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Burkhard Lemper/ Thomas Pawlik/
Susanne Neumann (eds.)

The Human Element in Container Shipping

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Preface

The whole shipping industry is run by people and for people. And while people vary in all sorts of ways, nevertheless, they are people with a set of capabilities as well as vulnerabilities. Hence, the term 'human element', now often used in shipping, appears inappropriate since it implies that it is just one piece of the picture. But humans are not simply an element such as the weather conditions – they are the very centre of the shipping industry.[1] Even so, it seems to be necessary to stick to this universally valid 'human element' label as it is now applied by the whole maritime industry.

Reflecting the fact that the 'human element' onboard vessels – i.e. being in and coping with an entirely different environment – is the critical point of every transport chain, we, the editors, are dedicating an entire book to maritime human resource management issues – issues which are rarely tackled in common literature.

The book starts with the reader being introduced to the criteria that affect *the choice of the seafaring profession* and make people follow a seafaring career. Important key terms and the basic career development theories are analysed, with a special insight to the results of studies in the field of factors influencing the choice of the seafaring profession. The various aspects of seafaring and shipping that represent vital information in the choice of a seafaring career, along with the basic steps in the career decision-making process, are discussed.

After understanding why people take up a career onboard, the reader will learn how *Corporate Social Responsibility and Employer Branding* are connected with each other and why it is important for modern companies in the maritime industry to differentiate themselves from their competitors when it comes to winning the global competition for highly-qualified seagoing personnel. Hints for developing an Employer Branding strategy – generated from a national survey among nautical sciences' students – are given.

The following chapter then explores the demands ship officers must satisfy today. It looks at the technical skills an officer in merchant shipping has to prove

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1 Gregory, D. and P. Shanahan (2010): "The Human Element – a guide to human behaviour in the shipping industry", p. 5, 15.

according to the STCW Convention, and examines the topic of Maritime Crew Resource Management. *Special requirements for preparatory trainings* are deducted. Based on experience gained in aviation, the development of Crew Resource Management is highlighted and evaluated for possible conclusions relevant for shipping.

The chapter on *cross-cultural management for seafarers* discusses three elements that are essential in shipboard work. These elements include shipboard leadership and intercultural competence, intercultural communication in multinational crews, and teamwork in multinational crews. Awareness of these essential elements can be used as a starting point in critically improving the cultural competence of seafarers.

Thereafter, *performance influencing factors in maritime operations* are presented and discussed. This section deals with some important human, technological and organizational factors known to influence performance and outcome of maritime operations. Factors include human physical and psychological characteristics such as fatigue, stress and alcohol abuse; the nature of tasks and human interaction with technical systems as well as physical and organizational work environments.

Subsequently, the *human error in shipping*, which is generally referred to as the predominant cause of marine casualties, becomes the focus of attention. It is explained that there is more to this categorisation than simply concentrating all attention on the mariner, the person at the sharp end of daily shipping routine. This article analyses the human error concept from the casualty investigator's point of view based on current statistical data as well as conventional and new trends in order to systematically approach human behaviour and underlying factors in the marine environment.

The chapter *criminalization of Seafarers discusses*, by way of various examples from the past, the circumstance that, whenever a large casualty or high-profile disaster involves a commercial vessel and possible harm to human life or the marine environment, the captain and crew of the ship are immediately at the centre of investigations and public interest. This article describes how seafarers were treated by public authorities and the media in different situations of that kind. Also, it highlights some fundamental problems which have occurred in the past and refers to the applicable complex international legal framework. It concludes with a brief introduction and summary of the "Joint IMO/ILO Guidelines on Fair Treatment of Seafarers in the Event of a Maritime Accident". Although non-binding, these guidelines have the potential to remedy the most severe problems that have usually been associated with the problem of criminalizing seafarers in the past.

The research based article *piracy, a part of Shipping companies' risk management – or a case of Freudian denial?* sheds light on a new aspect of risk management that must be taken into consideration. Using a micro-analytical approach to analyze authentic audio recordings from negotiation communication in a pirate hijacking situation, the article meticulously teases out the role of the shipping company's negotiator and the responses such a negotiator chooses to use, and how this affects the psychological trauma of the crew. The article asks whose risk and whose responsibility it is to monitor the role of the negotiator, and points out that although the negotiator seeks a role that contains emotional distance, this role has consequences for the crew.

Finally, it is discussed what happens i*f work changes to leisure time and free time becomes work* – a problem all mariners know. This last article deals with some basic questions concerning the topic of time itself – not in a philosophical sense but in a sociological way of thinking. The focus is on leisure time, family life, work time and the balance between these kinds of time. Furthermore, several key questions are considered, such as "which role does paid work play in our lives?" or "what are the consequences of the removal of spatial and systematic constraints of work in a globalized world on our time schedules?"

We are glad that the involved authors – everybody an expert in a specific area of HR – made their contributions with such great commitment besides their daily business. We would like to express our deepest gratitude for all the valuable contributions we received from the authors.

Finally, we would like to wish you interesting reading.

The Editors,

Prof. Dr. Burkhard Lemper *Prof. Dr. Thomas Pawlik* *Susanne Neumann*

Reference

Gregory, D. and P. Shanahan (2010): "The Human Element - a guide to human behaviour in the shipping industry", http://www.dft.gov.uk/mca/the_human_element_a_guide_to_human_behaviour_in_the_shipping_industry, last accessed 05 May 2012.

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Dr. Burkhard Lemper is Director and Head of the Maritime Economics and Transport Department at the Institute of Shipping Economics and Logistics (ISL), Bremen, Germany, and honorary professor at Bremen University of Applied Sciences. He has managed a wide variety of projects for individual clients in the maritime industry, especially for port authorities, ship yards and shipping companies. He has worked for several public and private customers on studies dealing with developments in the European and world wide transport markets, especially container transport, port development projects and feasibility studies including cost benefit analyses. He has written and published in particular on maritime sector issues. Other important aspects of his research are cargo flow and market analysis, simulation of cargo flows and transport modeling.

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1 The choice of seafaring profession

Dr. Maria Progoulaki

1 Introduction

What is the dream profession for people in their early childhood? It may be common for a child to want to be a policeman, a doctor, a rock star, an astronaut, a nurse, or even a pirate. How many children dream to become seafarers? Shipping carries more than 90% of world trade; without shipping, half the world would starve and the other half would freeze. This job is done by almost 100,000 merchant ships, manned by over one million seafarers from all over the world (IMO 2008). Against an estimated total world population of 6.7 billion, these figures indicate a remarkable situation: that the feeding and heating needs of the entire world are dependent on just over one million seafarers[1]. The International Maritime Organization (IMO)[2] draws attention to the vital service that seafarers offer to the shipping industry, an industry that contributes significantly to global and sustainable development and prosperity by carrying the world's commerce safely, securely, efficiently and at a fraction of the environmental impact and cost of other modes of transport.

BIMCO/ISF studies have highlighted an anticipated shortage of some 27,000 officers worldwide by the year 2015[3]. Especially in some traditional maritime countries, there is an apparent reluctance on the part of young people to choose seafaring as a profession. And even for those young people who do make that choice, their careers at sea are often short as they are either unwilling or unable to take on higher duties or, even more importantly, they actively choose not to remain at sea[4]. It must be stated that nowadays there is one generation of well-trained officers missing that could fill the gap between those close to retirement

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1 IMO (2008), p. 4

2 In 2008 the IMO launched the campaign "Go to Sea!" with the aim to promote seafaring as an attractive option for young people, one which can provide them with rewarding and long-term prospects, not only at sea but also in the broader maritime industry. Further information available at http://www.imo.org/MediaCentre/HotTopics/GoToSea/Pages/Default.aspx, last access 12 February 2012

3 BIMCO/ISF (2005; 2010)

4 IMO (2008)

and the young seafarers who have just started their careers[5]. If the global pool of competent and efficient seafarers is to meet future demand, then seafaring must be presented to younger generations as a viable career choice.
This chapter introduces the reader to the criteria that affect a person's decision to become a seafarer and to follow the seafaring career. Chapter 1 summarizes key terms and the basic career development theories. A special insight to the results of studies in the field of factors influencing the choice of the seafaring profession follows in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 discusses aspects of seafaring and shipping that represent vital information in the choice of the seafaring career, along with the basic steps in career decision-making process. The profile of the future seafarer and his/her career potentials are analysed in Chapter 4, with an epilogue in Chapter 5.

2 Useful definitions and career development theories

The meanings that young people of career-decision age attach to the terms of occupation and career are potentially limiting factors in their career behaviour and decision-making[6]. Pyne and Bernes[7] mention that if adolescents think of a career as a long-term commitment to a single (usually professional) occupation, they may quickly disengage from any career planning, in the belief that it has no relevance to their lives. Thus, it is important to define terms that are related to job and career, and clarify the differences between the words that are commonly used to describe one's employment. According to the following definitions[8]:
Work: is an activity involving mental or physical effort done in order to achieve a result; work as a means of earning income; the period of time one spends in paid employment.
Job: describes a responsibility or duty; task or piece of work, especially one that is paid; paid position of regular employment.
Profession: refers to a paid occupation, especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification.
Vocation: describes a strong feeling of suitability for a particular career or occupation; person's employment or main occupation, especially regarded as worthy and requiring dedication.
Career: means working permanently in or committed to a particular profession; an occupation undertaken for a significant period of a person's life and with opportunities for progress.

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5 Krüger-Kopiske, K.K. (2008), p. 102
6 Pyne, D./Bernes, K. (2002), p. 3
7 Loc.Cit.
8 Definitions drawn from Oxford English Dictionary, http://oxforddictionaries.com, last access 12 February 2012

Only by defining the different sides of employment one can understand the importance of training, remuneration, personal interest and dedication. These are some of the most important factors that influence a person's choice of profession, the individual's career development, as well as organisations' retention and turnover rates.

The field of career development has been examined widely by psychologists and career counsellors. Career development is the process that analyses and relates one's work and role in it with the environment and one's personal interests. There are five career theories that have guided the career counselling practice and research over the last decades at an international level[9]. These are: Theory of Work-Adjustment[10], Theory of Vocational Personalities in Work Environment[11], Self-concept Theory of Career Development[12], Theory of Circumscription and Compromise[13], and Social Cognitive Career Theory[14]. According to the 'Theory of Work-Adjustment', career choice and career development are a continual process of adjustment and accommodation in which the person seeks to work in environments that will cover one's personal needs, while the work environment seeks to match its requirements with the person's characteristics and needs. The theory of 'Vocational Personalities in Work Environment' postulates that the interest in a profession expresses, and thus is related to, the individual's personality, and that this interest can be conceptualised into six typologies, i.e. realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. According to 'Self-concept Theory', self-concept is generated by the complex interactions among one's experiences, one's physical and mental growth and the environment's characteristics[15]. Development of self-concept is considered a continual process, since self-concept is believed to be non-static. As the person encounters new experiences and progresses through developmental stages, the self-concept evolves. The 'Theory of Circumscription and Compromise' supports that, although genetic characteristics strongly influence the person's interests, skills, values, personality, nonetheless the expression of a person's characteristics is influenced by the environment. Career development is viewed as a self-creation process in which individuals look for avenues or niches to

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9 Leung, A. (2008), p. 116

10 Dawis, R.V. (1992; 2002; 2005), Dawis, R.V./Lofquist, L.H. (1984), cited in Leung, op.cit., p. 116

11 Holland, J.H. (1997), cited in Leung, op.cit., p. 118

12 Super, D.W. (1969; 1980; 1990), in Leung, A. (2008), p. 120 and Herr, E.L. (1997), Savickas, M.L. (2002)

13 Gottfredson, L. (1981; 2002; 2005)

14 Bandura, A. (1997) and Lent, R.W. et al. (2002), Lent, R.W. (2005)

15 Super, D.W (1969). However other scientists (Herr, E.L. 1997; Savickas, M.L. 2002) emphasize the effects of social context and the reciprocal influence between the person and the environment.

express their genetic proclivities within the boundaries of their own cultural environment[16]. Finally, according to the 'Social Cognitive Career Theory', a person's career goals and choice of profession are developed through an interaction among self-efficacy, outcome expectations and interest over time. The choice of career is a continual process in which the person and the environment mutually influence each other. The first step is to specify the primary career goals of the person, then proceed to actions that aim at achieving these goals, and finally assess the performance experience and get feedback regarding the suitability of the goals and the proficiency of the actions. According to this theory, the person's goals and interests might need to be compromised because of the influence from factors such as the person's culture, social barriers or lack of support[17].

Apart from the strong theoretical base that these five career theories offer, Parsons' theory is considered seminal in careers guidance. The basic concept of his theory is summarised in three principles[18] that guide the choice of a vocation[19]: (i) a clear understanding of one's self, one's aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations and their causes; (ii) a knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work, and (iii) true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts. In brief, the outline of Parsons' method of vocation counselling includes the following steps[20]: (1) Collect personal data, (experiences, interests, etc.), (2) Conduct self-analysis (examine personal characteristics), (3) Analyse the person's own choice and decision, (4) Analysis of the person's profile in relation to the choice of profession by a counsellor (e.g. in terms of character, education, experience, family, ancestry, resources and limitations), (5) Outlook of the vocational field, where the assigned counsellor has to hold some industrial knowledge[21], (6) Induction and advice, (7) General helpfulness in fitting into the chosen work.
The important information useful in the career decision and development process of a person in seafaring, as suggested by Parsons, may include statistics

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16 Leung, op.cit., p. 123

17 *Ibid*., p. 126

18 Parsons, F. (1909), p. 5

19 Parsons' book titled "Choosing a vocation" (1909) published by Houghton Mifflin is currently out of print. References are drawn from Evangelista L. notes available in www.orientamento.it/risorse/parsons.htm, last access 6 January 2012.

20 Parsons, *op.cit*., p. 45

21 Parsons, (op.cit., p. 46) notes that investigations should focus on: (1) lists and classifications of industries and vocations, (2) the conditions of success in the various vocations, (3) general and up-to-date information about the industries, (4) available apprenticeship systems and opportunities, (5) the available vocational courses in the person's region and country, (6) employment agencies and opportunities.

regarding world and national maritime labour force, capital investment in the industry in various regions or worldwide (showing for instance, the number of establishments, number of workers, salaries paid). It is apparent that the decision making for the selection of a career requires a thorough analysis of the individual's personality, life and social environment (internal factors), as well as the conditions of the working environment (external factors); the latter includes the micro and macro working environment, i.e. the vessel and the maritime industry respectively and will be analysed in Chapter 3.

3 Review of factors affecting the choice of the seafaring profession

A number of studies have underlined the shortage of qualified seafarers for the world shipping industry. The shortage of seagoing personnel, especially among OECD countries and Europe, led some researchers into the examination of the factors that affect a person's choice to follow the seafaring occupation. Some surveys focused on European or OECD seagoing personnel, while others on certain nationalities of seafarers. More than 10 years ago, the project on "Harmonisation of European Maritime Education and Training Schemes-METHAR"[22] identified a serious decline of interest of young people in seafaring and an insufficient supply of ship officers from EU countries. Following the METHAR research the European Commission funded the project on "Thematic Network on Maritime Education, Training and Mobility of Seafarers-METNET"[23]. METNET revealed that the main reasons for young people not choosing seafaring as a career include the perception the candidates have regarding the career prospects of the occupation, both onboard and ashore, the long times spent away from home, friends and relatives, as well as the negative image of the shipping industry. Moreover, an assumed uncertainty of employment for this occupation, and the perceived insufficient financial reward in comparison to the expected workload and hardship onboard were also underlined. The expected living conditions onboard, especially in terms of foreign and culturally diverse crew, also seemed to play a negative role in the attractiveness of the occupation. Finally, the technical profile of the occupation and the low social acceptance and low prestige of the ship officer's profession in most countries of the European Union were also mentioned as important reasons for not choosing the seafaring occupation.
The "Mapping of career paths in the maritime industries"[24] was a study aiming to provide an overview and/or global estimates of the possible and actual career

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22 METHAR (2000)
23 METNET (2003)
24 Southampton Solent University (2005)

paths of seafarers, the demand for seafarer's manpower requirements at sea and in relevant shore-based maritime industries, and the barriers to the mobility of qualified seafarers between the sectors. Findings showed that the most significant reasons for an individual's choice of a seafaring career was the location of home or place of upbringing, influence from the family, perception for good career prospects, a long-term interest in the sea and the chance to travel the world. Further, an important reason for staying at sea was found to be the person's long-held ambition to become a sailor, and a strong appreciation of the job and the seafaring life. Moreover, fast promotion to higher rank, and a parallel increase in pay were very influential in the decision to take up a maritime career. Finally, another important factor mentioned was the relationship between employer/shipowner and employee/seafarer. Especially officers, who mostly enjoy permanent contracts with shipping companies, may be more committed to their employers and, therefore, have a higher retention rate at sea industries[25]. The results showed that among the most common factors influencing the decision to search for a profession ashore were pressure from the family and a commitment to pursue a sudden job opportunity. Other reasons mentioned focused on difficult social conditions onboard (caused by small number of crew, cultural differences, stress and long hours of work) and generally fatigue and loneliness.

In the frame of the study on the "Future global supply and demand for seafarers and possible measures to facilitate stakeholders to secure a quantity of quality seafarers"[26], a survey among a large sample of maritime students in six countries[27] was conducted, with the aim to examine what attracts young people to the shipping industry and to the seafarer's profession. Results showed that despite the broad belief that the promotion of the importance of seafaring life and shipping from a young age is effective, only 1/3 of the respondents had had such knowledge prior beginning their studies in Maritime Universities/ Marine Academies. The majority of the students did however state that they had had the ambition to become seafarers from the time they were high school students. It is worth noting that almost 1/5 of them changed their minds after attending nautical/ maritime courses. The majority's motives to become sailors were the expected satisfying compensation, perceived good working conditions and perceived high status of the shipping industry.
Respondents were negatively influenced by factors such as lack of freedom onboard and celebrating holidays onboard. The main reason for wanting to move to a land-based work in the future was the family[28].

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25 *Ibid.*, p. 15

26 Japan International Transport Institute-JITI /The Nippon Foundation (2010)

27 Survey was conducted in twelve maritime institutions based in India, Croatia, Norway, Japan, Republic of Korea and the Philippines.

28 JITI/The Nippon Foundation *op.cit.*, p. 15

The "Young Seafarers' Focus Group"[29] consisted of young seafarers of seven different nationalities and aimed to give them the opportunity to express their views on their career and life at sea, and on what attracts and retains them to the shipping industry. Results showed that the main reasons for going to sea were considered to be the salary and related tax frame, family tradition, and the opportunity to see the world. Moreover, the seafarer's lifestyle, which includes hard work but long breaks, paid vacation (leave pay) and short contracts. For some of the participants seafaring offers job opportunities and was considered challenging and interesting work. Further, seafaring was believed to attract more practical people, while the person needs to experience life onboard before spending time on academic education[30]. In the question whether these students consider seafaring a career for life, they mentioned the obstacle of hard work, which is believed to be unsuitable to older age, as well as the job insecurity stemming from the contractual character of the occupation (contract workers). Finally, a positive influential factor for seafaring as a career was considered to be the family tradition, while the creation of family was mentioned as a difficulty for women who wish the seafaring career.

The European Community Shipowners Association's report on "Enhancing recruitment and training in the maritime sector in Europe"[31] presented results of a questionnaire survey on the reasons why young people choose careers at sea. The factors that were marked by ECSA members as important in encouraging young people to apply for maritime training places included: the knowledge that officer salaries are attractive, long leave periods, availability of future jobs at shore in the maritime cluster, the wish to work in a non office-restricted environment, influence by an acquaintance (family member or friend) who already worked at sea, sponsored or partially paid training, the attractiveness of travel opportunities, the limited availability of jobs ashore and the insufficient qualifications of the young people to find a job ashore[32]. In addition to these results, the report also presented the respective results from a survey among young Filipinos[33]. The reasons for Filipinos to apply for maritime training included: the good pay conditions, sponsored training, perceived good work in an international environment, the opportunity to travel, personal liking for ships and sea, recommendations by family or friends, unavailability of the preferred first career option or other job options.

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29 INTERTANKO/ITF (2009)
30 INTERTANKO/ITF *op.cit.*, p. 5
31 ECSA (2010)
32 *Ibid.*, p. 15-16
33 Dearsley, D.A. (2010), cited in ECSA *op.cit.*, p. 15

A survey from the largest seafarers' labour supplying country, the Philippines[34], showed that seafarers view their job as a way 'out of poverty', but are also attracted to a career at sea. While Filipino seafarers came mostly from poor rural backgrounds, the love of a career at sea also was uppermost among their reasons[35]. In the analysis of the respondents' answers (both officers and ratings), it was revealed that they choose the profession mainly for economic and financial reasons (to offer a better life to their families, offer education to their siblings or children, or pay a loan). The motive to go to sea is quite strong among Filipino seafarers, despite the expected difficulties and risks associated with work at sea, because ''they have no choice, there are very few economically attractive job opportunities''[36]. A small part of the respondents justified their choice based on their family's (parents or relatives) having the same occupation or to the family's advice and guidance to follow this occupation. Only a few of the Filipino respondents mentioned the adventurous profile of the occupation as a motive and others the relationship they had had with the sea from a young age.

A survey among Greek students in Marine Academies[37] aimed to examine the anthropological and social profile of the young people that choose to attend courses in shipping and maritime studies, their motives, the source of information about the Greek Marine Academies and their career development. The majority of the respondents had the belief that they originate from a land with a maritime tradition, and acknowledged the employment prospects in the field of shipping, especially in the place of their origin. The survey revealed that only a minor percentage of the students' parents were also graduates of Greek Marine Academies and that the vast majority of the students' parents did not have any relation with the maritime and shipping industry, thus family tradition in seafaring was not an influential factor. The personal interest in shipping, the expected good future career potentials and the good reputation of the Marine Academy were the main reasons for their choice. The main source of information regarding studies in Marine Academies came from the respondents' acquaintances (friends and relatives), and less from the campaign for the promotion of the seafarer's profession.

Most of the respondents had an established career ambition to become merchant marine officers, also supported by their statement that following the first months of the students' attendance to the courses, the majority wished to continue their studies until graduation.

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34 Amante M.S.V. (2003)
35 *Ibid.,* p. 19
36 *Ibid.,* p. 20
37 Pallis, T./Bissias, I. (2011)