and support systems (Zhao 2001) would turn eventually to the closest people in their new environment for support and to ease the stress of this transition. Michelle, once she began a job she enjoyed, eventually became a social person who sought out others for companionship and support. In this constructed space crewmembers have fellow workers close at hand (Thompson 2002). The friendship itself is not constructed – a crewmember can choose who will be a friend – but crewmembers have no choice who they work and live with (which tends to be the same people). Unlike a land-based employment situation where people can leave their work-mates at the end of their work shift, on the ships this is not such an easy thing to do because of spatial constraints and spatial organization.

Nigel remarked “my two main friends were waiters that came on-board” but “I tended to make friends in all departments, [but] mainly in the dining room.” When asked where he met people that were not in his department, he said that it is possible he met them in the crew bar though he does not quite remember. He said that “somebody knew somebody in some department and then you would meet somebody else.” He also stated that he worked at a time when the rules were not as strict and that even during their off time they socialized a lot more because they could get away with coming to work with

little or no sleep and possibly still drunk. Nowadays, as Andrew mentioned in his interview, people get fired for drinking within so many hours of their shift, for on-the-job drunkenness and for sleeping with passengers (February 2009).

International Friendships

When asked where their friends came from or specifically what nationalities they tended to gravitate towards when seeking friendships, participants offered mixed answers. Some said they sought out people from their own country or someone who spoke a common language (mainly English). Naomi said she had lots of friends from different countries. She said that she made friends with Canadians but that was not a main requirement for friendship just whoever was “there” (meaning the crew bar). Victor, from South Africa, after being asked if the people he made friends with were the same nationality as him or if he had friends from different countries, responded:

Most were...from England or Canada [and] all over the world [like] Eastern Europe people [but] mainly English speaking countries...it is just easier to communicate with someone who speaks English. (February 2009)

Steve believed

...every one tends to stick with the nationality that they are from. The South Africans definitely find it a lot easier to make friendships [with each other]. But also [I] found that it was easy to make some friendships with people whose first language is English ‘cause that is my first language. Nationalities like Canada, US, UK, New Zealand, Australia. I would say that would have been it. I found it quite easy to get along with Eastern Europeans, people from the likes of Russia, Romania, Croatia, Macedonia [as well]. (February 2009)

Andrew, when asked if he deliberately sought out people from the UK as friends, responded:

No, well, I mean you have a thing in common because you’re from the same place. I think early on in my [Cruise Line A] career, I probably hung out with people more

from my country but as time's gone on, there's less people from my country on ships and European countries as well, I guess because the Euro and currency exchange, and maybe they just don't enjoy the work anymore. So, it's harder to meet people you have much in common with, I've found it harder the last few years. (February 2009)

Michael said that the majority of his friends came from the dining room, where a predominance of Filipinos work. The nature of the job, long hours and little time off, affected whom he could meet and befriend. His wife, Michelle, stated that her job as Food and Beverage Coordinator also affected whom she met as well. Her job entailed working with crewmembers who fell under the jurisdiction of the Food and Beverage department, which means she arranged cabins and paper work for crewmembers who worked in the dining room, the bar, the galley and the Photo department. When she worked on-board, the greater numbers of the dining room, bar and galley workers were Filipinos, so she mainly spent social time around people from her own country. She did counterbalance that statement by saying many of her good friends were from Canada, Australia and other countries. Her main requirement of a potential friend was never that they were Filipino but instead that they were a good person. Nigel made a similar statement about his experience in the dining room: "... a lot of the people outside the dining room were English who I tended to be friends with. Inside the dining room it didn't really [matter] it was just people really."

My personal experience was that crewmembers did search out people from their home countries or who spoke the same language, but the biggest factor in forming friendships was whom they worked with in their department. As a lab technician I worked closely with Filipinos, which meant that many of my good friends were Filipinos; however, I also worked with South Africans, British, and people of various other

nationalities. Still, I echo Michelle's sentiment, that those I chose, as friends, were people I felt were "good people".

Socializing through Alcohol and Food

What do crewmembers do together as friends? The answers included various activities from going to the crew bar, going to bars onshore, going shopping, going to restaurants and going to the beach. These activities depended upon when they had time off (whether in port or when the ship was sailing), how much time off they had, and if they were designated as staff or crew.⁴⁶ The respondents said having time off depended on what type of job they held on-board.

Naomi, as youth staff, only worked eight hours a day and had plenty of time off in comparison with other positions on-board. She revealed that she and her friends did a lot of drinking and partying together, but she said they also ate together, both on-board and on shore; they went to the beach and did passenger excursions together. Michelle also affirmed that during her time off in port she went out to eat and shop with friends. She stated that she "ate a lot" with friends and food was an important part of her friendships. Michael confirms that in port he ate with his friends and went to the beach sometimes, depending on when and how much time off they had in port. Victor responded that

Sometimes after work we go get some drinks or just walk around and actually sort of socialize, eating and that sort of thing... there wasn't enough time to do anything else. So maybe sit at the same table or something like that but otherwise, sort of go off to lunch or a couple of beers. (February 2009)

⁴⁶ Crewmembers with the designation of "staff" can go into passenger lounges on their time off.

John agreed with Victor's statement that there was not much time to do anything with friends:

[In] the restaurant... you had very little time and you take snippets here and snippets there and if you were not sleeping, you were with somebody trying to forget about where you are at. (February 2009)

He felt that eating and drinking played a large part in the social scene, and he explained it as such:

It's all escapism. It was a strange blend of a desperate desire to escape from your current living situation, coupled with the fact that you don't even have enough time to perform things like eating and sleeping, basic functions like that. So everybody would kill two birds with one stone, you know, any free time you had you'd get a lunch and drink. Or if you weren't hungry but you needed to sleep but you wanted to get your ass off the boat, you'd go to the beach and sleep. (February 2009)

Steve states that he and his friends spent most of their time socializing by going for drinks in bars. They went to the crew bar and the disco on-board ship and also to the bars and beaches on the islands as well. He said that consuming alcohol "was a universal thing people do." Doug affirmed Steve's statement by saying that drinking alcohol was a common bond between people, but he went further by including eating as well:

Eating and drinking on-board, you know, you are eating and drinking the same stuff in the same room [and] you go to places like Guido's in Cozumel and you have a good meal there. It's a common bond. (February 2009)

Sexual Relationships

On-board a cruise ship, the number of crew staffing the ship can be as low as 200 to as high as 2000.⁴⁷ The higher ratio of men to women among crewmembers presents the possibility that men or women who desire a relationship with a man have a larger pool to choose from than men who seek women.

⁴⁷ As per cruise ship statistics on company websites.

There are many places on-board that crewmembers could meet for the first time. They could meet at work, in the crew or staff mess, in the crew bar, or even on shore during a port call (Thompson 2002). I asked my participants where they met their sexual partners. Naomi was definite that everyone she was involved with she met at the crew bar, while Andrew stated:

Normally I'd met them sometimes in the staff mess and we'd really start talking in the staff mess or sit and eat with them. Or in the crew bar. Usually the crew bar was the main place. (February 2009)

Steve and Doug agreed that they usually met the crew they had sexual relationships or flings with in the crew bar or the ship's disco. John had a slightly different experience because he worked two different jobs, and he also had a girlfriend during his first contract. He explains his experience as follows:

Well, as a waiter, everybody that I interacted with was also a waiter. Women that I'd hung out with...umm... you might as well say I was dating them. I didn't actually sleep around when I was a waiter but I might as well have, my girlfriend was on another ship. And you need that intimacy with people even if it's not being sexually intimate between people, right? For all intensive purposes I was dating lots of different people, you could call it that. They were all in the restaurant, every one of them. (February 2009)

In his next job as an art auctioneer, he was able to move around the ship freely, more freely than a regular staff member, and he had much more time off. He stated: "I was actually single as an art auctioneer and pretty much you can take your pick."

Michelle met Michael at work. Her job as Food and Beverage Coordinator brought her into close contact with the crewmembers who were under the Food and Beverage management, and Michael was a dining room/restaurant waiter. They both told slightly different versions of how they met. Michelle, when asked how they met divulged (as paraphrased in an earlier chapter):

How did I meet him? Ok, he signed-on...I was actually rude to him! I was mean! One time I was going on vacation and I think he heard, I mean somebody told him that I was going on vacation. He just, you know, went to the office and gave me a present. Why is this guy giving me a present? I am not even close to him, so, I thought maybe he likes me. So, after my vacation, I went back to the same ship. So we were together again and then we became friends. We were friends at first. (February 2009)

Michael's version of how they met is a bit shorter:

She was Admin Coordinator on a cruise ship. And I sign on there and met her there. After a couple of months, I go see her in the office often. Like we talk a lot, you know. Get to know each other... blah, blah, blah. Then I start to ask her to go out with me, you know. (February 2009)

Nigel, because he worked in the late 1980s and early 1990s, had fewer rules regulating his relationships than the other people interviewed. He rarely dated his fellow crewmembers on his first cruise lines. His (ageist) description of his dating experience is as follows:

The majority ... let's see on the first ship was [Cruise Line B] and [Cruise Line D] the vast majority were passengers. On the second cruise ship, all the passengers were virtually dead anyway so they were that old. I did have a girlfriend on there for the time I was on-board basically, which was five months. So, but it was mainly... it was a couple of crewmembers but mainly passengers. (February 2009)

So who were the people participants were getting involved with? Were they from a particular department? Were they allowed to "date" from inside their department? The majority of the participants they were allowed to "date" within their department as far as they knew. The only department that did not allow internal fraternizing was the Photo Department on Cruise Line A (Andrew February 2009)

Still, most of the participants tended to date outside their departments. Steve, in particular, said that he "never fraternized with any of my work colleagues. Not once with anybody from my department." He went on to say that he did "see" passengers (which is against the rules), and the crewmembers that he dated were from many different

departments. He specifically mentioned the bar staff, the purser's department, and the casino.

Naomi mainly had sexual relationships with dancers and social hosts. Andrew, besides his brief dalliance with a fellow photographer, saw people from many different departments. He "dated" a musician and people from the casino, the purser's department, the spa and the gift shop. Doug maintained that there was no specific department he selected "dates" from, but when he was a DJ and the Sound and Light Technician he "dated" spa workers, dancers and a couple of photographers. As mentioned above, during his first contract as a waiter John had a girlfriend (who was a dining room waitress on another ship) and associated with people from the dining room. Later, when he transferred to Art Auctioneer he dated women from all over the ship. He divulged (in a statement tinged with sexist undertones):

I dated some of the casino girls, some of the spa girls. Everybody dated a spa girl... that's just... you can't not sleep with a spa girl if you work on ships.⁴⁸ [...] A lot of entertainers, the singers, the dancers, ... I hung out with a lot of them. And also pursers, hung out with one purser. (February 2009)

Timing was an important factor in who crewmembers spent social time with: those people who had a similar schedule or happened to be in the crew bar at a specific time were the people they were most likely to meet and date. Some departments tended to "hang out" together because their hours were similar. The longer they worked the less time they had to hang out with other departments. Hence, long-working waiters

⁴⁸ There is an informal reputation that the spa girls ("Steiners") are party girls who are up for sex and a good time. There is a saying on-board ships, that use the company Steiner Leisure Limited (www.steinerleisure.com) for their spa services, that "there's nothing finer than a Steiner." This is an offensive sexual innuendo meaning that a Steiner is an easy target when it comes to sex and partying. The "Steiner's" were mainly younger British women (and some men) but slowly other nationalities were being represented.

associated only with other waiters/waitresses, as in John's case, or with the passengers they met while working in the dining room, as in Nigel's case. When I was a photographer during the beginning of my first contract, I spent social time with and "dated" people from different departments that I met in the crew bar. As soon as I started working as a photo lab technician, which required more and later hours, I stuck closer to "home"⁴⁹ (breaking the rules and "dating" photographers) because I did not have time to socialize outside of work.

Types of sexual relationships

Nigel stated that the majority of his intimate relationships with passengers were "one-night stands" (having sex with someone just one time) or lasted for the length of the cruise. He said his longest relationships with a crewmember lasted four months. Steve had a similar answer to Nigel: he participated in mainly "one-night stands", but he also was involved in two longer relationships: one that lasted six months and another that lasted four months. Naomi said that she did not seek out "one-night stands" because she did not want to face these people day after day until her contract was over. She categorized her relationships as short term (meaning a few weeks) or long term.

Andrew conveyed that he has had a mixture of one-stands, short term and long-term relationships:

I think I've experienced everything, really, in the years I've been on ships. I think it's ... you take 'em as they come. I don't know if that is a cliché, but I think you have to assess how long you're going to be on-board together, and you just look at lots of different things. Sometimes it could be, you know, a drunken one-night

⁴⁹ I use "home" as in "home-base" -wherever I am stationed or staying at that moment in time.

stand, or it could be a two-month fling, or it could be a six-month serious thing.
(February 2009)

He goes on to speak of the type of relationship, not how quickly they develop, that being on-board ship for so long he felt that he knew what he wanted in a relationship and “pretty much know ... the destiny of the relationship.” He is basically saying, “one gets what one is looking for.” If that is a “one-night stand”, one will find one. This could be true of long-term relationships as well; if a person was looking for a more committed relationship then one could extend it into months. If a long-term relationship is to be maintained the couple will usually try to be placed on the same ship each contract, otherwise after a time the couple usually broke up or left ship life to be together.

John said he was not the type of person to seek out one-night stands. He said he was more likely the type of person to be “friends-with-benefits” with a girl. His definition of “friends with benefits” was an emotionally intimate relationship that did not include sexually intimacy. But he did have one long-term (six-month) relationship during his tenure as an Art Auctioneer.

When asked what category his relationships fell under, Doug stated:

Most of them were one-night stands, some lasted until you had to disembark. Occasionally you had something with someone who was going to be, you know, disembarking in a couple of weeks and they are short intense relationships.⁵⁰
(February 2009)

Doug mentions the longest relationship he was involved in was with his, now, wife.

Similarly, Michelle and Michael’s longest relationship was their own.

⁵⁰ Doug’s phrase “had something” when describing intimacy is very interesting. In using “had” it sounds like he believed that making a connection with someone was something to be acquired like a possession.

Speed of Relationships: Time-space Compression

The majority of crewmembers I spoke to found their relationships tended to become serious (emotionally intimate) much more quickly than their relationships on-land. As John stated above, time is a factor and sometimes crewmembers met someone whose contract was close to finished, or crewmembers met with the certain knowledge a person could be transferred to another ship with not much notice. Participants reported just jumping in with both feet and having “short intense relationships” (Nigel). The relationships are emotionally intense because crewmembers know they may have a short time with someone so they try to compress what would happen in a six-month to one-year long relationship into a few short weeks or a couple of months. The constraints on shipboard can be found in “land-based” relationships as well but on-board ship all crewmembers are faced with the same time crunch. The collective perception of time constraints makes crewmembers feel that shipboard relationships are unique. The dating, intimacy, and trust that could generally take months to develop on-land is rolled into a few short weeks. Also, factoring in that crewmembers are away from family and friends and away from their support systems during their time on-board, forming quick attachments could be considered beneficial by giving them a sense of security (Lavy, Mikulincer & Shaver 2010).

Naomi told me an account of a fast-paced relationship. A couple she knew one day got off the ship in a port in the morning and came back to ship that afternoon married. That they had eloped without telling anyone was not the most shocking thing about this

quick marriage; it was the fact that they had been dating only two weeks before they wed. Naomi recalled that that evening, instead of a “Congratulations” banner, fellow crewmembers put up a banner reading “Are You Nuts” in the crew bar on the couples’ return to the ship.⁵¹ At the time of our interview, Naomi said she had just received an e-mail from them, and they were still married but no longer working on-board ships.

When my participants were asked about the perception that relationships happened so fast on-board ship the answers revolved around loneliness, emotions, drunkenness and tight space. Steve believed it was simple drunkenness that caused relationships, and Andrew partially agreed, but he thought drunkenness only influenced one-night stands. Andrew also mentioned the emotional aspect of the relationships: the need for connection, respect and kindness. He stated:

I think it’s a bit of frustration. I think it’s because you are living... on top of each other and it’s a very small environment. And I guess there’s a bit of loneliness coming in, so I wouldn’t say it’s desperation... you do feel the loneliness a bit more sometimes when you’re away from your family and your friends and your normal life so you are a bit vulnerable, I think. And I think you are looking for physical gratification and, you know, a hug, a kiss, you know... some intimacy. So these things become, I think in some ways they become a little bit more important, a bit more prevalent I suppose and you want them more quickly. (February 2009)

Victor agreed with Andrew that relationships happened quickly because “you’re lonely and they don’t know anybody and they need to connect to somebody... they feel a little bit alone [and need] emotional attachment.” As well he mentioned time and space affecting relationships. He believed the confined space “intensifies it, the closeness...it is such a short time, you try to push everything into one time...”

Nigel’s answer is a continuation of the time factor on-board:

⁵¹ Quick marriages happen in places like Las Vegas as well and Naomi and her friends had the same reaction to the elopement as people would if their friends did the same thing in Vegas- thinking that they moved to quickly into getting married.

I think you're similar people to start with because you are on-board... you work... everything's at speed on-board. When you have time off, you do everything; you put as much effort into it as possible. Maybe you're having a relationship, maybe you put everything into it as possible, everything just goes so quickly. And it's intense, the work is very intense, your time off... everything... [there is] an intensity in everything. It just rubs off into relationships. (February 2009)

Working on-board a cruise ship is stressful on a crewmember. John described life on-board ship like this:

You're like in a pressure cooker on ships, you know, and friendships blossom much faster than normally would and the relationships seem much closer, much faster than normal and when they're gone it hurts and then you find somebody else right away. (February 2009)

When asked to explain the pressure cooker/intensity factor, he continued:

[...] Simply the fact that people are coming and going so often. You know, cruise ships require young people who are in good shape and there's always a bunch of new one's coming and a bunch leaving. And that environment with people coming and going, you're going to get that. Now the other thing it's the college mentality for so many people. You know, you're cut loose for the first time. And [there is] no supervision. [...] I think the opportunity mixed with the college mentality, mixed with cultural mores [breaking] down. (February 2009)

Disposable Values and Lifestyles

Freedom and lack of responsibility seem to play a part in how relationships are formed.

Michael had the opinion that "everyone is free you know. [...] on ship. No one is

watching you, no one is telling you what to do... Nobody cares about your love life."

While crewmembers feel like they have very little "supervision" (meaning their family

and friends not there to judge them) in their love lives or their morals (although some

people may be affected by on-board gossip about them); the only time they are held

accountable is when their behaviour affects their work (e.g. missing work or sexual

harassment accusations). This can be seen in stories told (or witnessed) in the previous

chapter about crewmembers married to their partners on-land having on-board girlfriends/boyfriends. Anything that is considered morally wrong by the crewmember's standards or anything that crewmembers perceive as something that would not happen on-land is blamed on ship's life.

Naomi told me an anecdote about the trouble a staff captain had when his wife came on-board. The staff captain brought his wife and fifteen-month-old baby on-board for a two-week visit. The officers of Cruise Line A often brought their wives, girlfriends and children on-board to cruise. The officers had single cabins so their guests could stay in their cabins. Naomi was friends with the staff captain's wife and was with her when she walked in on her husband having sex with the ship's nurse. The nurse and the staff captain had been having an affair for some time, and when the staff captain's wife found out, Naomi remembered there was a screaming match. The staff captain ended up having to pay for a passenger cabin for his wife for the rest of her two-week stay and they ended up getting divorced.

The story Naomi told about the staff captain and his on-board girlfriend had me wondering if crewmembers acted differently on-board ship compared to their lives in their place of residence. I asked my participants if they felt that crewmembers behaved differently once on-board ship. Most of the participants believed that crewmembers did behave differently once they were on-board, but Doug felt that a person who cheated on a spouse on-board ship would be a cheater anywhere, even on-land: that "a dog is a dog" no matter where he is in the world. On the other hand, Victor suggested that crewmembers do behave differently because of a sense of freedom and feel less responsibility to family and friends. Naomi asserted that she definitely behaved

differently on-board ship because her family was not there to hold her responsible for any “bad” behaviour.⁵² She said her family believed her to be a “good” girl, so when she was with her family she had to be “good”.

Michael made a similar comment, stating that as long as crewmembers met their financial responsibility to their family, they felt like they could do whatever they liked on ship. He stated:

[Once] onboard sometimes most of my fellow crewmembers they can drink as much as they can. At home they cannot drink; they just drink a little. On-land at home in the Philippines they behave. On-board they go wild...” (February 2009)

Michelle confirmed that in her experience crewmembers on-board behave differently and have affairs that they would not have at home. Andrew also agreed; he said he knew married men who once they are on-board were like “kids in a candy store” and “any lollipop will do.”⁵³ He said these men were chasing after women, even with a wife at home. He also stated that crewmembers in the last five to six years, with new restrictions on them, were much more reserved than they once were. After September 11, 2001, if crewmember behaved too wildly they would instantly be sent home.

John stated that crewmembers “absolutely” behaved differently on ship than at home. In fact, he believed life on ship and on-land were so different that crewmembers have a hard time adjusting to life on-land.

There’s a freewheeling lifestyle on the ship that people don’t take home with them. [...] Because ships do change you and for example, if you have just done ten months and you’re living every second to the maximum; which what you do on ships, you live large... [there is also] the transient factor because on the ships you are transient and you live like that, you’re hopping from city to city, ship to ship.

⁵² By “bad” behaviour she meant drinking and having sex.

⁵³ By the expression “kids in a candy store” Andrew meant that there were many men and women to choose from to have sex with and by the expression “any lollipop will do” he meant that any person would do to fulfill the role of sex partner.

Person to person and as soon as you get home [...] it's hard to relate to the people that you used to relate to because they are all working. [...] It's hard to adjust back to land. [...] I know huge numbers of people that try to do it. In fact almost everyone I know tried to go back to land couldn't do it the first time and ended up going back to ships for one more contract. (February 2009)

Life on-board cruise ships is quite different from life on-land (Thompson 2002).

The fast-paced, intense lifestyle forces people to adjust and act differently on ships: whether it was "living large," as John called it, or leaving their morals on the gangway. Crewmembers reported experiencing a sense of freedom and a lack of responsibility to their family and friends back in their native country, and a tendency to let go and experiment. They possibly did things that they would not do at home, such as drinking more alcohol, having sex with multiple partners, and possibly cheating on their spouse.

Perceived Differences in Land and Sea Relationships

Michelle and Michael had what could be called a longer courtship compared to most on-board. They took their time getting to know each other before they started dating. When I asked them what they perceived to be different about relationships on-board and on-land they both agreed that having a larger quantity of time to spend together on-land was a treat for both of them. There was no pressure to fit so much relationship into the little free time they had from work. They could have quality and quantity at the same time. In contrast, Steve said the only perceived difference for him was that he had more relationships on-board in a year than he did in a year on-land.

A couple of my participants discussed relationships they started on-board and tried to continue on-land. These relationships were presented as examples of the differences

between on-ship and on-land relationships. I asked Andrew how he felt his long-term relationship was different on-land than it was on ship. He said that crewmembers are in

a very contained environment, and then you go out into a very open environment, so it's very different. When you are on-land you can go anywhere, go any place, any time, there's no sort of restriction on space and time or anything.⁵⁴ [But] it could get a bit boring. My partner would be going to a job, working, just to make some money and I'd have to be stuck waiting for her to come home. So it did get to be a drain sometimes, a bit boring. [...] I mean when we were together it was very nice, obviously. [On-land] you can have a bit more distance in the relationship. Whereas on ship, you're just shoved in front of each other's eyes every day. There is no real escape... (February 2009)

Naomi, as well, had a relationship that continued onto land during vacation time. When she and her partner were on-land, they were not in the same province, and this made it a long-distance relationship. Naomi found this hard to deal with because they rarely saw each other, unlike on ships where they would see each other every day. She called off the relationship after a month on-land. She said that the intensity was no longer there. She found carrying a relationship onto land too complicated; having to make arrangements to meet and spend time together was too difficult. She explained:

[On-board ship] you could make plans constantly, you were right there. It's not like you has to wait for somebody to get off work. Well, you did in a way, but you knew everybody's schedule, you knew what shows were going, you knew what was cancelled, if it was bad weather you didn't have to worry. You didn't have to worry about drinking and driving. We could all go out and have a good time and you didn't have to think about those things that you think about on-land. (January 2009)

Intensity seemed to be a recurring theme in descriptions of shipboard relationships.

Naomi mentioned above that the intensity and closeness were no longer there in her relationship when it continued on-land. Andrew, also, mentioned that partners could have more distance on-land and were no longer on top of each other, day in and day out. Doug

⁵⁴ This is a masculine viewpoint of freedom.

mentioned that ship relationships were so intense because the ship was such a confined environment. John went into the intensity of relationships on-board with more depth:

They are so much more intense on ships. They are by every definition more intense. They're faster. They're deeper. They're harder. They end sooner. It's quite weird I mean, when you are on-land you are not surrounded by the overwhelming newness that you get on ships and that is a big factor as well.[...]

When I first started on the ships, I had[...] a four week training class in the restaurant. The very first day, you know, you don't know anybody; they're all from foreign countries. Everything is just new, new, new. And by the end of four weeks and only four weeks everybody was crying because they were leaving their new friends.

And it's almost like,[...] being in the military. In that you are constantly being assaulted all the time by newness and the job and it's not about you, you know. You are just a cog in the wheel of a huge mechanism, So you cling to people, you rely on them in a way you do not rely on people on-land. [...]

You could be loving your life then suddenly they'll call you and say your transferring to another ship in 2 days. Well, I have to get [to] my 3 girlfriends [and] I have to tell them I'm leaving.

So it's way more intense than anything on-land. I mean on-land you have so many things that are stable and time flows differently and you're not on the go, go, go all the time. You're not forced [to work] to death every second of everyday. (February 2009)⁵⁵

Conclusion

All relationships, friendships and intimate relationships, on-board cruise ships, are perceived by my research participants as of a different nature from relationships formed on-land. While there are commonalities, such as forming bonds over food and drink, the formation of relationships while on-land and the experiences of being in a relationship do not have the same intensity and fast pace of the social worlds aboard a cruise ship. The lack of space is another major spatial difference between being on-land and being on

⁵⁵ When hired by Company A as a dining room waiter (as with some other jobs on-board) people are required to attend a four-week training school on-board a particular ship. I would compare it to Boot Camp in the military. At the end of four weeks if they pass the dining room waiters are then transferred to various ships and may or may not see each other again and the other crewmembers on-board the training ship again.

ship, and this also shapes people's experiences of intimacy. Even in spaces on-land considered "small," such as small towns and tourist places like campgrounds, small-space inhabitants always have physical avenues available where they can leave that space at any time and go elsewhere, although their choices are affected of course by resources, among other things. Regardless, it is harder to leave a ship in the middle of a large body of water than to leave a place on-land. Time, again, is a factor because the ships are at sea for many, many days of the year. In the end, there is a physical difference between being at sea on a ship and being in any space on-land.

As I have tried to demonstrate in the above discussions, the fast-paced social worlds and work environments of cruise ship life shape the way that relationships are formed and shaped and also influence who forms relationships. The intensity of the work affects the way crewmembers socialize and how quickly they form platonic and intimate relationships. Still, like on-land, they search out commonalities to help form and maintain their relationships. Sometimes these common bonds are a shared language, culture or nationality, but because of the multi-national, multi-cultural, multi-lingual aspects of ship life, crewmembers do not share a language; instead of language, the most common basis for forming bonds is through consuming food or drink together. My research participants clearly expressed the ways in which the need for instant emotional support in an environment that was experienced as fast-paced and intense and distant from land-based support systems influenced how relationships were "sped up." They wanted the support they would normally get from close friends and family at home, and they did so within the social networks that were available to them within the spatially remote and spatially

confining spaces in which they lived their everyday lives as workers and sociable human beings.

Chapter 7: Disembarking the ship: Conclusion.

As we leave behind our study participants, it is evident that life on-board cruise is not all sunny days, exotic ports and romance. As well, comes the realization that crewmembers lead personal lives outside of the work they perform. The participants' narratives paint a picture of crewmembers' experiences that are not the same as passengers' experiences (Thompson 2002). For crewmembers, the cruise ship is not the relaxing vacation away from the stressors of their job back on-land, although there are elements of recreation and leisure incorporated into their lives aboard the floating work place. This high-stress, fast-paced environment is their whole life while they are on-board. To be able to live in these surroundings they must adjust themselves to a world where situations can change very rapidly and are far from permanent. The rapid change experience includes such things as co-workers joining and leaving ship, the exchange of passengers at least once a week or maybe more, or having the ship change port stops in the middle of a cruise due to inclement weather or other difficulties.

Final Announcements

The modern cruise ship is an example of a fast way to see many places in a short period of time. A cruise ship is an example of the technology that contributes to the "time-space compression" associated with contemporary globalized societies under conditions of late capitalism and postmodernity (Harvey 1989; Decron 2001).⁵⁶ This, coupled with the need for instant satisfaction brought on by consumer culture and media and accelerated

⁵⁶ What is meant by calling a cruise ship an example of technology is that it is a machine used to transport people to different places in a period time and makes a profit while doing so.

capitalism in today's society (Harvey 1989), causes the cruise ship to be a high-speed, hectic environment for crew members.

The main word used by the participants in this study to describe life on-board a cruise ship was "intense." The atmosphere on-board a cruise ship may be relaxing for passengers, but the crew must put in a concentrated effort to produce this ambiance for passengers. It can be said there are workplaces on-land that have fast-paced environments, including stores, restaurants and bars, but there the workers can go to their place of residence: to family, friends or pets at the end of the day. Crewmembers cannot escape to relax because they live on-board. The crewmembers that I interviewed for this research project all spoke about how they bring their intense work life into their social life.

The need for emotional connection and support in stressful situations is a normal human reaction (Lavy, Mikulincer, and Shaver 2010). The hectic environment on-board a cruise ship is no exception, and emotional support is doubly needed due to the fact that family and close friends, normative social sources of emotional support in many societies, from their country are not present. As well, the pace and the impermanence of working on-board cruise ships increases the speed and intensity of connections made on-board. The majority of the participants in this study agreed that work on-board cruise ships was fast-paced and stressful. In turn, they developed friendships and relationships quickly and with the same intensity that matched the pace and intensity they experienced in their jobs.

Cruise ships hire crewmembers from all over the world (Lane 2001). The mix of nationalities leaves crewmembers looking for commonalities to form friendships. The

crewmembers tend to gravitate towards co-workers that share a common language, culture or nationality. When there is a lack of these commonalities – though most crewmembers have a rudimentary knowledge of English (Klein 2002) – they found that eating and drinking alcohol could bring crewmembers together. Many participants reported forming relationships through the departments they worked in or having their relationships affected by their departments and the department and its relative rank in the hierarchy as well as the job's time schedule and location. The participants in this study agreed that outside of work the places where they met fellow crewmembers were in the crew bar and the staff and crew messes. They also socialized by going out for drinks or sharing a meal. As several of this study's participants mentioned, they tended to combine socializing with eating or drinking alcohol because of time constraints.

A cruise ship may look large from the dock, but from the inside is quite small. An average cruise ship holds anywhere from 200 to 2000 crewmembers and 2500 to 3600 passengers.⁵⁷ That is the population of a large village or small town compressed into one ship. The crewmembers' living space is a very small percentage of the size of the ship. This amount of living space means crewmembers saw the same faces day in and day out, which added to the intensity of relationships. The intensity of constant contact in a confined environment speeds up the "getting to know you" aspect of relationships.

The formation of intimate relationships on-board cruise ships seems to integrate the factors mentioned above. My research has demonstrated that the hectic work pace, the close quarters, and the need for emotional support greatly influence the speed in which relationships develop from acquaintances to intimate relationships. The intensity of cruise

⁵⁷ These statistics are based on numbers from the major cruise lines websites.

ship life affects the speed of relationships. The need for instantaneous gratification brought on by a community/society that is based on how rapidly things can be produced seeps into crewmembers' social life. The need for a sense of intimacy is increased in an environment that operates at great speeds. While it would seem it would be easier to forego relationships under such conditions but most of my participants stated the need for emotional connection to avoid the sense of loneliness that comes from being in an intense, isolated environment.

Limitations

The number one limitation in writing this thesis was my own experience of working on cruise ships. It did help me understand and empathize with the participants, but it hindered me when it came to writing. I had to be careful that I was not writing an opinion piece instead of an empirical-based academic paper. Another limitation was the number of participants recruited. While the majority of the participants gave similar answers and seemed to be of the same mindset on the topics I inquired about, more participants would have given this study more of a solid foundation and more breadth and depth.

Future research/inquiry

This study is a jumping-off point for a further inquiry into crewmembers' lives on-board cruise ships. This study only brushes the surface of the investigation in particular relationships and how they are formed. There are many in-depth analyses that could be undertaken: a study of cross-cultural friendships or friendships between different nationalities; a study of how classifying people as crew and staff affects how they relate to each other; and a study of what happens to crewmember's friendships after they retire

from ships (who remain friends and who do not); as well as being in an isolated environment affects relationships and how they are formed.

This particular study could be broadened to include more people, especially more women participants. There could be more study of relationships that were started on ships and carried on to land and the perceived differences between them and solely ship-based relationships. As part of the same study, there could be an examination of how many couples stay together (or break-up) when back on-land and why. A study of crewmember and passenger intimate relationships could also be conducted. As well as question about religious beliefs and how and if they affect the way a person conducts sexual relationships on-board ship. These questions are a continuation of questions asked in this study and would further expand and deepen the understanding of intimate relationships on-board cruise ships.

In general, there could be more examination of the social structure of the ship, sexism, and racism and how they pertain to crew relationships. As well, these questions could be answered: How does the dividing of the cruise workers into crew and staff affect ship cohesiveness? How does having a multi-national crew affect the ship's harmony? What brings crewmembers to work on ships? What and how did they know about cruise ships before they worked on-board?

In closing, I suggest reading John Heald's Blog (www.johnhealdsblog.com, as discussed in Chapter 4) for further insight into cruise ship life. He writes from a place of twenty years experience on-board Carnival Cruise Lines, first as a bar waiter, then as a social host and now as Head Cruise Director/ Brand Ambassador. He writes this blog from on-board ship (and continues writing when he is on-land as well), describing daily

life on-board a cruise ship. He discusses many aspects of what has been covered in this thesis – including crewmembers’ relationships happening more quickly on-board than on-land. He gives a first-hand account of what is happening on the ship he is aboard. While this not a scholarly look into why things happen, his personal observations of his surroundings seemed to be on par with my experience as well as the participants in this study.

Appendix A

Informed Consent:

Consent form:

Below Deck on the "Love Boat": Intimate relationships between cruise ship workers in a globalized environment, Participant Information and Interview Consent Form

Investigator:

Susan Forsythe (Graduate Student University of Manitoba)
contact: umforsys@cc.umanitoba.ca

Purpose of this Study:

The purpose of this study is to learn how former and present day cruise ship crew members form and conduct sexual relationships while working on-board a cruise ship.

Your Participation:

You are being asked to participate in an interview. The interview may be face-to-face, on the telephone or online. You will be asked questions in regard to the aforementioned study (see above statement). The investigator will be conducting the interview the interview can take up to 2 hours.

During the Interview:

If the interview is face-to-face, you will meet the interviewer at a time place that is convenient for you and the researcher, a place you feel comfortable and is reasonably quiet. Face-to-face and telephone interviews will be audio recorded with permission of the participant. During the interviews the researcher may take notes. If the interview is online the interview will be printed directly from the instant messenger board or private chat room. If the interview is offline please indicate your consent to be audio recorded or not by checking the appropriate spot. If your participation is online please provide consent for have the interview printed or not by checking the appropriate spot.

Check one that applies to you:

- I give consent to having a face-to-face interview to be audio recorded.
 I do not give consent to having a face-to-face interview to be audio recorded, but agree to have notes taken by the interviewer.
- I give consent to having a telephone interview to be audio recorded.
 I do not give consent to having a telephone interview to be audio recorded, but agree to having notes being taken by the interviewer.

I give consent to having an online interview to be printed directly from the instant message board or chat room.

I do not give consent to having an online interview to be printed directly from the instant message board or chat room but agree to have notes be taken by the interviewer.

Your rights as a participant will not be affected if you decide to not allow the interview to be recorded or printed.

By Participating in this Study:

By participating in this study you will have the chance to share your experiences and inform others. You can receive copies or updates of this study if you wish. Please indicate whether you would like to receive a written report or update on this study.

I would like to receive a written report or update at the following (mailing or e-mail address):

Risks or discomforts of participating in this study:

There are no physical risks to participating in this study but if you feel that you need a counselor after the interview a list of resources will be made available to you.

Confidentiality:

To make sure what you said is confidential, your real name will not be used in the report. The information will be stored with an identification number, not your name. The audio recordings, the printed matter from the message boards and notes made by the researcher will be kept in a locked file drawer, the only person with access will be the investigator. At the end of the investigation the audio files and recordings will be destroyed.

Participation is Voluntary:

Your participation in the study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to answer any question at anytime during the interview. You can also stop the interview at any time and can drop out of the study at any time up to July 2009 for any reason. If you want to stop at anytime during the the interview please let the interviewer know and she will stop immediately.

Data Collection:

The data collected will be used for a master's thesis and related publication. The data collected will not be used or shared with other groups or agencies. Where and when appropriate the employer will be asked to agree to the interviews. The respondent will be selected according to his/her interest in the project and willingness to participate.

This research has been approved by the Joint Faculty Research and Ethics Board (JREB) . If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature

Date

Appendix B Interview Schedule

Background Information

1. Tell me about yourself (age, nationality, ethnic identity, education, occupation, marital relationship status). What were your relationships like before you worked on-board cruise ships? Were you single or married when you first started on ships? Did you date many people or have long-term relationships? How many approximately?

On-board Ship

2. How long did/ have you been working on-board cruise ships? Was/ Is this your first time away from home? What was/is your job on-board ship? How many people in your department? Men/women? Did/do you share a cabin? Where was/is this person from?

3. How did you form friendships when you are onboard ship? Where/how did you meet your friends onboard? Were they in your department? Did you meet elsewhere? How did they happen and were there anything special that helped reinforce this friendships? What did you do together? Are your friends of the same nationality as yourself? How did you maintain your friendships? Did food/eating/ drinking play a part and why?

4. Where/how did you meet the person/ people you ‘dated’ onboard? (eg. Worked in the same department, meet at the crew bar or the staff/crew mess?) What brought you together/attracted you to these people?

5. Did/do you ‘date’ within your department or is there a particular department that you usually hang-out with? Were/are there still rules about seeing someone in your own department? If so did/does your manager/supervisor know about it? If you hid/hide it, how did/do you go about it?

6. Did/do your relationships on-board tend to long-term, short-term, friends with benefits or ‘one night stands’? What has been your longest relationship on-board?

7. Did/do you and your cabin mate have an agreement about bringing someone back to the cabin? If no, did/do bring people back to your cabin? If yes, what does your cabin mate feel about it? What did/do you feel about your cabin mate bringing someone back to the cabin?

8. Describe your typical onboard relationship? How quickly did/do your relationships start? Do you agree with the old onboard saying “24 hours you’re dating and 48 hours you’re married”? Why do you think some relationships happen so quickly, they seem to happen out of the blue?

Long term relationships

9. How long were/have you been together? Were/are you able to be on the same ship together? If not, did/do you find it hard to be apart? How did/do you keep the relationship going? Did/do you see each other when on vacation? Was/is it different being together on-land than it was/is on-board? What made it different?

10. Are relationships on-board different from those on-land? Do crewmembers tend to behave differently onboard than on-land? How so?

On-land

11. Has having relationships on-board changed the way you look at relationships in your life at home? Are current relationships influenced by onboard relationships? How?

12. Any other comments about having relationships on-board? Positive or negative?

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