

**THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES ON CRUISE SHIPS:
THE REALITIES OF THE ROLES AND RELATIONS OF THE HR
FUNCTION**

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Thomas Schlingemann

Alliance Manchester Business School

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ABSTRACT

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Thomas Schlingemann

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The Management of Human Resources on Cruise Ships: The Realities of the Roles and Relations of the HR Function

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This thesis aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of human resource management (HRM) within cruise ship organizations. The cruise ship industry is one of the fastest developing sectors within the tourism industry. Therefore, it should come as little surprise that the demand for seafaring human resources has also grown. Assuming that effective management of crew members is key to the effective operation of cruise ships, the specifics and challenges for HRM in this particular organisational context are identified and analysed as well as the realities of the roles and relations of the shipboard HR function examined.

The present study is original in its theoretical approach, as it brings two approaches together which obviously are not linked. Ulrich's model talks about roles and the study used aspects of this framework in terms of the position of HRM. Goffman's concept of total institutions was also consulted in order to frame internal business-specific conditions and social relations. The combination of both approaches allows for the examination of HR roles and professional relations in a much more detailed and contextualised manner.

The cruise industry is acknowledged as being under-researched, and this is all the more true for research on HRM in this specific sector. Therefore, the nature of the research in this study is empirical and framed within an explorative approach. The analysis is based on a single case study within one cruise ship owner company, in which 23 semi-structured interviews were performed; there is also the use of ethnographic fieldnotes recorded during a three-month assignment on one of the company's cruise ships.

The thesis contributes to the existing literature in three ways. Firstly, the research analyses shoreside HR and how it is coping with various business-specific challenges, i.e. high growth rates, a high demand for new cruise ship employees, high turnover rates of crew members and a distinctive context of ethnic and national diversity. The analysis reveals that the HRM approach of the cruise ship owner company could be characterised as generally reactive and short-term in focus, a pure strategic orientation is absent.

Secondly, the thesis examines the content of shipboard HR work. The study reveals that the main focus of the shipboard HR function is on tactical HR work, especially training and development, employee relations, and advisory role in relation to shipboard leaders. The shipboard HR role includes HR activities that are not usually provided by HR business partners, such as the facilitation of training. This and the intense liaison between the shipboard HR function and its shoreside HR partners make shipboard HR work somewhat unique. Whereas a huge amount of transactional HR work does not necessarily add value to the business, strategic HR work is practically non-existent on cruise ships.

Finally, the thesis examines the realities of HR roles and relations on board cruise ships. The analysis demonstrated that HRM on board cruise ships can currently be summarised as reactive and short-term in focus, and the strategic partner role is practically non-existent. It is more a series of functions with different stakeholders contributing to it in a variety of ways and with overlap in terms of task executions. This shared nature of HR adds complexity to the HRM approach. Furthermore, strong influential links from shoreside HR were identified, which undermines the ability of the shipboard HR function to become a stronger partner of the business. Nevertheless, the analysis revealed the potential in this specific sector for enhancements and for the further development of HRM on cruise ships.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The arena of the research topic

The cruise ship industry has experienced phenomenal growth rates. Within the tourism industry it is one of the fastest developing sectors with an average annual increase in passengers of more than 7% for the past 20 years (Terry, 2011, p. 662; Schemmann, 2012, p. 154). The demand for its seafaring human resource element, which includes nautical and technical personnel to run the cruise ship as well as hotel and entertainment personnel to serve the guests, has been growing steadily. The demand is not only caused by an increasing number of cruise ships. As cruise ship owner companies seek to increase revenue, the size of cruise ships has grown, too. Today, most cruise ships carry between 2,000 and 3,000 passengers together with on average 700 to 1,500 crew members, but very large or megaships can carry up to 5,400 passengers and over 2,100 crew members (Terry, 2011, p. 662).

In order to remain competitive, emphasis has been placed on labour costs within overall operational financial management of cruise ship owner companies. Supported by a radical change in the maritime world's registration in the last 60 years towards flagging oceanic vessels to open registers established by non-traditional maritime flag states, known as 'flags of convenience' (Chin, 2008, p. 3; Alderton and Winchester, 2002, p. 36), global recruitment especially of contract seafarers has become free from national labour market constraints, leading to extended hiring of cruise ships' crew from cheaper labour supply countries, especially from developing economies in Central/South America and Southeast Asia, and a globalised seafarers' labour market over the past 30 years (Sampson and Zhao, 2003, p. 32; Sampson and Bloor, 2007, p. 554; Sampson, 2013, p. 752). Today a common cruise ship regularly hosts a crew comprising dozens of different nationalities (Terry, 2011, p. 661).

As the cruise industry is acknowledged as being under-researched (Gibson and Papathanassis, 2010, p. 405), this is all the more true for research on human resource management (HRM) within this specific sector. Cruise industry is specific as it can be allocated as a sector to the tourism industry in which it is frequently denoted as a small sector of it (Gibson and Papathanassis, 2010, p. 405), but also it can be seen as a small sector of a larger shipping industry with its numerous number of sectors and sub-sectors, e.g. merchant marine, navy, ship building, cruise industry, and other sectors (Parsa, 2008, p. 8).

Research on HRM in the hotel industry is scarce at the time of writing (Yang, 2007, p. 2). A search in UK's national thesis service EThOS (Electronic Theses Online

Service) produced only a few documents specifically targeting HRM in the hotel industry (Esichaikul, 1996; Gannon, 2007; Giousmpasoglou, 2012; Gould-Williams, 1999; Halim, 2001; Hoque, 1997; Lee, 2012; Naama, 2007; Newnham, 2010; Nickson, 2000; Pan, 2007; Papavasileiou, 2013; Peixoto, 2007; Singh Jassel, 2012; Suryani, 2012; Wang, 2008)¹. The results show even less research documents when searching for HRM in the shipping industry. Only three theses were found for this subject area (Dennett, 2013; Menelaou, 2011; Parsa, 2008) and a search for HRM in the cruise industry produced only one result (Zhao, 2011)².

There is a wealth of literature concerning international maritime shipping industry and human resource issues. A comprehensive collection of international maritime HR literature was compiled and made accessible by Wagtmann (2010). Another rich source of literature is the Seafarers International Research Centre, a part of the Cardiff University School of Social Sciences, which was established in 1995 with a view to conducting research on seafarers (SIRC, 2015). Much of the literature relates to the merchant shipping sector, and where the cruise industry is concerned, it relates mainly to shoreside HRM issues like recruiting, labour market and seafarer shortage, and to a lesser extent to seafarer issues like health, status, protection and diversity. The management of human resources in the cruise industry is not explicitly the focus of the literature here.

This thesis is even more limited in its subject area as it is about HRM on cruise ships. Although this organisational form is linked to the cruise ship owner company, the shoreside organisation was not the primary focus here. The subject area here does also not encompass HRM on other type of vessels. Cruise ships are unique in the way that the number of crew by far outnumbers that of other type of vessels, which makes it a very unique environment.

At the end of the 1990s the first cruise ship owner companies started to introduce a separate shipboard HR officer position on their cruise ships. This development occurred mainly to relieve certain shipboard positions from HR related operational tasks due to increasing responsibilities and demands within their core duties. The cruise ship industry also experienced a steep growing demand of seafarers and at the same time expanded recruitment efforts within a globalising seafarers' labour market. These developments persuaded over the years more and more cruise ship owner companies to introduce enhanced HRM approaches onto their cruise ships.

¹ Key words for the search: HRM Hotel; Human Resource Management Hotel; Human Resource Hotel; Personnel Management Hotel.

² Key words for the search: HRM Shipping; Human Resource Management Shipping; Human Resource Shipping; Personnel Management Shipping; Management Cruise.

Today, most of the large cruise ship owner companies have already installed a separate shipboard HR function on most of their cruise ships.

Over the past two decades the most important academic discussion within the field of HR strategy has been on the relationship of HR practices and firm performance, which also had a remarkable influence on management practice (Kaufman, 2010, p. 615; Becker and Huselid, 2006, p. 921). Many modern organisations emphasise the importance their employees have for them by quoting what is now a fairly common phrase, calling them their 'most valuable asset' (Guest, 1991, p. 165). The importance of companies' internal human resources becomes apparent in the following quote: 'Growing acceptance of internal resources as sources of competitive advantage brought legitimacy to HR's assertion that people are strategically important to firm success' (Wright et al., 2001, p. 702). Considering the aforementioned large number of crew members on modern cruise ships, it is rather surprising from today's perspective that such a separate HR function on cruise ships has not been set up earlier that goes beyond administration and training towards HR services.

The organisational context in focus is unique in many aspects compared to traditional organisational settings. A cruise ship sailing (what it is doing most of the time from afternoon/evening to the next morning at least) is physically isolated not only from the other parts of the company it belongs to, but also from the outside world until it hits port again (Brownell, 2008, p. 139). In this mobile environment crew members find limited possibilities for social interaction with the outside world. It is an organisation that encompasses crew members' time and interests to an extended degree. Authority and hierarchy is clearly defined in a rather militaristic form, which finds staff on board working and living in an environment that compares to the definition of 'total institution' as described by Goffman (1961). 'Due to this feature of the industry', as Klikauer and Morris (2003, p. 544) summarised it, 'strategic and human resource management has a mobile dimension not shared by the general run of manufacturing and transport industries'.

Unique features that influence HRM on cruise ships can also be derived from the nature of the staff and the unique requirements of the work on a ship. An obvious effect of the extended use of the globalised labour market for seafarers is that one finds nowadays a highly diversified crew, with sometimes over fifty different nationalities on board sharing the restricted space. For many, English is not their first language, but it is usually the shipboard language amongst international crew. This and also the plurality of values, cultures, attitudes and experiences impact the nature of interpersonal relationships (Brownell, 2008, p. 140). Then there is the

continuous rotation, caused by differing contract length from two to ten months for different positions and even among seafarers of different origin, with lengthy breaks, and different embarkation dates. And crew members often work long hours compared to usual shoreside employment, as to serve the guests cruise ships usually operate twenty-four hours a day seven days a week (24/7) with no day off for crew members.

The outline above constitutes briefly the arena, conflicts of interests, and tensions within the chosen topic of research. But the interplay between organisational context, HRM and organisational roles and relations on cruise ships has not been the subject of academic research so far; a gap that should be closed with the present study.

1.2 Introducing key theories

My interest here is on exploring the application of HRM within the cruise ship environment, or more precisely on cruise ships, and the realities of the roles and relationships involved in the shipboard HR function. This interest needs to be grounded in some theory, and there are two that are important as an original feature of the present research, namely Goffman's concept of total institutions and Ulrich's HR role model. However, before some of the important theories for the present study are briefly introduced, the meaning of HRM should be determined in order to understand the boundaries of the field.

HRM gained mainstream acceptance as an approach towards people management in the 1980s. It offered a new agenda as a substitute for industrial relations and personnel management (Collings and Wood, 2009, p. 7). However, a definition for HRM is more difficult to determine. The British debate, initially focused on the distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' models of HRM (Legge, 1995; Storey, 1989), views it as a contested domain with no consensus. Compared with personnel management and industrial relations, Storey (1992) identified 27 differences with HRM. The later approach mostly comprises less bureaucracy with an increased importance of strategic HRM as a way to success, more integration with business objectives, and a critical role for line managers (Storey, 1992).

There is no intention here to explore the concept of HRM in depth or to establish a new, all-embracing definition. Instead, the assumption of Marchington and Wilkinson (2008) should be followed that HRM is not a specific model but rather a field of study that is concerned with the 'management of employment, incorporating individual and collective relations, the whole range of HR practices

and processes, line management activities and those of HR specialists'. Furthermore, it experiences 'influences from a range of different stakeholder interests' and aims 'to enhance the contribution of HRM practices to performance' (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2008, p. 40-41). The aspect of HR specialists' activities leads to the first main concept used here.

Over the last two decades the roles of HR departments and HR specialists have experienced vast changes. One of the more prominent researchers that has reported and analysed these changes and developed a new influential typology of the HR department is Dave Ulrich (1997). His typology of strategic partner, administrative expert, employee champion, and change agent made a considerable impact within the academic community of HRM and beyond. There are a number of models classifying the types of HR specialists (e.g. Legge, 1978; Storey, 1992; Reilly, 2000). They all are useful in many ways, but rather simplify the complex role HR professionals often have to play, which might need adaptation or considerable change in different contexts or times. Still, the model allows us to understand the different roles HR can take when not used in a too normative way, as reality reveals it to be more complex. The fact that the organisational structure is not considered here seems to be an inherent weakness in the HRM field of research.

The more formal, militaristic organisational structure (hierarchy) on vessels indicate a bureaucratic organisation for the nautical/technical branch of cruise ships (Brownell, 2008, p. 140). Assigning the cruise ship organisation to a highly rigid and bureaucratic form on a scale that contains on the other end of forms contemporary business organisations that feature a highly flexible and, to use Henry Mintzberg's evocative term, 'adhocratic' form, might appear correct at first sight, but in cultural and moral terms most organisations today are hybrid forms situated between both ends of the scale (Hendry, 2006, pp. 270-271). The hierarchical structure that can be found on every commercial vessel together with an authority factor is one of the general characteristics of the next theoretical concept.

The cruise ship for crew members is a place to work and live. It is a social institution that entails characteristics that build internal contextual factors. Here, Goffman's (1957) concept of total institutions was consulted to get a much more detailed understanding of the factors that affect life on board cruise ships and the management of its human resources. The concept especially helps to explain the results regarding the nature of HRM on board and thereby offers a more solid social grounding to HRM theory. The combination of Goffman's concept and Ulrich's model in the present study is original and an important feature as it allows us to examine

HR roles and professional relations on board cruise ships in a much more detailed and contextualised manner.

1.3 The aim and research questions of this thesis

The argument here is that there is a need for empirical studies with an explorative approach that contribute to a deeper understanding of HRM within cruise ship organisations. Therefore, the overall aim of the research reported in this thesis is 'to explore HRM, HR roles and their relationships in cruise ship organisations. More specifically, to identify and analyse the specifics and challenges for HRM in this particular organisational context as well as the realities of the roles and relations of the shipboard HR function'.

The aforementioned overall aim for this research is broad and needs further specification. However, within the initial phase of the research process it served as a useful guidance and was critical in order to set and keep the direction of the research, which is rather explorative in its character (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 536). While the research was conducted further and I delved into the research topic, different and more differentiating themes emerged as being important for the understanding of HRM in cruise ship organisations. Examples of these themes are characteristics and specifics of the work settings such as temporal employment, round-the-clock operation or the closely linked working and living environment, a highly diverse workforce that was, for whatever reason, willing to work far from home for an extended period of time, focal points within HR practices like leadership development or employee relations, and changing roles and responsibilities of shipboard line managers following the implementation and development of the shipboard HR function. These themes lead to initial research questions as outlined below:

1. How has the cruise ship owner company developed its HRM approach to deal with specific problems and issues in the quite challenging cruise industry environment?
2. What HR activities dominate in cruise ship organisations and what specifics do they entail in light of the cruise ship environment?
3. How are HRM related roles on cruise ships shaped and how do they relate to each other?

These initial research questions served to build three thematic clusters to be investigated in an inductive approach. Following the review of literature, more precise research questions emerged that narrowed down the broader research

questions into more specific and focused topics, and connected these topics to certain theory outlined in the literature review chapters. This resulted in the following seven research questions that provide the basis for the analysis and discussion chapters:

On the nature of HRM in a cruise ship owner company, including its response to contextual conditions (initial research question 1):

- Q1: How has the cruise ship owner company set up specific HR strategies, policies and procedures in response to contextual conditions?
- Q2: How is the shoreside HR function set up to cope with the specifics of the cruise ship context?
- Q3: What is the distinctive role of the shoreside HR function?

On the nature of HR activities onboard cruise ships (initial research question 2):

- Q4: What are the core HR services of the shipboard HR function to support the shipboard operation and what core HR services does the business expect?
- Q5: What specific characteristics do transactional, tactical and strategic HR activities encompass within the cruise ship environment?

On the nature of HR related roles and relations on cruise ships (initial research question 3):

- Q6: What different roles do the HR function on board entail and what characteristics do these roles have within the cruise ship environment?
- Q7: How is the shipboard HR function perceived by the interviewees and what characterises the collaboration of line management with the HR function?

These questions on the nature of HRM in a cruise ship owner company including its response to contextual conditions, the nature of the HR activities onboard cruise ships, and the nature of HR related roles and relations on cruise ships - informed by relevant HRM theory (chapter 2), aspects of the cruise industry and the company used in the case study (chapter 3), and organisation theory and characteristics of cruise ship's human resources (chapter 4) – form the basis for the research design (chapter 5) and provide the framework for the analysis and discussion on shoreside HR responding to contextual conditions (chapter 6), HR activities and their characteristics (chapter 7), and realities of shipboard HR roles and relations (chapter 8).

1.4 Research methodology

In addition to literature and internal documents, the primary basis of this research are semi-structured interviews and ethnographic fieldnotes, which I recorded during a three-month assignment as HR professional on board a cruise ship with the cruise ship owner company under consideration. The process of gathering primary data took place in 2011. The nature of the research question, which aims to investigate the 'why' and the 'how' of the phenomenon, in this case the application of HRM in cruise ship organisations and its challenges, HR roles and relations, had to utilise a qualitative approach (Yin, 1994). The research strategy basically followed an inductive approach due to the minimum amount of academic literature relating to the research questions and an under-researched field both in shipping and HRM.

1.5 Overview of content

The study consists of nine chapters, following a widely accepted model of presenting doctoral work (Perry, 1998). In the next chapter the focus is on HRM theory, where the organisational context of HRM, the development of this academic field with different approaches and theories, theoretical frameworks within HRM, and roles of the HR function will be outlined and discussed by reviewing relevant literature. The specific context of the tourism industry, the cruise industry, relevant institutional regulations, and cruise ship operating companies including the company used in the case study are outlined in chapter 3. The object of this research, the cruise ship, is then at the core of this study in chapter 4 in regards to organisational structuring and hierarchy, the cruise ship as a total institution, and role theory on roles in a sociological sense. A focus on cruise ship's human resources, influential factors for choosing a profession, diversity, and a seamen's relation to the outside world comes into focus next.

Chapter 5 explains the methodology used for this study and the overall research process. It begins with outlining philosophical assumptions that explain the choice of the research approach. Then it encompasses the overall aim of the research and the research questions, before the overall design of the study as well as the methodology used is described. It follows an outline of the research process and finally some ethical considerations.

Chapter 6 analyses the motivations behind working in the seafaring profession, before the key HR activities of recruiting and selection, retention, and career management are examined in order to identify how shoreside HR is responding to

contextual conditions. In chapter 7 an assessment of HR activities that was conducted in the example cruise ship owner company is discussed, before characteristics of transactional, tactical and strategic HR activities are critically reviewed. Chapter 8 analyses the data in regards to the realities of shipboard HR roles and relations. The different roles the HR function conducts are discussed, then responsibilities for HR activities of different shipboard roles, before the collaboration of shipboard leaders with the shipboard HR function is in the focus. The last chapter summarises the main findings, provides the theoretical implications, outlines the strength and limitations of the present study, explains the significance and relevance for practice, and makes suggestions for future research.

2 INTRODUCING RELEVANT HRM THEORY

2.1 Introduction

As already indicated in the introductory chapter, the cruise ship industry has been recording one of the highest growth rates within the tourism industry for decades now, which makes it an interesting component of this sector. According to this trend, the cruise ship industry's demand for seafaring human resources is growing. Within this unique organisational context of cruise ships, assuming that effective management of these seafaring human resources has a key role to play in the effective operation of cruise ships, the management of human resources on cruise ships is of particular interest.

It was also pointed out in the previous chapter that while there is some literature on HRM in the hotel industry, literature on HRM in the shipping industry is scarce, with even less in the cruise ship sector. This deficiency in the literature serves as an even more powerful incentive for conducting the present study. But as there is no specific literature to build on, we have to refer back to common literature on HRM theory in order to create a basis on which the analysis rests. Whilst this is first and foremost a chapter on theoretical foundations, and the cruise ship sector is dealt with later, occasionally I will provide cross-references with the specific sector.

HRM is not something that takes place in isolation; it is rather embedded in complex and changing organisational contexts. Therefore it is necessary to gain an understanding on influences and interdependencies that organisational context has on HRM approaches in general, and how a cruise ship organisation can be characterised in regards to its organisational context. Due to space limitations, first the aspect of globalisation will be discussed, before flexibility and fragmentation of work comes into focus.

HRM is a central concept within contemporary management research that became popular when the HRM perspective emerged in the beginning of the 1980s out of personnel management. Therefore the objective of the second core section is to gain an understanding of the nature of HRM and an insight into for this study relevant personnel management and HRM approaches. First, some early approaches within personnel management are presented and debated, and then an understanding of the developments that led to the emergence of HRM is outlined. Furthermore, the academic debate about similarities and differences of personnel management and HRM are of interest, before the different theoretical HRM approaches are outlined and discussed, like the Michigan and the Harvard approach, and the hard and soft approach to HRM. Another important debate within

the field of HRM that will be reviewed here is strategic HRM, which focuses on HRM's contribution to business success. As the section focuses on the manifold roots and contents of the HRM perspective, it serves as a theoretical source on which the specific research rests.

The main focus within HRM research over the last few decades has been on the contribution HRM can provide towards the success and performance of the organisation. Therefore, some important theories in the field of HRM, that reflect basic assumptions for the specific HRM research, have to be discussed here. First, the resource-based view that links internal resources of organisations with strategy in order to gain competitive advantage should be examined, before four different perspectives on HRM that link the latter with organisational strategy and performance are reviewed. These theoretical frameworks that explain and predict the contribution of HRM to gain competitive advantage and organisational performance and which as believed here complement each other, reflect the basic assumptions of the present research.

The role and influence of the HR function has been extensively discussed over recent years with an ongoing debate centred around the important roles HR should play as well as a scepticism in HR's ability to contribute. A key question here is whether the HR function can become more business-oriented and a contributor to strategy and organisational performance. As the study of HRM on board cruise ships will examine the different shipboard roles and their contribution to HR work, HRM literature on different roles of the HR function needs to be looked at. First, a variety of conceptual models will be presented, and then the ambiguities and conflicts of interest of HR roles will be examined.

2.2 The organisational context of HRM

2.2.1 Introduction

Before presenting HRM with its contemporary strategic focus, the integration with line management and its individual orientation, the complex and changing organisational contexts need to be taken into account here in order to get a better understanding of what drives the development and implementation of appropriate HR strategies and practices in the short, medium and long terms. This is important in order to address issues arising from these circumstances. The importance of the external context can be explained by the fact that all HR activities are socially embedded in their wider, institutional, external contexts, and that organisations are

required to adapt their internal organisational structures and behaviours in response to external forces (see Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003, p. 1; Farnham, 2010, p. 19).

The external context in which organisations operate is not static. Developments such as globalisation and advances in technological sophistication, but also the changing nature of work have a major influence not only on the structure adapted by organisations but also on the location both of the organisation and where the work is conducted by its employees (see Clarke and Clegg, 2000, p. 4; Rubery et al., 2002, p. 645). More and more alternative forms of organisations emerge nowadays such as virtual organisations, network organisations or strategic alliances as a response to changing economic, ecological and social conditions. The nature of work, as well as the relationship between employees and their organisation, is also dramatically altering as a consequence of increased use of such alternative forms such as contingent workers or consultancy partnerships, as well as from core and non-core employees (Colakoglu et al., 2006, p. 209).

This section about organisational context is structured in two parts. First, the focus is on globalisation, and in the second sub-section flexibility and fragmentation of work is discussed. The aim is to demonstrate that organisational context have a variety of influences and interdependencies. It is a determining element for a business strategy, but also for the structure of the organisation and the location where the work is conducted. The emerging trends of globalisation and the changing nature of work not only fundamentally influence structure and location of organisations and the operation performed by its different employee groups, but also have a significant impact on strategic HRM including HR roles and HR practices (Colakoglu et al., 2006, p. 210). Therefore HRM on cruise ships cannot be discussed without awareness of organisational context, as any HRM approach as well as the employment relationship is linked to it.

2.2.2 Globalisation

Frequently cited from Castells (2001, p. 52) is the half-sentence that globalisation is widely recognised as a fundamental feature of our time. He further justifies this with the emergence of global financial markets, which accelerated in the late 1980s in conjunction with the deregulation and liberalisation of financial trading. Managing the complexity brought in by deregulation and financial ingenuity was made possible through new technology allowing capital mobility quasi instantaneous around the world and between different segments of the financial industry (Castells,

2001, p. 52). The extent of the internationalisation of investment is well illustrated by figure 1 below on foreign direct investment (FDI).

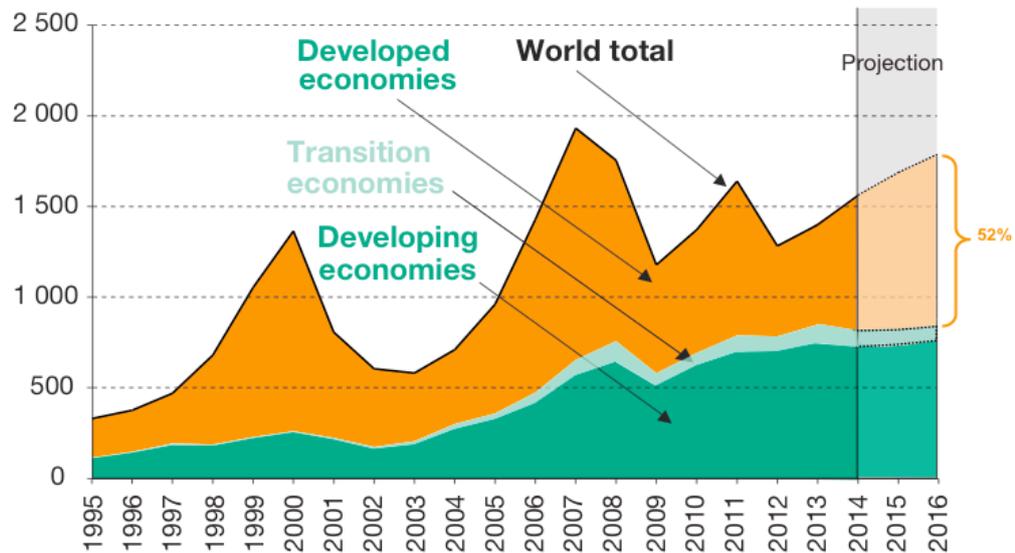


Figure 1 FDI inflows, global and by group of economies, 1995-2013 and projections, 2014-2016 (Billions of dollars).

Source: UNCTAD (2014b, p. xiii & p. 2), © 2014 United Nations. Reprinted with the permission of the United Nations.

Additionally the fundamental role of transnational corporations (TNCs) which today account for 25% of the world gross domestic product (GDP) demonstrate the increasing importance of global companies (see Martínez Lucio, 2013, pp. 19-20).

There are numerous theories that explain the determinants of international trade and existence of multinational corporations. Adam Smith for example argued that whenever location and labour advantages enables a country to produce a product cheaper than other countries, then division of labour between countries occurs (Ingham, 2004, p. 11). The Heckscher-Ohlin model, an extension of the former theory, is based on the factor endowments of a trading region, so that countries will export products that use their abundant and cheap factors of production (land, labour, and/or capital), but import products that use the countries' scarce factors (Blaug, 1992, p. 185). These theories explain that organisations will continue to move their operations and sales beyond their national borders as long as they benefit from globalisation.

There are a variety of reasons for organisations to enter into new markets. They might just want to offer their products in local markets and engage in sales and marketing of these products, while some operations have a much broader value-

added and product scope within a multinationals' network, up to a world mandate role of the foreign subsidiary that provides certain expertise to the rest of the multinational company with minimal local interface (Birkinshaw and Morrison, 1995, p. 734).

How multinational corporations conduct business as a whole has been dealt with in a number of concepts and competing theories (see e.g. the hierarchy model of multinational corporations by Hedlund (1993), his heterarchy model (Hedlund, 1986), the categorisation of multinational corporations by Bartlett and Ghoshal (1989), Perlmutter's (1969) distinction between ethnocentric, polycentric, and geocentric multinational corporations, the typology of 'isomorphic pressures' by Ferner and Quintanilla (1998), and Edwards' et al. (2007) integrative approach).

The discussion of these concepts and competing theories demonstrates how complex it is for a company to act globally, first in relation to its internal strategic decisions about HR styles and practices at subsidiaries, and second in relation to cultural, political and operational contexts in which it operates. When seeking to explain how HRM and HR practices are implemented in the subsidiaries of multinational corporations, these internal and external forces must be taken into account. This leads to the consequent question how the cruise ship organisation can be characterised in this respect.

Cruise ship owner companies are global organisations by nature, as their subsidiaries, the cruise ships, usually operate in international waters. But as they only touch local markets during short visits, they do not need to respond to them. Autonomy in operational decision-making is very limited and rather centralised at the parent company. On the whole, cruise ship organisations, employing officer and ratings from around the world, are geocentric, only where guest language needs to be considered, an ethnocentric tendency can be assumed within management. The HRM approach is situated between corporate and inter-corporate isomorphism, as international regulations add to corporate policies and practices.

In the introduction to this section it was noticed that there are many factors that influence organisation structure, for example, developments within the external context of organisations such as the aforementioned globalisation but also the changing nature of work, the location of the organisation and the work conducted by its employees. The next section will take a look into the changing nature of work and the employment relationship, which has changed dramatically over the last few decades.

2.2.3 Flexibility and fragmentation

A widely referred to researcher regarding the issue of workforce and organisational flexibility is Atkinson (1984; 1987), who developed in the mid-1980s an influential model of flexibility, the flexible firm. The model distinguishes between 'core' workers and 'peripheral' workers. Core workers are described as employees with permanent contracts and accordingly high job security, they are well paid and enjoy good career prospects, but they are also expected to be functionally flexible and apply their skills across a wide range of tasks. They will be involved more in key business activities where high levels of skills are required.

The group of peripheral workers is subdivided into a first and a second group. Starting with the second group here, it comprises employees that are recruited as required with contracts that combine functional flexibility with numerical flexibility. Many part-timers and temporary employees fit into this group, but also job sharers, government trainees and short-term contractors. Employment security and career development is lower than for the core group.

The first peripheral group encompasses employees on contracts with some degree of permanence, but they enjoy a low level of job security and even less access to career opportunities. Hired from the secondary labour market for a job where less skills and little training is needed, this group helps the company to achieve numerical and financial flexibility but not functional flexibility like with the second peripheral group. Clearly external to the host organisation the individuals of this group are employed by another employer or self-employed, but offer labour and sometimes also a whole business service to that organisation (e.g. self-employment, sub-contracting, agency workers, and outsourced units). The size of this group has expanded significantly not only because of the offered numerical flexibility which helps to respond to cyclical and unpredictable demand, but also because organisations can outsource labour and employment relations issues and shift risk of recruiting to third parties (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2008, p. 63; Dainty and Loosemore, 2012, p. 204).

There are doubts, however, how extensive the 'flexible firm' really is in reality today (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2008, p. 64). Despite this the model outlines the possibilities of organisations to develop more flexible employment policies and practices. And as already mentioned above new organisational forms are emerging. Classical forms like bureaucracies are being dismantled and replaced by looser, networked organisational forms, alliances, partly contracted-out or franchised organisations, partnerships, or temporary project organisations (Rubery et al., 2002, p. 645; Saracoglu, 2009, p. 8).

The development of these new forms is accompanied with increasingly blurred boundaries between organisations, fragmented work and disordered hierarchical structures (Marchington et al., 2004, p. 1). For employees, fragmentation of work does not necessarily lead to new and better work opportunities but rather to increasing job insecurity, as it might get harder to cope with the improved performance expectations promised to customers and clients. Especially in project- and short-term employments where discontinuities in employment are common, workers might more and more have to bear the risk of their own career development. The already weaker role of trade unions is becoming further marginalised through the transfer of workers to other organisations. And management and control of staff might become increasingly diffused, as hierarchies get disordered through the growth of inter-organisational relations and increased influence of customers and clients on the management of employment, e.g. through asking for certain staff to be utilised on 'their' contracts, or through the influence of customer-feedback (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2008, pp. 65-67).

The company used in the case study only provides temporary contracts to their cruise ship employees like most of the cruise ship owner companies that operate their cruise ships under flags of convenience. There are some companies that provide permanent contracts at least to their officers and shipboard managers in order to retain this group with high levels of skills. In practice crew members, although employed in a rather classic bureaucratic organisation, are situated between the second peripheral group and the core group, as the cruise ship organisation usually provides a letter of rehire at the end of the contract, assuming the performance was satisfactory. Nevertheless employment security is low, but career development is an essential element here. First peripheral group employees are found in outsourced areas like spa, shops, medical services, and within entertainment, but most of the cruise ship employees belong to the second peripheral group.

2.2.4 Conclusion

The section above illustrates that organisational context is complex and is subject to continuous transformation and change. Due to space limitations developments within the external context have been discussed merely with a focus on globalisation and the changing nature of work due to flexibility of labour as well as fragmentation. Although a complete picture of organisational context could not be given here, the outlined developments show that they have a variety of influences and interdependencies, e.g. on strategy but also on the structure of organisations, on the nature of work and the location it is conducted, on the way human resources

need to be managed, on the relationship between employees and organisations, etc.

It has been shown that the global cruise ship organisation is not linked to local markets and instead rather centralistic in decision-making, geocentric in regards to shipboard management, and that corporate control determines the HRM approach. Employment here is temporary, but some structures of core employment like career development have been identified for the many areas that are not outsourced.

2.3 HRM approaches and theories

2.3.1 Introduction

A central concept within contemporary management research is HRM. The origins of theory on managing people can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century, or even before towards the end of the 19th century, when welfare officers (sometimes called 'welfare secretaries') came into being (Kaufman, 2007, p. 20). In principle, since organisations had to select and recruit people, there has always been a form of personnel management. But in contrast to the past, a consistent emphasis from organisations on the management and development of employees has only just emerged in recent years. A great shift occurred in the beginning of the 1980s when out of 'traditional' personnel management the HRM perspective emerged (Boselie, 2002, p. 9).

The objective of this chapter is to gain an understanding of HRM approaches and theories in this field. The research aims to explore how and why HRM is conducted in the specific cruise ship environment; therefore the concepts that inform the research need to be determined from the variety of different theories and approaches. It is not intended to give an extensive and detailed overview of HRM here. For a more extensive overview an interested reader is referred to Storey (1989), Storey (1992), Storey (2007), Legge (1995), and Schuler and Jackson (1996). The main interest here is to outline trends and main discussions within the academic field of HRM. An understanding of the dynamics and the context of changes within the field allow further determination of where HRM is situated within the specific sector of cruise ship research.

First of all we will be taking a quick look at some earlier developments as they provide some theoretical insights the research is referring to. Then developments that led to the introduction of the concept of HRM in the late 1970s and the

beginning of the 1980s will be outlined before the controversial debate on the differences and similarities of this new approach and personnel management is presented. The interest is then on theoretical perspectives of general models of HRM, the Harvard and the Michigan approach, which leads here to the discussion on the hard versus soft dimension of HRM. The field of research has experienced a move towards a more strategic understanding of HRM, which will then be looked at. Different general approaches to HRM are outlined here and thereby provide a reflection of the basic assumptions of HRM research.

2.3.2 Some earlier developments within personnel management

In the late 19th century and early 20th century with the progression of the industrial revolution, factory mass production became pervasive and large-scale organisation raised. A need for management theories came to pass for better and more efficient ways of manufacturing goods, e.g. bring down costs, increase profitability, and maximise productivity. As a result, influential management theories to improve management practices were developed, for example scientific management by Frederick Taylor, administrative science management by Henri Fayol, and bureaucratic management by Max Weber.

2.3.2.1 The scientific management approach

Scientific management or synonymously called Taylorism (Kanigel, 2005, p. 6) began its development with Frederick W. Taylor. He was the first who applied scientific research methods borrowed from natural sciences to explore human work processes with the goal of increasing economic efficiency and labour productivity. The assumption of his investigation is that employees think and act rationally on purpose and only seek to maximise their economic benefits. The company's ambition on the other side is to use manpower in the most productive way and eliminate all external influences that hinder the realisation of this goal. To improve labour productivity six essential principles were developed within scientific management (see Holtbrügge, 2013, pp. 9-10):

- *Radical division of labour*
- *Separation of planning and operations*
- *Uncoupling of direct and indirect activities*
- *Task-oriented personnel selection and development*
- *Performance-oriented remuneration*
- *Unity of command*

Scientific management made it possible to systematically investigate efficiency of work processes as well as develop measures to increase efficiency in order to

improve productivity, but also to control production workers' behaviours and motivate them (Schuler and Jackson, 1996, p. 19). This had a major impact on the introduction and spread of mass production in the early 20th century. With this in mind, Taylorism is often criticised for its dehumanisation of the workers and the workplace (Kaufman, 2001, p. 512). However, the theory of scientific management and the methods of job analysis and job design have evolved further and the optimisation of work and tasks is nearly ubiquitous in industry today (Wolf, 2012, p. 92). The principles are applied today even in administrative and service areas, e.g. manual routine tasks or work organisation in fast food restaurants (Kieser and Ebers, 2014, p. 130), which can be connected to the hotel arena on cruise ships.

2.3.2.2 The administrative science approach

Henry Fayol (1916/1949) developed nearly contemporaneously to the development of scientific management but independently of it his general theory of business administration (Fayol, 1949). In contrast to the technocratic approach of scientific management with its focus on the task, Fayol was more concerned with management and emphasising the role of the individual manager. His elements of management reflect a managerial behaviour that helps to meet organisational goals and objectives effectively: forecasting and planning, organising, commanding, coordinating, controlling. And the fourteen principles of management serve as guidelines for organisational leadership. With the development of his administrative theory Fayol became one of the founders of a general theory of management, which influenced many modern concepts of management.

While management scientists like Taylor and Fayol placed emphasis on human work processes and principals of management in order to increase organisational efficiency, at roughly the same time the German sociologist Max Weber was interested in describing and assessing the historic shifts from traditional authority regimes to new principles of formal rationality. His approach will be discussed here in more detail as the cruise ship organisation is largely seen as being structured bureaucratically.

2.3.2.3 The bureaucratic management approach

Weber wanted to understand how an organisation could be designed to make it more rational and efficient as it grew larger and more complex (Weber, 1947). He developed a framework of administrative characteristics for what he called bureaucratic structures, a term for a type of formal organisation in which impersonality and rationality dominate in order to attain its goals in the most

efficient way. Weber's characteristics of this type of organisation are briefly outlined below.

Due to him, every position within the organisation has a clear task to perform. Labour is clearly divided among the staff and entails a high degree of specialisation. Specialisation, in turn, asks for experts with advanced technical qualifications to perform the organisational tasks, what determines organisation's recruitment strategy. Employment by the organisation based on the technical qualifications of a candidate therefore needs to disregard any influence of existing friendships, family ties or other (political) connections, leading to a separation of the position from the position holder. Organisational positions are embedded into a hierarchical authority structure of supervision and control, usually taking on a pyramidal shape wherein each official has not only the responsibility for the decisions and actions of his subordinates but also a clearly circumscribed authority over the officials under him. Decisions and actions of officials are governed based on a formal system of rules and regulations, which enables the performance of activities in a predictable and uniform manner, and which ensures stability and continuity in operations regardless of changes of personnel. And finally a formal and impersonal culture of the organisation is fostered. Emotional detachment is expected from officials in their contact with other officials and clients so as to not distort their rational judgment when carrying out their duties, as well as written communication and records to ensure continuity and build up organisational memory (Blau and Scott, 1962, p. 32-33).

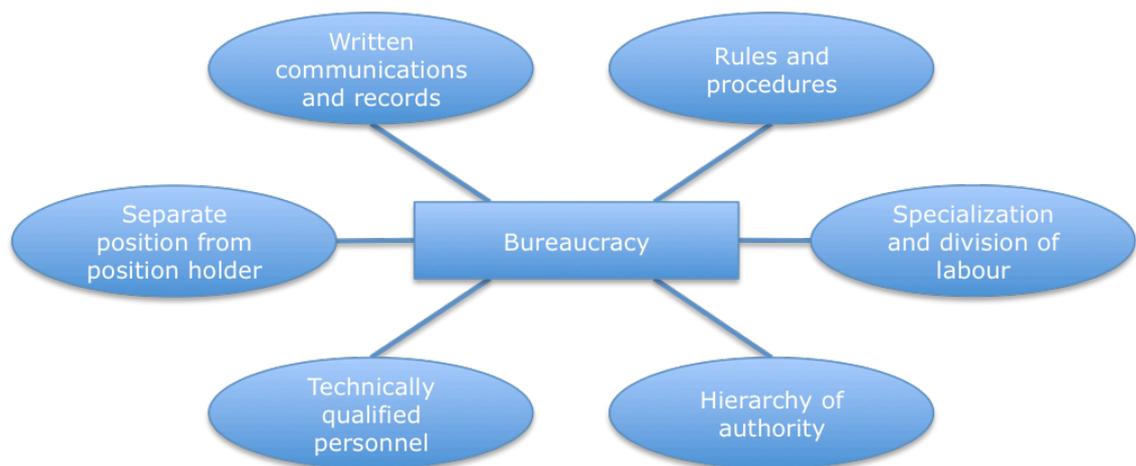


Figure 2 Weber's dimensions of bureaucracy

Source Daft (2010, p. 346); Reproduced with permission of South-Western College Publishing in the format Republish in a thesis/dissertation via Copyright Clearance Center (Order Detail ID: 68369249).

For Weber bureaucracy was the most rational form of institutional governance, which leads to his assumption that because rationalisation in his view was a driving force of society, bureaucracy would increase until it ruled society. His 'ideal type' of bureaucracy, which is not based on empirical analyses but derived from the most characteristic bureaucratic features of all known organisations, is by its very nature likely to attract criticism.

One reason is because of the dilemma of authority. Weber argued that bureaucratic authority is both legitimate because it is rational and derived from formal positions filled on the basis of technical competence. Parsons' (1947) critique is based on the latter argument. He asked if subordinates follow because of superior's knowledge or because of his formal position of authority. He claimed that if both characteristics are not joined and the subordinates possess the greater technical competence, each group could legitimately claim to exercise authority, leading to instability and ambiguity as well as violation of normative foundations of bureaucracy (Parsons, 1947, p. 58-61).

Gouldner (1954) questioned if obedience of subordinates is based on the rationality argument to achieve goals efficiently or on an obligation to obey the commands of those in higher positions. While in the first case compliance is perceived as the best means to achieve a particular end, in the second case compliance is unconditional, as commands are based on formal positions regardless if they are perceived as a rational means to achieve particular goals (Gouldner, 1954, p. 22-23).

Merton (1957) pointed out another unintended consequence of rational bureaucratic organisations, referring to the bureaucratic officials, whose normative attachment to formal rules and regulations might let them insist on following rules and procedures in a probably obsessive way regardless of whether they actually advance the goals of the organisation, making rules to become an end in themselves, rather than the means to an end (Jaffee, 2001).

This is only a small example of the criticism bureaucracy faced by various organisational analysts (see Mabey et al., 1998, p. 238). Despite the criticism in regards to 'unanticipated consequences' and 'dysfunctions' of bureaucracy and its oft-heralded death, many organisations today are still essentially bureaucracies as this type of structure helps them meet their goals. Daft (2010) concluded that 'Weber's prediction of the triumph of bureaucracy proved accurate' (Daft, 2010, p. 349).

For the organisational context of cruise ships it has already established above that in many aspects its structure is close to that of a bureaucracy. However, the hotel

division on cruise ships face the dilemma that the underlying characteristics of bureaucracy would seem to be at odds to the hospitality service, which requires responsiveness to the individual requirements of the guests, i.e. a flexible approach and service crew initiative. But it can equally be said that organisations usually do not fit into any particular model of organisational design and structure and that a form of hybrid between bureaucracy and more organic forms of structure is predominant (Mullins, 2001, p. 188).

2.3.3 The emergence of HRM

An alternative programme to personnel management that emerged first in North America in the 1980s (Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990, p. 18) is HRM. This approach was influenced by the aforementioned approaches as well as other developments like the human capital perspective, the organisational development movement, and the human resource accounting approach, and marked a change in the way employees were perceived. It went from simply seeing them as being important for enhancing performance and later as an asset (value), to considering them as key to organisational success (Boselie, 2002, p. 13).

A number of factors had an impact on the emergence of the new approach (see Legge, 1995, pp. 76-79). One factor was globalisation and more specifically increased competition from Japan and other international companies, which challenged American and European organisations in the 1970s and 1980s. In the following years a lot of companies experienced takeovers, mergers and business closures. As a way to address these challenges, organisations adapted new technologies, reorganised their structures to a less hierarchical organisation, relocated jobs into areas of cheaper labour and applied a more proactive and strategic approach to the management of their human resources.

A second factor was a downturn in the economic growth in Western developed nations in the 1980s. During the recession in the United States for example skilled jobs were made redundant in traditional industries. New but usually lower paid and lower skilled jobs emerged in the following in new sectors. Another related factor here was the introduction of new technology like IT-based manufacturing and communication technology that led to increased competition. Organisations needed to adopt and adapt these technologies in order to meet customers' need and expectations. At the same time they needed fewer employees but the ones they retained, needed to be more skilled and flexible.

The next factor is that the Japanese effect directed the focus of organisations' management to associated labour management practices. Many attempts were

made to apply aspects of the Japanese approaches (Price, 2011, p. 14). Employees, mainly well-educated and high-skilled knowledge workers, became a 'human resource' and a source of competitive advantage in many Western organisations. The final factor here on the emergence of HRM was that a change of employee relations occurred. With the decline of the traditional manufacturing industry and a less protective role of the state trade unions, protective power declined and the employee relations changed from collectivism to individualism, basing the employment relationship with employers more on individual arrangements and agreements (Lewis et al., 2003, p. 22).

Since the emergence of HRM the nature of this field has been debated. Some trends can be outlined that have influenced further developments within HRM (see Martín-Alcázar et al., 2005; Schuler and Jackson, 2005). One debate on the nature of HRM began early in the 1980s and concerned the question of how personnel management and HRM differ (see e.g. Guest, 1987; Guest, 1991; Legge, 1989; Legge, 1995; Lundy, 1994; Storey, 1992). Another debate was about different theoretical models of HRM that emerged in the early 1980s (see e.g. Beer et al., 1985; Fombrun et al., 1984). These theoretical perspectives initiated a debate on 'hard' versus 'soft' HRM. Furthermore, the field experienced a move towards a more strategic understanding of HRM by linking HR strategy to business strategy (Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall, 1988; Brewster and Larsen, 1992). In the following sections these influential trends and debates on HRM will be outlined further.

2.3.4 Personnel management to HRM

A controversial debate to identify a clear difference between personnel management and HRM began in the 1980s. A number of authors saw more similarities than differences between both approaches. As Legge (1989) put it, there are not a lot of differences between personnel management and HRM (Legge, 1989, p. 27). She argues that in practice there was little or no empirical evidence for a radical change of people management with the emergence of the HRM field (Legge, 1995).

The most obvious change is a 're-labelling process' (Legge, 1989, p. 20). An obvious change of label was also quoted by Torrington (1989, p. 64) who queried if the content of HRM differentiates to any extent. There are some diverging aspects, but they cannot be qualified as substantial differences and are rather a matter of emphasis and meaning (Legge, 1995, p. 74). The new terminology at least helped personnel management to get rid of its unfavourable welfare image and other

'negative connotations' (Sisson, 1990, p. 1) and directed the attention towards perceiving people as a key resource of organisations (Armstrong, 1987, p. 31).

The question whether the nature of managing people had really changed after the introduction of the concept of HRM in the early 1980s is answered by Torrington (1989). The author argued that personnel management is a continuing process of evolution and growth, in which more and more fields of expertise are acquired and assimilated. The evolutionary process of HRM is only adding a further dimension and cannot be seen as a revolutionary concept (Torrington, 1989, p. 66). However, although the procedures and techniques of personnel management strongly resemble those of HRM, HRM appears to be more purposeful, relevant, and effective because the approach is more strategic and philosophical (Armstrong, 1987, p. 34).

Guest's (1987) overview where he lists and compares the stereotypes or key assumptions of personnel management and HRM provides a valuable distinction concerning time and planning perspective, psychological contract, control systems, employee relations perspective, preferred structures, roles, and evolution criteria (Guest, 1987, p. 507). He argued that HRM is characterised by a long-term perspective (proactive, strategic, and integrated), an emphasis on employee commitment and self-control, a unitarist employee relations perspective, an organic systems approach, a large integration into line management, and a maximum utilisation of human assets. In contrast, the personnel management approach is characterised by a short-term perspective (reactive, ad hoc, and marginal), an emphasis on compliance and external controls, a pluralist employee relations perspective, a bureaucratic and mechanistic systems approach, a crucial role for specialists and professionals respectively, and a focus on minimisation. Although this overview indicates that HRM is the 'better' choice, the author concludes that 'other approaches are equally legitimate and likely in certain contexts to be more successful' (Guest, 1987, p. 508).

Storey (1989) in contrast states that HRM provides a completely new form of managing personnel and regards HRM as a 'radically different philosophy and approach to the management of people at work' (Storey, 1989, p. 4). He considers HRM as a departure from orthodoxy of traditional personnel management (Storey, 1989, p. 8). Storey (1992) also provides an overview of the distinction between personnel management and industrial relations on the one side, and the emerging HRM approach on the other side (Storey, 1992, p. 35). His distinction is based on the dimensions beliefs and assumptions, strategic aspects, line management, and key levers, which he further subdivided into 27 items.

Like Guest (1987) he perceives a shift from a pluralist to a unitarist employee perspective, from personnel specialists to line-managers integration, from a procedural view to a business-needs orientation, and from a monitoring to a nurturing perspective towards labour. He characterised HRM as being customer-oriented, central to a corporate plan, and focuses its attention for interventions on wide-ranging cultural, structural and personnel strategies (Storey, 1992, p. 35). Both descriptive comparisons of personnel management and industrial relations respectively, and HRM by Guest (1987) and Storey (1992) are highly normative and need to be taken with care, as they are based on a United Kingdom context (Boselie, 2002, p. 16). The models describe an 'ideal type' of HRM, which makes them useful research tools, but in practice not all elements of Storey's 27 points, for example, would be included in an HRM model (Bloisi, 2007, p. 14).

There are some differences that are important in the distinction between personnel management and HRM. Legge (1995) for example states that the later emphasises the importance of employee and management development, that development is seen merely as a management activity that focus on employees. Secondly, that although both approaches highlight the role of line managers, in the second approach they have a more proactive role. Thirdly, within HRM, a central activity for top management is to manage the organisation's culture (Legge, 1995, pp. 74-75).

This section has shown that with the transition from personnel management to HRM an academic debate ensued concerning the changing perception of the employment relationship before and after the introduction of HRM, and about similarities and differences between both approaches. This transition was triggered by the reasons outlined in the previous chapter, e.g. globalisation, an economic downturn with a shift from traditional manufacturing industries towards new service sectors on the one hand and technology-based process industries on the other, major changes in labour management practices and the view of the employment relationship. An unambiguous consensus cannot be determined, and although a shift of organisations from personnel management towards HRM can be identified in order to gain competitive advantage, the concept of HRM is not a homogeneous one.

In the next section two major best practice approaches that differ in their theoretical and philosophical view of HRM will be discussed. The first HRM approach is concerned with aligning HR strategy with business strategy, and views people as a resource used as a means of achieving organisational goals. The second HRM approach is concerned with human resources aspect and employee commitment to the organisation.

2.3.5 Theoretical perspectives on HRM models

Different theoretical models arose when HRM emerged from North America. One of the key texts was 'Human resource management: A General Manager's Perspective' edited by Michael Beer et al. (1984), which positioned itself in the human relations tradition. The classical text 'Strategic Human Resource Management' by Charles Fombrun et al. (1984) outlines another theoretical model, with its emphasis much more on the strategic management literature.

2.3.5.1 The Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna model of HRM

Fombrun's et al. (1984) model was academically developed at Michigan University and is therefore named the Michigan approach. It is associated with the 'situational-contingency' standpoint with an emphasis on the term resource management in HRM (Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990, p. 21). The principles of the Michigan model stem from strategic management. Employees are recognised as a business resource. To accomplish a mission and achieve strategic goals, this resource has to be designed and managed within an organisation. In other words a main contribution of this approach is the interrelated linkage of HRM with strategy and organisational structure and thereby provided the basis for today's dominant approach in research on HRM and performance, namely strategic HRM that will be discussed later on in this chapter (Boselie, 2002, p. 29).

The HRM system developed by Fombrun et al. (1984) is called the human resource cycle (Fombrun et al., 1984, p. 41). It consists of four key factors influencing performance (Tichy et al., 1982, p. 50). Selection is the function to bring in people who are best able to perform within the defined structure. The appraisal function is to evaluate the performance. Rewards function as a way to motivate employees to enhance their current performance. Similarly, the development function support employees to increase their current performance but also prepare them for future positions (Devanna et al., 1984). All four HR activities are linked to performance and serve as a means to achieve organisational missions and goals.

Visualised as a triangle, Fombrun's et al. (1984) model displays the mission and strategy of a firm, which need to be decided on by management, organisational structure, which needs to be designed by management in order to meet the strategy and mission, and HRM, which needs to be organised and integrated by management to fit with the structure and to fulfil the mission and strategy. As these three company internal items interrelate with each other, they cannot operate in isolation. The model states the three external forces of politics,

economics and culture that need to be considered and responded to by managers in order to design the HRM system.

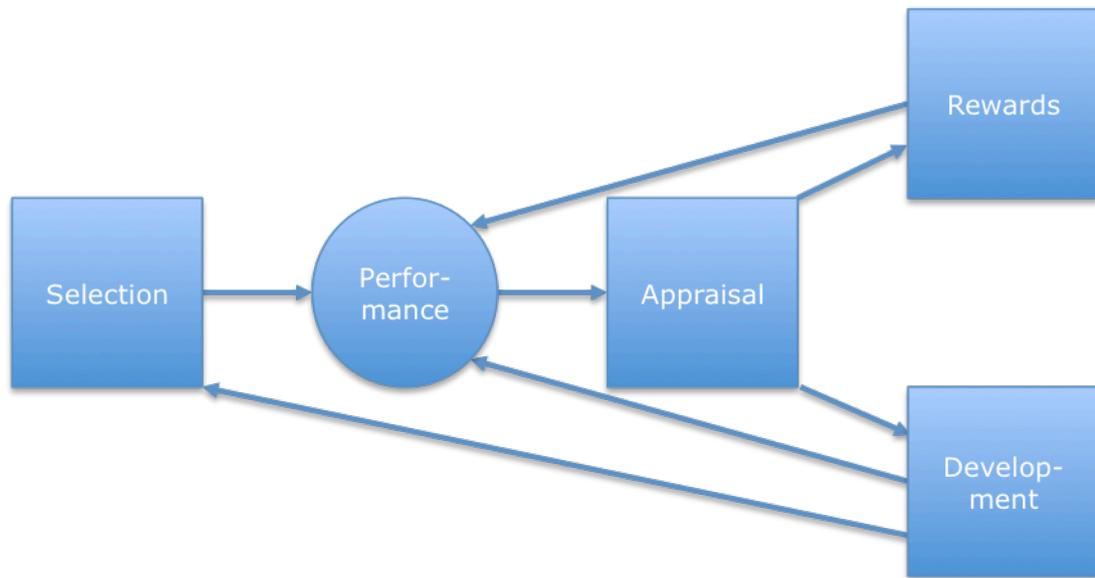


Figure 3 The human resource cycle

Source Fombrun et al. (1984, p. 41); Copyright © 1984 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Reprinted by permission of John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

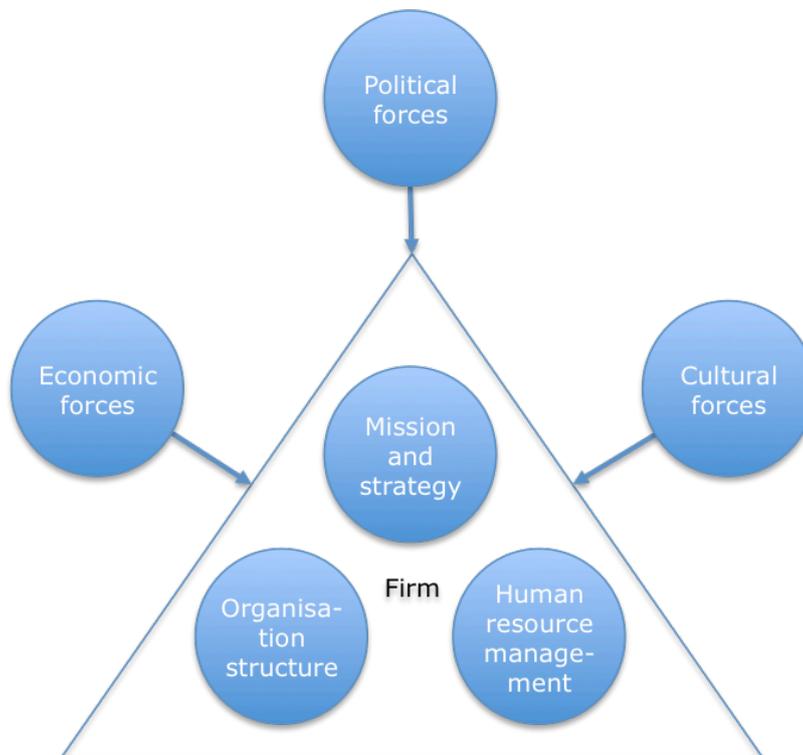


Figure 4 The Michigan approach

Source Fombrun et al. (1984, p. 35); Copyright © 1984 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Reprinted by permission of John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

The Michigan approach is one of the foundations of the HRM fit concept (Torrington et al., 2007, p. 37). The human resource circle shows how activities within HRM can be integrated to support organisation's strategy. In order for an organisation to be efficient, a tight horizontal fit of HR policies and activities is needed so that they make a coherent whole. Fombrun's et al. (1984) triangle model positions HRM in relation to organisational strategy and structure. The vertical fit between HR policy as a whole and organisational strategy is necessary for an organisation to be effective (Ehnert, 2009, p. 105).

Prescriptive in its nature and focused on its four HR activities, Fombrun's et al. (1984) model does not consider stakeholder interests and situational factors. It also ignores the notion of management's strategic choice. But the human resource cycle provides a useful heuristic framework to explain the nature and significance of the four HR activities. And the model illustrates the importance of one of its key assumptions, namely that HR policies and practices not only need to be aligned to an organisation's strategy and structure but also match the external business strategy. As mentioned earlier in this section, this approach provided the basis for strategic HRM, today's dominant approach in research on HRM and performance. It takes the company owner's point of view rather than employee's viewpoint, which has been the perspective of the next dominant approach in HRM since the 1980s.

2.3.5.2 The Harvard model of HRM

Beer's et al. (1984) model was academically developed in the MBA programme of Harvard University and is therefore known as the Harvard approach. It is associated with the 'developmental-humanist' standpoint with an emphasis on the term human in HRM (Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990, p. 21). Storey (1987) links the human relations school of Herzberg and McGregor with this approach (Storey, 1987). Employees are seen as valued assets and a source of competitive advantage through their commitment, adaptability and high quality of skills, performance etc. They are proactive inputs into productive processes, capable of development, worthy of trust and collaboration that is achieved through participation and informed choice (Legge, 1995, p. 66).

As a means of encouraging and even improving managerial behaviour of managing the human resources, Beer et al. (1984) proposed as part of their model the HRM system with four HRM categories a manager needs to take responsibility for, regardless of the size of the organisation (Bloisi, 2007, p. 16). Under the term 'employee influence' is included how managers exercise their power and authority while ensuring that the organisational goals are met. Summarised under the term

'human resource flow' is the demand that managers need to ensure the right mix and number of people in the right place and at the right time by means of managing the movement (flow) and performance of people through recruitment and selection, development and ending of employment. The 'reward systems' are concerned with monetary and non-monetary rewards in order to maintain a motivated and productive workforce. The 'work systems' refer to the organisation of work to ensure that the allocation of people, information and technology results in efficient and productive organisational outcome.

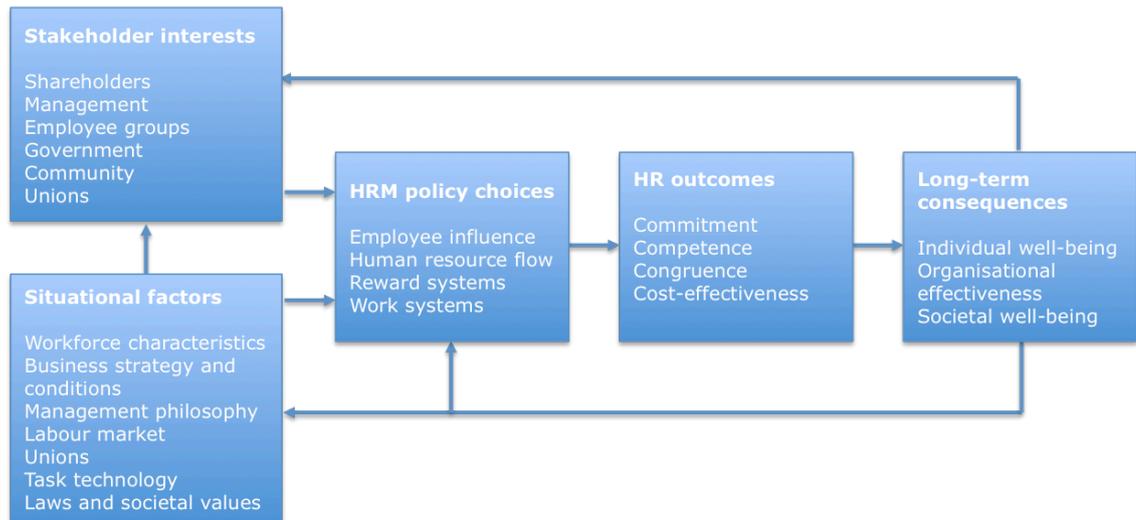


Figure 5 The Harvard approach of HRM

Source Beer et al. (1984, p. 16); Reproduced with permission of Professor Michael Beer and Professor Bert Spector.

In their model of HRM Beer et al. (1984) recognise that the different interests of different stakeholders influence managers' choices as outlined in the HRM system above and need to be taken into account. These HR policies are also influenced and sometimes constrained by situational factors that lay outside the business environment as well as within the firm. Individual needs and organisational needs could be different, and organisations would endeavour to balance these needs, which makes the 'Harvard School' more a pluralist approach (McKenna and Beech, 2008).

The policies chosen within the HRM system affect the HR outcomes. Beer et al. (1984) named four criteria that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of HRM. Commitment reflects employees' bond to organisation's values and mission. The link between HRM objectives and an organisation's goals is expressed by the criteria congruence. Competence reflects the development of an appropriate mixture of knowledge, skills and abilities of the workforce. And finally the delivery

of performance in a competitive manner is summarised under the criteria cost-effectiveness. According to Beer et al. (1984), additional factors can be added to value HR policies' effectiveness depending on circumstances.

As the HR policy choices affect the HR outcome, this results in long-term consequences on an individual, organisational and a societal level. Individual employee well-being comprises economical, physical and psychical rewards that they receive in exchange for their effort. Organisational effectiveness reflects the contribution of HR policies to business goals and organisational survival. The consequences HR practices have on society are summarised under the term societal well-being. As these long-term outputs can influence stakeholder interests, situational factors and HR policy choices, the model comprises a feedback loop.

A key point of Beer's et al. (1984) model is its emphasis on employees' participation throughout the organisation. Influenced by behaviour theory the authors took a humanistic and anti-authoritarian viewpoint. A further key point is the emphasis on manager's responsibility for managing the human resources which to its extreme releases HR specialists from delivering HRM initiatives.

The strength of Beer's et al. (1984) model is its classification of inputs and outcomes at organisational and societal levels, which creates a basis for a critique of comparative human resource management (Boxall, 1992). The weakness of the Harvard model is the lack of a coherent theoretical basis to measure the relationship between HR inputs, outcomes and performance (Guest, 1997).

2.3.5.3 The hard and soft approach to HRM

Fombrun's et al. (1984) and Beer's et al. (1984) models deserve credit, having shaped the development of HRM models and the understanding of the HRM role not only in academic discourse but also in organisational practice (Ehnert, 2009, p. 87). Both models have been juxtaposed in the early academic literature on HRM and a lot of research in this field has been conducted based on these approaches (Boselie, 2002, pp. 19-20).

While the Michigan model and the Harvard model were developed by American HRM academics, in the British academic debate a distinction emerged between a 'hard' and a 'soft' version of HRM. Heavily drawn upon the academic work of Fombrun et al. (1984) and Beer et al. (1984), the hard version has been linked to the Michigan approach and the soft version to the Harvard approach.

Storey (1987) was one of the first who indicated that HRM has a hard and soft dimension. In his mapping on various meanings of HRM he distinguished various

positions along the two dimensions hard and soft and weak and strong (Storey, 1992, pp. 26-27). Similarly, Guest (1987) described two dimensions, the hard-soft and the loose-tight matrix, while seeking to define HRM.

In the beginning of the academic debate on HRM the models were predominantly normative and prescriptive (Hendry and Pettigrew, 1990, p. 18; see also Legge, 1995, pp. 64-65). Within these normative models the dichotomy of hard versus soft HRM was described by many commentators as diametrically opposed along a number of dimensions (Truss et al., 1997, p. 56).

Keenoy (1997) in contrast commented that these models are rather complementary (Keenoy, 1997, p. 838). That was shown by the research of Truss et al. (1997) in eight organisations. They found in all organisations a mixture of both hard and soft approaches. Their conclusion is that even if the rhetoric of HRM is on the individual and therefore the soft approach, almost always the interest of the organisation, which is characteristic for the hard approach, predominated (Truss et al., 1997, p. 70).

Not only the hard/soft debate but also what is sometimes argued to be the next phase in the evolution after the occurrence of the HRM concept (Lundy and Cowling, 1996, p. 80) has its roots in the work of Beer et al. (1984) and Fombrun et al. (1984) (see Truss and Gratton, 1994, pp. 663-664). Based on strategic management theory the concept of strategic HRM expands the former concept by becoming more linked with the strategic needs of the business (Schuler et al., 1993, p. 421). What is meant by this term and the boundaries of this concept are outlined in the next paragraph.

2.3.6 Strategic HRM

When the modern concept of HRM emerged at the end of the 1970s and succeeded personnel management, the debate about the differences between these two concepts started. The contribution HRM can provide towards the success and performance of the organisation became one of the dominant issues within academic debate and led to a huge number of academic literature (see e.g. Guest, 1997, p. 263). Another major area of research is the debate on understanding to which extent HRM can act as a key means to achieving competitive advantage in organisations (see Barney, 1991, p. 99). Linking HR strategy and business strategy so that the former might become an integral part of the latter is a third important debate within the field of HRM (Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall, 1988; Brewster and Larsen, 1992, pp. 411-412). Involving line managers in HR practices and devolvement of responsibility for HRM to line managers is seen as very much part

of the HR strategy debate (Brewster and Larsen, 1992, pp. 412-414; Budhwar and Sparrow, 1997, p. 476).

These debates about HRM's contribution towards business success, helping to obtain competitive advantage, becoming an integral part of business strategy, and the devolvement of responsibility to line managers, all lead to a strategic perspective of HRM. Summarised under the emerging term strategic HRM this concept started to develop in parallel with the older established HRM concept from around the early 1980s (Lundy and Cowling, 1996, p. 80). A huge body of literature began to emerge that examined the relationship between HRM and the theory of strategic management (Boxall, 1992, p. 61).

The debate concerning the meaning of strategic HRM is based on the discussion about the similarities and differences between HRM and personnel management. Legge (1989) for example summarises that HRM plays a more central strategic management role than personnel management (Legge, 1989, p. 75). Many other academics that commented upon the differences between HRM and personnel management regard the relationship between HR practices and strategic aims of the business as the core feature of HRM (see Truss and Gratton, 1994, p. 665). Based on this debate it is hard to see the differences between HRM and strategic HRM.

Although there might be an overlap between the two concepts in terms of rationale and philosophy, two important dimensions that distinguish strategic HRM from traditional HRM can be outlined. The first dimension is the potential link between HR practices and strategic management processes of the organisation. This vertical combination marks a new sphere of conceptual development (Lundy and Cowling, 1996, p. 80). The horizontal dimension emphasises the various HR practices. Linking the different practices through the application of strategic management techniques should ensure they are promoting the same goals (Truss and Gratton, 1994, p. 666).

A central strategic HRM approach or common direction is missing, the field is rather characterised by its 'significant diversity' (Boxall and Purcell, 2000, p. 184). A most popular meta-theory within strategic HRM research is the resource-based view of the firm today, largely because 'its ability to articulate why HRM could be linked to the economic success of firms' (Wright and Haggerty, 2005, p. 5). As will be outlined in chapter 2.4.2 when the theoretical framework of the resource-based view will be discussed, it focuses on the internal resources as a basis for sustainable competitive advantage. Thereby it provides a legitimate foundation upon which it can be argued that organization's human resources 'could in fact

contribute to firm-level performance and influence strategy formulation' (Allen and Wright, 2006, p. 8).

Another important thread in strategic HRM literature is a variety of perspectives to reveal and demonstrate the effectiveness of HRM on organisational performance. In chapter 2.4.3 the universalistic, contingent, configurational and contextual modes will be outlined in further detail. In strategic HRM research the single perspectives often appear to be competing and pre-eminence of one perspective over the other has been established, but as I argue further below there is a potential complementary nature of the various strategic HRM models (Youndt et al., 1996, p. 837). Each of these perspectives emphasise a specific dimension of the reality of strategic HRM, but they are all concerned with the same research question, the relationship of HRM with organisational strategy and performance (Martín-Alcázar et al., 2005, p. 634).

2.3.7 Conclusion

This sub-chapter started with outlining some early approaches of personnel management that are linked to traditional manufacturing industries. The rise of Pacific economies, an increase in globalisation, an economic downturn in Western economies, developments like the introduction of new technologies, a shift in employee relations from collectivism to individualism, and a focus on Japanese labour management practices in the 1970s and 1980s forced Western companies to shift their focus on their source of competitive advantage, their well-educated and high-skilled knowledge workers, which became 'human resources' that needed to be managed differently. But the new concept of HRM, which emerged around 1980, became part of a debate about similarities and differences to personnel management with little in the way of unambiguous consensus reached. For the research here the new approach is characterised by a long-term perspective, a unitarist employee perspective, an integration of a more proactive line-management and a strategy-orientation in regards to culture, organisation and human resources. Nevertheless it seems logical that it is merely an enhancement of personnel management.

Different theoretical models of HRM, the Michigan and the Harvard approach, have initiated another debate about the nature of this field which led on the European side to a theoretical debate on hard versus soft HRM. The Michigan approach, academically developed by Fombrun, Tichy and Devanna, recognises employees as a business resource that needs to be managed in order to achieve an organisation's strategic goals. It is one of the foundations of the HRM fit concept that includes

horizontal fit of HR policies and activities and vertical fit between HR policies and organisational strategy. By way of contrast, the Harvard approach, developed by Beer and colleagues, sees employees as valued assets and a source of competitive advantage through their commitment, adaptability and high quality of skills and performance. The following British academic debate distinguishes between a hard version, which is linked to the Michigan approach, and a soft version drawn on the academic work of the Harvard approach. Being predominantly normative and prescriptive, the models have been first described as diametrically opposed along a number of dimensions, before research showed that they are rather complementary as a mixture of both hard and soft approaches have been found simultaneously in organisations.

A third debate on the nature of HRM emerged out of the approach to link HR strategy to business strategy in an effort to experience a more strategic understanding of HRM. Strategic HRM is the dominant approach in research on HRM and performance, and has its roots not only in strategic management theory but also, and indeed mainly, in the Michigan approach. Concerned with the contribution HRM can provide towards the success and performance of the organisation, strategic HRM applies the two dimensions of the HRM fit concept and adopts a more macro-level perspective. The following discussion of theoretical frameworks for this research is based on theories dominant in strategic HRM.

2.4 Theoretical frameworks within HRM

2.4.1 Introduction

The study of HRM is multidisciplinary. Input and viewpoints from business strategy, economics, psychology, sociology, law, philosophy, industrial relations etc. flow into this field of research. As Boselie (2002) asserts, most HRM scholars are eclectic in their method to HRM theorising (Boselie, 2002, p. 20). They do not regard one theory as being more important than others. Rather it is the research object and the research setting that determine which specific theory will be applied. Thus, in the field of HRM, a wide variety of theories exist that HRM scholars apply.

Here, some theoretical frameworks within HRM research will be outlined. One of the main focuses within HRM research in the past several years has been on HRM and performance. A most influential framework is the resource-based view of the firm, which links strategy and organisation's internal resources in order to gain competitive advantage. To understand how strategic success is conceptualised in

HRM, dominant theorising perspectives in strategic HRM are reviewed. Next to the universalistic perspective and the contingent point of view, the configurational approach and the contextual perspective are outlined. The outlined theoretical frameworks here reflect the basic assumptions of the present research, as they explain and predict the contribution HRM can provide towards success and performance of the organisation.

2.4.2 The resource-based view of the firm

Over the last two decades a couple of strategic management theories have dominated HRM research. One has been the resource-based view that has strong implications for strategic HRM. This theory proposes that a firm gains competitive advantage through effective and efficient utilisation of an organisation's internal conditions and resources. By way of contrast, in the early 1980s the focus for gaining competitive advantage was on external, respectively market-driven influence factors, based on the firm's market position (Porter, 1980; Porter, 1985). Developed as an alternative to this approach, the resource-based view of the firm is according to Barney et al. (2001) the 'most influential framework' in strategic management research (Barney et al., 2001, p. 625).

The first coherent statement of the resource-based view of the firm theory was by Wernerfelt (1984). He based his approach for competitive advantage of a firm on a bundle of tangible and intangible resources that are at the firm's disposal (Wernerfelt, 1984, p. 172). But it was Barney (1991) who specified the characteristics of resources necessary for a sustainable competitive advantage (Wright et al., 2001, p. 702). His theoretical model is based on the assumption that the bundles of productive resources are varied for different firms (resource heterogeneity) and that some resources must be inelastic in supply or costly to copy, which is the resource immobility assumption (Barney, 2002).

To have the potential of sustained competitive advantages, resources must be valuable in the sense that they exploit opportunities or neutralise threats in a firm's environment, they must also be rare among a firm's current and potential competition, imperfectly imitable by other firms to obtain them and non-substitutable by competitors who seek for substitutes in order to counter the firm's value-creating strategy (Barney, 1991, pp. 105-106). In addition an organisation needs to be capable of absorbing and applying these resources so that they can provide sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 2002).

The resource-based view caused a change in organisational thinking by providing a conceptual perspective that focused on internal resources as a basis for sustainable

competitive advantage, thus shifting from an outside-in approach to an inside-out approach (Boselie, 2002, p. 21). In numerous strategic research programmes the breadth of diffusion of this theoretical model has been acknowledged and its popularity in the literature on strategic HRM indicates that the resource-based view has become the theory most often used within strategic HRM (Priem and Butler, 2001a, pp. 25-26; Wright et al., 2001, p. 703).

Many scholars have contributed to the development of the resource-based view after Wernerfelt's (1984) initial article mainly until the mid-1990s (e.g. Rumelt, 1984; Barney, 1986; Barney, 1991; Dierickx and Cool, 1989; Peteraf, 1993). A number of articles have criticised the resource-based view, outlining the drawbacks of this approach. Widely known are Priem and Butler's (2001a; 2001b) critique and Barney's (2001) response.

Priem and Butler (2001b) argued that the resource-based view is tautological and does not generate testable hypotheses that prove the fundamental concepts (Priem and Butler, 2001b, p. 64). In another article they concluded that different resource configurations could generate a particular level of return and thus the theory could not provide an explanation on how to achieve competitive advantage with resources (Priem and Butler, 2001a, p. 29). The resource-based view tends to neglect forces that lead to similarities between organisations in the same industry, which might include external forces, normative traditions or success of other organisations that are forced to copy its approach (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2008, p. 162). By focusing strongly on the internal context of the business, some writers argued that the effectiveness of the resource-based view is also inextricably linked to the external context of the firm and that in an external environment, which is less predictable, it adds more value (Golding, 2004, p. 56; Miller and Shamsie, 1996, p. 539). In their recent assessment of critiques of the resource-based view Kraaijenbrink et al. (2010) identified eight types of criticisms with three to be difficult to dismiss. One was the valuation of resources which is too indeterminate to provide for useful theory, the second critique was that the four criteria for resources and organisation are neither necessary nor sufficient for sustainable competitive advantage, and the third refers to the definition of resources, which seems to be all inclusive and undifferentiated (Kraaijenbrink et al., 2010, p. 360).

Despite the critique on the resource-based view it has been widely used in strategic HRM research (Wright et al., 2001, p. 706). Researchers in this field state that human resources not only add value to the firm, but also are rare, non-substitutable and cannot be imitated and therefore meet the criteria for being a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Wright et al., 1994, p. 301). Although

the critique above indicated that the resource-based view does not meet the standards of a true theoretical perspective of competitive advantage (Priem and Butler, 2001b, p. 64), and in isolation, this conceptual perspective is inadequate to explain how and why strategic HRM enhances organisational effectiveness (Way and Johnson, 2005, p. 4), it is generally a useful tool for examining strategic issues in HRM research (Delery and Shaw, 2001, p. 169).

2.4.3 HRM, corporate strategy and performance linkage

HR practices, which include for example recruiting, selection, performance management, training, and the administration of compensation and benefits, and are referred to by Huselid et al. (1997) as technical HRM (Huselid et al., 1997, p. 172), can influence organisationally relevant outcomes such as productivity and profitability and thus enhance organisational effectiveness. So they can create a source of sustained competitive advantage, but it is unlikely that the HR practices deployed by the organisation (HRM systems) alone produce sustainable competitive advantage. They must be aligned with a firm's competitive strategy (Huselid, 1995, p. 636; Delery and Doty, 1996, p. 803). This relationship between corporate strategy, HRM systems and organisational performance is one of the most important questions in strategic HRM.

In the following paragraphs different perspectives on HRM and its relationship with organisational strategy and performance will be reviewed which Delery and Doty (1996, p. 802) termed 'modes of theorizing'. Additionally to the universalistic, contingency, and configurational perspective named by Delery and Doty (1996) a fourth mode of theorising will also be discussed which Brewster (1999, p. 45) named the contextual paradigm. Although there might be alternatives to these modes of theorising like the complexity perspective suggested by Colbert (2004, p. 341), the four different approaches to the main research question in strategic HRM will be sufficient here as they have been widely reviewed in the literature in contrast to Colbert's (2004) suggestion.

2.4.3.1 Universalistic perspective

It is also called 'best practice' perspective and assumes that best single human resources practices or sets of best practices (high performance work systems) exist that are characterised by having demonstrated capacity to improve organisational performance and are generalisable (Becker and Gerhart, 1996). Agency theory and transaction costs theory are dominantly used frameworks within this perspective to

overcome opportunistic behaviour and reduce internal management costs (Delery and Doty, 1996).

Universalistic propositions have been built on basic propositions of human capital theory, which argue that valuable knowledge, skills and abilities will lead to higher organisational performance (Martín-Alcázar et al., 2005, p. 635). The approach has been criticised for ignoring synergetic interdependency or integration of practices, its narrow questions and its lack of solid theoretical foundation (Martín-Alcázar et al., 2005, pp. 634-635; Brewster, 1999).

2.4.3.2 Contingent point of view

This view, also called 'best fit' approach, argues that there is no universal or one best way to manage. The specific ways in which HRM is set up and applied in order to improve organisational performance depends upon the internal and external situation. Contextual factors include on an organisational level factors such as labour markets, technology, organisation size and structure, national business and employment systems, trade union traditions, and product markets (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2008, p. 140) and on an individual employee level factors such as age, gender, education level, job experience, and nationality (Boselie, 2010, pp. 59-60).

Two dominant frameworks that help to develop a more solid theoretical corpus than the universalistic foundations comprise are the behavioural perspective and the resource-based view of the firm. From the behavioural perspective a wide set of propositions concerning the fit between business strategy and HR strategy have been developed, as well as other organisational and external variables. The resource-based view focused on strategic fit and the link between the human factor and the formulation of organisational strategies (Alcázar et al., 2005, p. 222; Martín-Alcázar et al., 2005, p. 636).

Assuming that there is one most appropriate way for each particular set of contingencies and rejecting the one best way of managing, the contingency research is not very different from the universalistic perspective in terms of level of analysis. The critique is similar to the aforementioned one in that it fails to explain how and why different organisations, when responding to the contingent factors in different ways, can achieve success (Martín-Alcázar et al., 2005, p. 635).

2.4.3.3 The configurational approach

This model, which is also called the 'best bundles' model, suggests that there are various configurations of HR practices that collectively improve business performance. By addressing what bundles of practices enable the organisation as a total entity to achieve its corporate strategic objectives, it adopts a holistic perspective in contrast to the reductionist perspective of the contingency approach (Meyer et al., 1993, p. 1178).

To be effective, an HRM system derived out of an internally consistent set of HR practices, thereby achieving horizontal fit, is aligned to the overall firm strategy, thus achieving vertical fit. In order to determine which combination or configuration of HR practices may be the most effective in terms of leading to higher business performance, Miles and Snow (1984) described three fundamental types of strategic behaviour an organisation may choose which they called defender, prospector, and analyser (Miles and Snow, 1984, p. 37).

This approach relies on a systems perspective and denies a linear relationship between patterns of possibilities for managing human resources and organisational performance. It thus opens the 'black box' of the former approaches, so that the management of human resources can be analysed as a complex and interactive system (Martín-Alcázar et al., 2005, p. 637). It also applies the principle of equifinality, which entails that for the same set of conditions multiple HRM systems may be equally effective for the organisation and thereby rejects the universalistic assertions of best practices (Delery and Doty, 1996, p. 812).

2.4.3.4 The contextual perspective

This approach introduces a descriptive and global explanation for analysing strategic HRM through a broader model. The change of perspective proposed by the contextual model is a reconsideration of environmental influences as a contextual framework, and not only as a contingency variable, therefore adding an analysis of social dimensions to the strategic HRM model (Martín-Alcázar et al., 2005, pp. 643-644). The environmental factors included have been traditionally underestimated, such as the influence of culture, ownership structures, labour markets, the role of the state and trade union organisation (Brewster, 1999, p. 48). This paradigm also integrates contextual variables from within the organisation such as firm's culture, climate, size, structure or the particular interests of the different stakeholders involved (Martín-Alcázar et al., 2005, p. 644).

The focus on performance is secondary (Brewster, 1999, p. 48). Instead, it concentrates more on explaining the relationship between strategic HRM and its context, thus integrating the function in a macro-social framework. Strategic HRM interacts with this framework reciprocally by being conditioned by it but it also shapes and affects its external and organisational contexts (Ehnert, 2009, p. 107).

Within the firm, strategic HRM is no longer only the exclusive responsibility of the HR specialist but also that of all other managers, especially that of the line level (Martín-Alcázar et al., 2005, p. 638). The contextual perspective explicitly adopts an inductive research mechanism. The model is criticised for its limitation of using large series of data that are in contrast to the other paradigms mentioned above, gathered in a less directed manner and analysed mainly with descriptive statistical techniques to collect evidence and explanation rather than to test and predict. Qualitative methods are rarely used to test the models, although the contextual perspective explicitly adopts an inductive logic of research (Brewster, 1999, p. 49).

The way HRM contributes to performance and the underlying paradigmatic assumptions of all four models outlined above mark the differences between them (Ehnert, 2009, p. 121). But although different models to explain and predict the contribution of HRM to organisational performance have been developed, it still remains difficult to provide sufficient methodological rigor and research designs to explain this complex relationship (Wright et al., 2005, p. 410). It is believed here that each approach can complement the other approaches by adding constructs, variables or relationships.

2.4.4 From strategic HRM to the roles of the HR function

To explore the understanding of strategic success in HRM four perspectives on the relationship between HRM, corporate strategy and performance have been reviewed, namely the universalistic, contingency, configurational and contextual perspective. These four models of theorising have been developed to explain and predict the contribution of HRM to organisational (and especially financial) performance; one of the most important questions in strategic HRM. The differences between the four models are the way HRM contributes to performance and the underlying paradigmatic assumptions. But it still remains difficult to provide sufficient methodological rigor and research design to explain the complex relationship.

A main conclusion that can be drawn at the end of this sub-chapter, but also by considering the discussions of the previous sub-chapter on the different HRM approaches, is that HRM is a multidisciplinary approach. That means for the

research here that the particular circumstances of the research environment and the research object plus the objectives of the research determine the specific HRM theory that will be applied here. In practice an eclectic method of theorising will be used. As shipboard HR specialists that conduct HR work are examined, there is a need for models that help to understand roles of the HR function, which is the focus of the next section.

2.5 Roles of the HR function

The HR function is an organisational function that aims at effective management of employees in order to attain organisational objectives at an optimal level. It has evolved from the traditional role of personnel administration, but today takes different HR roles in response to situations that demand HR activities. Over the last decades different HR role models have been discussed, and in recent years the discussion on HR roles and the influence of the HR function has become even more extensive between HR scholars, but also HR consultants and HR professionals.

The HR function is believed to be subject to different pressures. On the one hand, there is a call for downsizing and restructuring traditional administrative processes, but on the other hand the HR function should go beyond its traditional operational and transactional role and contribute to strategy whilst also taking an important role in terms of change management. In the discussion is also a question of whether the HR function is capable of performing the demanded new roles. That illustrates that HRM theory is filled with contradiction, and further contributions about the actual role of the HR functions need to be made.

As a basis for the later identification of HR roles on board of cruise ships, different models of the HR role will be outlined. Ambiguities and conflicts of interest that the HR roles experience due to different and sometimes competing demands and priorities will then be discussed. There is also a sociological view on roles, which will be examined in chapter 4.4 as it fits better into the discussion on the organisational setting.

2.5.1 Models of the HR role

It varies widely what HR professionals do and how they do it. According to the extent to which they are generalists or specialists, their working style (e.g. proactive or reactive), their own capabilities, the level at which they work (e.g. strategic, tactical, or transactional), and the contextual conditions and needs of the

organisation, different types of roles can be classified for HR professionals, who form the HR function. The complex roles an HR function can entail have been described in a number of models, which are not universal, but by mapping out these roles they provide some insight into different ways HR professionals can operate.

There are a couple of widely known models. Legge (1978) was concerned with how HR professionals could effect change within their organisation, and suggested three options in her HR innovator model: conformist innovator, deviant innovator, and problem solver (see Legge, 1978). Tyson and Fell (1986) provided with their building site model a first model that describes three types of practitioner: clerk of work, contracts manager, and architect (Tyson and Fell, 1986). However, this model has now been superseded by later, more holistic models, which comprise a broader range of complexities of the HR role. One is Monks' (1992) model which includes four types of practitioners: traditional/administrative, traditional/industrial relations, innovative/professional, and innovative/sophisticated (Monks, 1992).

Storey's (1992) strategic/tactical model also outlines four possible roles: change makers, advisers, regulators, and handmaidens. In his model the roles played by HR specialists could be plotted against two axes: interventionary/non-interventionary and strategic/tactical (Storey, 1992). Reilly's (2000) model of HR includes the strategist/integrator who is most likely making the longest-term strategic contributions, the administrator/controller who is making tactical short-term contributions, and the adviser/consultant who falls between the two (Reilly, 2000).

Similar to Storey's (1992) model but based on his view of the roles HR professionals should play rather than observations of how the roles actually look like, Ulrich (1997) proposed with his 'HR champion' model a two-dimensional map, with a day-to-day/operational and future/strategic focus on the vertical axis, and a people and process focus on the horizontal axis. The roles HR professionals are carrying out as champions in creating and delivering value are termed change agent, employee champion, administrative expert, and strategic partner (Ulrich, 1997). The model experienced widespread uptake as a reference to the different ways in which the HR function can be deployed, with a concentration on the business partner role. A reformulation of the model in 2005 in conjunction with Brockbank suggested five core HR roles, where the strategic partner and the change agent roles are now combined into the strategic partner role, but a human capital developer and an HR leader role are added (Ulrich and Brockbank, 2005a). The reformulation became necessary due to the changes in HR roles the authors

had observed (Ulrich and Brockbank, 2005b). They also argue that no one conducts all five roles to the same degree. It is dependant on the HR function one covers as to whether the HR roles are of primary or secondary importance.

Ulrich's early framework as well as the revision with Brockbank is mainly normative as opposed to other above-mentioned models. It is not based on and validated through academic methods, but rather on experience. Research on the four roles model brought forth a degree of conflict and ambiguity between roles. Hailey et al. (2005) noted difficulties combining organisational roles with employee related roles (Hailey et al., 2005, p. 64). Another critique on role ambiguity came from Caldwell (2003), who also whilst acknowledging the model's strength, recognises that various roles have to be conducted simultaneously by the HR function (Caldwell, 2003, p. 992). With the move away from the people-versus-process dimension of the early model, the interrelations of the roles became more vague, and especially the role of the HR leader remains unclear in relation to the other roles. Nevertheless, Ulrich's model is a systematic framework that captures the emergence of new HR roles, which has become an often-cited classic (Talamäki, 2009, pp. 17-18). For the purposes of the present research, the model builds an important fundament for analysing the different HR roles, which will be enriched by other HR roles of other models.

2.5.2 *Role ambiguities and conflicts of interest*

The HR function is caught between a number of competing demands and priorities. In its compliance and enforcement function it has the responsibility to develop and enforce legally compliant HR policies and procedures in order to ensure that the organisation does not experience financial or reputational harm. Sometimes these HR policies and procedures do not find the support of line managers as they may regard them as overly bureaucratic and cumbersome (Guest and King, 2004).

As representative of management, strategic partner and functional expert the HR function mainly represents the employer side and supports line management at all levels. Making efficient use of existing human resources as well as performing its own role in a most cost-effective way are core goals here, and it is expected to represent the interests of the organisation. A lack of clarity over the boundaries between the role of management and the HR function might add additional conflicts of interest here.

Mainly based in HR welfare roots is the role of representative of employees. Empathising with employees, representing their concerns to the management, working to improve their contribution, and ensuring that they are aware of the

strategic issues facing the firm creates a special relationship, in particular for employees' wellbeing but also for ethical and moral concerns.

With the rise of HRM as a 'profession', professional bodies like the Society for Human Resource Management (USA) and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (UK) became further established, which serve as a guide for HR professionals in developing and promoting good HR policies and practices (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2008, p. 181). As professionals they are concerned with ethical standards recommended by these professional bodies, and on the other hand with ethical standards set by the organisations they are working for, which sometimes brings HR professionals into a difficult position.

In addition to this, questions concerning the unique contribution of the HR function to wider organisational goals, which arise from serving different focus groups like management or employees, or the legal and professional components, as just outlined above, cause further conflicts of interest. As the function works closely with the management and supports them by setting the framework for HR policies and procedures, devolution of HR tasks to line managers makes the latter even more responsible for delivery and putting policies into effect. But individual line managers may be implementing the policies and procedures designed to address certain HR issues ineffectively or just ignoring them. The distinct impact of the HR function on organisational performance is therefore difficult to evaluate. Especially when an organisation's focus is on financial control and short-termism, any long-term considerations of the HR function as a strategic partner might rather be neglected. Due to this, there is a risk that the HR function might be questioned in order to save costs.

2.5.3 Summary

It can be summarised here that especially the model developed by Ulrich (1997, 2005) experienced a widespread uptake as a reference to the different ways HR professionals can operate. But serving different focus groups like management and employees, and considering different standards of the organisation and professional bodies, might cause role ambiguities and conflicts of interest. These considerations outlined above provide the basis for mapping out the different HR roles on board cruise ship.

2.6 Conclusion

In the introduction to this chapter it was pointed out that literature on HRM in the sector of investigation is scarce, which led to a review of common literature on HRM theory. In the first section globalisation as well as flexibility and fragmentation of work were discussed. These are two aspects that show that HRM is embedded in complex and changing organisational contexts. Through this, our awareness and understanding was broadened allowing us to recognise that organisational context influences HRM approaches. This section also provided a characterisation of cruise ship organisations in regards to organisational context.

The second core section was concerned with gaining an understanding of the nature of HRM. The cruise ship is characterised in the next chapter as a bureaucratic and highly hierarchical organisation, with a huge service sector that experiences some conflicts of interest due to rationalisation and customer orientation. Relevant HRM theory was found in some early developments of the beginning of personnel management, which are outlined in the first sub-section.

The focus of the present study is on HRM on cruise ships, for which a general understanding of the concept of HRM as emerged in the beginning of the 1980s, and which was then further developed, is of fundamental importance. The reasons which led to the transition from personnel management were identified and included globalisation, economic downturn, a shift from traditional manufacturing industries towards new service sectors, technology-based process industries, major changes in labour management practices and the view of the employment relationship. Then the debate about similarities and differences of personnel management and HRM illustrated that the concept of HRM is not a homogenous one. This in turn brought the focus onto different theoretical perspectives on HRM models, and an idea of the dichotomy of the Michigan and the Harvard approaches, as well as the hard and soft debate to HRM, were presented. Finally it was outlined that these models are rather complementary, even if the rhetoric of HRM is on the soft approach, the hard approach to HRM forms a predominant aspect that is considered, too.

The HRM concept evolved further. Linking it to the strategic needs of the business led to the concept of strategic HRM. Although an overlap to the first concept was found, its emphasis on performance brings its focus on organisational level and a more macro-level perspective as opposed to the functional aspects of the field on a micro-level. As the thesis in part challenges the strategic HRM view, this discussion is vital here.

As the roles and relations of the shipboard HR function is another primary focus of the present study, literature on models of the HR role as well as role ambiguities and conflicts of interest have been examined. The model of Ulrich and Brockbank was identified as a main reference for roles within an HR function, which is usually caught between a number of competing demands and priorities. Serving different focus groups like management and employees is one identified cause that might lead to role ambiguities and conflicts of interest.

HRM has been identified as a multidisciplinary approach. The focus of this chapter has been on HRM being embedded in complex and changing organisational contexts, on the nature of HRM and its evolution, dominant theories of strategic HRM, and HR roles and inherent challenges. But for the present study the discussed literature on HRM theory is still insufficient. The cruise ship is a specific form of organisation, and in order to broaden the analytical lens here, organisational theory need to be consulted. Therefore in chapter 4, a focus is placed upon organisation structuring and hierarchy.

But before that, in the next chapter the specifics of the context in which the present study is conducted will be outlined. Therefore, background information on the tourism industry and on the cruise industry is given in chapter 3, as well as institutional regulations discussed that have an impact on managing cruise ship crew. Finally, background information on the cruise ship owner company used in the case study is given by way of a comparison with another company in order to better highlight its specific characteristics.

3 THE CRUISE SHIP EMBEDDED IN THE CRUISE INDUSTRY

The organisational setting of cruise ships is both specific and distinctive from other main organisational forms ashore. Furthermore the cruise ship organisation is embedded in a specific economic sector. The current situation and developments with this sector as well as institutional regulations influence the central issue of this research, namely to examine how and on the basis of what considerations the 'human element' is managed within this specific organisational setting of cruise ships.

This chapter aims to inform about the specific context of the industry in focus, institutional regulations within this area, and to provide background information on a cruise company. Therefore the first of the following sections will introduce the reader to the tourism industry as the super-ordinate economic sector to which the cruise line industry belongs, which will itself then be presented in more detail. Institutional regulations that determine contemporary operations of cruise ship owner companies will then be examined next. And finally the company in which the data for this research was gathered will be presented. For a better understanding of the specifics of that company a comparison with another cruise company is provided here. The key findings on the question of this chapter – what influential factors from the specific industry, from the institutional regulations, and from the cruise company inform the central research issue here – are then summarised in the concluding section of this chapter.

3.1 Background information on the tourism industry

Tourism in general has grown steadily over the past few decades as the following statistics show. Between 1995 and 2014 international tourist arrivals increased from 527 million tourists to 1,138 million tourists (see figure 6). This is equivalent to an average growth rate of 4.1% over this period. Variations from year to year are due to political crisis or economic violations that affected the demand and tourist arrivals. In 2014 international tourist arrivals grew by 4.7% over the previous year (UNWTO, 2015, p. 1).

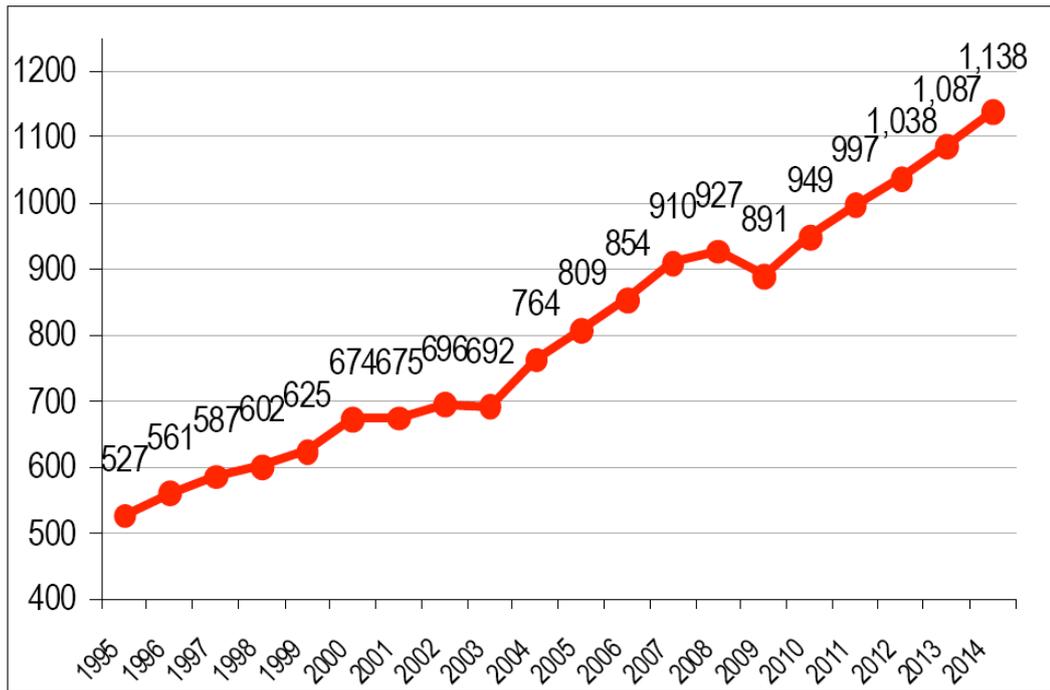


Figure 6 World: Inbound tourism. International Tourist Arrivals (million)

Source: UNWTO (2015, p. 1), ©UNWTO, 9284404315.

Taking a long-term view over the past six decades, tourism has become one of the fastest-growing economic sectors in terms of continuous expansion and diversification. The virtually continuous growth with occasional interruptions is expected to continue with an increase of approximately 3.3% a year from 2010 to 2030, compared to an average of 3.9% a year in the period 1995-2010. As displayed in UNWTO`s (2011) research project publication `Tourism Towards 2030: Global Overview` tourist arrivals are expected to reach a total of 1.8 billion arrivals by 2030 (see figure 7).

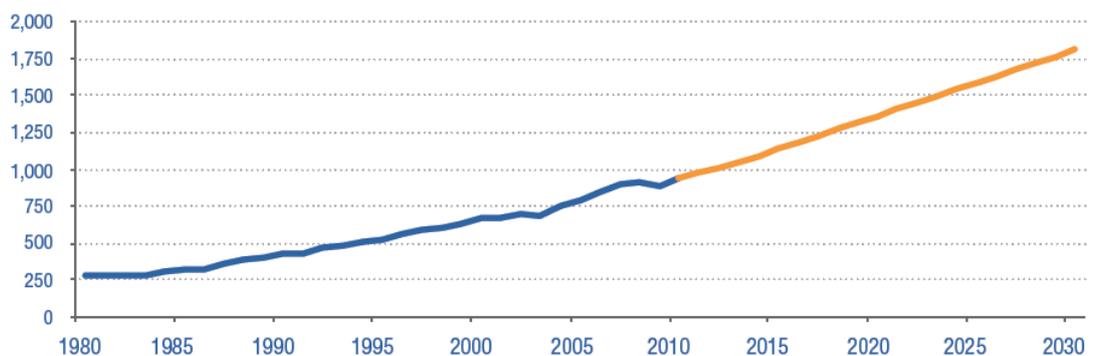


Figure 7 International Tourist Arrivals, million

Source: UNWTO (2011, p. 12), ©UNWTO, 9284404315.

According to the 'International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics 2008' personal tourism trips are classified according to the main purpose within eight categories. As the focus of this study is directed towards the cruise line industry, the tourism trip category 'holidays, leisure and recreation' is looked at in more detail (United Nations, 2010, p. 24). In 2013, 52% of all tourist arrivals were conducted for leisure, recreation and holiday purposes (see figure 8).

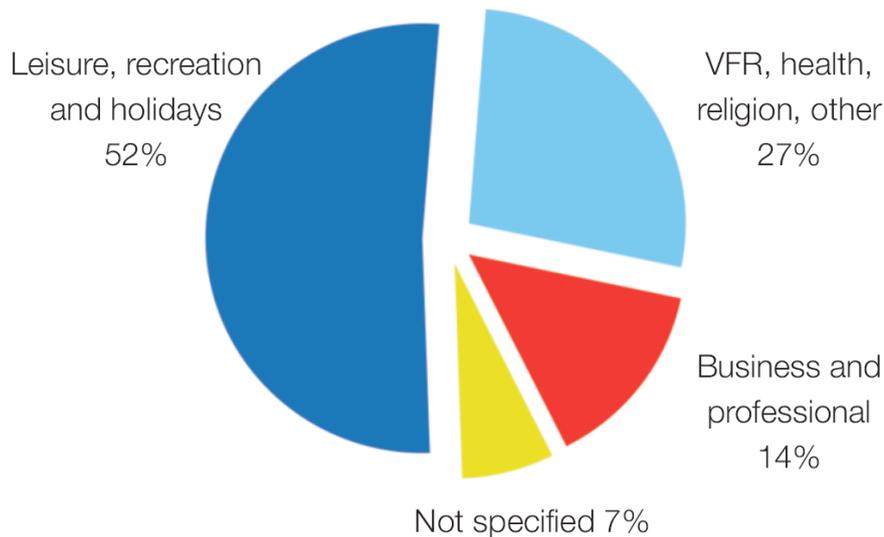


Figure 8 Inbound tourism by purpose of visit, 2013 (share)

Source: UNWTO (2014, p. 5), ©UNWTO, 9284404315.

3.2 Background information on the cruise line business

The section gives background information on the cruise line business in three steps. First it provides an historical overview about the emergence of the cruise industry, before statistics are provided that show dimensions of growth within the cruise line industry. Third, an overview about the different brands within the cruise line business is given.

3.2.1 Historical overview of the cruise industry

The cruise industry as we know it today emerged in the 1960s and is connected to the demise of ocean liners. The tradition of taking cruises can be traced back to the 19th century when people started to travel on mail ships to cross the Atlantic. Cunard began in 1840 to run steamships across the Atlantic to carry mail. As these ships were faster to cross the Atlantic than previous vessels, paying passengers started booking travel on mail ships. To satisfy their expectation of comfort,

onboard amenities were increased. Over the years mail and cargo vessels evolved into grand ocean liners (Delp, 2010).

The first ship that was exclusively built for cruises was the Prinzessin Victoria Luise, named after Kaiser Wilhelm II's daughter. The ship started its operation in 1900 by German's HAPAG line and offered cruises in West Indies and the Mediterranean. This first attempt ended in 1906 when the ship or grand yacht with its 120 first class cabins grounded (The New York Times, 1906). Meanwhile, the grand ocean liners evolved further adding more and more amenities for passengers like shipboard swimming pools, fine dining and even well appointed staterooms with running hot water. To reflect the variety of socioeconomic status of passengers, different ship areas with corresponding passenger amenities were dedicated to classes of passengers, leading to the emergence of specific ship designs radically different from cargo ships (Rodrigue et al., 2013, p. 249).

Although in the late 19th century some cruise lines like the Hamburg-America Line offered long winter cruising in the south with their transatlantic ships during the worst of the winter season of the North Atlantic (Aust, 2015), the actual modern cruise industry era began with the demise of the ocean liner, which started when a regular transatlantic passenger jet service began to be offered between London and New York in 1958. During the 1960s air travel took over the glamorous role of the ocean liners and it was hardly commercially justifiable to continue to run ocean liners for transatlantic travel. But the lifespan of an ocean liner is about 30 years, so a new purpose for the ships was needed and was found by offering cruises for example in Caribbean waters (Delp, 2010). Due to certain characteristics of ocean liners like high fuel consumption and deep draught, which made them unable to enter shallow ports, not all ships were suitable for cruising duties.

A perfect example of the transformation of an ocean liner into a cruise ship is the famous SS France. The ship operated a transatlantic travel service between Le Havre and New York between 1961 and 1974. A single crossing for the 2,000 passengers carried took about 4 days. A more efficient jet liner like the 747 that was introduced in 1970 was able to carry about 3,200 passengers across the Atlantic in the same time based on one round trip per day. Financially unattractive for transatlantic crossing operations, the SS France was sold to Norwegian Cruise Line, renamed into SS Norway and served as a cruise ship between 1980 and 2003 (Rodrigue et al., 2013, p. 249).

The modern cruise industry emerged slowly within the 1960s with the founding of cruise line companies. In 1965 Princess was founded. The company started to offer short cruises from California down along the Mexican coastline at a reasonable price

on its MS Princess Pat. A year later, in 1966, Norwegian Cruise Line came into business. The company offered on its MS Sunward the first budget Caribbean cruises. They became the first to offer cruise packages that included low-cost airfares. Royal Caribbean International opened in 1968 and debuted two years later with the MS Song of Norway, a 724-passenger cruise ship. The largest cruise company today, Carnival Cruise Lines, which absorbed dozens of other cruise lines, started in 1972 and invented the 'Fun Ships' market (Delp, 2010).

3.2.2 *Dimensions of growth within the cruise industry*

When the first ships dedicated to cruising appeared in the 1970s they were designed to carry about 1,000 passengers. The number of new cruise companies helped to bring down prices via increase competition enabling a wider section of the population to afford cruises which had previously been only for the elite, and in doing so developing today's mass market. In the 1980s a development for larger cruise ships started, first with Norwegian Cruise Line's SS Norway, the aforementioned converted ocean liner SS France. The ship was able to carry more than 2,000 passengers who were entertained by then by Vegas style entertainment shows. In 1988, the capacity record was set to 2,350 passengers by Royal Caribbean's MS Sovereign of the Seas, the pioneer who introduced the now common multi-store atrium with glass elevators (Delp, 2010). Since then, the title 'largest cruise ship' was passed back and forth between the cruise line companies, with today's largest cruise ships, the MS Oasis of The Seas and the MS Allure of The Seas from Royal Caribbean International with a maximum guest capacity of 6,360 respective 6,318 passengers (Royal Caribbean, 2015a; Royal Caribbean, 2015b).

From the 1980s onwards the cruise industry has been growing rapidly within the tourism industry, from an estimated number of 500,000 passengers that took a cruise in 1970 within the U.S. cruise industry (CLIA, 2015), to more than 20,000,000 passengers worldwide in 2012 (see table 1 and figure 9). Since 1990, the cruise line industry has experienced an average annual passenger growth rate of 7.5%.

Another reflection of the cruise industry's growth is the expansion of total guest capacity through the introduction of new cruise ships. The Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) named 40 new ships that debuted in the 1980s, and for the 1990s this number raised to nearly 80 new ships. For the period 2000 to 2010 over 100 new ships were introduced (CLIA, 2015). In its 2012 Industry Sourcebook the CLIA mentioned 143 new ships as being build between 2000 and 2012 and having been entered into their members' fleet (CLIA, 2012, p. 7). In

2006, six new cruise ships were introduced (Silverstein, 2006), in 2007 ten (Garrison, 2007), in 2008 eight (Garrison, 2008), in 2009 again ten (Garrison, 2009), in 2010 thirteen (Garrison, 2010), in 2011 eight (Garrison, 2011), and in 2012 also eight new ocean ships (Garrison, 2012). Together, this amounts to 63 ships within the last 7 years; on average 9 ships a year. In 2013 six new cruise ships were added, and in 2014 eight (Cruise Market Watch, 2012). In 2015 seven new ships will debut, in 2016 ten and in 2017 five (Cruise Market Watch, 2015b). On the other hand there have been some cruise ships that have been retired or laid up (Paniagua Mazorra, 2007), but no exact figures were available so that the guest capacity growth rate over time cannot be displayed here.

Year	Worldwide	N. America	Europe	Other
1990	3,774,000			
1991	4,168,000			
1992	4,385,000			
1993	4,728,000			
1994	4,800,000			
1995	4,721,000			
1996	4,970,000			
1997	5,380,000			
1998	5,868,000			
1999	6,337,000			
2000	7,214,000			
2001	7,499,000			
2002	8,648,000			
2003	9,526,000			
2004	10,460,000			
2005	11,180,000			
2006	12,006,000			
2007	14,625,000			
2008	15,779,000	10,870,400	4,124,100	1,784,500
2009	17,216,000	10,887,100	4,338,900	1,990,100
2010	18,421,000	11,748,700	4,452,900	2,219,500
2011	19,177,000	12,176,700	4,683,600	2,316,700
2012	20,135,000	12,582,200	5,053,400	2,499,600
2013	20,976,000	12,690,500	5,663,500	2,622,000
2014	21,556,000	12,923,000	5,702,000	2,932,000
2015	22,247,000	13,037,000	5,762,000	3,448,000
2016	22,935,000	13,211,000	5,894,000	3,830,000
2017	23,956,000	13,655,000	6,109,000	4,192,000
2018	24,627,000	13,890,000	6,231,000	4,507,000
2019	25,316,000	14,127,000	6,354,000	4,835,000

Table 1 Annual cruise passengers worldwide and by region

Source: Cruise Market Watch (2015b).

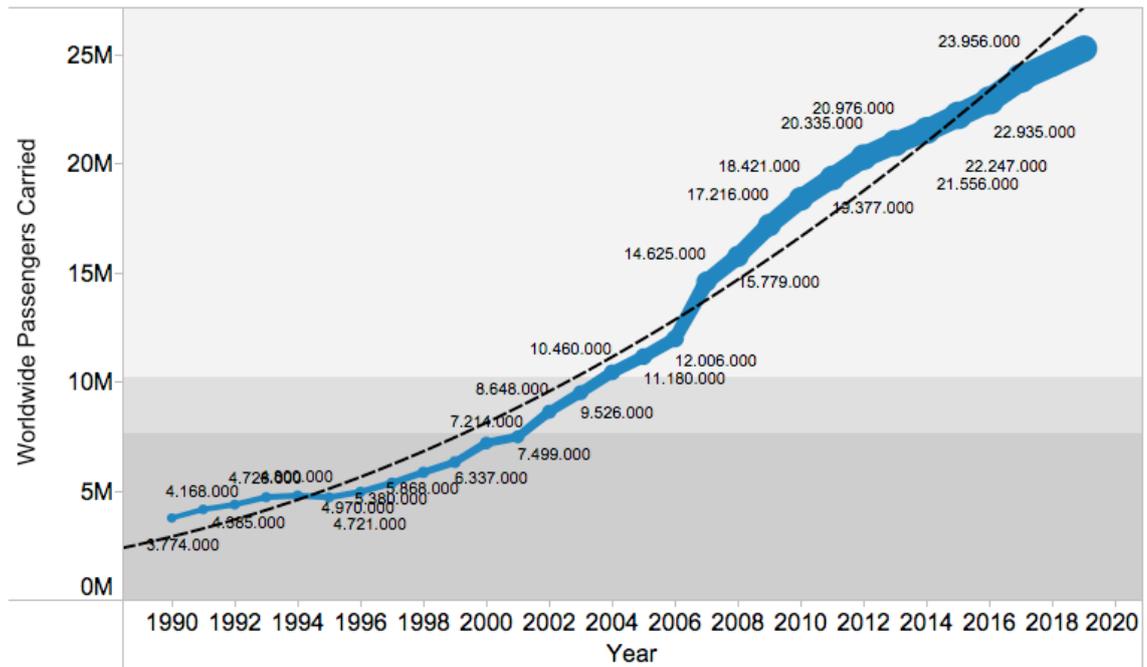


Figure 9 Growth of Worldwide Passengers Carried

Source: Cruise Market Watch (2015b); Reproduced with permission of cruisemarketwatch.com.

3.2.3 Overview of the different cruise line brands

Estimations for 2015 concerning the net revenue of the total worldwide cruise industry are \$39.6 billion, an increase of 6.9% over 2014. Table 2 provides an overview of the diversification of brands. The largest cruise company with its ten brands is Carnival Corporation with a total share of 48.1% of the expected 22.2 million annualised passengers in 2015. Royal Caribbean Cruise Limited is expected to accommodate 23.1% of the total annualised passengers with its five brands. The third largest cruise line is Norwegian Cruise Line with 10.4% of the total annualised passengers, followed by MSC Cruises with 5.2%. The four largest cruise corporations share nearly 87% of the worldwide passengers, so it can be said that the cruise line industry is somewhat oligopolistic (Ahola, 2011, p. 3). The two cruise lines that are examined in more detail below, AIDA Cruises and Disney Cruise Line, are expected to make up 3.7% and 2.8% of the expected annualised passengers in 2015.

Parent	Brand	Market share	Net Revenue (T\$)	Total Passengers	Passenger Capacity	Ship Count
CCL	Carnival	21.3%	3,162,590	4,725,100	62,368	24
	Princess	7.9%	346,4140	1,744,200	40,996	18
	Costa Cruises	7.4%	2,646,510	1,646,200	37,220	15
	AIDA	3.7%	1,359,410	828,700	21,886	11
	Holland America	3.0%	1,719,550	670,700	23,126	15
	P&O Cruises	1.7%	1,455,500	383,400	18,577	8
	P&O Cruises Australia	1.2%	922,160	266,500	13,810	4
	Cunard	0.9%	1,012,680	199,400	6,694	3
	Ibero Cruises	0.8%	614,990	177,700	9,210	3
	Seabourn	0.2%	277,310	45,400	1,766	5
	Total	48.1%	16,634,840	10,687,300	235,653	106
RCL	Royal Caribbean	16.7%	5,600,920	3,698,900	68,478	23
	Celebrity	4.2%	2,229,850	936,800	24,320	11
	Pullmantur	1.6%	463,300	344,200	7,818	4
	Croisieres de France (CDF)	0.5%	174,200	104,400	2,862	2
	Azamara	0.2%	260,980	41,100	1,420	2
	Total	23.1%	8,729,250	5,125,400	104,898	42
NCL	Norwegian*	9.5%	3,421,250	2,116,700	38,546	14
	Oceania Cruises	0.6%	890,390	132,500	4,554	5
	Regent Seven Seas	0.3%	571,900	62,000	1,890	3
	Total	10.4%	4,883,540	2,311,200	44,990	22
Other	MSC Cruises	5.2%	1,653,150	1,147,600	30,174	12
	Disney	2.8%	940,890	615,900	8,508	4
	Hurtigruten	1.4%	608,390	309,800	5,618	12
	TUI Cruises**	0.8%	701,570	298,300	8,780	4
	Thomson Cruises	1.3%	712,180	298,300	7,153	5
	Star Cruises	1.3%	706,900	296,100	7,100	4
	Louis Cruises	0.9%	470,940	197,300	4,730	5
	Cruise & Maritime Voyages	0.5%	198,810	109,100	2,978	4
	Phoenix Reisen	0.5%	259,270	108,600	2,604	3
	Classic Internat. Cruises	0.4%	199,130	83,400	2,000	5
	Silversea	0.4%	527,380	80,900	2,292	8
	Saga Cruises & Spirit of A.	0.4%	186,680	78,200	1,875	3
	Crystal	0.3%	607,470	69,400	2,056	2
	All Leisure Holidays	0.3%	154,230	64,600	1,549	3
	Ocean Star Cruises	0.2%	113,900	47,700	1,144	1
	Hapag-Lloyd	0.2%	154,130	43,200	1,302	5
	Celebration Cruise Line	0.2%	88,810	37,200	892	1
	Ponant Yacht Cruises	0.1%	224,760	29,800	1,175	5
	Viking	0.1%	68,600	27,000	928	1
	Star Clippers Cruises	0.1%	46,690	24,500	564	3
	Pearl Seas Cruises	0.1%	41,820	17,500	410	2
	Paul Gauguin (PGC)	0.1%	119,080	15,300	410	2
	Lindblad Expeditions	0.1%	81,810	11,500	626	8
	American Cruise Lines	0.0%	15,700	10,800	362	4
	Fred Olsen	0.0%	38,580	10,600	3,048	3
	SeaDream Yacht Club	0.0%	67,430	10,100	224	2
Discovery World Cruises	0.0%	34,140	8,700	556	1	

Parent	Brand	Market share	Net Revenue (T\$)	Total Passengers	Passenger Capacity	Ship Count
	Quark Expeditions	0.0%	65,160	7,400	674	5
	Swan Hellenic	0.0%	36,590	6,900	362	1
	Blount Small Ship Adv.	0.0%	11,040	3,700	192	2
	Travel Dynamics	0.0%	10,840	3,200	100	2
	Hebridean Island Cruises	0.0%	11,490	2,200	54	1
	Orion Expedition Cruises	0.0%	6,680	400	106	1
	Windstar ***				298	4
	Total	18.4%	9,164,240	4,075,200	100,844	128
	Grand Total	100.0%	39,411,870	22,199,100	486,385	298

*Norwegian Cruise Line now includes Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises, purchased in 2014 from Prestige Cruise Holdings. **TUI Cruises is a German-based joint venture between TUI AG and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. ***Figures on market share for Windstar are not available.

Table 2 Worldwide market share, net revenue, passengers, ship count

Source: Cruise Market Watch (2015c); Cruise Market Watch (2015a).

3.3 Institutional regulations

In this section a brief overview on institutional regulations that have implications on employment and working conditions of seafarers is given. Cruise ship owner companies operate in a highly globalised market, in which they face strong competition and potential labour shortages due to industry's high growth rates (Terry, 2011, p. 661). It is therefore hardly surprising that these companies seek economic advantages as well as reduced external regulatory limitations. Any opportunistic activity of these companies that runs contrary to the safety and protection of ship, people on board, or environment might be legitimately prevented or restricted by multinational regulatory institutions or independent advocates for seafarer interests (Parsa, 2008, p. 39), either by institutional regulations or collective agreements.

In the next sub-section a brief look into the 'flag of convenience' system will be taken and its consequences for seafarers discussed. After this, national and transnational labour representative institutions, here especially the International Transport Workers' Federation and its potential to serve as regulative institution between ship owners and seafarers, will be examined. Key international conventions and treaties, which the International Maritime Organisation achieved agreement on, will be outlined afterwards, before the Maritime Labour Convention consolidated by the International Labour Organisation will be discussed.

3.3.1 Flag of convenience system

'Flags of convenience' are essentially open registries for ships. The beginning can be traced back to 1919, when first Panama created such a registry, followed in 1943 by Honduras and in 1948 by Liberia (DeSombre, 2006, p. 71). The practice of using these flags began to increase in the 1950s. However, towards the late 1960s and especially during the maritime world's economic downturn following the economic crisis in 1973, ship owners were rushing en masse to transfer their vessels' registration to open ship registries (Chin, 2008, p. 3). This development was accompanied by an extension to other flags such as Cyprus (opened in 1964), Singapore (1966), Malta (1973), Bermuda (1974), and the Bahamas (1976).

As of 1 January 2014, the open registry established by the flag state of Panama is the largest one with 21.21 per cent of the world fleet's dead-weight tonnage, followed by Liberia with 12.24 per cent and the Marshall Islands with 9.08 per cent. These top three registries, in which the dead-weight tonnage of national owners is not even half a percent, account together for almost 43 per cent of the world dead-weight tonnage. According to that data, the total world amount of dead-weight tonnage registered by foreign owners is close to 73 per cent in open registries (UNCTAD, 2014a, pp. 43-45).

These registries include open and second registries, the latter established from 1984 onwards as a response from developed countries to the developments of attractive flags of convenience for ships, not only because they lost the taxes and employment, but because they faced the decline of whole ship-related businesses as well (Carlisle, 2009, p. 320). Second registries provide an alternative to flags of convenience as they also grant not only fiscal advantages to ship owners, they also allow with certain limits to contract foreign crew.

The main advantages to the states that run open registries are that the fees charged for the registry contribute a remarkable percentage to the national budget, and that it might be a source of otherwise-scarce foreign capital (DeSombre, 2006, p. 78). It should be noted, however, that one can find not only ships in a deplorable state with low skills crew and lower wages under flags of convenience, but also ultra-modern ships with highly competent crews sailing under these flags (Rodríguez-Martos Dauer, 2009, p. 93).

The drivers behind the flag of convenience phenomenon are largely economic, as ship owners seek to avoid the costs and restrictions that they experience when they register their ships in their countries of origin. Flags of convenience provide ship owners with possibilities to reduce or eliminate certain taxes, to drastically reduce

labour and environmental regulations, and to eliminate restrictions on crew and owner citizenships (Terry, 2011, p. 662). From a management perspective on human resources on board, open registries do not stipulate employment for their citizens, they do not set conditions for the recruitment of international seafarers, and they do not enforce or strengthen existing national regulations governing seafaring labour rights and benefits. Because of this, they allow ship owners access to highly globalised and flexible labour markets (Chin, 2008, p. 5).

The International Transport Workers' Federation, a leading trade union at international level for seafarers, which according to its own statement has been leading an almost 55 year campaign against flags of convenience, complains that seafarers, who are employed on ships under flags of convenience, are often denied basic human rights and experience minimum social standards, that protection from their home countries is almost nil as the rules from the country of registration apply on board, and that unions are often powerless to influence what happens on board. On their Internet sites the International Transport Workers' Federation names the following implications for seafarers: very low wages, poor onboard conditions, inadequate food and clean drinking water, and long periods of work without proper rest leading to stress and fatigue (ITF Seafarers, 2015c). Under sociological considerations, Rodríguez-Martos Dauer (2009) noted a growing unemployment among seafarers from developed countries, a general drop in wage levels and in welfare gains, unsafe health and safety conditions due to falling standards, that are not only a potential hazard for the ship and the environment, but also for the crew itself, increasing solitude among seafarers, and an encroachment in the profession of seafarers by issuing qualifications too readily (Rodríguez-Martos Dauer, 2009, p. 93).

It can be concluded here that global de-regulation in the maritime industry, notably experienced since the 1980s through migration to open or international registries, has had major consequences for the seafaring labour market, as it became widely globalised and shifted from the traditional maritime countries in Western Europe and North America towards cheap labour regions in Asia, Middle- and South America, and Eastern Europe. Further consequences concern the life and conditions of work of the seafarers on board vessels, in regards to seafaring career path, rates of pay, languages spoken on board, and other employment conditions (Parsa, 2008, p. 41). Following this examination of the open registry system with its implications on the employment relationship of seafarers, potential socio-political influences from institutional sources will be reviewed in the next three sections.

3.3.2 International Transport Federation (ITF) regulations

National and trans-national labour representative institutions are a potential source of regulations between ship owners and seafarers. Their common function is to safeguard and enhance seafarers' interests. Before the aforementioned International Transport Federation, a leading global trade union association for seafarers, and its socio-political influences will be examined, some observations on national trade unions in the maritime industry will be made.

For traditional maritime nations, mostly developed economies, Donn (1994) reported in 1994 a widespread unionisation among maritime employees. Through collective bargaining or arbitration, maritime unions found agreements with ship owners on employment conditions and determination of wages, conditions that were comparable with that for shore-side employees in those countries (Donn, 1994, p. 213). But the strong national maritime trade unions with its high level of membership experienced a steep decline in its collective bargaining power with the rise of deregulation in the shipping industry and the flag of convenience regime as described above (Parsa, 2008, pp. 56-57). An international approach to defending seafarers' interests against these developments came about in form of the International Transport Workers' Federation. Through affiliation to the Federation, national maritime trade unions can still support their members.

The International Transport Workers' Federation was founded in 1896. It represents transport workers worldwide and promotes their interests (Menelaou, 2011, p. 65). According to the information presented on its Internet sites it represents over 600,000 seafarers that are members of affiliated unions (ITF Seafarers, 2015a). One of its main roles is that of a centre of coordination for national trade unions and its members (Parsa, 2008, p. 59). The main policy-making body of the International Transport Workers' Federation is the congress, where voting delegates of affiliated trade unions meet every four years. The global union federation represents the interests of maritime transport workers' unions in the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), bodies that will be looked at in more detail further below (Menelaou, 2011, p. 66).

In addition to its efforts to raise labour standards and wages on ships and to represent the interests of seafarers and affiliated maritime trade unions, the International Transport Workers' Federation is also concerned with open registries, and as early as 1958 initiated a campaign to prevent or reverse flags of convenience registrations (DeSombre, 2006, p. 139).

In its political orientation of the campaign it labels registries as flag of convenience by applying certain criteria (ITF Seafarers, 2015b) and attempts to convince ship owners, seafarers and shippers not to register in or use ships that are registered under flags of convenience. Protecting and gaining rights for seafarers on flags of convenience-registered ships is the industrial focus of the campaign. The International Transport Workers' Federation attempts to bind individual ships through a collective agreement to a set of labour standards. In November 1999 it agreed with the International Maritime Employers' Committee (IMEC), which emerged in 1993 out of a previously existing ship owners' organisation concerned with Indian workers on British ships (Guest, 1993), on a first industry-wide collective bargaining system, the 'Constitution of the ITF/IMEC Joint Negotiation Forum'. This agreement was effective from 1 January 2001 and covers more than 100,000 seafarers. In addition to conditions for seafarers it includes a benchmark wage rate for seafarers employed by IMEC members on flags of convenience-registered ships (DeSombre, 2006, p. 141; Menelaou, 2011, p. 66).

The International Transport Workers' Federation is one of the most active institutions in attempting to set and protect global standards of labour conditions for seafarers. It runs a campaign against flags of convenience and uses a worldwide network to inspect ships. At the same time, it cannot be ignored here that the effectiveness of its efforts is limited, first, because of the scale of the shipping industry, and second, because of the individualised contractual and short-term nature of seafarer employment (Terry, 2011, p. 663).

3.3.3 International Maritime Organization (IMO) regulations

Another source for institutional regulations that indirectly or directly impacts on seafarers' labour conditions is the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Established in 1948 by the United Nations it contributed to or introduced a number of international conventions and treaties.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is an international agreement concluded in 1982 resulting from the third Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III) held by the United Nations between 1973 and 1982. The convention came into force on 16 November 1994, a year after Guyana became the 60th nation to sign the treaty (UNCLOS, 2013). The International Maritime Organization has actively contributed to the work of the conference, so that several provisions in the convention refer to the organisation in connection with the adoption of international shipping rules and standards (IMO, 2008). In particular, Article 94 of the convention refers to the duties of the flag state to take measures

necessary to ensure safety at sea in regards to construction, equipment and seaworthiness of ships, but also with regards to the manning of ships, labour conditions and the training of crew (UNCLOS, 1982). It should be pointed out however, that there are still nations that have failed to ratify the convention, and there are also no mechanisms in place to ensure that signatory nations fulfil their obligations. This means that the convention is not working to satisfy regulatory expectations (Parsa, 2008, pp. 51-52).

The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch Keeping (STCW) is the first internationally agreed regulation of the International Maritime Organization that relates directly to human factor-related issues. The first version from 1978 came into force in 1984, and in 1995 it experienced a complete revision and update, that fully came into force in February 2002. Further amendments to the convention were adopted with the so-called Manila Amendments of 2010, which came into effect on 1 January 2012 (IMO, 2015).

The convention provides minimum standards on training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers on an international level, and with its revision of 1995 it includes effective mechanisms for enforcement of its provisions. Here, in order to help assure quality of practice across member states, adopters were asked to report to the International Maritime Organization on the implementation of training and certification procedures (Parsa, 2008, p. 52).

A negative impact of the introduction of higher standards of training implemented through the revised STCW Convention is that the numbers of certificates seafarers are required to hold increased alongside the costs, as training institutions had to upgrade their facilities in order to comply with the revised requirements. It is regularly the seafarer who has to pay the course fee. According to a study conducted by Cardiff University it is not surprising that evidence of fraudulent certificates in respect to the STCW-1995 Convention was uncovered (Obando-Rojas et al., 2004, p. 302). Can the cost burden be mitigated and are seafarers truly competent by holding certificates of competency from member states are two debates following the strengthening of the provision (Parsa, 2008, p. 53).

In addition to the above-mentioned convention, the International Maritime Organization as the first United Nations' organisation that is concerned solely with maritime matters achieved agreement on some other widely known and recognised conventions such as the Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), the Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collision at Sea (COLREG), and the International Safety Management (ISM Code) (Menelaou, 2011, p. 62). Dealing

with safety and pollution prevention at sea, they are not primarily intended to directly impact on seafarers' labour conditions. Still, the prevention of injury or loss of human life or an emphasis on the importance of training relate to the question of socio-political implications of institutional regulations on seafarers.

The Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), the Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch Keeping (STCW) are known as the three major conventions of the maritime regulatory system with a focus on ship standards and environmental issues.

3.3.4 International Labour Organization (ILO) regulations

A United Nations organisation that is alongside other focus groups concerned with the welfare of seafarers is the International Labour Organization (ILO). It aims to promote maritime labour standards, deals with issues such as working and resting hours, minimum wages, pensions, vacations, and sick payment, and also sets minimum requirements for seafarers, like minimum age and necessary training and qualifications. Other concerns are regulations on medical care on board and ashore, health and safety protection, accident prevention, and accommodation, food, and catering on board (Menelaou, 2011, p. 63).

In order to improve the working and living conditions of seafarers, the International Labour Organization convened a meeting in September 2004 to draft a new convention on maritime labour standards. Aiming to agree on a single convention the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) was adopted and signed by 300 delegates from eighty-eight maritime Member States on 23 February 2006, consolidating 38 previous maritime conventions and 30 recommendations (Milde, 2011, p. 208). The convention came into force on 20 August 2013. Currently, 56 member states that comprise more than 80 per cent of the world's gross tonnage of ships have ratified the convention (ILO, 2015).

It is considered to be the fourth major convention of the international regulatory regime for quality shipping, completing the aforementioned key conventions of the International Marine Organization that focus more on safety and security of ships and protection of the maritime environment rather than the human and labour rights of the seafarer. As inspections regarding working and living conditions for seafarers are extended to ships entering ports of countries where the convention is in force even when their flag state has not ratified the convention, this regulation might serve to limit nefarious practices that have become endemic to the flags of convenience system (Terry, 2011, p. 663).

Some commentators have criticised the Maritime Labour Convention for not going far enough to protect seafarers, because for example it does not deal with the issues of visas for shore leave or protection of the right to strike. Nevertheless, with the Maritime Labour Convention a single, overarching treaty was created that is capable of representing international labour law, alongside the above-mentioned conventions on safety and security of ships and protection of the maritime environment. Universal in nature, it introduced an enforcement system that is not dependent on ratification by single affected states, but authorises Port State Control to enforce relevant international labour standards. This reduces possibilities to undermine the labour rights of seafarers especially within the flag of convenience system (Cameron, 2013, pp. 91-92).

3.3.5 Summary of the analytical reflections

In this section an overview of institutional implications on employment and working conditions for seafarers was given. The open registries with international flags and flags of convenience, a phenomenon that was driven largely by economic reasons to avoid costs and restrictions, is granting ship owners with access to a highly globalised and flexible labour market, but according to the International Transport Workers' Federation, refuses to grant basic human rights to seafarers, allowing ship owners to only establish minimal social standards.

With the deregulation in the shipping industry and the flag of convenience regime, national maritime trade unions lost influence. The International Transport Workers' Federation is today one of the most active institutions attempting to set and protect global standards of labour conditions for seafarers. It runs a campaign against flags of convenience, but still effectiveness of its efforts is limited due to the scale of the shipping industry and the individual and short-term nature of seafarers' employment.

The International Maritime Organization achieved agreement on a couple of widely known and recognised conventions, three of them building the major pillars of the maritime regulatory system. Primarily concerned with safety and pollution prevention at sea, it is mainly the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch Keeping (STCW) that relates directly to human factor-related issues as it provides minimum standards on training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers on an international level.

A recent improvement in the working and living conditions of seafarers was achieved by the Maritime Labour Convention, which consolidates prior maritime labour conventions and regulations established by the International Labour

Organization. It is now building the fourth pillar of the maritime regulatory system. Its new enforcement system reduces possibilities to undermine the labour rights of seafarers especially within the flag of convenience system.

The current analytical reflection in this section provides insight into developments and tensions regarding standards of labour conditions within the maritime industry. Deregulation and shipping market globalisation provided opportunities to decrease these standards, whereas initiatives to restrain ship owners from acting solely opportunistically as well as institutional regulations associated with standards of seafarer employment might provide opportunities on countering these developments.

3.4 Background information on two cruise line companies

In the next sub-section, information is provided about the founding and development of AIDA Cruises, its business model, its position in the cruise market, and statistical information about its human resources. Then in the following sub-section, similar information for Disney Cruise Line is outlined. The latter company is the one where the data for this research was gathered from, although I gained experience within both companies in a shipboard HR professional role. To gain a better understanding of differences between cruise companies, a comparison between the outlined cruise ship owner companies will be conducted in the third sub-section here.

3.4.1 AIDA Cruises

AIDA's business model

Cruises can be divided into different styles, like luxury cruises, theme cruises, holiday cruises, expedition cruises, recreation cruises, family cruises, etc. AIDA cruises introduced another concept of cruising, the 'club' concept. This idea was first discussed in 1986 within the Seepassagen-Komitee Deutschland (SPKD) based on a market analysis of the Starnberger Studienkreis für Tourismus. The high potential for cruising had already been recognised for the German market, and the emphasis on the club concept had already been realised ashore by travel and leisure companies like Club Méditerranée or Robinson Club. A club is designed as a self-contained vacation resorts that provides a list of services and activities in a single package to vacationers. A cruise ship can also be seen as a self-contained vacation resort but with the difference being that it is not static and can sail to different destinations. Back when the idea of club style cruises first emerged, no

member of the SPKD dared to realise this concept and introduce a club cruise ship onto the market. Finally the SPKD was terminated in 1992 after some internal disputes (Mundt, 2007, p. 381).

The founding and development of AIDA Cruises

In 1996 it was the German Tour Operator Deutsche Seereederei (DSR) that realised the club concept on its debuting cruise ship AIDA, the later AIDAcara. The experience for guests was radically different from that of traditional cruising. Dining was mostly buffet-style, only one a la carte restaurant was offered as an alternative. Participation in many activities, e.g. fitness-related activities, and also wellness was offered to passengers, and a dress-code was waived (Cruise Critic, 2015a). The success of the concept was such that in the first year 95% of the passengers who participated hadn't ever taken a cruise before. Also the average age of passengers was lower than that of traditional cruises (Mundt, 2007, pp. 381-382).

But despite a good number of bookings, the company could not generate a profit with the ship (Weiland, 1997). To strengthen the liquidity of the company the SS AIDA was sold to Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL), but the operation of the ship remained with DSR's newly founded cruise operator Arkona Touristik GmbH through a charter contract. Two years later the SS AIDA was bought back from NCL by AIDA Cruises, a joint venture of Arkona Touristik GmbH and the British P&O. The success of the club ship product continued. P&O Princess Cruises immediately ordered two new ships for the AIDA brand. The company also formed Ocean Village in 2003, essentially a British version of the club concept introduced by AIDA (Cruise Critic, 2015a).

When in 2003 P&O Princess Cruises merged with Carnival Corporation, AIDA Cruises was transferred to the Costa Cruises Group, Carnivals main operating company for the European brands of the corporation.

AIDA's position in the cruise market

Today, AIDA Cruises with its headquarter in Rostock is a shipping company and a cruise operator with ten cruise ships in its fleet and the eleventh and twelfth to be christened in 2016. The expected net revenue for 2015 is 1,359 million dollars, which is the equivalent of 8.17% of Carnival Corporation's share of revenue. AIDA Cruises is expected to welcome 3.7% of the worldwide annualised passengers in 2015, namely 828,700 passengers, which is 7.75% of Carnival Corporation's share of passengers. With around 6,900 employees (about 900 of them working ashore),

AIDA Cruises can welcome up to 20,290 passengers at any given time. Table 3 below lists all AIDA Cruise ships.

Ship	Builder	Entered	Gross	Flag	Capacity	Crew
AIDAcara	Kvaerner Masa	1996-	38,557	Italy	1,180	369
AIDAvita	Aker MTW	2002-	42,289	Italy	1,266	389
AIDAaura	Aker MTW	2003-	42,289	Italy	1,266	389
AIDAdiva	Meyer Werft	2007-	69,203	Italy	2,050	607
AIDAbella	Meyer Werft	2008-	69,203	Italy	2,050	607
AIDAluna	Meyer Werft	2009-	69,203	Italy	2,050	607
AIDAblu	Meyer Werft	2010-	71,304	Italy	2,176	611
AIDASol	Meyer Werft	2011-	71,304	Italy	2,176	611
AIDamar	Meyer Werft	2012-	71,304	Italy	2,176	611
AIDAstella	Meyer Werft	2013-	71,304	Italy	2,176	611
AIDAprima	Mitsubishi	2016-	124,500	Italy	3,286	900
AIDAmia	Mitsubishi	2016-	125,000	Italy	3,286	900
* without Pullman beds					18,566*	5,412

Table 3 AIDA Cruises cruise ships

Source: Logitravel (2015); AIDA (2015).

Statistical information about AIDA's human resources

Figures on employee structure on AIDA's website are only available as part of the Sustainability Report AIDA cares 2012 that reflects the fiscal year between December 2010 and the end of November 2011. 4,966 employees from 25 different nations were employed by AIDA Cruises during that period, 492 employees ashore and 4,474 crew members and officers onboard. The majority of officers were from EU countries (88%), and the majority of the crew members were from the Philippines (50%). While on board, slightly over 20% were women (female officers = 24.3%; female crew members = 20.4%), ashore nearly 60% were female employees (see table 4 and 5).

For nautical, technical and electrical staff from EU countries the onboard times have been reduced to 3:2 contracts, which means that they spend three months at sea and then two months on shore leave (AIDA, 2012a). In the hotel area 6:2 contracts are common for EU crew members. Non-EU crew members regularly serve 9:2 contracts. The total turnover rate for the fiscal year 2011 was 10.03%, compared with fiscal year 2010 when it was 9.1%, this is a 10.2% increase of the turnover rate (AIDA, 2012a; AIDA, 2011). Turnover rate is defined here as the proportion of departures - without considering end of fixed-term contracts - in relation to permanent full-time employees.

	EU	Philippines	India	Indonesia	Other
Officers	88	12	0	0	0
Crew*	28	50	10	11	2
Total	37	41	10	11	2

* Non-Officer Crew Members

Table 4 Employees according to region in per cent

Source: AIDA (2012b).

	Total	Men	Women
Total employees	4,966	3,732	1,234
Officers, on board	684	518	166
Crew, on board	3,790	3,016	774
Total, on board	4,474	3,534	940
Total, on shore	492	198	294
EU, on board	1,898	1,165	733
Non-EU, on board	2,576	2,369	207
Full-time, on board/on shore	4,895	3,732	1,163
Part-time, on shore	71	0	71

Table 5 Employees according to gender, occupation, contract and region

Source: AIDA (2012b).

Taking the figures from fiscal year 2010, from 386 leavers, 363 were employed on board, which equates to 94% of the total turnover rate. 291 of these leavers were EU crew members and officers (69.4%) while 95 were non-EU crew members and officers (24.6%). Turnover rate on board of cruise ships is higher with EU crew members and officers and this is a common issue within the cruise industry that needs to be dealt with. The guest language on board is German. That means that crew members in the hotel area who want to be successful in developing their careers are better off if they have German language skills. This presents a bigger challenge for non-EU crew members who wish to become leaders.

3.4.2 Disney Cruise Line

The founding and development of Disney Cruise Line

Magical Cruise Company Ltd., headquartered in London, United Kingdom, was incorporated as a subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company in 1996 to provide cruise line services as Disney Cruise Line (Bloomberg, 2015). The company has been in cruise ship operation since 1998 when the first of two sister-ships debuted, the MS

Disney Magic. A year later the second cruise ship, the MS Disney Wonder, was taken into operation.

Disney’s business model

Disney Cruise Line (DCL) became a leader in family-oriented cruises. Its ships are especially designed and built as family cruise liners. Targeting families with children of any age, DCL aims to provide a unique and individual family vacation that has something for each family member to enjoy. At the same time as parents or adults are able to enjoy the sea and sunshine, children or teenagers can also be entertained and spend time away from their parents.

Disney’s position in the cruise market

While the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) reported a market share of 1.8% for Disney Cruise Line in its 2005 Cruise Manual (Kwortnik, 2006, p. 288) and Cruise Market Watch named a similar 1.9% of the world wide cruise market share in 2011 (Cruise Market Watch, 2011), the company boosted its prospects with the launch of the additional two cruise ships MS Disney Dream and MS Disney Fantasy in 2011 and 2012 to a worldwide market share of 2.8% for 2015 (Cruise Market Watch, 2015c).

The expected net revenue for 2015 is 941 million dollars, which equates to 2.4% of worldwide share of revenue. Disney Cruise Line is expected to welcome 615,900 passengers. With 4,816 crew members, Disney Cruise Line can accommodate up to 13,400 passengers at any given time. This is a crew-to-passenger ratio of 1.77 (with Pullman beds 2.79); compared to AIDA Cruises’ crew-to-passenger ratio of 3.43. This indicates a higher service standard onboard. Table 6 below lists all Disney Cruise Line cruise ships.

Ship	Builder	Entered Service for DCL	Gross Tonnage	Flag	Capacity	Crew
Disney Magic	Fincantieri	1998–Present	83,000 tons	Bahamas	1,754	950
Disney Wonder	Fincantieri	1999–Present	83,000 tons	Bahamas	1,754	950
Disney Dream	Meyer	2011–Present	130,000 tons	Bahamas	2,500	1458
Disney Fantasy	Meyer	2012–Present	130,000 tons	Bahamas	2,500	1458
* with Pullman beds: Magic/Wonder = 2,700 and Dream/Fantasy = 4,000 passenger count					8,508*	4816

Table 6 Disney Cruise Line cruise ships

Source: Cruise Critic (2015b); Disney Cruise Line (2015b).

Statistical information about Disney's human resources

The Walt Disney Company (TWDC) operates in more than 40 countries with approximately 166,000 employees (Disney Cruise Line, 2015c). The diversified entertainment company includes five business segments: Media Networks, Parks and Resorts, Studio Entertainment, Consumer Products and Disney Interactive. Disney Cruise Line is part of the Parks and Resorts segment. The company was founded by the brothers Walt and Roy Disney as an animation studio on 16 October 1923 and is today's largest media and entertainment conglomerate in the world by revenue, placed at 45,041 million US dollars (Fortune, 2015). Compared to the estimated net revenue of 941 million US dollars for 2015 published by Cruise Market Watch for Disney Cruise Line (Cruise Market Watch, 2015c), this entity makes only up to 2.1% revenue of the whole company.

In regards to its human resources, Disney Cruise Line does not provide detailed statistics. On the company's career website and in the company's Fact Sheet it is only divulged that nearly 8,000 'Cast and Crew Members' from more than 80 different nations are employed (Disney Cruise Line, 2015b; Disney Cruise Line, 2015a).

3.4.3 Comparison of both cruise line companies

This section summarises and compares in brief the two cruise line companies AIDA Cruises and Disney Cruise Line.

Business model

Although the predecessor of AIDA Cruises, the Deutsche Seereederei, had gained experience in the cruising industry before, both companies established the cruising style for which they are known for today nearly at the same time, namely in the second half of the 1990s, with a new build cruise ship. But AIDA Cruises' market position today is higher than Disney Cruise Line's. Both cruise lines are part of a multinational company, but the role Disney Cruise Line plays within The Walt Disney Company is still marginal compared to AIDA Cruises' contribution to Carnival Corporation's revenue.

	AIDA Cruises	Disney Cruise Line
1st cruise ship	1996: AIDA, the later AIDAcara	1998: Disney Magic
cruising style	club cruising	family cruising
expected passengers in 2015	1,359,410	828,700
expected market share in 2015	3.7%	2.8%
expected net revenue in 2015	1,359 million US dollar	941 million US dollar
share of company's revenue	8.17% of Carnival Corporation	2.1% of The Walt Disney Company

Table 7 Two cruise line companies and their market position

Source: Author.

Position in the cruise market

Compared to Disney Cruise Line, which grew in two major steps with four cruise ships (built in 1998 and 1999, and in 2011 and 2012 respectively), AIDA Cruises grew nearly steadily and was operating ten cruise ships by the beginning of 2015, with another two due to debut in 2016. The number of cruise ships also explains that passenger capacity with AIDA Cruises is more than double that of Disney Cruise Line. Disney Cruise Line's crew-to-passenger ratio is by far lower than AIDA Cruises' one, which indicates a higher service standard on board for the passengers. While AIDA Cruises' cruise ships operate under the Italian flag, Disney Cruise Line's cruise ships are registered in the Bahamas.

	AIDA Cruises	Disney Cruise Line
Number of cruise ships by 2013	10	4
Passenger capacity, lower berth	18,566	8,508
Manning, total	5,412	4,816
Crew-to-passenger ratio	3.43	1.77
Flag	Italy	Bahamas

Table 8 Two cruise line companies' cruise ships

Source: Author.

Statistical information about human resources

The total number of employees of the two cruise line companies is not very different, as are the number of total ship's complement, which are only slightly higher with AIDA Cruises. Disney Cruise Line ship's crew is a lot more diversified than AIDA Cruises' one. Disney Cruise Line's diversity reflects the reality of the North American cruise market. As AIDA Cruises' guest language is German, the lower number of nationalities on its cruise ships reflects the fact that German language skills are still necessary in many service positions.

	AIDA Cruises	Disney Cruise Line
Employees, total	6,900 employees	8,000 employees
Manning, total	5,412 Officers & Crew Members	4,816 Cast & Crew Members
Nationalities	25 nations	> 80 nations
Guest language	German	English

Table 9 Officers and crew members

Source: Author.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter it has been outlined that not only the tourism industry with an annual growth rate of around 4% has been one of the fastest growing economic sectors over the last six decades, within it the cruise industry has experienced even stronger growth rates. The market changed from cruises catering an elite market to a mass market with affordable cruises for a wider segment of the population. Since 1990 the average annual growth rate on passengers has been around 7.5%, leading to more than 20 million passengers per year today. With this change, ships also became larger with up to 6,000 passengers on the biggest ones. The cruise ship market is rather oligopolistic, as the biggest player welcomes nearly half of the total annualised passengers, and the top four largest corporations share nearly 87% of the passenger market.

In order to reduce costs and avoid restrictions, cruise ship owner companies followed the trend within the maritime industry to register their cruise ships in open or second registries. As a consequence, ship owners gained access to a highly globalised and flexible labour market. On the other hand this development influenced seafarer labour markets in traditional maritime nations, mostly developed economies, and maritime trade unions lost influence. The deregulation in the shipping industry opened the door to decreased labour conditions for seafarers. Activities to counteract these developments and restrain ship owners from acting solely opportunistically have been outlined here (see chapter 3.3.2). The International Transport Workers' Federation for example runs a campaign against flags of convenience and seeks collective agreements with ship owners on labour standards. Institutions like the International Maritime Organization and the Maritime Labour Convention achieved agreement on a number of conventions. In regards to labour conditions the recently ratified Maritime Labour Convention is certainly one of the most influential ones.

Cruise ship owner companies can pursue different business models, as outlined here by a comparison of two companies. While AIDA Cruises introduced a club cruising style with a high crew-to-passenger ratio, more than double the numbers of ships and passenger capacity but with a nearly similar total manning number as Disney Cruise Line, the latter concentrates on family cruising. Its role in regards to revenue contribution within the parent company is by far lower, as part of the Parks and Resorts section it might have more the role of an extended arm of the Disney parks, bringing the Disney experience to a floating resort. Numbers on employee developments are scarce, but a trend can be seen whereby officers are mainly from developed countries whereas the majority of crew members are hired from regions in Asia, Eastern Europe and Central America. Regarding gender, there are more men than women. Turnover rate is a common issue within the cruise industry, but in the group of crew members and officers from developed countries it is a lot higher compared to crew members and officers from other regions. Crew diversity is higher in the company that serves the North American cruise market than the one that preferably serves the German market.

As already outlined in chapter 2 the literature on HRM is insufficient for the present study. Organisational theory needs to be consulted to broaden our analytical lens here. In chapter 4, first a focus is placed upon organisation structuring and hierarchy. As the cruise ship is a place to work and live, a rather unique social institution, Goffman's concept of 'total institutions' will be applied and discussed next. Then roles need also be considered in a sociological sense in order to understand the importance of roles as a concept. In the second half of the next chapter, discussions on the human element on board cruise ships will provide a further basis for the analysis.

4 ORGANISATIONAL SETTING AND HUMAN RESOURCES

In chapter 2 HRM theory was introduced and discussed. To better understand that organisations are required to adapt their structure and HR activities in response to external forces, a look into the complex and changing organisational context was taken. Then the nature of HRM and its evolution came into focus to gain an understanding of the multidisciplinary field with its different HRM approaches and theories. Theoretical frameworks were outlined that reflect basic assumptions of the present study, like the four perspectives in strategic HRM that link to organisational strategy and performance. Finally, to understand the different roles the HR function can take, different models of HR roles were outlined and conflicts of interest within these roles discussed.

The conclusion reached in chapter 2 is that HRM must be tailored to the particular circumstances. The focus of the present study is on HRM in the organisational setting of cruise ships. To understand the distinctive nature of the cruise ship as an organisation, further theory on organisation is needed. For this purpose this chapter concentrates on four themes, namely organisation structuring, hierarchy, the cruise ship organisation as a total institution, and organisational theory on roles and responsibilities.

Additionally, this chapter encompasses specifics relevant to a cruise ship organisation's human resources. The reason for this second part is that from the nature of the staff of cruise ships, unique features that influence HRM on cruise ships can be derived. A review of literature on influential factors for choosing a profession, diversity on cruise ships, and a seafarer's relation to the outside world provide a base for understanding the nature of managing human resources on cruise ships. These topics outlined above will be expanded upon.

Organisations in general are social arrangements, whose purpose is to pursue organisational goals by means of controlled performance. In the first section on organisation structuring, the objective is to identify the form in which cruise ship organisations are allocating, coordinating and supervising activities in order to achieve its aims. Here, a link back to Weber's (1947) bureaucratic management approach is taken that was already outlined in chapter 2.3.2.3. This section is important as organisational structures provide the foundation on which operating procedures and routines rest. Then some features of mechanistic organisations are discussed, in respect to their characteristics for the cruise ship organisation and the management of its human resources.

Bureaucracies, the prominent organisational structure of cruise ships, tend to organise individual responsibility and authority in a hierarchic managerial structure as a framework of supervision and control. Following Karjalainen (2004) who argued that 'the ship is one of the most hierarchical organisations in the 21st century' (Karjalainen, 2004, p. 78), a look into this vertical organisation of tasks is taken to identify characteristics and their impact for managing crew members.

The cruise ship is a social institution. Availing oneself of the notion of the 'total institution', for which first the attributes as outlined by Goffman (1961) are described, enables an analysis of the characteristics and specific functioning of cruise ships as a place to work and live. The aim of the section on the ship as a total institution is to outline the factors that affect life on board cruise ship and to explore to what degree a cruise ship can be seen as a total institution.

HRM is a shared function. Different roles in various departments of an organisation play a role. It is an objective of this study to identify the typical roles of individuals on board cruise ships that are conducting HR tasks as part of their responsibilities. In order to understand the importance of roles, in the section about role theory and roles in a sociological sense a glance into role theory is taken, and what roles in general signify in a sociological sense in this surrounding should be specified.

The cruise ship industry has been criticised for its harsh and inhumane working conditions (e.g. Klein, 2002). Wages are said to be low, with a strong reliance on tipping especially in basic positions like stewards. Contracts are long-term for many positions on board with few days off, and the days include long working hours in order to make cruise holidays special for passengers (Frantz, 1999; Nevins, 1989). Nonetheless, individuals choose to commence shipboard employment and many of the seafarers on cruise ships return to their profession on board once their previous contract has expired. The reasons determining this choice will be the focus within the section on influential factors for choosing a profession.

On today's cruise ships there is an obvious presence of men and women seafarers originating from all over the world (Chin, 2008, pp. 1-2), a development that can be linked to the 'flags of convenience' emergence and a granted access to highly globalised and flexible labour markets for cruise ship owner companies. The aim of the section on diversity on board cruise ships is to analyse the literature and gain an understanding on how diversity affects the management of cruise ship employees.

The working and living conditions on board are characterised by long periods of separation from family, friends, and home, crew members inability to leave the ship

for longer than just the couple of hours in port during shore leave, limited possibilities of social contacts beyond the shipboard community, and a workplace that is at the same time the place where leisure time is spent, making out of the job an 'all hours' work function (Oldenburg et al., 2009, p. 96; Hetherington et al., 2006, p. 410; Kahveci, 1999, p. 54; Papachristou et al., 2014, p. 4). The impact the outlined factors have on cruise ship employees and their management as well as the seamen's relation to the outside world is the focus of the final section.

4.1 Organisation structuring

To achieve the aims of the organisation, its activities need to be organised by dividing them up and allocating them to sub-units, and additionally they need to be coordinated and controlled (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2013, p. 502). As a pattern of interactions and coordination that links technology, tasks and the human factor of the organisation, organisational structure reduces not only uncertainty in decision-making through facilitating the flow of information within a company but also coordinates and integrates diverse activities that are conducted within different parts of the company (Duncan, 1979, p. 59).

Work specialisation, hierarchy, span of control, chain of command, departmentalisation, formalisation, and centralisation are all elements of organisational structure, whose respective configuration results in different shapes of organisational structures. A continuum of different organisational structure designs ranging from a rigid bureaucratic structure, a bureaucratic structure with a senior management team, a bureaucratic structure with cross-functional teams, a matrix structure, a project (team) structure, up to a loosely coupled organic structure was presented by Morgan (1989), but even more complex and amorphous structural alternatives are nowadays used by organisations which tend towards outsourcing, alliances, and virtual networking (Daft, 2010, p. 89). In responding to changes in contingency factors such as environment, technology, size, life cycle, and culture contemporary organisations are often forced to undergo changes in their strategic orientation as well as reorganisation of their structures, but still there are organisations that continue to be successful with traditional functional structures, such as bureaucracies with vertical hierarchies.

Organisational structures of merchant ships – and of cruise ships when focusing for a moment here just on the nautical and technical branch – are in many respects close to bureaucratic organisations, given the more formal, militaristic organisational structure due to safety concerns where roles and lines of authority

are clearly defined (Brownell, 2008, p. 140). In chapter 2.3.2.3 titled *the bureaucratic management approach* a deeper theoretical insight into the systematic study of bureaucracy that was launched by Max Weber (1947) was given.

On first glance one might be tempted to assign a cruise ship to a highly rigid bureaucratic form of organisation on the above mentioned scale developed by Morgan (1989), where on the other end of forms contemporary business organisations that feature a highly flexible and, to use Henry Mintzberg's (1989) evocative term, 'adhocratic' form are listed. A phenomenon that might support this impression is that the cruise ship work environment encompasses its organisational members to an extended degree of control over their time and space, which is called an 'encompassing tendency.' Goffman (1961) described the corresponding organisational form and termed it 'total institution', a formal concept that will be discussed in more detail for the cruise shipping environment in chapter 4.3.

But in cultural and moral terms most organisations today are hybrid forms between both ends of the scale (Hendry, 2006, pp. 270-271; Mullins, 2001, p. 188). To find out which structure the cruise ship organisation encompasses, the narrow context of considering solely the nautical and technical branch of a cruise ship has to be abandoned here and the other branches of the cruise ship organisation have to be included in the discussion.

A simple explanation of what cruise ships in essence are, was given by Talluri and Van Ryzin (2004). They stated that 'cruise ships are essentially floating hotels' (Talluri and Van Ryzin, 2004, p. 560). The same term was used by Dickinson and Vladimir (1997) in their book 'Selling the Sea. An Inside Look at the Cruise Industry' (Dickinson and Vladimir, 1997, p. 7). The size of the hotel and entertainment branch on a cruise ship might lead to a misperception that cruise ship management is almost identical to managing a hotel, and that the organisational design of hotels is interchangeable with that of cruise ships, with just an additional operation unit. But so far it is neither the shipboard hotel director nor the cruise director who manages the cruise ship as the highest-ranking officer.

Nevertheless it is worth considering the literature concerning the service industry, as most of cruise ships' staff is working in the hotel or entertainment sector to serve the guests, either by taking care of the guest areas including cabins, by serving the guests in dining areas, bars, shops, or recreation facilities, or by entertaining the guests. Many of these crew members have guest contact during their work.

Interactive service work is especially important for the cruise ship environment where crew members are 'on stage', and whenever they are accessible to the guests they serve as emotional actors, thereby doing what Hochschild (1983) termed in her studies as 'emotional labour' (McDowell, 2009, p. 164). The term encompasses the theory that service workers are expected to express certain emotions to customers, even when stress predominates the work and also after long working hours when fatigue emerges (Morris and Feldman, 1997, p. 270).

On the other hand an increasing global process within the service industries is rationalisation (Turner, 2003, p. 141), which leads here to an influential theoretical approach within contemporary sociological debate, namely Ritzer's (1993) thesis on 'McDonaldization'. Building on Max Weber's (1947) concept of rationalisation, which proposed that most societies throughout history have been governed by tradition and that the most significant trend in modern sociology is an increasing rationalisation of every part of our daily lives, and that rationalisation would continue until our society would become an iron cage, dehumanising everyone and creating an extreme level of uniformity, Ritzer (1993) uses McDonalds as a metaphor for the over-rationalisation of society. He identifies four main principles, predictability, calculability, efficiency, and control.

Criticism of this approach within cruise tourism emerged for example from Weaver (2005), who examined the McDonaldization thesis on the ordered and structured nature of shipboard production and consumption. In his paper he demonstrated that Ritzer does not provide a comprehensive analysis of risk and also understates the pervasiveness of post-Fordist customisation, both attributes of cruise ships that are difficult to reconcile with his thesis (Weaver, 2005, p. 361).

Other critical authors argued that this theoretical approach does not take into account the contradictory life experience of service workers, including ambiguous feelings whereby guests take on the role of both, the enemy and a friend (Korczynski and Macdonald, 2009, p. 77). Marek Korczynski (2002, p. 64) provided the concept of customer-oriented bureaucracy:

This concept of the customer-oriented bureaucracy captures the requirement for the organisation to be both formally rational, to respond to competitive pressures to appeal to customers' wishes for efficiency, and to be formally irrational, to enchant, responding to the customers' desire for pleasure, particularly through the perpetuation of the enchanting myth of sovereignty.

This approach helps us to understand the above-mentioned contradictory life experiences of service workers by suggesting that service-based organisations face dual imperatives of efficiency and service quality (Korczynski, 2001; Korczynski,

2002; Korczynski and Macdonald, 2009, p. 79; Knox, 2007, p. 2). Rationalising pressure pushes service firms towards bureaucracy in the Weberian tradition, but the non-rational aspects of customer orientation means that service workers have to embrace and cope with unpredictability and variability of customers, so that service workers must have both a quantitative focus in the work that they do as well as a qualitative focus.

Within bureaucracy, a central aspect is its reliance on division of labour to maximise the efficiency of task completion, but in a customer-oriented bureaucracy, this aspect is also coupled with the need to ensure a strong customer(-oriented) relationship. Management needs to integrate these dual imperatives, a fragile social order that is capable of producing customer orientation and task efficiency (Korczynski, 2002, p. 86). In search to balance routinisation and efficiency with a customer focus, management policies sometimes need to fluctuate between them (Knox, 2007, p. 3).

Korczynski's form of work organisation is a concept applied in organisations that are primarily concerned with delivering services to customers, such as the hotel and entertainment branch on cruise ships. It is an example that bureaucracies have adapted and evolved over time, different in many respects from older, more conventional organisational forms, but still bureaucracies nonetheless. It can be derived from the discussion here that cruise ships encompass a merely bureaucratic structure of organisation with some characteristics of new, hybrid types of organisations (Erickson et al., 2009, p. 168).

Karjalainen (2004) outlined that the mechanistic approach of organisations might be best to analyse ship organisations, working like a machine with its human resources to work as part of the machine 'in a routinised, efficient, reliable and predictable way' (Karjalainen, 2004, p. 78; Morgan, 2006, p. 13). According to Robbins and Judge (2012) the mechanistic model is generally synonymous with bureaucracy (Robbins and Judge, 2012, p. 496). It has highly standardised work processes, high formalisation, extensive departmentalisation, and is centralised, and has a more managerial hierarchy. It shows a mostly downwards-oriented communication flow with little participation in decision-making by lower-level members of the organisation. The way in which these characteristics impact the management of shipboard human resources will be outlined next with the exception of the features relating to the vertical organisation of tasks, which are discussed in the next section on hierarchy.

Standardisation of activities organised in a functional structure are fundamental to achieving economies of scale. Standardisation is shown by the detailed descriptions

of roles and responsibilities in the safety management system, a system that contains safety and environmental guidelines that are regularly audited internally as well as by independent global risk management and certification organisations such as Lloyd's Register (Disney Cruise Line, 2015e). Role inhabitants are able to perform in a highly efficient manner through this standardisation. Duplication of people and equipment can thus be minimised. Standardisation provides orientation, allowing individual crew members that take on a new task to work efficiently almost right from the start. However, this also means that the individuals on board become interchangeable (Morgan, 2006, p. 25). On the one hand this can help a professional further his career on board, but on the other hand it provides an empty structure of roles that can be filled at short notice (Aubert and Amer, 1965, p. 272).

Ambiguity of work tasks in a mechanistic structure is minimised, but also the freedom and flexibility of more organic structures. Not everybody prefers functional standardised work organisations, but many might be most productive in this kind of organisational setting. A generalisable effect between organisational design and employee behaviour is not deductible. Individual differences have to be considered here (Robbins and Judge, 2012, p. 501).

But whereas employees in more organic organisations value interpersonal justice, in mechanistic organisations it is important that formal policies and procedures are perceived as fair (Spell and Arnold, 2007, p. 730). In light of this, it shows the influence of rules and regulations on the morale and motivation of crew members, how they are applied by the management of cruise ships, and how shipboard HR professionals advise on HRM related rules and regulations.

Bureaucracies work most efficiently as long as predictable issues can be solved through well-defined rules and regulations. Modifications to standard procedures, however, can be rather difficult to introduce. Functional departmentalisation might be accompanied by potential conflicts between functional-unit goals, with the risk of losing sight of the overall goals of the organisation (Robbins and Judge, 2012, p. 488). Centralised authority and control counters this potential challenge. Centralisation, which is an important aspect of the hierarchical structure and one of the features of the mechanistic model, will be looked at further in the next section on hierarchy.

4.2 Hierarchy

Ship organisations are highly hierarchical institutions, and as Fricke (1974) notes, the hierarchy of the ship is always present (Fricke, 1974, p. 93). Hierarchy in the shipboard environment does not solely stem from legal provisions, it is also a hangover from past traditions (Rodríguez-Martos Dauer, 2009, p. 32).

Larger organisations have even more formal levels of management (Lawler III, 1997; Mintzberg, 1979; Naismith, 2007, p. 230). Kirby and Hinkkanen-Lievonen (2000) argue that for larger ocean-going vessels with even bigger crews, more hierarchical organisation of labour on board is needed (Kirby and Hinkkanen-Lievonen, 2000, pp. 207-208). In combination with comradeship, hierarchy serves the efficient operation of the ship (Encandela, 1991, p. 142).

Theories of hierarchy have been discussed in different research fields for a long time, for example in sociology (Davis and Moore, 1945; Weber, 1947), in organisational behaviour (Bavelas, 1950), in psychology (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959), or in economics (Frank, 1985). Even more research on hierarchy has been conducted over the last decade (cf. Overbeck and Park, 2001; Keltner et al., 2003; Magee and Galinsky, 2008; Anderson and Brown, 2010), in particular in the fields of leadership, power, status, and dominance (for further literature see Anderson and Brown, 2010, p. 57).

Hierarchy, which can be defined as a rank ordering of individuals along one or more socially important dimension (Gruenfeld and Tiedens, 2010; Magee and Galinsky, 2008), comes in different forms. The ranking within an organisational hierarchy can be processed according to power, status, or authority of its group members, and it can be formally delineated as well as informally emergent (Anderson and Brown, 2010, p. 57).

The focus of much of the recent research has been more on the individual level, on the social rank of individuals and corresponding psychological consequences (e.g. Tiedens, 2001; Anderson et al., 2001; Keltner et al., 2003). A limited number of research has also focused on group or organisational levels, like Anderson and Brown (2010), who assessed how differences in hierarchy steepness impact group success. The topic of their research focused on whether groups functioned better in hierarchical organisational structures or in flat structures.

The advantage of a standardised operation with a high formalisation – two of the characteristics discussed in connection with the mechanistic model in the last section – is that it allows a centralised decision-making process, another identified feature here. Important decisions on cruise ships are almost exclusively made at

the executive level, and it is expected that crew members accept executive decrees without question. On the other hand this hierarchical setting might have an unfavourable impact on crew members' motivation for achieving an organisation's goals, as on lower levels participation in centralised organisations tend to be minimal, leaving low-ranking crew members with a feeling of being uninvolved (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2012, p. 100).

Supervision in hierarchical and machine like organisations is rather closed. The margin of discretion of a supervisor is limited through detailed rules and regulations. From an HR perspective this feature allows middle and lower supervisor levels to staff these positions with less experienced individuals. This is closely linked to the cruise ship characteristic that fluctuation is high and career advancement a lot faster compared to similar positions ashore. Experienced decision makers are predominantly needed at senior executives level (Robbins and Judge, 2012, p. 488). However, authority and control is nowadays increasingly shared with shoreside operation, not least for safety reasons but also to minimise any risk that could harm the cruise ship owner company and its reputation. This change indicates that another type of executive leader is sought on cruise ships today; one that is capable of successfully collaborating with others.

Interaction between superiors and subordinates is mainly characterised by instructions. For the shipboard environment Weibust (1969) noted a large agreement with the authoritarian element in shipboard hierarchy (Weibust, 1969, pp. 251-252). The reason behind this is that emergencies could occur at any moment, where orders need to be obeyed without argument in order to minimise damages, loss of human life or the ship. The flow of information between its members in hierarchies as well as information integration is perceived as easier in hierarchical organisations (Anderson and Brown, 2010, p. 59).

Authority and hierarchical structure can be found on every vessel. One of the main reasons for this is that it ensures that in an emergency situation the operation of the ship continues. This is just one aspect, however, of Goffman's (1961) 'total institution' concept whereby all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. Other aspects regarding life on board a cruise ship will be outlined and discussed in the next section.

4.3 The cruise ship as a total institution

4.3.1 Characteristics of total institution

Factors affecting the living conditions on board ships can be linked to the characteristics of total institutions, which were described by the American sociologist Erving Goffman (1957) in a paper presented in April 1957. He listed five types of total institutions. Group four includes army barracks, boarding schools, work camps, colonial compounds and large mansions (from the point of view of those who live in the servants' quarters) and also ships. This group was established to better 'pursue some worklike task and justify themselves only on these instrumental grounds' (Goffman, 1961, p. 5). Weaver (2003) points out that a cruise ship could be regarded as 'a vehicular total institution' (Weaver, 2003, p. 62).

According to Goffman (1961, p. xiii) 'a total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of similarly-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life'. Cruise ships have acquired many of the general characteristics of total institutions that Goffman (1961, p. 6) lists as the following:

- 1. All aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority (in contrast to the basic social arrangement in modern society that individuals tends to sleep, play, and work in different places, with different co-participants, under different authorities, and without an over-all rational plan).*
- 2. Each phase of the member's daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together.*
- 3. All phases of the day's activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials.*
- 4. The various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfil the official aims of the institution.*

Goffman confirms that these totalistic features are not entirely exclusive to total institutions and can be found in other establishments. Not only that, none of the institutions seem to exhibit every item but many of the attributes can be found to a high degree. For the object of interest here, the ship, additional common characteristics can be derived from Goffman's (1961) essay:

5. *There is a basic split in total institutions between the large class of institution members and a small class that supervises them. Social mobility between the two groups is grossly restricted, the social distance is typically great, and often formally pre-scribed.*
6. *In the ordinary arrangements of living in our society, the authority of the workplace is kept within strict bounds of the work schedule, whereas in total institutions with its twenty-four hour day implication, the institution takes over 'responsibility' for its members and guarantees that all (basic) needs are organised for them.*
7. *'Forced saving' illustrates a practice in total institutions that payment is given only after a work season is over and the member leaves the institution.*
8. *Upon entrance a sociological stripping process is fairly standard in total institutions where personal identity equipment as well as other possessions are exchanged by institutional possessions that will be the same for large categories of members.*
9. *In some total institutions, expressive signs of respect for the supervising group are coercively and continuously demanded.*
10. *Characteristic for the authority system assumes that any member of the supervising group has certain rights to discipline anyone of the member group.*
11. *The authority of corrective sanctions is directed to a great multitude of items such as to matters of dress, deportment, social intercourse, manners and the like.*
12. *Misbehaviours in one sphere of life are held against one's standing in other spheres.*
13. *The member cannot easily escape from the press of judgemental officials and from the enveloping tissue of constraint.*
14. *There is usually a form of initiation to give a new member a clear notion that he is not only merely a member but that even within this lowly group he has a low status.*
15. *Total institutions provide a relatively explicit and formal set of prescriptions and proscriptions, which spell out the requirements of a members conduct. Thus the institution is getting the member in the position to live and operate by the house rules.*
16. *A small number of clearly defined rewards or privileges could be granted to members of the total institution in exchange for obedience to the supervisory group.*
17. *House rules and privileges provide the functional requirements of the third element in the privilege system: punishments. These are designated as the consequence of breaking the rules. One set of these punishments consists of the temporary or permanent withdrawal of*

privileges or abrogation of the right to try to earn them. In general, the punishments meted out in total institutions are of an order more severe than anything encountered by the member in his home world.

18. An institutional lingo or a special argot develops in total institutions as a social process.

As the notion of a 'total institution' has been applied within some sociological papers about ship-life, especially in regards to the life-style of merchant seamen (e.g. Forsyth, 1983), it is worth exploring if and how cruise ships have the characteristics inherent to a total institution.

4.3.2 Cruise ships as a form of a total institution

A total institution encompasses a place or space of residence and work that is not open. The institution members are in some way enclosed in it and isolated from the rest of society. Entry and departure are not free (Rodríguez-Martos Dauer, 2009, p. 15). Members of a total institution lack the chance to combine their institutional life with some other activity in the outside life, e.g. to leave the place they are in and join a much wider social setting. What does that mean for a ship?

A seagoing vessel can best be described as a place of work and residence. The raison d'être of a merchant ship is to make a profit through maritime trade. For a cruise ship the cruise ship owner company aims to gain some earnings through transportation and entertainment of guests on a voyage. The type of shipping has defined the construction and design of the vessel, all spaces are engineered to fulfil the purpose of the ship.

For a crew that is recruited to accomplish the mission of the ship, spaces to accommodate them are arranged, including cabins, galleys and messes, spaces for leisure time activities, etc. For the time being on board the vessel, it becomes their place of residence where they sleep, spend their leisure time and satisfy all their daily (basic) needs. It becomes their homes for the months they are on board.

While a merchant vessel would have a crew of 15 to 40 members, a cruise ship can easily have between 500 and 1,000 crew members, or even more depending on the size of the ship. Most of them belong to the hotel and entertainment department. Especially in the large departments of the hotel side, many crew members work together on common tasks. In the nautical and technical departments, crew members work alongside only one, two or probably three other crew members at most. Nevertheless even when crew members work alone or in small groups, the ship is a small area and others that work on other tasks are not far away (Rodríguez-Martos Dauer, 2009, p. 20).

The crew of a ship is what Nolan (1973) expresses as a 24-hours society. Not only is the work scheduled and governed by routine watches and regular maintenance work, meals, relaxation, leisure activities and social contacts are also more formally administered respectively limited within this enclosed ship-life. This is more true for a merchant ship than a cruise ship where crew members more often get the chance to spend at least a couple of hours ashore when the vessel hits port. They can then spend some time away from work and their living space, and can decide if they spend that time with colleagues or alone.

As Forsyth (1983) expresses it, a merchant ship at sea, sailing on a long distance journey, 'is a total institution where a large number of like-situated individuals are cut off from wider society for an appreciable time' (Forsyth, 1983, p. 10). While at sea, the vessel has the physical obstacle of being surrounded by the sea. Crew members cannot simply leave the ship and travel freely even when there is a special situation involving their families or a social or culturally important event happening onshore. Only in special and mostly extremely important cases can a helicopter be used to bring somebody from the ship to a different destination.

Even the captain isn't allowed to alter the course of the vessel to a different destination. The route of the vessel is drawn up by the ship owner or charterer, and only in situations of a great emergency where the vessel itself is in danger or the life of the crew is threatened, may the course of the ship be altered.

For a cruise ship the aspect of isolation from the rest of society is not as extreme as it is for merchant ships or vessels with a similar purpose. A cruise ship hits port regularly every day or every other day after an intermediate sea day. Longer periods away from the coast are seldom and often caused by a change of the cruise area. A cruise ship that has spent for example the summer season in the Mediterranean needs to cross the Atlantic on a little over a week journey if the schedule determines that the winter season should be spent in the Caribbean.

Crew members join a ship for a purpose, but the life they will lead there goes beyond their own goals. The ship has to fulfil a common purpose, set by the ship owner. It can be the transportation of goods from one place to another or like on cruise ships carrying passengers on a defined route. So there are sets of objectives that stand above the interests of the individual. The freedom of action and movement that characterise life outside the total institution is limited here.

A crew member cannot freely leave the ship even when it is in port. When he is not on duty and wants to leave the ship only for a couple of hours, he needs to seek permission from a representative of the captain if not from the captain himself,

because crew members regularly have to stand-by for emergency duties to ensure that in an emergency situation, which could occur at any time, even in ports, a certain number of crew is present for rescue of life and ship measures or when necessary for evacuation processes.

If a crew member wants to leave the ship unscheduled for a longer period of time or permanently, the captain most likely needs to seek permission from the ship owner company first. Additionally, permission might have to be asked from the competent authorities of the state and port where the crew member wants to leave, as in foreign ports for international crew members visa issues and other formalities might be involved, and leave forms might need to be stamped by authorities.

Another reason why permission to leave may not be granted is that the relief crew member has been delayed or does not turn up. A ship is obliged to have certain positions manned, otherwise authorities could withdraw it from service. Without a replacement a crew member might remain tied to the ship.

A hierarchical structure is found on every commercial vessel together with an authority factor, as they are necessary to ensure a smooth operation of the ship. This is especially critical and important in emergency situations for which a ship always needs to be prepared. This authority and hierarchical structure is inherited and has some similarities to the military world. Encandela (1991) describes the formal structure in the following way that 'a small group of managers imposes on a larger group a set of formal rules, regimented schedules, and the use of standard items of equipment such as dress, food, bedding, and the like' (Encandela, 1991, p. 131).

The group of managers can be compared to the group of officers, and this group is separated from the larger group of crew members; a division similar to other total institutions with supervisory staff and low status institution members. This difference is manifested in the uniforms, which vary depending on department and professional rank, and which with some exceptions most crew members of a cruise ship wear. It is also expressed through the areas the different groups use for their daily needs. Officers and crew members do not eat in the same mess. There is an officer mess and a crew mess, and sometime one also finds a staff mess on cruise ships. The group of staff consists of lower ranked officers and crew members with a supervisory or key function but without any ranking, which one can find especially on the entertainment side. Cabins are similar within any particular professional rank, larger for higher ranks and smaller for lower ranks. Crew members with lower ranks often have to share their cabins with one or more other crew members.

In general officers also do not informally associate with crew members. If a separate crew bar and an officer bar are not present, as is the case on a few cruise ships, one can observe that crew members use one part of a common crew bar and the officers another area within it. It is more seldom that an officer sits with his or her crew, and when this does occur, it often has a team-building goal behind it.

Goffman (1961) describes a disculturation process in total institutions, whereby institution members get unused to dealing with certain features of daily life in the complex social world outside the total institution (Goffman, 1961, p. 13). This phenomenon has been observed amongst seamen as well and in particular for officers. Even minor things such as cleaning the cabin, making the bed, serving the food, cleaning the clothes and uniforms, etc. are taken care of by lower ranked crew members. Despite this, a lot of the daily needs of crew members are also taken care of by the total institution. The ship environment thus provides a kind of security of a total institution in contrast to the unfamiliar routines and uncertain expectations on the beach (Hohman, 1952, p. 201).

In situations where the isolation from life on shore can be very long, for example on merchant ships or on long distance routes in general, basic social skills that are required to successfully interact and build relations in wider society can become lost. When leaving the confines of the ship, the seaman might experience a sense of uneasiness and difficulty in communication, for example talking only about the 'damn ship' with his family and others he interacts with who can't easily understand the importance it has for the seaman. A seaman with prolonged experience of shipboard isolation might be ill at ease in the complex social world ashore because of the deprivation of alternative roles, opportunities and interactions at sea (Forsyth, 1983, p. 10).

To cope with the deprivation of shipboard life as described above, the seaman might develop what is termed a 'release binge fantasy' (Forsyth, 1983, p. 10), which describes what he plans to do once he is ashore again. Supported by 'forced saving' because the wages might be paid at the end of the contract, these fantasies are usually realised once he leaves the ship. But after a short while, the seaman is driven back to the security of the ship life, which presents a kind of a paradox. He does not like being on the ship because of the deprivations and as such develops the release binge fantasies, but the difficulty in adjusting to the unfamiliar routines and uncertain expectations of life ashore or being bored with the strange environment ashore results in the seaman returning to the ship where his unease is assuaged by the security of the total institution. Regardless of place, he permanently appears in the role of the stranger (Forsyth, 1983, p. 11).

Today, this is somewhat different on cruise ships as the isolation is not as severe as on other ships. There are permanently changing groups of guests that represent the complex social world ashore. Every now and then crew members get the chance to go ashore and spend some time sightseeing, shopping or other leisure activities. The wages are also paid out regularly on at least a monthly basis.

According to Hohman (1952) the merchant seaman suffers from the absence of routine family relationships and community ties (Hohman, 1952, p. 17). When he returns home to his family after a several months contract, arrivals become events rather than daily occurrences, the seaman becomes a visitor who may even feel a little like a stranger to the children that he was not able to see grow up. Contact with relatives and friends get lost over time.

A lot has changed since Hohman (1952) conducted his investigations, especially in regards to communication, which means that seafarers today can more easily stay in contact with their family and friends. Whenever a cruise ship hits port, one could find crew members in places where Internet is available for free or for a low price to contact their families and friends via email, Skype, Facebook, FaceTime, or other communication channels.

While sailing, Internet usage on a ship is quite expensive as the connection to the World Wide Web can only be realised via satellite. Crew members have the possibility to buy telephone cards on board, which make calls to family and friends more affordable. Although not physically present for example a crew member from the Philippines who is on a ten-month contract could regularly talk to his children, stay updated about whatever issue is currently important within the family, and see the children grow up via video calling programmes.

Daily work and life on board is governed by and large by routine. Day work as well as watches are established in schedules. The introduction of new processes and working instruments are often regarded with suspicion. One reason is that the influence of traditions and customs on ships is quite strong, especially on the nautical and technical side. This is different on the hotel and entertainment side on cruise ships. Cruise ship owner companies are keen to get high ratings on customer satisfaction, because a high percentage of cruisers are returners who after sailed for the first time, then regularly spend their vacations on cruise ships again, providing that they had a good experience on their last cruise. Nevertheless routine work and a scheduled daily routine also govern the daily work and life within these departments on cruise ships.

From a seaman's point of view, because the working space and the living space are all in the same place, all activities, either private or work related, are nearly always conducted with the same people (Karjalainen, 2004, p. 86). As a consequence, one cannot escape monitoring and observation by one's shipmates. This is not intended to be a form of official and recorded surveillance as might exist in other total institutions. It just happens that in the narrow environment with limited possibilities to escape, crew members get to know what their fellow crew members are doing. While this remains an established part of the ship's practices, for the seaman it might cause stress, as one cannot escape the ship's physical and social structure.

The analysis of seagoing vessels as a total institution conducted above shows that many aspects of a total institution as described by Goffman (1961) can be found to a certain degree on ships. This confirms the fact that the concept of total institution is a very valid point of departure for the current research on the management of human resources on cruise ships. But it should not be disregarded that there are major differences between different types of vessels. Merchant vessels on long distance voyages create different situations and a different environment for the crew than cruise ships. In comparison with merchant ships, crew size on cruise ships is by far larger and more diverse, the vessel regularly hits port and jetties are chosen that are not far away from cities or places of excursions, where the ship stays for the whole day and the crew gets a chance to regularly go ashore.

It should be noted here that the notion of total institution for ships is not without criticism. Gerstenberger (1996, p. 174) for example, sees the ship foremost as a technical artefact that causes the separation from the outside world through the functions of technology in contrast to other total institutions that uses bolted doors and high fences to separate it. And Weibust (1969, p. 214) argues that seamen will not acquiesce completely in their lives on ships as a total institutions.

The concept of total institutions is largely divided between two groups: a small class that supervises, and a large class of institution members. On an organisational level of the cruise ships many more roles can be identified that also mirror the hierarchical structure. What these roles signify in a sociological sense is the focus of the next section where role theory is discussed.

4.4 Role theory and roles in a sociological sense

Role theory explains individual role behaviour in various social systems by 'presuming that persons are members of social positions and hold expectations for their own behaviours and those of other persons' (Biddle, 1986, p. 67). For Biddle 'the fact that human beings behave in ways that are different and predictable depending on their respective social identities and the situation' is one of the most important features of social behaviour (Biddle, 1986, p. 68). Aside from many other definitions, 'role' can be seen as 'the specific forms of behaviour associated with given positions in which the behaviour develops originally from task requirements' (Katz and Kahn, 1978, p. 43).

Since the early 1930s role theory has been developed effectively in a wide and still vital area of psychology (Moreno and Jennings, 1934), sociology (Mead, 1934) and anthropology (Linton, 1936; Linton, 1947). The above-mentioned authors who developed their fundamentals independently from each other are considered to be the founders of role theory. Although role theory spans multiple disciplines such as aforementioned ones and focuses on a range of perspectives such as functional, symbolic interactionism, structural, and cognitive (see Biddle, 1986, pp. 70-76), it quickly found its way into organisational behaviour research, where most empirical work was conducted. Researchers here tried to understand the behaviour of individuals in social entities that are pre-planned, task-oriented, and hierarchical (Korpela, 2014, p. 10). Today's research is mainly concerned on the one hand with gender, religion, personality and family from a social constructionist perspective. While on the other hand role stress, role conflict and role ambiguity forms also the focus of work and organisationally related research (Nyström, 2005, p. 10). The way roles are enacted on a ship from a sociological standpoint is looked at next.

A role 'highlights the social expectations attached to particular social positions' (see dictionary entry 'role' in Scott and Marshall, 2009, p. 654). For example it is expected from a captain of a cruise ship to give orders when manoeuvring the vessel. And a seaman is acting in accordance with his role when taking the orders of the captain. These actions, if it is 'giving orders' by the captain or 'taking orders' by a seaman, are socially classified functions that come with the position. There are a number of (social) rules telling the role inhabitant how to act in accordance with the role assigned to him.

According to Linton's (1936) structural account approach a role 'locates a position in society' and describes 'the standard bundle of rights and duties associated with an ideal type of this position. These expectations, which are socially based, constitute the role' (Scott and Marshall, 2009, p. 654). Berger and Luckmann

(1966) specify, that by enacting a role, 'the individual participates in a social world. By internalising (this role), the same world becomes subjectively real to him' (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 91).

For a cruise ship the social world is structured in roles, each integrated into the hierarchical order and accompanied by a framework of rights and duties. This is what Berger and Luckmann (1966) describe as 'roles represent the institutional order' (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 92). On a role level that means that a crew member who takes over a role objectifies himself as the role representative. In other words, he is a captain or ordinary seaman, but is no longer a person named by his name who is acting on his own. On an institutional level each role has a connection with all the other roles on board, thereby allowing the institution to function and to consolidate the institution.

A system of roles structures institutions, or in more general terms a society. The function of roles is to provide reference for individuals, which help them get their bearings and know their place in the institution or society (Rodríguez-Martos Dauer, 2009, p. 36). A crew member embarking upon a cruise ship finds a system in place, in which every position is well defined. Before even getting to know particular individuals, he knows what to expect from them as he is familiar with their roles, and thereby quickly finds his place in the shipboard society.

Shipboard roles are internationally defined, which does not mean that they do not vary from ship owner company to ship owner company, or even from ship to ship. But in general shipboard roles are sufficiently well defined by a fundamental set of duties and attributes, so that anyone going on board basically knows what to expect in that role and what he can expect (Rodríguez-Martos Dauer, 2009, p. 37).

The social-psychological view within role theory focuses more on the dynamic aspects of how people come to play their roles. Ervin Goffman for example discusses the ways in which roles are performed. A role can be embraced fully and in detail, or with a distance showing that the person in that role is much more than the simple role he performs (for more details see Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) and *Encounters* (1961)). This approach focuses on the emergent outcomes of roles rather than the fixed expectations as in the structural account approach (Scott and Marshall, 2009, p. 655).

In other words, when a captain of a cruise ship gives orders, he is acting in accordance with the role of a captain, as it is expected from a captain to give orders. The action comes with the role, and the captain identifies himself with this action. But the identification does not encompass the entire 'self' of the person who is acting in that role, just the part that comes with the role of a captain. That part is

according to Berger and Luckmann (1966) objectified in line with socially available typifications of behaviour. The self in its totality is subjectively experienced as different from or even confronting to that part, which comes with the role and which builds the truly 'social self'. A captain, by giving orders, therefore is acting out a socially objectified function, but he might distance himself from the actions as he reflects upon his behaviour afterwards (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 91).

A role that is assigned to an individual as a crew member does not leave much room to create an own interpretation of how to fulfil the expectations that come with the role. A crew member will in general seek to show attitudes that can be expected of him when enacting that role. But there is some scope of discretion where attitudes are probably not absolutely in line with the expected norm, but normal enough in terms of what can be expected. For example, shipboard leaders usually apply the discipline process regulations for offences of crew members against shipboard regulations. Although punishments like in the old days of seafaring are not allowed or tolerated by any cruise company anymore, these shipboard leaders might sometimes apply a sort of punishment that is not part of the discipline process regulations. This could be in the form of a temporary withdrawal of privileges, like the privilege of officers of free access to the guest areas.

Now that the theory on organisation has been outlined which has helped to understand the distinctive nature of the cruise ship as an organisation, the 'content' of this organisation, the human resources whose management is the focus of this research will be examined. The reason is that their unique features influence their management on cruise ships. Therefore motivational factors for choosing a seafaring employment, diversity, and the relation to the outer world will be discussed, starting with the factors for choosing a profession in the next section.

4.5 Influential factors for choosing a profession

The motivations for why people choose to start a career in an institution like a ship is undoubtedly a factor of special importance when it comes to the analysis of people as part of human resources. In some ways, they are inmates in what was described above as a total institution, but at the same time they live their working lives there for just a certain period of time. In contrast to other total institutions like prisons, psychiatric hospitals or depending on the political system also barracks, where entering for inmates is compulsory, seafarers embark a ship of their own free will, driven by personal circumstances and needs. Through employment contracts these people are legally bound to the ship, or rather the

ship-owner, for the time of the contract lengths, but out of all the institutions mentioned above they can easily leave whenever they might wish, only restricted by the fact that the vessel may not be back in a port which is where they are allowed to debark, and in general the notice period in their employment contracts.

Several analyses of the reasons for which seafarers have chosen their profession have been undertaken (see for example Kalvaitiene et al., 2011; Berzins and Barbare, 2013; Apostolado Del Mar, 1984; ICMA, 1988). These surveys are based on questionnaires and the data acquired during the research was analysed using statistical analysis methods. Undoubtedly these analyses build a comprehensive list of factors and its statistical distribution to the question, what people have motivated to start a career on ships. A notable summarising scheme of factors that might be individual's reason for choice of profession is presented by Kalvaitiene et al. (2011) in figure 10 below.

External factors	Internal factors
<p><i>Social factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social state of parents • Vicinity of educational institutions • Parents' education and work • Attitude of family's value 	<p><i>Physical factor:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health
<p><i>Economical factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State's economical situation • Labour market tendencies 	<p><i>Psychological factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences • Self-image • Interests • Tendency • Intellect • Abilities • Character • Temper • Self-evaluation
<p><i>Public factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach to education • Approach to work • System of public values 	<p><i>Spiritual factors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude of individual value • Attitude of moral value

Figure 10 Factors, influencing choosing of profession

Source: Kalvaitiene et al. (2011, p. 536); Reproduced with permission of Professor Adam Weintrit, TransNav.eu.

The authors distinguish between external and internal factors and list under both categories three subgroups, namely social, economical and public factors as extrinsic motivated factors and physical, psychological and spiritual factors as intrinsic motivated factors. For a great majority of young people economical (good

salary, possibilities to assure social welfare of the family, career possibilities, etc.), social (wish to acquire education, seafarer's work is responsible, seafarers are assessed as good specialists, it is one of the most perspective professions for those who live in seaside region, etc.) and psychological (seafarer's work seems to be interesting, dreams to become a captain or chief mechanic, etc.) factors have been determined (Berzins and Barbare, 2013, p. 17; Kalvaitiene et al., 2011, p. 538). In principle, more than one factor is crucial for individual's choice, and external and internal factors influence the choice likewise. According to Chapman (1992), financial reasons are generally the main motivation for people from developing countries going to sea, as wages on land might be very low (Chapman, 1992, p. 5; Berzins and Barbare, 2013, p. 15). In the Philippines, the seafaring profession is well respected, as it provides middle class living standard, so this profession symbolises a certain social status. Others aim to escape poverty, as soon as they find a similar wage in their own country they might quit (Rodríguez-Martos Dauer, 2009, p. 108). Choosing a profession is also a characteristic of an individual person, it is a means to express one's personal 'ego', and one's professional behaviour is a way to implement a professional self-image (Kalvaitiene et al., 2011, pp. 535-536).

As stated by Holland (1966), similar people might choose similar professions, but it depends how the personality matches to the environment, how an individual becomes satisfied from the work, successful in it, and retains it (see Berzins and Barbare, 2013, p. 14). Vroom (1964) showed that when individuals believe that their performance can lead to the achievement they desire, they perform effectively. And it is their individual personality and aspiration that determine if they gain job satisfaction, not the job alone (Moreby, 1975, p. 37).

Understanding the external and internal factors in choosing a profession might at least help to attract new entrants to the shipping industry, as in the campaign 'Go to Sea!' that was launched by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in 2008 (see Mason, 2008). A cruise ship owner company could try many different ways to reach candidates and could vary according to the profile and characteristics the open position requires. Similarly, maritime educational institutions could benefit from this knowledge, especially because it is no longer a secret that the youth today are no longer interested in the seafaring profession (Berzins and Barbare, 2013, p. 15).

The last statement has special relevance to individuals from developed countries from where the majority of nautical and technical officers on cruise ships are recruited. But on today's cruise ships a diverse mix of seafarers is employed, a topic that needs some further examination in the next section.

4.6 Diversity on board cruise ships

Many cruise companies today employ a lot of staff from developing countries and regions, first and foremost in order to save costs. According to the BIMCO/ISF Manpower 2010 update, the shift of the labour market for seafarers from the traditional maritime countries of Western Europe, Japan and North America towards Far East, Indian sub-continent, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe continues unabated. The latter group provides nearly 71% of the approximately 624.000 officers and nearly 81% of the approximately 747.000 ratings worldwide (BIMCO/ISF, 2010).

Although the majority of crew members are usually from developing countries, the distinctive ethnic diversity on board is not reflected in the hierarchy of officers, staff and crew. Wood (2004) noticed that it is rather linked to nationality, race, and ethnicity (Wood, 2004, p. 140; see also Terry, 2011, p. 662). Most managerial and 'front-line' positions are held by crew members from developed regions like North America or Europe (Lee-Ross, 2006, p. 47). Thompson (2002) noticed a pattern in the relationship between occupation and race/ethnicity. Crew members were hired for particular positions from specific global regions. Due to his report youth coordinators and entertainers were primarily hired from North America and Great Britain, whereas room stewards usually originated from South America and the Caribbean, and security personnel came from the Philippines (Thompson, 2002, p. 334).

Cruise ship owner companies might take advantage of the onboard diversity for marketing purposes. Wood (2000) outlined an example from a cruise ship he sailed on where the diverse ethnicity of crew members was marketed as part of the overall guest experience. The multinational crew was referred to as a wonderfully successful 'mini United Nations' to the guests, a best practice the world can learn from as they form 'one big happy family' (Wood, 2000, p. 359). The marketing approach is not limited to guests, also potential new cruise ship employees might be attracted by the possibilities of 'building relationships with people from a multitude of different countries' (Disney Cruise Line, 2015d).

Managing workforce diversity which encompasses equal employment opportunity policies and practices can also be linked to cruise ship owner companies ambition to reduce legal costs associated with lawsuits and grievances (Kossek et al., 2005, p. 55). As Shen et al. (2009) outlined, organisations with an ethnic diverse workforce are in a good position to effectively argue against charges of discrimination in legal proceedings, as they gain a good legally defensible position when referring to their extremely diverse workforce (Shen et al., 2009, p. 238).

Managing such a diverse aggregation of crew members successfully has some challenges for cruise ship leaders. Lee-Ross (2006) noted that there was evidence to suggest that managers are not dealing with these challenges satisfactorily (Lee-Ross, 2006, p. 47). It is not simply acknowledging differences in people that sufficiently specify the appropriate management approach. Managing diversity involves, according to Kim (2006), recognising the value of differences, combating discrimination, and promoting inclusiveness (Kim, 2006, p. 86). Instead, as Lee-Ross (2006) reported, managers dealing with individuals that show widely differing work attitudes often apply a rather autocratic and dispassionate leadership style with a 'product' rather than 'worker' focus in order to optimise a veneer of 'efficiency' (Lee-Ross, 2006, p. 47). Rodríguez-Martos Dauer (2009) for the merchant marine refers to officers from developed countries, which frequently forget their democratic principles and treat crew from developing countries despotically, or at least with some measure of disdain (Rodríguez-Martos Dauer, 2009, p. 86). Chapman (1992) warns, that 'when officers or managers deliberately take unfair advantage of these workers' economic or social vulnerability, because they are from other cultures, it is exploitation – a form of violence' (Chapman, 1992, p. 5).

Negative attitudes and behaviours can harm the working relationship to the crew. As Kim (2006) outlines, prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination should never be used by management, it can damage morale and work productivity, and result in increased employee turnover. Instead, it is important that cruise ship leaders understand the value and importance of diversity, which is in the interest of the cruise ship organisation (Kim, 2006, p. 47).

Wood (2004) links the high ethnic diversity in combination with the confined environment to an increasing likelihood of crew social disorganisation (Wood, 2004, p. 140). Rodríguez-Martos Dauer (2009) confirms that when people of different nationalities live and work together, mutual understanding is not limited to difficulties in linguistic understanding, it also encompasses an understanding with regard to cultural differences, social customs, religious beliefs and practices etc. (Rodríguez-Martos Dauer, 2009, p. 82). According to Chapman (1992), conflicts are inevitable when people from a variety of cultures are brought together in the same workplace (Chapman, 1992, p. 5).

On an individual level, in order to reduce subtle forms of discrimination and exclusion within the crew that hinder effective working relationships, the cruise ship organisation can utilise diversity training, a most prevalent intervention to change

crew members' attitudes and behaviours to 'value diversity' (Kossek et al., 2005, p. 63; Gupta, 2013, p. 39).

According to Pettigrew (1998), anxiety is common in initial encounters between groups, which can occur even without intergroup prejudice. It can be reduced through continued contact, although bad experiences can increase it (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 71). A means to develop 'affective ties' between different cultural groups can be to ask specific groups on board to design culture related activities or celebrations. It can yield a better cross-cultural understanding of others, can become a source of pride for group members that illustrate their culture, and shows how diversity is honoured within a cruise ship organisation' (Kossek et al., 2005, p. 65).

An aspect that is relevant for all crew members regardless of their origin is the long period of being separated from family, friends, and in general more or less from the outer world, a factor outlined as a characteristic of total institutions further above. As this separation has an impact on crew members and their management, the relation of seamen with the outside world will be discussed in the next section.

4.7 Seamen's relation with the outside world

Seafaring is characterised by many demanding aspects and associated with physical, mental and psychosocial stressors in a specific context that often differs from other working activities (Carotenuto et al., 2012, p. 189). According to a study of Danish seafarers more than half of the respondents mentioned that being away from home was the most important aspect for leaving seafaring. It might seem contradictory that nearly 80% rated the duration of home leave as a motivator to work in seafaring. But this result reflects the importance of work-home leave balance and the demand for a time-period of freedom and time with the family. Almost one third in this study named isolation/loneliness as a reason to leave seafaring, and nearly the same amount of respondents named stress as a demotivating factor (Haka et al., 2011, pp. 23-24). Caesar et al. (2015) claim that there is a connection between these factors, as separation from the home world increases loneliness among seafarers, and coupled with stress they create mental depression (Caesar et al., 2015, p. 146).

Oldenburg and Jensen (2012) confirm the connection between separation from home and stress, especially when seafarers experience a powerlessness of not being able to directly influence problematic situations at home or when they see the development of their children only marginally. It is difficult for a seafarer to practice

different roles during his assignment on board; he mainly is a crew member, and only partially a family member, but far away. For him that means a loss of a critical psychogenic protective factor on board (Oldenburg and Jensen, 2012, p. 686).

However, separation is problematic for the families of the seafarer as well, as there is a cost involved for communication and necessary equipment, or wives who are in paid employment need to arrange their leave in concert with their partner's leave periods (Thomas et al., 2003, p. 71). A study that examined family strategies to cope with the routine periodic absences of seafaring husbands and fathers has been conducted by Forsyth and Gramling (1990), who see possibilities for shipping companies to better support seafarers and their families (Forsyth and Gramling, 1990, p. 195).

The nature of crew on ships is multicultural. For merchant ships with small size crews this might lead to limited opportunities for communication and socialising (Papachristou et al., 2014, p. 6), however this issue cannot be assigned to cruise ships in a similar way, as the huge number of crew members makes it likely to find someone with a similar cultural background. And in theory frequent opportunities for shore leave make a wider contact with life beyond the shipboard possible. However, in practice due to frequent changes of ports and places crew members rather tend to look into their own cruise ship occupational community to establish social contacts, which in itself still is a kind of isolation factor, although to a lesser extent (Kahveci, 1999, p. 47). As social isolation has serious repercussions on a seafarer's mental as well as physical health, 'reasonable access to ship-to-shore telephone communications, and email and Internet facilities, with any charges for the use of these services being reasonable in amount', as outlined in the Maritime Labour Convention (ILO, 2006, p. 50), is one important possible remedy for social isolation (Papachristou et al., 2014, p. 6).

4.8 Conclusion

In order to understand the distinctive nature of the cruise ship as an organisation, the first section on organisational structures aimed to identify the form in which activities are operated and how responsibilities are determined to achieve organisational goals. In many respects merchant ships are identified as rigid forms of bureaucratic organisations, as can be seen by the nautical and technical branch of a cruise ship organisation. In the service-oriented hotel branch of a cruise ship in particular, however, a conflict was identified between the irrational provision of service work and an increasing demand for routinisation and task efficiency. The

concept of customer-oriented bureaucracy seems to balance the requirements for a strong customer orientation and rationalising pressure here. In summary, cruise ships are structured as bureaucratic organisations but not in a rigid form as they encompass characteristics of hybrid types of organisations. Additionally, the mechanistic model was introduced as the preferred approach to analyse ship organisations. It revealed some interesting characteristics, i.e. a high degree of standardisation of work processes, high formalisation and an extensive departmentalisation.

Another feature of the mechanistic model that was discussed in the section about hierarchy is that the decision-making process is mainly centralised to executive level management. Ship organizations as outlined here are highly hierarchical institutions, not least to ensure that in an emergency situation the operation of the ship continues, but also as hierarchy serves the efficient operation of the ship. However, it was shown that authority and control is nowadays increasingly shared with the shoreside operation.

Many aspects of a total institution can be found to a certain degree on merchant ships, and to a lesser degree on cruise ships. However, the features outlined in chapter 4.3 on the ship as a total institution affect life of crew members on board cruise ships in a variety of ways. The analysis thereby confirmed that the concept of total institutions could assist a more thorough analysis of managing crew members on a cruise ship.

The section concerning role theory and roles in a sociological sense provided an understanding of role characteristics and what they signify in a sociological sense in the cruise ship surrounding. It should be noted here that a role is a kind of pattern of (social) rules that guides action. It determines what is expected of the person carrying out a certain role. Furthermore, a system of roles structures an organisation, such as a cruise ship. That again gives the organisation certainty that it will continuously functioning.

The section concerning motivational factors for choosing a profession revealed that there are a number of external and internal factors that exist for why different seafarers choose their profession. Usually more than one reason influences the choice for commencing and continuing seafaring, and external and internal factors likewise influence the choice. The knowledge of the reasons is useful, as it can help with attracting new entrants to the shipping industry and retaining them on board.

Cruise ship crew is characterised by a huge diversity with an ongoing shift towards hiring from labour markets in developing countries and regions. However, as shown

in the section about diversity, this distinctive ethnic diversity on board is not reflected in the hierarchy of officers, staff and crew. The management of such a diverse group of crew members includes some challenges, and it has to be said that cruise ship leaders do not always deal with these challenges satisfactorily. In order to not harm the working relation and appreciate the interest of the cruise ship organisation, cruise ship management needs to understand the value and importance of diversity, combat discrimination, and promote inclusiveness.

Being away from family and friends is an important issue for seafarers. It is a frequent reason for leaving seafaring again, as the separation from the outside world fosters a feeling of loneliness. The challenges outlined in the section about the seamen's relation to the outside world have a variety of influences on crew members and how to manage them, and as shown here, are factors that demand recognition from the cruise ship owner company as well as cruise ship leaders.

The many aspects of the organisational setting of cruise ships outlined, provide a broad base for understanding the distinctive nature of the cruise ship as an organisation, the environment in which HRM is the focus of this research. Specifics regarding human resources on board, one element of HRM, provide a useful platform for understanding the nature of its management on board. The next chapter will outline the methodological approach of the current research.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

In the previous three chapters the nature of HRM, of the case within its context, and of organisations have been set out. This chapter explains the methodological framework and the overall research process. As King and Horrocks (2010b, p. 3) outlined, 'research needs to have a strong theoretical and philosophical grounding', and furthermore 'epistemological questions around what represents knowledge within a particular ontological view' influence how information is generated and understood (King and Horrocks, 2010b, p. 10). This chapter, which explains and justifies the rationale behind the overall design of the study and the analysis of the data, begins with outlining philosophical assumptions that inform the choice of the research approach that has been undertaken here. Through this, it explains the dominant ontological position present in this research, the adoption of constructivist ontology, the usage of an interpretivist philosophical approach to knowledge generation, and the application of an inductive research strategy of linking data to theory.

The next section encompasses the overall aim of this research, the research questions, and the process that led to more in-depth research questions that build the basis for the data analysis and discussion later on. As Flick (2009, p. 100) outlined, 'the result of formulating research questions is that it helps you to circumscribe a specific area of a more or less complex field, which you regard as essential, although the field would allow various research definitions of this kind'. Indeed, HRM on cruise ships can be approached from a multitude of aspects, therefore the outlined and developed research questions of this study are highlighted as a signpost.

HRM is a complex process with many influences (Greene and Ann Mi, 2013, p. 1) and no less complex is the task of investigation of HRM on cruise ships, which requires a systematic approach to data collection and analysis if meaningful results are to be achieved. The fourth section will describe the overall design of the study as well as the methodology used. Then a description of the research process, including the data collection and analysis process will be given. Finally some ethical considerations will be outlined, before a summary of the chapter is provided.

5.2 Philosophical assumptions

In this section philosophical ideas that exert influence on how research can and should be conducted and what the research process entails are explored. The questions here are concerned with the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge, which cannot be separated from issues concerning the conduct of research. Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 25) clarify this further by arguing that 'ontological assumptions and commitments will feed into the ways in which research questions are formulated and research is carried out'. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 105) similarly add: 'Questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm, which we define as the basic belief system or world view that guides the investigation, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways'. According to King and Horrocks (2010b), the preferences in well-executed research are not the issue but rather they see the focus on 'justification' of the methodology and methods adopted in relation to the purpose/rational for the research. They further concluded that the researcher needs to evaluate 'a host of issues that need to be carefully worked through, examining our philosophical assumptions about reality and associated theoretical perspective(s)' (King and Horrocks, 2010b, p. 6).

Research philosophies are drawn together in the concept of research paradigm. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 116), 'no inquirer ... ought to go about the business of inquiry without being clear about just what paradigm informs and guides his or her approach'. According to Bryman (1988, p. 4) a paradigm is 'a cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done, how results should be interpreted, and so on'. According to Saunders et al. (2007, p. 112) the term paradigm can lead to confusion, 'it tends to have multiple meanings'. The work of Burrell and Morgan (1979, p. 22) with its exposition of four paradigms for the analysis of social theory, which can be used in management and business research, is particularly helpful in understanding epistemological and ontological foundations and their relationship. As Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 26) concluded 'the choice of which paradigm to adopt has implications for the design of the research and the data collection approach that will be taken'.

Ontological and epistemological beliefs assist here in deciding what the research approach and acceptable method for research is. Following the argument of Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 61) that ontology is within most debates among philosophers the starting point, their ordering is applied here as ontological concerns are more fundamental, and epistemological decisions follow from the

determination of ontology. According to Saunders et al. (2007, p. 108), ontology is concerned with the nature of reality. The questions of social ontology, 'whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors' (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 22), outline two ontological positions researchers can take, which are frequently referred to as objectivism and subjectivism or social constructionism.

Objectivism portrays the position that social entities exist in a reality external to social actors concerned with their existence (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 108). In this research the overall aim is to explore HRM in cruise ship organisations, particularly by asking key stakeholders, especially managers and HR professionals who are working in this environment. The interviewees will have their own understanding and view based on their unique experience. Therefore a subjectivist ontological stance is been adopted here, a position which asserts that social phenomena are created from the perceptions and consequent actions of those social actors concerned with their existence (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 108).

Crotty (1998) further distinguishes between constructivism and constructionism. As Patton (2002, p. 97) confirms, the terms are so difficult to distinguish and easy to confuse, but they illustrate how the process of social construction unfolds among scholars. Constructivism 'points out the unique experience of each of us. It suggests that each one's way of making sense of the world is as valid and worthy of respect as any other'. This ontological position of 'meaning-making activity of the individual mind' dominates the research here. Social construction's on the other hand emphasises that culture 'shapes the way in which we see things (even the way in which we feel things!) and gives us a quite definite view of the world'. It points out the 'collective generation [and transmission] of meaning' 'as shaped by the conventions of language and other social processes' (Crotty, 1998, p. 58; Gergen, 1994, p. 127). The ontological position of constructionism is considered in this research as well by recognising the influence the unique cruise ship culture has on the perceptions and actions of social actors interviewed here.

Epistemology is defined by Easterby-Smith et al. (2008, p. 60) as a general set of assumptions about the best ways of inquiring into the nature of the world. The central concern is what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 102). Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 16) specify this central issue and ask the question 'whether or not the social world can and should be studied according to the same principles, procedures, and ethos as the natural sciences', which indicates the epistemological position known as positivism. A

contrasting alternative emerged out of the view that 'the subject matter of the social sciences – people and their institutions – is fundamentally different from that of natural sciences' (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 17). The social scientist needs to grasp the subjective meaning of social action, an area of epistemology that is termed interpretivism.

Saunders et al. (2007, p. 107) summarised that 'an interpretivist perspective is highly appropriate in the case of business and management research, particularly in such fields as organisational behaviour, marketing and human resource management'. In this research, following on the ontological positioning of constructivism, an interpretivist approach to knowledge generation is taken. As King and Horrocks (2010b) concluded, the term 'interpretative' is quite broad in social sciences, but can be 'encapsulated in concerns around how the social world is experienced and understood'. Interpretative research describes aspects of the social world by offering a detailed account of specific social settings, processes or relationships, which they termed as 'idiographic' (King and Horrocks, 2010b, p. 11). According to Saunders et al. (2007), what is crucial to note here is 'that the researcher has to adopt an empathetic stance'. That means that the researcher needs to enter the social world of the research participants and understand their world from their point of view (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 107).

'The interpretivist approach asserts that science cannot be value free and maintains that values cannot be avoided in conducting research' (Arneson, 2009, p. 71). This leads here to the axiological issue to which extent value-free research is possible. The philosophical branch of axiology is concerned with the nature of value and refers here to the values a researcher brings to the research approach. As Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 30) pointed out, the values that a researcher holds can intrude at any stage of the research process. According to Heron (1996, p. 126), in order to achieve credible research results, researchers should articulate their values 'as a basis for making judgments of relevance about what they are doing and how they are doing it'. On this basis, I can refer to a long career within the field of HRM, including contracts in shipboard HR functions within two cruise ship owner companies. The impetus for the exploration of HRM on cruise ships originated from professional experiences as well as my own personal interest in this topic.

Business research is also influenced by practical considerations. The importance and significance of practical issues become clear with the close linkage of the research question to the choices of research strategy, design, or method. I am interested here in HRM on cruise ships, a topic on which virtually no research has been carried out in the past. As there is little prior literature, from which guidance

or theory could be derived, a quantitative strategy would be difficult to apply. Following the advice of Bryman and Bell (2007) 'a more exploratory stance may be preferable and, in this connection, qualitative research may serve the researcher's needs better, since it is typically associated with the generation rather than the testing of theory ... and with a relatively unstructured approach to the research process' (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 33). Another important practical dimension is the particular setting in which research takes place. The research was conducted in a company I worked for. Any ethical considerations that may have arisen due to me having the dual role of a colleague on the one hand, and a researcher on the other were allayed because I was employed in a shoreside role in the company where the data was procured for this research. The only data I gathered on ships was the interviews I conducted during my three-month assignment. The remaining data was obtained during my time with the second cruise ship owner company, where I worked for a longer period which included three work assignments on cruise ships. However, this data was not used for analytical purposes but rather for professional experience and therefore only serve to strengthen my theories rather than provide explicit evidence.

According to Bryman (2012, p. 20) 'theory is important to the social researcher because it provides a backcloth and rationale for the research that is being conducted'. The relationship between theory and research is represented by two approaches: the process of deduction and of induction. A Researcher using a deductive research approach 'develop[s] a theory and hypothesis (or hypotheses) and design[s] a research strategy to test the hypothesis', while using an inductive research approach he 'would collect data and develop theory as a result of [the] data analysis' (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 117). For the analysis here an inductive approach has been applied on the whole, as this approach involves the process of drawing generalisable inferences out of the observations (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 14). However, the predominant inductive process also entails a modicum of deduction, first and foremost because the principles of grounded theory are used for the analysis of the data. This process of analytical induction involves data collection, a generalisation of findings into statements about the possible relationship involved, and a verification of the statements by further data collection, up to a point where types of results can be categorised (Jankowicz, 2013, p. 103). Theory is said to emerge by induction from the realities of the situation, rather than being 'brought in from outside' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The research questions and the sub questions of this research will then be revisited in the following section.

5.3 Overall aim and research questions

According to Flick (2009), 'the result of formulating research questions is that it helps you to circumscribe a specific area of a more or less complex field, which you regard as essential, although the field would allow various research definitions of this kind' (Flick, 2009, p. 100). To maintain the focus of the research, the overall aim, the research questions as well as the sub questions of this research are again outlined in this section, before the design of the research will be outlined.

The overall aim of this research as defined in chapter 1.3 is:

To explore HRM, HR roles and their relationships in cruise ship organisations. More specifically, to identify and analyse the specifics and challenges for HRM in this particular organisational context as well as the realities of the roles and relations of the shipboard HR function.

Within the initial phase of the research process the overall aim served as a useful guidance and was critical in order to set and keep the direction of the research, which is rather explorative in its character (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 536). While the research was conducted further and the researcher delved into the research topic, different and more differentiating themes emerged as important for the understanding of HRM in cruise ship organisations. Examples are:

- Characteristics and specifics of the work settings such as temporal employment, round-the-clock operation or the closely linked working and living environment
- A highly diverse workforce that was, for whatever reason, willing to work far from home for an extended period of time
- Focal points within HR practices like leadership development or employee relations
- Changing roles and responsibilities of shipboard line managers following the implementation and development of the shipboard HR function

From these themes initial research questions have been derived that are intended to guide the research to achieve the aforementioned overall aim:

1. How has the cruise ship owner company developed its HRM approach to deal with specific problems and issues in the quite challenging cruise industry environment?
2. What HR activities dominate in cruise ship organisations and what specifics do they entail in light of the cruise ship environment?
3. How are HRM related roles on cruise ships shaped and how do they relate to each other?

These initial research questions served to build three thematic clusters to be investigated. First the nature of HRM in a cruise ship owner company and its response to contextual conditions, secondly the nature of HR activities onboard cruise ships, and finally the nature of HR related roles and relationships on cruise ships.

The review of the relevant literature for this research resulted in three chapters. While the focus in chapter 2 was on the academic field of HRM, including its organisational context, development within the field that led to contemporary HRM approaches, important theoretical frameworks, and finally HR role models, chapter 3 provided not only background information on the company used in the case study and the industry in which it operates, but also institutional regulations were discussed. In chapter 4, organisation theory on structures, hierarchy, the total institution, and roles in a sociological sense was examined. Additionally, with the focus on the human resources, motivations for choosing a seafaring profession, diversity, and seamen's relation to the outer world were addressed.

The research followed an inductive approach here due to the minimum amount of academic literature related to the research questions and an under-researched field that encompass the combination of shipping and HRM. Due to good accessibility, the initial analysis of the rich data gathered in an early phase of the research resulted in certain clusters of thematic nodes that contain a certain amount of contributions from different interviewees and helped to form a good overall picture. The combination of these focus themes with the review of the literature resulted in more precise research questions, that narrowed down the broader research questions into more specific and focused topics, and connected these topics to certain theory outlined in the literature review chapters. This step resulted in the following seven research questions that provide the basis for the analysis and discussion chapters, which follow this one:

On the nature of HRM in a cruise ship owner company, including its response to contextual conditions (initial research question 1):

- Q1: How has the cruise ship owner company set up specific HR strategies, policies and procedures in response to contextual conditions?
- Q2: How is the shoreside HR function set up to cope with the specifics of the cruise ship context?
- Q3: What is the distinctive role of the shoreside HR function?

On the nature of HR activities onboard cruise ships (initial research question 2):

Q4: What are the core HR services of the shipboard HR function to support the shipboard operation and what core HR services does the business expect?

Q5: What specific characteristics do transactional, tactical and strategic HR activities encompass within the cruise ship environment?

On the nature of HR related roles and relations on cruise ships (initial research question 3):

Q6: What different roles do the HR function on board entail and what characteristics do these roles have within the cruise ship environment?

Q7: How is the shipboard HR function perceived by the interviewees and what characterises the collaboration of line management with the HR function?

The overall research aim and all related research questions imply the need to examine in-depth data of current practices within a cruise ship organisation in order to produce a structured and comprehensive analysis. Descriptive and analytical information was gathered to include both, necessitating the use of analytical techniques that facilitated both exploratory and orderly systematic examination of varied data. With the aforementioned research questions in mind and a research strategy and approach outlined in the previous section that facilitates the investigation of in-depth, rich data, the following section on research design is put into perspective.

5.4 Research design

The rationale for the research strategy was justified with regards to the social world under investigation and the researchers beliefs. In order to answer the research questions fully, it is important to consider how HRM is currently characterised within the cruise ship organisation, and why that characterisation exists. The most appropriate research strategy to apply here is case study, as according to Yin (2003) case study research provides an appropriate method for examining the 'how' and 'why' questions of research (Yin, 2003, p. 1).

According to Hartley (2004), 'case study research consists of a detailed investigation, often with data collected over a period of time, of phenomena, within their context' with the aim being 'to provide an analysis of the context and processes which illuminate the theoretical issues being studied' (Hartley, 2004, p. 323). The distinctive need for case studies as outlined by Yin (2003) 'arises out of

the desire to understand complex social phenomena' because 'the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events', such as organisational and managerial processes, for example (Yin, 2003, p. 2). Eisenhardt (1989) points out that case study research is 'particularly well-suited to new research areas or research areas for which existing theory seems inadequate' (Eisenhardt, 1989, pp. 548-549). Given these statements it might again be important to note at this point that case study research is not a method but a research strategy (Hartley, 2004, p. 323). Case study research might encompass either qualitative or quantitative methods, or even a combination of both, because complex phenomena may best be approached through multiple methods. In any case, quoting again one of the most prominent experts in case study research, Yin (2003) states that '[u]sing case studies for research purposes remains one of the most challenging of all social science endeavours' (Yin, 2003, p. 1).

A key decision for the research to be made was whether multiple cases or a single case should be used. The challenge in a single case study is 'to disentangle what is unique to that organisation from what is common to other organisations' (Hartley, 2004, p. 326). The organisation here is a cruise ship, not the company. In-depth interviews were gathered on two cruise ships, during a time period when the company operated three cruise ships. Most of the interviewees have worked on at least two of the company's cruise ships, if not on all three, which was stated at the beginning of the semi-structured interviews when biographical data was asked. The research is a result of months I spent in the cruise ship branch of the company and years working with the organisation members during the period of building and launching two new cruise ships. A contrasting perspective could thereby be gained and valuable information gathered about the research questions.

According to Yin (2003), there are five components of research design that are especially important before any data is collected: the main question, its propositions, the unit of analysis, the link between data and propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2003, p. 21). The nature of research questions as 'how' and 'why' questions have already been mentioned above, but due to an exploratory approach there are no research propositions here. The unit of analysis confirms the perspective of the research and thereby limits the consideration of information to that which is directly relevant for the overall research aim and research questions. Units of analysis are according to McClintock et al. (1979) 'defined as individuals, groups, or organisation', but 'they could be almost any activity, process, feature, or dimension of organisational behavior' (McClintock et al., 1979, p. 614). Within this research, the cruise ship organisation

is defined as the unit of analysis. Thereby the focus of the research is on structures, policies and processes, roles and relations, and contextual factors of HRM within the cruise ship organisation. Yin (2003) also introduced the term 'embedded units' as a finer aspect of the main unit of analysis that could be studied and analysed within the case (Yin, 2003, p. 25). The main unit of analysis is usually at the level addressed by the main research questions, while the embedded units generally refer to subunits within the case. Two subunits are defined here, the group of line managers and the group of HR professionals. Both embedded units of analysis contribute to unearthing further aspects to enhance the understanding of HRM with the cruise ship environment. The fourth and fifth components mentioned above represent the data analysis process in case study research, which will be outlined further below in this section about research design.

The evaluation of case studies as a research design relies heavily on the use of criteria such as reliability, construct validity, internal validity, and external validity or generalisability and how far the researcher feels that these are appropriate for the evaluation of case study research. Some social researchers accept them as appropriate while others do not (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 63). Reliability is concerned with the extent to which consistent findings can be achieved through the applied data collection techniques or analysis procedures (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 149). Threats to reliability can be subject error, subject bias, observer error, and observer bias. Subject error was reduced by scheduling the interviews well in advance and arranging a time slot where job related stress and distraction seemed to be generally low, while at the same time reassurance was offered that all interview content would remain confidential which in turn also helped to minimise subject bias. To lessen the threat of observer error a high degree of structure was introduced to the interview schedule, while observer bias was reduced by recording verbatim scripts of all interviews for analysis. Further reliability was achieved by creating a case study protocol that directed the data collection, and a case study database. The database consists of case study notes, interview transcripts, observation notes made during the interviews, ethnographic fieldnotes written down during the three-month assignment, and documents. To ensure confidentiality of the respondents and company information, the database and relevant data are not presented with this research report.

According to Yin (2009) appropriate operational measures for the concepts being studied need to be identified, which is referred to as construct validity (Yin, 2009, p. 40). The tactics that are used here to achieve this are on the one hand the use of multiple interviews in order to gather numerous sources of evidence in the data collected, and on the other hand, establishing a chain of evidence that enabled me

to follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusions (Yin, 2009, p. 122).

Internal validity refers to the extent to which the data accurately reflects the phenomena under study (Brewer, 2004, p. 503). Certain conditions are believed to lead to other conditions, thereby establishing a causal relationship rather than a spurious relationship (Yin, 2009, p. 40). This research is an exploratory study and not concerned with making causal statements. Therefore the logic of internal validity is not applicable here (Yin, 2003, p. 35).

The degree to which results obtained in one study can be replicated or generalised to other samples, research settings and procedures is referred to as external validity (Fellows and Liu, 1997, p. 85). Commonly stated is that single cases offer a poor basis for being representative. However, in case studies researchers seek to generalise a particular set of results and apply them to some broader theory (Yin, 2003, p. 36). The intention of this research is not to test findings through replications in other research settings. Therefore this research is unable to fully generalise the results. However, future researchers might be able to make such generalisations by replicating the investigation with further samples. The tool that will support them is the implicit case study protocol provided here, which includes a relatively structured methodology with well-defined research questions, semi-structured interview schedules and data analysis approaches. In the next section, the data collection methods are outlined.

5.5 Data collection process

In this section first the sampling strategy is outlined with a focus on typical case sampling, on participant selection and a discussion on sample size. The second part encompasses the research interview and data collection process. It starts with a justification of semi-structured interviews as the chosen research method, and then it outlines the interview guide for the interviews and a short interview guide presented to the interviewees in advance of the interviews. In addition to this, it describes the two phases of the data collection process, and finally summarises the additional data gathered for this research.

5.5.1 Sampling strategy

Qualitative research typically focuses on relatively small samples in depth, even single cases, that have been purposefully selected (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Here

'purposive sampling', which represents a group of different non-probability sampling techniques, was chosen, so that when it came to selecting the units that were to be studied, the judgment of the researcher could be relied on (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 226). Purposive sampling is applied when the focus is on particular characteristics of a population, that will best enable the researcher to meet the research aim and answer the research questions. Patton (1990) outlined sixteen different types of purposive or judgmental sampling techniques, from which the research here employed 'typical case sampling' (Patton, 1990, pp. 182-183). These techniques focus on the normality/typicality of the unit of research and are adopted when a qualitative profile of one or more typical cases should be presented. Typical does not mean that the sample is representative for the population being studied and allows generalisations in any rigorous sense, but the sample could illustrate other similar samples as it is not in any major way atypical, extreme, deviant, or intensely unusual (Patton, 1990, p. 173). The cruise ship owner company chosen for this research as the case is a typical example within the industry. In relation to market share, net revenue, passenger capacity, and ship count, it is situated in the mid-range. The company is known for having introduced a separate HR function on board as the first in the industry in 1998 which many others have now followed, so today it is rather typical amongst the main players operating a shipboard HR function.

The participants selected for the sample had to be able to assist in achieving the research aim, investigating HRM in a cruise ship organisation. One issue within qualitative research as outlined by McCracken (1988) is that of gaining access to the potential participants (McCracken, 1988, p. 17). King and Horrocks (2010b) note that in many research studies they must be reached through one or more gatekeepers, through 'someone who has the authority to grant or deny permission to access potential participants and/or the ability to facilitate such access' (King and Horrocks, 2010b, p. 31). Here access was granted through the Head of HR, who also gave me the chance to join the shipboard organisation on a three-month assignment, a period where most of the interviews took place and ethnographic fieldnotes were written down. In these three months I delved deep into the shipboard HR function as I fully covered one of three positions within the shipboard HR department with all accompanying responsibilities.

Another issue to look at is sample size. According to Guest et al. (2006) guidelines for determining non-probabilistic sample size are virtually non-existent (Guest et al., 2006, p. 59). Nevertheless they cited Bertaux (1981), who argued that fifteen is the smallest acceptable sample size in qualitative research (Bertaux, 1981, p. 35), Morse (1994), who recommended at least six participants for

phenomenological studies (Morse, 1994, p. 225), Creswell (1998), who recommended between five and twenty-five interviews for a phenomenological study (Creswell, 1998, p. 64), and Kuzel (1992), who recommended six to eight interviews for a homogeneous sample (Kuzel, 1992, p. 41). The sample size here as presented in table 10 below is 23 and therefore meets even the most stringent of guidelines proposed by the different authors.

No*	Date	Company	Function
1	04.11.2010	Disney, M/S Dream	HR Manager
2	17.11.2010	Disney, M/S Dream	Staff Captain
3	28.12.2010	Disney, M/S Dream	Captain
4	30.12.2010	Disney, M/S Dream	Staff Captain
5	02.01.2011	Disney, M/S Dream	HR Manager
6	06.04.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	Hotel Director
7	07.04.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	Training Officer
8	12.04.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	Business Office Manager
9	14.04.2011	Disney Cruise Line, shoreside	Leadership Trainer
10	15.04.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	Food and Beverage Manager
11	17.04.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	Manager Merchandise
12	18.04.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	Security Officer
13	18.04.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	Spa Manager
14	21.04.2011	Disney Cruise Line, shoreside	Fleet Culinary Standards and Consist Chef
15	03.05.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	Executive Housekeeper
16	05.05.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	Food Manager
17	10.05.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	HR Manager
18	16.05.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	Chief Engineer
19	17.05.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	Staff Captain
20	17.05.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	Cruise Director
21	19.05.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	Hotel Director
22	21.05.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	Doctor
23	26.05.2011	Disney, M/S Magic	HR Manager

*The numbers here are used to be able to assign the quotations in the text to the interviews.

Table 10 List of interviewees

Source: Author.

Boswell (2006, p. 1493) states that those employees at higher hierarchical levels will have greater 'line of sight' to an organisation's strategy and thereby understand better how to contribute to those objectives. Therefore employees within the higher levels of the organisation with managerial responsibilities were primarily selected as a sample for this research. A distinction can be adopted from Hales (2005) between those with remote, indirect, and strategic direction and control of work and, crucially, workers, termed here as first-line managers, and those with proximal, direct, and operational direction and control, termed here as supervisors (Hales, 2005, p. 473). For this research, fourteen front-line or strategic managers who function at a higher shipboard level were selected, and only two supervisor level participants. Two members of the first group and one member of the second group were employed by contracting companies, as the areas in which they were

employed are generally outsourced ones. Within the HR function four managers with direct reports were selected and one non-managerial employee. Two participants from the shoreside organisation were also added to this research: a branch manager with managerial responsibilities and a management trainer.

5.5.2 Research interview and data collection

For this research, one of 'the most frequently used method[s] when gathering data in qualitative research' (King and Horrocks, 2010b, p. 6) is considered the most appropriate one here, namely interviews. According to Kvale (1996), in a qualitative research interview interviewees talk about the world in which they live (Kvale, 1996, p. 1). The purpose of applying the qualitative research interview method is to obtain these descriptions of the real life of the interviewees, and by interpreting the meaning of the phenomena described understand the world from the subjects' point of view, reveal the meaning behind peoples' experiences, and uncover their world (Kvale, 1996, pp. 5-6; McCracken, 1988, p. 9). The initial assumption of entering into the other person's perspective by qualitative interviewing is 'that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit' (Patton, 2002, p. 341), as the researcher wants rich, detailed answers. The qualitative interviewing approach places much greater interest in the interviewee's point of view and thereby 'tends to be flexible, responding to the direction in which interviewees take the interview and perhaps adjusting the emphases in the research as a result of significant issues that emerge over the course of interviews' (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 474).

In order to explore the experiences and understandings of key stakeholders relating to HRM on cruise ships semi-structured interviews were conducted. To aid me in this, I had a list of themes and questions to be covered, focusing on certain aspects of HRM. The approach is flexible in the sense that additional questions were added and questions were not followed in exactly the way outlined in the interview guide and rather instead, depend on the flow of the conversation (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 312). But, by and large, all the questions were asked and a similar wording was used in all interviews (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 474). The respondents had a great deal of leeway in how to reply, and by asking open-ended questions they were encouraged to say more rather than less (Flick, 2009, p. 334).

The interview guide that was applied in all interviews here was derived from a similar interview guide that was developed and tested in a pilot study about HRM in project organisations. Each interview started with an opening biographical question, a non-direct question that is termed by Spradley (1979) 'grand tour question', which encourages informants to talk and become engaged in the interview

(Spradley, 1979, p. 86). For the research it provided rich data about the motivational factors to commence a career on board and the background of the seafarer. A second question on initial thoughts about HRM also aimed to explore past experiences of the interviewees.

The second part of the interview guide aimed to explore current HRM related issues. The questions were structured into seven main investigative fields:

- The strategy for HRM in a ship-operation business unit
- The structure and reporting line of the HR function
- The day-to-day operations
- HRM across different types of employment
- Responsibilities for HRM – the key players
- The connection between the ship-operation and shoreside organisation
- The contribution of HRM to the success of the organisation

The last part tended to explore possible improvements with an outlook into the future. The interview guide as used is presented in Appendix 1.

Every interview was arranged with every interviewee well in advance to ensure that a time slot was chosen where work related stress and disturbances would be less likely to occur and where the time taken for the semi-structured interview could be at least one hour. A day before the interview took place a short interview guide was presented to the interviewee. This paper gave a short definition of HRM and shortly explained the purpose and aims of the research project. It then listed the above outlined seven main fields of investigation about contemporary HRM on cruise ships. The interviewee has been assured that no preparation was needed and that all information was to be treated with the utmost confidentiality. The guide concluded by expressing gratitude to the interviewee for participating in the research project. The short interview guide for interviewees can be found in Appendix 2.

The data collection was undertaken in two phases. In the initial phase five semi-structured interviews were conducted. The type of knowledge that is required from the cruise ship organisation is in-depth in nature, but also high-level which meant it needed to be gathered from higher-ranking managers of the organisation. Therefore three nautical officers from the highest and second highest ranks were selected for the interviews as well as two HR managers with direct reports. The interviews took place during the launch phase of a new cruise ship, when it was still in the yard or on the crossing respectively, even before the maiden voyage took place. These interviews were also conducted to test the interview guide. The responses provided were detailed in nature. The results showed that the interview

questions had been carefully constructed and the wording and order of the questions in the interviews supported to develop rapport and relationship with the interviewees. It was concluded that no modification was needed to the developed and applied interview guide, which then served in its original version in the other interviews as the interview guide, too.

During my three-month assignment as HR professional on board a cruise ship eighteen semi-structured interviews were conducted in a second phase of data collection. Every interview lasted about one hour on average. The instruments and procedures used to collect data were exactly the same as in the first phase. The selected interviewees reflected the knowledge required from the unit of analysis, the cruise ship organisation, as well as the embedded units, managers and HR professionals. The quality of responses obtained from the individual interviews was highly favourable due to the same reasons as the previous phase, namely a careful construction of the interview structures, a deliberate selection of interviewees, a flexible approach during the semi-structured interviews, and a developed rapport and close relationship with the interviewees.

All interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees, and verbatim interview transcripts of the interviews were conducted for analysis. Additionally after every interview I recorded my observations, which I had noted down during the interview, in observation notes and complemented them with additional thoughts that came to me from the recording process.

To understand the true perspectives of the subject being studied, I conducted self-observations and self-interviews in the form of ethnographic fieldnotes during my three-month assignment. Autoethnography is a qualitative research method that focuses on the researcher's subjective experience (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 740; Chang, 2008). Here, I myself become the primary subject of the research. Aware of the major disadvantages that fieldnotes are subject to, namely memory and possible conscious or unconscious bias, this method was chosen to be applied in the research here as it allowed accessing the subject and recording what I observed in an unobtrusive manner.

Apart from the primary data this research benefited from secondary data that was gathered during the three-month assignment. The Safety Management System, which is required amongst others by all international passenger ships of 500 gross tons or more (IMO, 2002), comes with a manual that contains all organisational charts and job descriptions of every position on board; useful information for the analysis especially regarding HR related roles. I was also granted access to an HR evolution assessment that was conducted to realign the shipboard HR function. The data provided to me included a report of the first two of three phases conducted,

and primary respondents' data from the initial survey from 12 HR professionals and 19 shipboard stakeholders.

5.5.3 *In the field as a researcher*

In practice, the research during my three-month assignment was such, that I was employed and working as a full-time employee conducting a mid-level officer position as an HR professional. It is important to note that I had been in many different HR roles for more than 10 years by then. However, aside from working for about 2 weeks on a cruise ship for the yard-based project team during the commissioning of a new vessel a couple of months prior to the assignment, I was unfamiliar with this new work environment. That was very advantageous in terms of data collection and analysis because I gained so many fascinating first impressions. Especially in the beginning of the assignment, I took nothing for granted and much of what today is ordinary to me stood out and was recorded.

The rare free time I had was spent with my shipmates as much as possible. The majority of the time I ate in the officer mess, the few times I used the crew mess a kind of segregation between officers and crew members was noticeable. For a similar reason I quite often visited the officer bar in the evening to chat, and rarely the crew bar. There are many organised crew activities in which I took part and when in harbour I often went out with fellow crew members. Working and living in close contact with the actors on board for months assisted in getting deep information on social processes and interactions. As an HR professional, I had also many interactions with crew members, and I worked closely with officers and HR colleagues. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eighteen of the latter group. I did not experience the close relationship as a disadvantage, as it provided an open atmosphere in the interviews, and resulted in a deep insight into ship life. The position in the hierarchy might have generated some distance to crew members, as indicated above, but a vice versa effect to officers, and especially access to many events and places I wouldn't had access as ordinary crew member.

The ethnographic fieldnotes were sometimes taken during breaks, but mainly in the evening. Taking notes among other crew members felt a bit awkward, therefore they were recorded solely in my cabin when I was alone. Within the three-month assignment, for about two of the months I wrote on a daily basis. I decided only in the third month to skip a few days in between so as to avoid the recording of too much repetitive information. The method of observing I applied can be described as participant-as-observer role in Gold's (1958) classification of participant observer roles (see Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 454). Working full-time while simultaneously observing did probably not give me the time for the research I would have had in a

more observing than participating role, but due to the length of assignment that fortunately was not a noticeable issue.

The process of taking interviews has already been outlined above. Often, the interviewees chose an open deck coffee bar in the guest area as the interview location, no doubt due to the good quality of the coffee. The disadvantage here was that although there was one corner a little bit apart from the rest so that disturbance was minimal, there was continuously gentle background music to be heard. That turned out to be an issue when transcribing the interviews, as the tape recorder does not differentiate between sources. Only one interview with an HR professional was comparatively short, as resentment towards the research was somewhat noticeable in the form of some extremely short answers to open-ended questions. Some questions turned out to require more explanation, especially the ones about HRM across different types of employment, and others turned out to be too broad. In particular the questions about HR strategy were difficult to answer for many interviewees. Looking back now, some of the questions in this regard could have been more interviewee-friendly.

In general, the interviewees were very talkative and a good connection was established easily due to the good working relationship that we enjoyed, as outlined previously. During the interviews I tried to follow the steps I had planned, but when interviewees for example talked about something interesting I had not considered or where more specific questions suddenly came to mind, the specific order was left for a while and additional questions spontaneously added. An example for an unexpected theme was the collaboration with procurement allies. Yet, the material gathered is extensive and provides enough information. Nevertheless after processing, analysing and discussing the inherent topics, so many possibilities for specification were detected that would be included in further research.

5.6 Data analysis

The data collection process provided with the verbatim interview transcripts, the observation notes, and the ethnographic fieldnotes a large amount of rich and fertile, but disorganised data. Content and sequence of the questions asked in the semi-structured interviews were not fully specified in advance, and observations about everyday lives on board were regularly written down in a systematic way in the ethnographic fieldnotes which related to multiple and frequently changing events with alternating importance. Hence the data analysis followed a grounded theory framework.

Consideration was given here to the quantity of information that would need to be reviewed. As Patton (2002) notes 'the data generated by qualitative methods are voluminous' (Patton, 2002, p. 444). The sheer quantity of data generated makes the task of analysis particularly challenging, or as Marshall and Rossman (2010) put it, 'this phase of data analysis is the most difficult, complex, ambiguous, creative, and fun' (Marshall and Rossman, 2010, p. 211). For the process of transforming data into findings, no formula exists according to Patton (2002), who added, 'guidance, yes. But no recipe ... [The] final destination remains unique for each inquirer, known only when – and if – arrived at' (Patton, 2002, p. 432).

In order to compare and contrast data, version 10 of the QSR NVivo software was used. This software assists by providing a better data management through its ability to store transcripts and data, to conduct simple searches, and to manage large volumes of data (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 185). It also makes the coding and retrieval process faster and more efficient, provides higher accuracy and greater transparency in the process of conducting qualitative data analysis, and it invites the analyst to consider possible connections between codes (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 605). In this way, the software provided an efficient and transparent approach of managing and analysing the gathered qualitative data. But despite the possibility to consistently replicate analytic techniques within the data analysis, the software does not do the analysis for the researcher. It cannot make statements for example about coding of textual materials or interpret the findings (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 604). The researcher still needs to spend a significant amount of time reading and making sense of raw data. However, the software does increase the ease at which analysis is undertaken, by minimising repetitive, mechanical tasks (Buchanan and Jones, 2010, p. 4).

In essence the software helps to arrange and access complex information systematically and enables the construction of a database of information. It is important to seek advice from other users when selecting an appropriate and up-to-date software package (Weitzman and Miles, 1995), and to consider the specific needs of the research project (Tesch, 1990). Research colleagues possessed such experience, and after I was able to participate in a training course about the application of the software and the application of a demonstration copy proved that the software package and the format and structure of the data fit together, the decision was made to select QSR NVivo software for this research.

After the system was populated with the above-mentioned 'disorganised' data, initial categories (nodes) that reflected similar themes or issues in the data were derived as a starting point, using the interview guide as well as initial readings of the transcribed interviews (Ryan and Bernard, 2000, p. 781). With these initial

themes and issues in mind the first transcribed interviews were coded and nodes produced. The importance of coding is to gain a clearer understanding of certain issues (Blismas and Dainty, 2003, p. 459). After the first interviews had been coded, the categories were reviewed, sub-categories developed, and the set of nodes were reordered and rearranged according to its support for identified issues. The next transcribed interviews were then coded. Blismas and Dainty (2003) observed that 'the degree of coding skills increases markedly as the nodal system becomes entrenched within the coder's mind and coding becomes more specific and accurate' (Blismas and Dainty, 2003, p. 459). Until all transcribed interview data was coded, the process of reorganising the coding structure and building a coding tree was repeated a couple of times. The coding criteria used in this research followed what Miles and Huberman (1994) identified as descriptive and interpretative routes (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 57). The coded data described aspects of the cruise ship organisation in its descriptive role and substantiated concepts that have been identified within the data analysis process in an interpretive role. After the observation notes and ethnographic fieldnotes had been coded as well, the coding tree with its categories and sub-categories reached a saturated stage that was applied in the coding analysis.

Coding made it possible to get close to the data and identify particular issues. It reduced the voluminous data to common themes that allow comparison and patterning between data sets. In order to make sense of the codes the next stage was to link particular concepts and themes to each other (Miles and Huberman, 1994, pp. 134-137) and create conceptual models from the data (Ryan and Bernard, 2000, p. 782). This analytical stage involved searching the data. NVivo provides search and retrieve capabilities that allow a rapid search of the data. Additional documentation was also examined and included in the data interpretation process. All these additional documents were saved for future reference and the location recorded. In this stage a narrative description was constructed concerning relevant aspects of HRM on cruise ships. Interpretation and making sense of the findings was my primary goal. Relevant sections of the data needed to be accessed, but also in order to put the coded text back into context the raw data needed to be reviewed. NVivo helped greatly in this regard by retrieving longer text passages that not only enclose the coded section.

5.7 Ethical considerations

In social research ethical issues need to be taken seriously right from the beginning, starting with planning the research, seeking access to individuals and organisations, collecting and analysing the data, and finally reporting research findings. Ethics are defined as 'moral principles, norms or standards of behavior that guide moral choices about our behavior and our relationships with others' (Blumberg et al., 2005, p. 92). 'Others' might include those who become subject of this research, but also those affected by it (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 178). To ensure that the design of this research is methodologically sound and morally defensible, it followed the guidelines for postgraduate research students of Manchester Business School at the University of Manchester.

An attempt was therefore made to minimise potential ethical transgressions before and during the data collection process. When first approaching the potential interviewees and before anyone agreed to voluntarily take part in this research, the purpose and nature of the research was outlined, as well as stating the fact that potential findings would be published in a doctor thesis. The short interview guide that was provided to the interviewees a day before the interview took place briefly explained again the purpose and aims of the research project and assured confidentiality of the information provided. Just before the commencement of the interview each participant was asked for his or her consent in regards to tape-recording the interview, which was granted without exception. A copy of the respective interview transcript was also offered, but no one requested it. In terms of anonymity, assurance was given that the interview transcriptions and provided documents would only be used for academic research, that the data would be stored securely and not be available for anyone other than the researcher himself, and that no names of respondents would be used in the doctor thesis. Thus, an ethical approach to the research conducted was maintained and ensured informed consent of research participants and that steps were present to avoid any potential harm to the subjects involved.

5.8 Summary

This chapter has presented and discussed the methodological research path applied in this research to meet the overall research aim and research questions. Specifically, it began with a justification of the philosophical assumptions made in this research. It then outlined the overall research aim and the research questions, before it explained and discussed the research design, the data collection, the data analysis and finally addressing ethical considerations.

The research followed an inductive approach. The rationale behind this is that conducted research and literature in the field of HRM on cruise ships is very rare, and that theory to be tested in a deductive approach is practically non-existent. It is assumed here that social phenomena are created from the perceptions and consequent actions of the participants, a view expressed in the position of constructivism adopted, an ontological stance that accepts an inherent subjectivity of this research (Cassell and Symon, 1994, p. 4). The epistemological position encompasses an interpretivist approach, being more sensitive to organisational life under research and able to capture and encompass its dynamic while the researcher enters the social world of the research participants to understand their world from their point of view (Saunders et al., 2007, p. 107).

The use of a qualitative approach, through semi-structured interviews and ethnographic fieldnotes, was deemed to be the most appropriate as 'qualitative research tends to be concerned with words rather than numbers' (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p. 402) and the focus of the research questions here is 'on organisational processes, as well as outcomes, and trying to understand both individual and group experiences of work' (Cassell and Symon, 1994, p. 1). The research design to understand the complex social phenomena in the research setting was that of a case study, as this method 'allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events' (Yin, 2003, p. 2), such as the investigated organisational and managerial processes. For this reason it was deemed to be the preferred strategy for the 'how' and 'why' research questions here. In the subsequent chapters, the data will be analysed and the findings corresponding to the research questions will be discussed.

6 HR ONSHORE RESPONDING TO CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS

6.1 Introduction

In chapter 2 the focus was on HRM theory, where the organisational context of HRM, the development of this academic field including different approaches and theories, theoretical frameworks within HRM, and the roles of the HR function were outlined by reviewing relevant literature. The specific contexts of the tourism industry, the cruise industry, relevant institutional regulations and cruise ship operating companies have been outlined in chapter 3. The object of this research, i.e. the cruise ship, was then the main focus in chapter 4, particularly the organisational structure and hierarchy, the cruise ship as a total institution, organisational theory on roles and responsibilities, factors that influence its human resources to choose a seafaring profession, diversity, and seaman's relation with the outside world.

Those involved in the maritime industry are aware of the complexity of this environment. Operating in highly globalised and competitive business and labour markets, cruise ship owner companies' revenue generating business units are continuously evolving. The operation is embedded in an international maritime legislative framework and a variety of expectations of its shareholders as well as its stakeholders. Seafarers on cruise ships under flags of convenience are usually employed on fixed-term contracts with limited job security. Tremendous turnover rates and a high degree of diversity within cruise ship crews are both natural phenomena.

The overall purpose of this chapter is to get an understanding of how HRM develops ways of dealing with specific problems and issues in a quite challenging environment. Additionally, it intends to highlight that any debate on HRM here needs to consider the context of the cruise ship sector and the specific workforce. The analysis focuses on a couple of key HR activities of the shoreside HR function, namely selecting and supplying resources as well as retaining and developing them. The reason for focussing on these HR activities will be outlined further below. In order to frame the analysis of the single HR activities, three research questions have been formulated.

One of the objectives of this chapter is to outline the specific HR strategies, policies and procedures of the cruise ship owner company and the effects of external and internal contextual factors in relation to the type of work. The corresponding research question asks, 'how has the cruise ship owner company set up specific HR strategies, policies and procedures in response to contextual conditions' (research

question Q1). This is important for this research as the approach of HRM on cruise ships is directly linked to the HR strategies, policies and procedures of the cruise ship owner company.

Secondly, this chapter aims to identify the characteristics and specifics of the shoreside HR function of the cruise ship owner company. 'How is the shoreside HR function set up to cope with the specifics of the cruise ship context' is the related research question (Q2). This will provide an insight into how the cruise ship owner company specifically reacts to the inherent challenges of a complex cruise ship environment (diversity of human resources, continuously moving business unit, etc.) and how it shapes its operations.

The third aim is to understand the distinctive role of the shoreside HR function as a contributor to strategic, tactical and transactional HR work. Therefore, the question is posed 'what is the distinctive role of the shoreside HR function' (research question Q3). This in turn is a necessary basis for determining its influence on the shipboard HRM approach and for assessing the extent to which both are linked or distinct from each other.

This chapter is based on a review of the data gathered in the semi-structured interviews as well as in the ethnographic fieldnotes recorded during my three-month shipboard assignment, both of which, to outline the limitations of the data, primarily focused on HRM in the cruise ship organisation. Nevertheless it also entails some insight into the shoreside organisation and how it operates. The thematic analysis of the data resulted in a structure that focuses on a company's investment in its human capital.

The next section presents motivations of shipboard employees to commence and continue with a seafaring profession, which is a necessary basis for the following three sections. Chapter 6.3 focuses on recruiting employees for shipboard employment, while chapter 6.4 presents the results of the analysis of the data regarding a company's approach to retention and career management. A concluding section follows in chapter 6.5.

6.2 Motivational factors to work in a seafarer profession

As cruise ship owner companies not only face a global labour shortage in the shipping industry but are also struggling to ensure a supply of high-quality workers with appropriate maritime certificates and licences, any HRM measure to effectively counteract the potential shortfall has to understand and consider workers'

motivation and place them at the centre of HR policies in order to achieve sustainability. This requires some further explanation.

In general, motivation directs a person's behaviour towards certain goals. It is an inner drive to, for example, take up a desired type of job or to apply the maximum effort to perform assigned tasks. Motivation makes individuals go beyond what is required, become high performers, and be creative. To understand an individual's motivation is not only important for an organisation in order to attract and retain people, managed appropriately it can also serve to link an individual's goals to organisational goals.

However, motivation is not a simple subject. The same set of motivators cannot be applied to two different people. Rather, managers are faced with a diversity of motivational variables, which complicates the task of motivating employees. And the diverse composition of an international and therefore less homogenous workforce adds to this challenge.

There are different reasons for seafarers to commence and to continue shipboard employment on a cruise ship. For a sustainable recruiting and retention approach as well as for a career management strategy, both of which are the key HR activities that are the focus of this chapter, it is essential to know the different forms of motivation why people choose to start a career as a seafarer and why they return to this employment once their previous contract has expired. By analysing the different motivational factors for cruise ship employees, this section provides a necessary basis for the HR policies and practices that are discussed in the subsequent sections. Therefore, the main objective of this section is to identify these motivations, which are also part of the examinations of the recruiting, retention, and career management approaches of the company this research is based on. This leads to the following dual structure of this section.

The initial question to all interviewees concerned the beginning of their professional career on board ships. The original intention for this question was to find an easy start into the conversations with the interviewees. The second purpose was to get some information about their personal backgrounds and motivations that led them into the maritime sector and become a seafarer. The answers received were as diverse as the people themselves. With diversity in eloquence, elaborateness, and priorities, interviewees shared their personal career developments and expectations. The narratives reflect their experiences and motivation when they entered a ship for the first time to commence their professional career. The analysis of these motives forms the first part.

The people interviewed also continuously return to their profession on board, contract after contract. In a second step after the examination of the motivations of the interviewees to start a career on board, the various motivational factors will be derived from the data to indicate why crew members continuously return to the ship.

6.2.1 Motivational factors for choosing a seafarer profession

Seafaring can be a vocational choice as well as a career. A staff captain in the following statement impressively outlines how seafaring as a vocational choice and a career is today, compared to the past:

It used to be quite a popular career but, I mean, it's certainly not [today]. At home, it's not advertised much, I don't think. You don't see these career talks or whatever. I don't think it goes into the secondary schools, so a lot of people don't know about it. It is a shame in a way, because for the right person ... it can be a very good career but it's just not advertised (19).

The statement is primarily linked to the situation in the traditional maritime countries but it also points to the shortage of qualified people in the maritime industry and the fact that there are not enough trainees in maritime educational institutions to fill the gaps.

Still, for many of the nautical and technical staff on board, seafaring was their vocational and career choice, as the following statement of the staff captain shows:

Well, basically when I left school, I have gotten an apprenticeship with [an oil company] on oil tankers and gas carriers. The apprenticeship, I guess, lasted about four years. There were periods at college, and at the end of it I got what is called second mate's licence. And I went back to work at [the oil company] on a series of oil tankers and gas carriers (19).

A cruise ship provides a lot of opportunities for professional development, and as the next statement from an executive housekeeper shows, the prospect of a career on board can be a motivator to commence shipboard employment:

And with the September 11 attacks, they had to restructure the whole [assignment] programme. So they asked me if I want to go back to Paris, ... or if I want to stay here and do something with cruise lines. So I ... asked if I could stay with cruise lines. If I stay with cruise lines, then I would like to try their housekeeping area instead of guest services area, because I want to endeavour ... diversify my background. So I came on board as a second housekeeper (15).

Whereas for nautical and technical staff ship assignment is part of their vocational training in order to gain seagoing experience, which is a prerequisite for their further professional development, hotel staff usually already come with

qualifications and experience in their area of profession. The vocational choice therefore is not an important aspect for the latter. But for both groups a professional career is a motivator to commence cruise ship employment.

It seems natural to assume that the social and regional origin has some influence on the choice of the profession, whether one grew up in a family where at least one family member had already gained shipboard work experience, or in a coastal region where one had seen ships passing by. However, there is no proof for the assumption about regional origin here. Although the above cited staff captain originated from a region with an important seaport on the south coast of Great Britain, all other interviewees grew up a distance away from coastal areas. The influence of the social origin on the choice of the profession is confirmed in the next statement, although it refers to the hospitality sector. Here, it was a friend of the family that brought a cruise director onto cruise ships:

I was in college and I was interested in hospitality business. My father was in the hotel business, so I knew about that. And he had friends that were in the cruise business, so I jumped on the cruise ship. And I thought I was going to do it for a short period of time, but I ended up doing it for thirty years (20).

No other interviewees referred back to their families or social origins as influential factors for choosing their profession, therefore it can be summarised that even if the social and regional origin can have an impact on the choice of the profession, it is not a dominant motivational factor. However, seafaring has always fascinated and attracted people, which becomes apparent in the following statement from an HR manager:

And then I had an opportunity to go with the ship. The leader of the organisation was an old friend. She had talked me into it, and it did not take much to do that, and I thought I would give it a shot. I have always had a love for water and boats, so that part made it easy to want to do that, the maritime side of it was very attractive to me (1).

Popular stories about seafarers read in early life like Moby Dick or Treasure Island, a rather romantic view on seafaring, might have fuelled this kind of motivation to choose seafaring as a profession. Next to seeking adventure, it can be a desire to go out and see the world and live the life of a 'free' seaman. Although in relation to the freedom aspect reality might prove different very quickly, as the ship might provide less oversight and more autonomy than in a shoreside organisation:

I found that I did like the remote work. ... We had the same goals [like the shoreside organisation], conducted the same type of work. That was just having a little more autonomy and control, and less oversight, I guess. It just seemed like it was a little easier to get things done, and so I enjoyed the autonomy of

being out in remote site, but we still ... have [regular] meetings with the main [shoreside] organisation that we are part of (1).

A simple rational motivator for choosing seafaring as a profession is the monetary aspect, as a merchandise manager confirmed:

The ship is a very different environment, and I joined because of the money. I am not going to lie. That was my first driving factor (11).

The idea of going to sea is often connected with economic factors. It is well known that a seafarer can save a lot of money while living and working on a ship, as basic needs, such as food and accommodation, are provided by the ship owner company without extra charge. For many people, especially from developing countries, the motivator is that seafaring enables them to earn a living for their families back home, and allow them to live a life at middle class level. The economic situation in the home country, unemployment or an unsecure existence, might force someone into a seafaring profession, as the example of a medical doctor from South Africa shows:

Then we opened a practice, small town practice. And because I was not making money, I decided to come to ships (22).

In summary, it can be said that it is rather seldom that the social or regional origin had a notable influence on the choice to commence a seafaring career. Economic factors were mentioned more frequently as well as the possibility of a fast growing career, compared to similar possibilities onshore. Internal factors that were cited included a certain spirit of adventure, to see the world, and a perceived independence that suits one's working style better.

6.2.2 Motivational factors to continue shipboard employment

What continuously brings them back and re-join the cruise ship once their previous contract has expired, will be examined in the following paragraphs. A hotel director put it in a direct and clear statement:

Money is the number one motivator on the ship. You can say whatever you want to say, but a lot of people leave their homes here for the money. And then when they come here, they enjoy working for us, being [name of the cruise company], with everything that we do, they do enjoy it, but number one factor is money (6).

Next after the money it is the career prospects, as the next statement of a merchandise manager confirms:

It was the money. It ended up being a career (11).

The turnover rate is high on cruise ships, a characteristic of the sector that contributes to a short-term view of HR policies and practices. For cruise ship employees this means that there are possibilities to develop in a shipboard profession. And as the careers of the interviewees show, there are a lot of possibilities for learning and gaining professional experience. Although working on cruise ships entails many disadvantages, such as working long hours and being in a confined environment, for many it is the lifestyle as a seafarer with long breaks that motivates them to stay in that employment. This was outlined by a staff captain as followed:

And the time off as well, the work-life balance. I mean for me now, I want a one [month on], one [month off] system. It would be worth more to me than extra money, to be honest, because the time off is very important to me (19).

Although probably a less important motivational factor for people who choose shipboard employment out of economic reasons, it still is a plus, according to a food manager, that one can travel the world and explore new and different places around the world:

Maybe some Caribbean people feel a little bit more far away from home once they are in Europe, but I noticed some of them saying 'Wow! We are going to Europe. I have never been there'. ... Some are very much interested of going around, definitely, but it is also life experiences, travelling, see something else (16).

A shoreside based leadership trainer who provides training on all cruise ships of the company in focus highlighted a passion for the job as another intrinsic motivator to continue working in the cruise ship profession, when he talked about a crew member working as a server:

There is a wonderful crew member. ... He is probably the best server I have ever seen in my life. And you could challenge him, and he will bring it in a professional way, because that is his career choice, that is what he wants to do, that is what his passion is (9).

The main motivators for continuing in a seafaring profession that were mentioned in many interviews were money, career possibilities and gaining experience. Additionally, seafarer's lifestyle, travelling the world and passion were outlined as motivators. Table 11 summarises the derived motivational factors, with the most commonly cited factors marked with an asterisk (*):

Motivational factors for entering a seafaring profession	Motivational factors for continuing with a seafaring profession
Vocation	Money*
Career*	Career*
Social and regional origin	Gaining experience*
Adventure	Seafarer's lifestyle
Travelling	Travelling
Autonomy	Passion
Money*	

Table 11 Motivation for entering and continuing with a seafaring profession

Source: Author.

6.2.3 Summary

From the statements it can be derived that especially for people from developing countries money is the main motivator, but people from developed countries would not commence or continue seafaring if the monetary incentive was too low. Although one might be inclined to attribute the travelling motivation to cruise ship staff from developed countries, as indicated in one statement above, travelling the world and exploring new and different places around the world is also a positive aspect of seafaring for people from developing countries, and might be an additional motivator for this group. This short line-up of two motivational factors also shows that there is usually more than one motivator that leads people to enter into a seafaring profession respectively continuing employment.

In the analysis no distinction has been made between groups of individuals, for example between men and women, young and experienced individuals, nautical/technical crew members and hotel/entertainment staff, officers and ratings, or between different origins, such as individuals from developing countries and developed countries. The reason is that the data was not originally collected to provide a deeper analysis of motivational factors, and the picture that would be gained from this was detected as being too unspecific. A further analysis would provide much more insight into motivators and to which groups it can be mainly attributed.

A further discussion that would be worth conducting at this point is about the different reasons for entering a seafaring profession in contrast to reasons for continuing with a seafaring profession. Vocational choice is a motivator for commencing a seafaring profession but not one for continuing with a seafaring profession, whereas the lifestyle as a seafarer with long breaks is rather a motivator to stay in shipboard employment than to commence it. Money on the other hand can be attributed to both aspects equally, which is also one of the

strongest incentives named on both sides. However, the data here does not provide enough references, so that further research is needed for a scientifically founded statement. Further knowledge of these factors will be useful and necessary for the enhancement of a recruiting strategy and recruiting initiatives as well as for increasing retention, and for professional development approaches including career management.

In the introduction to this section I have argued that the commitment of workers is crucial to achieving corporate goals. Furthermore, it is an essential element to increase job performance. An important predictor of commitment is motivation, the subject of this section. Corresponding questions are what motivates employees to work in a specific organisation or to work in a particular profession, and whether those are intrinsic motivators or extrinsic ones. The relationship between commitment and motivation might also be of interest for further research as well as the impact of (intrinsic and extrinsic) motivation on (occupational and organisational) commitment, as this will have implications for the management of cruise ship organisations.

6.3 Recruiting and selection

It was already outlined further above that not only the tourism industry, to which the cruise industry belongs, is one of the fastest-growing economic sectors (chapter 3.1). The comparably small sector of the cruise industry is also experiencing rapid growth: an average passenger growth rate of 7.5% from the 1980s onwards (chapter 3.2.2). The cruise industry operates in a highly globalised market, in which cruise ship owner companies are facing strong competition and a potential labour shortage due to the aforementioned strong growth of the industry (chapter 3.3). Due to the introduction of the flag of convenience system, cruise ship owner companies have gained access to highly globalised and flexible labour markets, which has led to the development that a big portion of its human resources is now recruited from cheap labour regions in Asia, Middle- and South America, and Eastern Europe instead of from the former traditional maritime countries in Western Europe and North America (chapter 3.3.1). At the same time, officers are mainly from developed countries, whereas the majority of crew members are from the above mentioned regions, especially from developing countries. Gender-wise men are the group with higher numbers. A high turnover rate, especially of EU crew members and officers and to a lesser extend of non-EU crew members and officers, is a major challenge cruise ship owner companies are facing (chapter 3.4.1).

The cruise ship owner company used in the case study needs to cope with the just briefly summarised situation in the cruise industry. It can be derived from the different aspects mentioned that there is a high demand for new cruise line staff. A cruise ship owner company can deal with this challenge by applying different strategies. In this section the focus is on recruiting, and the intention is to examine who is in control of the recruiting process, what are the recruiting approaches the company applies, and how the recruiting strategy can be adapted.

In the first sub-section, the stakeholders of the recruiting process are outlined. Additionally, an insight is given into how the company in focus processes recruiting. Here we will also clarify who is in control and responsible for the process. To ensure the supply of cruise ship staff, the company can apply different recruiting approaches, which are outlined below as well as the different policies that are concerned with recruiting issues. In the second sub-section, the focus is on identifying the recruiting strategy the cruise ship owner company applies.

6.3.1 Stakeholder, process and approaches of recruiting

The recruitment of cruise ship staff is first and foremost the responsibility of the central recruitment department onshore. In the ethnographic fieldnotes I recorded some notes after talking to a recruiter of the cruise ship owner company:

The recruiter works close with the scheduling team to identify the need for new crew members and officers. He maintains a database for open positions and another one with potential candidates. During the year he participates in about ten recruitment trips throughout the world. Recruiting agents within specific countries regularly conduct pre-selections of possible candidates, and invite them for a second interview when the recruiting team comes to that country. It is a good recruitment trip when more than 50% of the interviewees will get hired.

The quote above indicates that cruise ship owner companies work with agencies to recruit new crew members. It needs to be examined first to what extent recruiting is an in-house process before a closer look to recruitment via agencies can be taken. A training officer gave the following insight when talking about officers from the deck and engine departments:

We can try to understand ... their recruiting process, because it does not go through the regular recruiting. Again, they are like cream of the crop persons. They have a specific type of recruiting (7).

With 'regular recruiting' the training officer referred to the process of recruiting via agencies. She also indicated that the recruiting process for the group of officers from the deck and engine departments was different. According to the separate

recruitment department specialising on that group, nautical or technical education, certain certificates and licences, and experience and time at sea are necessary prerequisites for conducting certain roles in the marine and technical operations (MTO) of the company. The recruiter in this department actually has nautical certificates and a long on board working history as a shipboard officer. How important it is for the recruiter to have knowledge and experience in that area becomes obvious in the quote from a staff captain:

There are a limited number of experienced people with master's licences or chief engineer's licences from good quality countries, I guess. There are some more suspect ones (19).

The issue with fraudulent certificates was already touched upon in chapter 3.3.3 and is not the focus here, but the above outlined specifics indicate that keeping control over the recruiting process for nautical and technical officers is a vital part of the recruiting policy.

It is reasonable to ask at this point how the other officer positions as well as management positions are filled. An investigation on the Internet career websites of the cruise ship owner company provided two directions. One is a job search possibility on the career websites that provided some openings, including certain non-officer roles. A second is to search for a procurement ally contact for the country one wants to apply from. Which way to choose depends on the position of interest. Certain roles, especially officer and supervisory positions but also some other selected positions are primarily recruited directly through the central recruitment department of the cruise ship owner company. For the majority of roles with higher numbers of positions on board, such as ordinary or able seamen, bosuns, oilers, cooks, galley stewards, or housekeeping cleaners, procurement allies or agencies are consulted.

An interesting aspect to examine when working with agencies is the degree of control over the recruiting process. To what extent the cruise ship owner company gives away control to the procurement ally characterises the relationship between both sides. In the quote from the ethnographic fieldnotes above, I have already outlined that recruitment agencies are reviewing applications and conducting pre-selections after an initial job interview.

In general, recruitment is a process to generate a pool of capable people that apply for employment with an organisation, which is the first stage within HRM. Important for the organisation to achieve its strategic goals is to recruit individuals with the right skills and attitudes. Therefore recruitment is part of the HR strategy. However, for lower-level employees with a lower amount of responsibilities and who need fewer skills than required for managerial positions, less screening takes place.

A less strategic focus on this group of employees on the one side, and a short-term perspective due to the huge demand for new cruise ship staff, makes outsourcing this extensive task to local procurement allies a logical step.

The recruitment team of the cruise ship owner company conducts recruitment trips to the respective countries, where in a second interview the candidates that will be considered are selected. This might be the ideal way the process can be handled. However, as a food and beverage manager outlined:

We are looking for diversity and it is great, 50, 60 nationalities. But of course there is a big budget behind that as well ... to keep these diverse people on board and to recruit them of course (10).

What may be questionable is if the amount of recruitment trips is approximately near the number of diverse nationalities employed on the cruise ships. Even when some countries in a region are combined and potential candidates invited to a neighbouring country for a second interview, the number would be far beyond the number named by the recruiter, which were ten recruitment trips he usually participates in during a year.

There is reason to believe that especially in developed countries where the occupation in certain positions requires obtaining vocational qualifications, the control of selecting staff for the cruise ships is reduced and placed more in the hands of procurement allies. This can be concluded from recruiters of the cruise ship owner company waiving to conduct recruitment trips to these regions and at the most conducting telephone interviews instead.

In principal, the role of the agency is first and foremost to generate appropriate applicants for shipboard positions, which is the intention of recruiting. The selection, i.e. choosing the right candidates from a pool of applicants that most likely will succeed in the job given organisational goals and legal requirements, is the responsibility of the cruise ship owner company. The amount of time and effort that is spent with selecting the right candidate depends on the amount of responsibilities that the position requires.

When the shoreside recruiting team conducts recruitment trips, they ask officers from different areas to accompany them. A food manager who has taken part in a recruitment trip shared his experience:

It's not easy actually to recruit, because sometimes you have just half an hour with the candidate, and you have to read the guy half an hour basically. As soon as he arrives on board, you realise, he is not the best. That's not an easy job, that's for sure (16).

The quote indicates a similar view on recruiting as on selection, i.e. that HRM has a short-term perspective and less of a strategic focus on the group of employees that are recruited through an agency.

Recruitment trips are not only extensive in regards to costs and resources, but there might be room for quality enhancement when working with recruitment agencies. According to a youth counsellor who had resigned and was interviewed to find out her reasons, it was the agency that had not given the right information about conditions on the cruise ship, like working hours, breaks, work content, etc. A food and beverage manager shared this impression:

Sometimes I get a feeling, when the crew comes on board, that there is something wrong from the recruiter, from the agency there. They picture up the whole thing a little bit wrong there. I don't know if HR could make sure that this does not happen. Because again, an agency, they get money for the people they are sending here. So sometimes they are pitching it a little bit too glamorous here, that we are making a little bit too much money here. But then the reality is not like that. So when they come here, there is not what they were promised. Maybe HR from shoreside could work stronger on it, so that crew somehow has more knowledge about it (10).

The issue outlined above with the agencies is that they provide a general overview over shipboard employment and information about the specific positions with the cruise ship operator to the applicants. The cruise ship owner company provides much of the specific information to the agency, and company-specific training is given to the recruiters from the agency. But that leaves the cruise ship owner company with only indirect control over the introduction session for potential candidates.

As the agency earns money with successful candidates, they might tend to talk up specific issues in a too positive way. As a result of this the expectation of candidates might be different to the reality on a cruise ship, which could lead to frustration at a later stage. Due to the fact that the time on the recruitment trips is limited, as mentioned above by a food manager, it can occur that the recruiters do not detect unrealistic expectations or motivation, and can not correct them in the short time they have while selecting appropriate candidates.

The intention of the company in focus to employ cruise ship staff from many different nations as outlined above, and the high demand for new crew members are two effects that potentially counteract the above claimed quality management enhancement with recruitment agencies as well. The cruise ship owner company has to refer to and utilise a huge number of different hotel and marine personnel providers, which also operate in markets that are culturally different to the home

market of the company. This just briefly outlines the area of potential conflicts when working with international recruitment agencies.

The fact that the demand for new cruise ship staff is high within the cruise ship owner company in focus was confirmed by a food manager:

We need more people to come, that's for sure. It is a global industry problem, because all cruise companies don't have enough people to put on board. A lot of people, they do one contract. They don't like it, and they go back (16).

The quote also indicates the situation in the cruise industry as outlined in the introduction. Next to the strong growth rate of the cruise industry, there are reasons that can be related to the crew members. As outlined by a staff captain, people might just use cruise ship employment to bridge some time gap or to gain a different experience for a short time:

Look at youth activities and the dining. We look at the turnover. It's people, a lot of them are young kids, taking a gap year off, just seeing what it is like. They are at one contract, maybe two at the most (19).

There are multiple reasons for choosing a seafarer profession as outlined in the first section of this chapter. Another strategy to manage the demand for new cruise ship staff might be to increase retention rate, a topic that will be considered at a later stage in this research. Nonetheless, the quote confirms that turnover as mentioned earlier is an issue for the industry.

Sometimes the recruiting demand can be further specified. There are cruise ship operators who serve local markets, like the company in focus has mainly done in the past. However, when the cruise region is changed and potentially guests from another market are expected to join in greater number, knowing a foreign language of that region and of the guests can become an advantage, as a business office manager outlined:

We need to recruit crew members that can help us better in Europe than over here in the States. Yes, the language is different, so we need to have people with those skills, not only to be helpful on the port of calls, but helpful to the [European] guests that come [to us] there (8).

Although the statement is more a recommendation, a cruise director confirmed that when he was recruited just before the cruise ship owner company entered into a new cruise region the company was seeking some regional expertise from the area he originated from.

The three last statements outline again the challenges faced by the company, i.e. a high demand for new cruise ship staff due to labour shortage in the industry, high growth rates, a high turnover due to multiple reasons of cruise ship staff which

does not improve the situation, and a sometimes more specific cruise ship staff demand due to the cruise region or guests' origin. So far we have outlined two approaches of external recruiting, direct recruiting or indirect recruiting through agencies.

Another approach that can be derived from some quotes in the section about the motivation is to recruit from within the company. As the cruise ship owner company is only a small part of a large media and entertainment corporation, it can take advantage thereof. In a statement further above, an executive housekeeper confirmed that she was approached by the company and was given a choice to commence work with cruise lines, in that instance because the political situation had led to a restructuring of an assignment programme in which she could not continue to stay. Another example for internal recruiting came from an HR manager, who used a possibility to sail with a company-owned cruise ship. When asked by a leader of the cruise line organisation to commence a professional career on board, he confirmed that it had not taken much to persuade him. The experience showed that many of the HR managers on board came from other branches of the company.

The company sometimes launches specific recruitment programmes, as an executive housekeeper outlines:

When we came back from the Med, they were still recruiting for the [new cruise ship], and we had this campaign of recruiting friends, and asking friends, if they were interested in coming. I had a lot of crew members fortunately, whose friends were interested in coming (15).

The 'Recruit a Friend' initiative was set up when the demand for new cruise ship staff exponentially went up because of the launch of a new cruise ship. This initiative, along with the employment of relatives, is a recruiting approach that could bring some personal issues onto the ship. Especially regarding relatives, the company has put the 'Employment of Relatives' policy in place, which is concerned with these potential issues when two or more relatives are working in too close proximity. This is one policy that relates to recruiting.

As shown above, the company aims to ensure diversity among the crew on its cruise ships and therefore hires cruise ship staff from many different nations. This intention is backed by an 'Equal Employment Opportunity' policy, which ensures that nationality does not play a role when hiring cruise ship staff. The policy also includes applicants for employment. This is a second policy identified that relates to the cruise ship owner company's recruitment efforts.

Recruiting cruise ship staff is twofold. On the one hand there are officers and managerial staff, which to a large degree come from developed countries, where seafaring is nowadays less attractive. Together with a high turnover rate, this creates a labour shortage of skilled candidates for positions with higher responsibilities. On the other hand there is a massive demand for cheap labour from developing countries, accessible today due to the globalised and flexible labour market, as a result of a continuous growth of the industry.

The cruise ship owner company applies different HRM approaches here. For the latter group procurement allies are used, and in order to cope with the demand, diversity is fostered. The perspective is short-term and control over the process is reduced to a final selection of these lower-level employees. In respect of the first group of almost core staff, control over the recruitment and selection process is kept in-house. In addition to the external labour market the company uses the internal labour market as resource. Still, the HRM approach here is first of all short-term focused, which is owed to the high turnover within this group.

Now that many approaches for recruiting new cruise line staff have been identified, such as the direct external recruitment, indirect external recruitment through agencies, indirect internal recruitment through existing employees, or direct internal recruitment through directly contacting internal employees in other business areas, still no recruiting strategy has been identified nor a link drawn between the motivation and a recruiting strategy. This will be dealt with in the next section.

6.3.2 Recruiting strategy

The aim of this section is to identify a recruiting strategy of the cruise ship owner company used in the case study. Ideally a recruiting strategy should link to the motivation to commence and continue seafaring employment as identified in the first section of this chapter. Therefore, it is also questioned here how the identified motivation link to any recruiting approach of the company in focus. A staff captain, asked how the company has to react to the challenges within the labour market, answered:

Well, we have to react as a company in that we have to have a competitive package here that is attractive. I personally ... don't think the package now is attractive, as when I first joined. ... I had accidentally previously accepted an contract from [another cruise company] before I came, but then [the company used in the case study] came along and offered me considerably more money and a three on two off system as opposed to four on two off (19).

As money and contractual side conditions are prominent motivational factors to commence and continue shipboard employment, the cruise ship owner company can directly influence employee motivation through an appropriate strategy, as shown in this example. The same applies to the rotation system that is provided with the whole package. The recruiting strategy identified here is that the company aims to provide a competitive package of employment terms and conditions in order to attract potential cruise ship staff.

In regards to career possibilities provided by the cruise ship owner company, which is another motivator identified above, the staff captain outlined:

For two years I was stepping up to staff captain. It was a long time, but then it was like ... to be honest, it was dead man's shoes because we only had two ships, and it was only really the movement with the new ships [ten years later] that there was some progression. So it was quite frustrating for a long time (19).

Career possibilities are limited if the cruise ship owner company does not expand, as he continued in another statement:

When I joined, ... the original plan was they are going to bring a ship out every year, and they were talking about seven ships and plenty of opportunities. ... I guess 9/11 happened, the world shut down, and it really was dead man's shoes, you were stuck in the same position (19).

The main point here is that when the staff captain started his career with the company in focus, there appeared to be prospects for a fast career progression due to the expected commission of one ship per year for a while. However, due to an external event, the company changed its business strategy. Therefore, in today's recruiting strategy career development lost some of the power to attract people.

A recruiting strategy includes a communication strategy, how potential individuals can be attracted to commence a cruise ship employment. A means to communicate are the Internet career websites. An examination of these websites shows that next to a competitive pay and world-class training (overview), rewarding experiences (overview), gaining pride, building a career, travelling, and developing friendships with other crew members (all culture/diversity) are named here. These items reflect many of the identified motivational factors. Here, the shoreside HR function can directly influence the recruiting strategy by formulating the communication strategy. Further research is needed to assess the importance of the named items within the recruiting strategy but the list shows that the recruiting strategy builds on many of the motivational factors named in the first section.

The tactical HR work on recruiting is mainly provided by the shoreside HR function. Shipboard only plays a minor role, as officers might be asked to accompany a recruitment trip as experienced ship life experts. The shipboard HR function only provides transactional HR work, for example by announcing special recruitment programmes, forwarding applications, or posting job openings on bulletin boards. The shoreside HR function has a strategic orientation in regards to recruiting, as it mainly sets up the corresponding communication strategy, and links the recruiting strategy to the business strategy.

6.3.3 Summary

The responsibility for recruiting cruise ship staff in the company in focus lies with a central recruitment department onshore. Only for recruiting nautical and technical officers, a specialized recruitment department is installed, also onshore but in a different location. The recruitment department maintains a close working relationship with the scheduling department and with international recruitment agencies. Recruiting for officer roles in the marine and technical operations, which is conducted by the just mentioned separate recruitment department, as well as recruiting for officer and supervisor roles and some other roles through the central recruitment department is an in-house process.

Recruiting for roles with higher numbers of positions on board is widely outsourced to international recruitment agencies. This action is accompanied by a loss in control over recruitment quality and initial information about the employment. To keep control over selection, recruitment trips are executed to choose potential cruise ship staff after an initial pre-selection by the agency. However, this process cannot always be followed, as demand for new cruise ship staff and the number of agencies are both high. Additionally, recruitment trips are not carried out into all regions, as for example they are not common in developed economies. Recruitment trips are often undertaken to one location in a region, thereby combining some neighbouring countries. The amount of screenings of candidates often does not leave much time for a more thorough interview. While diversity should be high, cultural differences make recruiting even more challenging for the central recruiting team.

Sometimes the company launches specific recruitment programmes, like the 'Recruit a Friend' approach just before a new cruise ship was launched. Or employees within other areas of the company are directly contacted. Although control over the recruiting process lies mainly with the company in focus as the outline above shows, this aspect could be investigated further in the future. Policy

wise the company in focus has enforced two in relation to recruiting, i.e. the 'Equal Employment Opportunity' policy and the 'Employment of Relatives' policy.

A dualism in the HRM approach was determined here. For the huge amount of lower-level employees from a highly diverse set of developing countries, procurement allies are used to which control over recruiting, but not selection, is transferred. For officers and some other almost core staff positions the process is completely kept in-house, and occasionally the internal labour market is tapped into. The whole process is short-term in focus as a reaction to labour shortage of skilled cruise ship employees accompanied by high turnover within this group, and to the high demand of cheap lower-level labour due to continuous growth of the industry.

Within the specific recruiting strategy of the company in focus there are strong elements that can directly influence individuals to commence a seafaring profession like the monetary aspect or the rotation system, and there are factors that might only play a tangential role within today's recruiting strategy, as the example of the change in the growth strategy shows. The way individuals are approached and attracted for a shipboard employment is defined in a communication strategy, which is part of the recruiting strategy. In it many aspects are named that can be linked to the identified motivational factors. However, how significant they are within the company's recruiting strategy requires some further investigations.

6.4 HRM on retention and career management

The subject of the last section, recruiting high quality crew members at different levels and from different origins, can only be sustainably successful if the company also understands how to retain its human resources and how to motivate them. In this section, which is divided into two sub-sections, the company's approach to retention and career management is examined.

In the introduction of the section 'recruiting' the situation within the cruise industry was outlined in a comprehensive form, for example that turnover rate is high, especially within the group of seafarers from developed countries (see chapter 6.3). In the subsequent sub-section (chapter 6.3.1) a couple of reasons were identified. The intention of the first sub-section about retention is to determine the role of the shoreside HR function, which initiatives can be identified, and how the shipboard functions influence the approaches.

Building a professional career is a motivation of individuals for commencing and continuing in cruise ship employment. Managing the career objectives of crew members is for the cruise ship owner company a means of attracting and retaining qualified and experienced cruise ship staff. In this sub-section, it will first be discussed if the approach for marine and technical staff and for the hotel arena needs to be different. Subsequently the policies and practices as applied by the cruise ship owner company are examined by reference to the data. Finally, the role of the HR function and its orientation is looked into.

The reason to combine both topics into one section here, or in other words, to deal with recruiting in a separate section, is that retention and career management only commences when a new crew member was hired. Therefore, the management of human resources starts at that point, whereas recruiting is an upstream process to ensure the supply of new crew members.

6.4.1 Retention

A staff captain referred to the areas of youth activities and dining, and mentioned:

It's people, a lot of them are young kids, taking a gap year off, just seeing what it is like. They are at one contract, maybe two at the most (19).

These individuals just bridge some time gap or they want to gain some different experience for a short time, but their intention is not to pursue a shipboard career. Others just find out during their first shipboard experience that this lifestyle does not suit them, as has been outlined above already in a below repeated quote of a food manager:

A lot of people, they do one contract. They don't like it, and they go back (16).

As with recruiting, it is important to know the different motivators for choosing and continuing a seafaring profession (see chapter 6.2) when setting up an HR strategy to increase retention rate. Money is named as a strong motivational factor, and depending on the package a cruise ship owner company offers, cruise ship staff might be willing to move, as the next quote of a security officer shows:

A lot of them are doing the same job. They will go from company to company, based on benefits and pay, ship area, location they are working in, and length of contract. There is a shortage of experienced managers, and of course navigation officers and engineers. So they can go where the money is. I am not sure if they will have particular loyalty to a certain company, because they are going to do the same job in another place. They can move around easier than more job-based workers who mostly go through agencies in order to get hired (12).

This statement shows at first sight some limits of HRM. Cruise ship employees are not necessarily identifying themselves with the cruise ship or with the company. It can be summarized that if the focus is on money, that perspective might dominate. But as the first statement of a hotel director in chapter 6.2.2 about motivation to continue shipboard employment proves, apart from money people also identify with the work on the cruise ship and the company.

There are many factors included in the offered terms and conditions of employment that can influence the retention rate, mainly guaranteed wages as well as variable salary components if applicable, but also benefits like health insurance, pension schemes, life insurance, rotation schemes, or even privileges such as spouse travel policies, etc.

Sometimes global economic developments urge the company to introduce new policies. Salaries within the company in focus are paid in US dollars, but most of the cruise ship staff is from countries with a different currency. Due to a weak US dollar around 2010, the company experienced an increased fluctuation of marine and technical officers. Therefore, the company had to react, as the quote from a staff captain outlined:

A lot of people left. And now the exchange rate to the dollar, that was a big thing. But fortunately within [the cruise ship operator], there was some adjustment for the MTOs to compensate for that, so they looked after it in that way (19).

To counteract the development that marine and technical officers left the company due to an unfavourable exchange rate, the cruise ship owner company implemented an MTO allowance for individuals from some regions in order to keep them. When the US dollar became stronger after 2010, the allowance was withdrawn again. Another example where the company had to introduce a temporary policy for a certain group of its cruise ship staff was during the commissioning of new vessels, as an HR manager described:

So [with the commission of the vessel], we don't have any paying guest here ... on board. But we have positions that are gratuity-earning positions. Well, they have to earn some sort of money or we will never be able to get them here on board and get them to help us do the work that they need to do (5).

For the time until paying guests came on board, i.e. after the maiden voyage, a policy was set up that increased the guaranteed wages for gratuity-earning positions. However, we can critically say that these are exceptional activities to react to economic constraints that would otherwise lead to losing skilled crew members. There is no proactive element identifiable in installing these HR policies.

Cruise ship employment might offer fast career developments, especially when the cruise company expands continuously. Especially for officers and crew members in the deck and engine departments career is a strong motivator for continuing seafaring. But, as outlined in the quote below from a staff captain, cruise ship employment is in competition with the rest of the industry:

The whole marine and technical industry is short of experienced people. There are lots of jobs out there but on sea and shore-based as well. I guess pilotage is an area where they are crying out for people, surveyors and anything, people that are not coming back to sea anymore (19).

Again it might depend on the attractiveness of the package, the money, the rotation, the privileges, etc., but also the experience one faces on the cruise ship, that makes people stay within their cruise ship employment:

I could get a job tomorrow somewhere else, no problem at all. I am quite happy with my job at the moment. I think what keeps me here is mainly the people I work with, the team. I was with [an oil company], they have over 80 ships now, and every time you joined, it was completely a new set of people, new set of operating procedures, and different ways of doing stuff. Whereas here, you are familiar with the way you are doing it. You know the people and you know the team (19).

The staff captain in the quote above indicates that familiarity with the work and the fellow crew members is an advantage especially of smaller cruise ship owner companies. Larger ones aspire to obtain the same familiarity effect for their cruise ship staff by building ship teams, as I have experienced with another cruise ship operator. Here, a small number of same position holders will be scheduled for a small number of the same cruise ships of the company and their successive assignments are defined and coordinated well in advance.

Next, the focus is on means to influence retention rate on board a cruise ship. A food and beverage manager indicates in the following quote not only what can be done on cruise ships, but also what are the benefits:

I think that if the crew feels that they are treated well and we have a good [management] system around, then the crew is coming back. They have more knowledge of course after a couple of contracts ... They will know our operation ... We will have a stronger team on board, who will make more money ... And that is also going to ... get these people coming back all the time (10).

The advantages are obvious. Not only will individuals who are familiar with their work ensure a smooth operation, the aforementioned gratuity-earning position holders will also help generate more revenue for the company as well as make more money for themselves. Again, money is a strong factor but also the approach to managing these human resources on board is an influential factor, which

includes the application of company policies as well as an appropriate leadership approach from shipboard management.

In addition to the approach supervisors take to managing their teams, an administrative and formal means to increase employee retention is linked to crew members' need for job security. With the completion of the assignment on board and just before leaving the cruise ship, those crew members whose fixed-term contracts should be extended after their break for a successive assignment will usually receive an assignment letter which provides details about the next engagement on the company's cruise ship. This is a transactional task performed by the shoreside scheduling department, where the shipboard side only provides additional input in regards to performance of the respective crew member.

There is no distinctive role the shipboard HR function performs to increase retention rate. In their role as generalists, shipboard HR specialists provide some tactical HR work that might indirectly have some influence, like supporting shipboard management to apply an appropriate leadership style, helping to ensure an appropriate application of HR policies and initiatives, and working on crew morale.

6.4.2 Summary on retention

As the cruise industry faces high turnover, some reasons have been identified here like the original intention to only gain experience for a short time or bridge some time gap, realising that the shipboard lifestyle does not suite one, or the variety of opportunities with other shipping companies or shoreside employment possibilities.

By setting up certain HR strategies and policies, the shoreside HR function has many means to influence retention. There are many similarities with recruitment. For example, the terms and conditions offered as well as career development are factors that influence retention rate. As specific policies, the MTO allowance which was temporarily introduced due to negative impacts of exchange rates or a temporary increase of guaranteed wages during the commissioning of a vessel for gratuity-earning positions have been identified as well as means of the scheduling department, which satisfy the need of crew members for familiarity and job security.

On board, how the HR policies of the cruise ship owner company are applied in practice as well as the approach how supervisors manage their teams also play an important role. The onboard HR function does not have any distinctive task to improve retention rate but it has many means of indirect influence by providing a high quality approach as HR generalists to support the different stakeholders.

The HRM approach is again of a dualist nature. There is a monetary and hard component, accompanied by introducing temporary HR policies to react to economic constraints. The examples affected only certain shipboard groups, the deck and engine officers in one case, and the gratuity-earning positions in another case. And on the other hand there is a soft aspect. Familiarity with the work and the fellow crew members was named as well as the management style, including how HR policies are applied. Here, the findings can be linked to the hard and soft HRM approach debate as outlined in the literature review in chapter 2.3.5.3. Again, a strategic focus was missing as to how the HR function copes with industry-specific challenges such as high turnover.

6.4.3 Career management

A staff captain answered as follows when asked if there should be a difference in managing the careers of crew members on the one hand who need, for example, extensive vocational training, certain certificates and licences as well as shipboard experience in order to fill a certain position, i.e. pointing to nautical and technical officers and crew members, and on the other hand those for whom mainly the experience in their profession is the main prerequisite to develop into certain positions, i.e. pointing to many positions in the hotel arena:

We need to treat them differently. We have got to realise that the people like those from marine and technical operations, they could be here for the long run. Some of them ... I've been here over 12 years, and a lot of people have. Maybe that requires a different approach (19).

In a statement of a training officer this perception is shared. She also references the long time spent at sea by this group as opposed to ordinary crew members:

Like the engineers, the ones who have that ranking and the schooling and marine background, and the officers, yes, I think we need to look at them differently, or deal with them differently. They are here on board because this is their career, as opposed to regular crew members who make two, three, four, five contracts and then leave. I think we have to be even more of a support to them ... because this is a career ... They will spend their entire life at sea ... as opposed to the regular crew members ... This is their life (7).

But long shipboard careers are not unique to marine and technical crew members, they can also be found in the hotel department, as the example of a hotel director confirms:

With [this cruise ship company] I started in 1998 as part of the opening team for the [first cruise ship]. But cruising in general I started in 1996. So two years I was with [another cruise ship company]. I started as an assistant waiter, the same with [this company], I started as an assistant waiter. ... A hotel director I became in 2008 (6).

This leads to the conclusion that the length of the shipboard employment cannot be an argument for treating these groups differently. Nautical and technical officers on board have usually passed an extensive professional education and training. To climb up the career ladder they need to spend time at sea, gain experience and attend even more training in order to get the maritime certificates necessary for certain positions. This is confirmed in the statement of a staff captain:

I gradually made my way while at sea. I did some more exams, I got my chief officer's licence. A bit more time at sea, a few more exams, and eventually after about, I think after about 10 years I got my master's licence (19).

In order to develop one's career in the marine and technical operations, one needs to gain seagoing experience, i.e. spend a certain time at sea with particular responsibilities in order to be accepted to attend further training and obtain certain licences. Maritime educational training and the profile of requirements in maritime shipping are highly regulated, for example through the STCW (Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping) (see chapter 3). This is different in the hotel arena, as the quote from a captain confirms:

On the ship, there is a lot of on-the-job training. Take our hotel director. He started as a server ... He also had some sort of hotel school as well. Some of them had hotel schools, but normally they start as a junior leader or even a crew member. If they do well, they will be promoted through the ranks. That might take a few years. It depends on the situation. A server can become a head server, he can become a restaurant manager, and so forth (3).

Climbing up the ranks by way of promotions is not an unusual career in this branch. Additionally, it is possible to change to a different business area within the hotel department, as the outlined career path of a business office manager shows:

I did several roles like the host position, crew officer assistance, clearance, also the guest services coordinator. And in 2007, in January, I moved to the finance department. So I started with the revenue position for several months and then moved to the payroll position. And I did two contracts in payroll and then to my current position here as business office manager for about three years now since 2008 (8).

The main difference identified between both areas is that climbing up the ranks in the deck and engine department needs to be accompanied by gaining seagoing experience while carrying out certain responsibilities as well as off-the-job training and obtaining certain licences as regulated for example through the STCW in addition to the personal development one makes in the respective positions. A successful career within the hotel department on the other hand depends first and foremost on the developments and experiences one gains in the respective positions. The differences outlined confirm that a different HRM approach is needed, as the formalised education of marine and technical operations staff needs to be

considered in addition to the performance approach that applies to both career paths.

A staff captain described what has changed nowadays in regards to promotions through the ranks and positions:

In our line of business, the marine and technical operations, things have changed. People are a lot more impatient now. Years ago, it was not unusual to see 40/50-year-old second mates, and captains were ancient. But people from our generation, they want [promotion] a lot quicker now, and they want to get the senior ranks, but they don't really want to be at sea for 10/15 years to get the experience (19).

This is not a situation that is specific to the cruise ship industry but it is a challenge the cruise ship owner company has to face as well. And steep careers are not seldom on cruise ships, compared to shoreside employments, especially when the cruise ship owner company has an extensive growth strategy and can offer a lot of career possibilities.

Next, the company's strategy to manage careers will be focussed on. A food and beverage manager related to the time he started with the company:

So when I did my job interview, they said, "Okay, you have great knowledge, but you don't have any ship experience. So I need to bring you in a lower position, lower in the operation to see how you are doing things there, and then you go from there." And that was great. It was very needed (10).

The same approach was reported by a cruise director, who was in the cruise business then for 30 years, and who already had gained the rank of cruise director within another cruise ship operation:

I took a full year as an assistant cruise director to learn the company first and foremost (20).

He further outlined that in order to become successful within this cruise ship owner company, stepping down would be a necessary step:

[The cruise ship company] is pretty much a different animal in that it's pretty organised, it's pretty detailed, and it's an entertainment company first and foremost. And I think that's the difference when coming into the company (20).

This stepping down when commencing employment is one approach of the company in focus when managing careers. It needs to be outlined that this approach is specific for this company and might not be found in other cruise ship owner companies. A staff captain mentioned another approach:

For two years I was stepping up to staff captain (19).

Stepping up into the next level position is a temporary assignment to a target position. The advantage is that the company can test how one is performing with

minimising the risk to find out that someone is not up to the job after that person has already been promoted. This is a means to develop crew members, as is also confirmed by the quote of a spa manager:

There is a big step-up possibility. For instance, when I see someone that is really progressing, and that person wants to do management, I can put her forward. I will monitor that person closely just to see how she is going through the work ... And then I will put an appraisal and send it to the office. Once the office approved that one, I can announce her to my assistant, and then I can share the job with her ... Then once she finished her contract, she can go back to our academy, she can complete the management training, and then come back as a manager (13).

Although this is an example from a contractor, a similar approach applies to the cruise ship owner company. So far career management within the company in focus seems to be a carefully treated process, but there is the means of direct promotion as well. A natural peak of promotions appears when a new cruise ship comes into service, as reported by a staff captain:

When the new ships come out, there will be a surge of promotions and then for a while people will be steady in the ranks and there won't be much progression (19).

A high turnover rate provides possibilities for further development, at least for lower ranks. In addition to direct promotions or step-ups, the company in focus also applies the means of succession planning and combines it with the possibility to gain work experience in different areas, as the quote of a food and beverage manager shows:

So I did [head bartender], and then [I was] assistant beverage manager for maybe one and a half years, two years, and then beverage manager for five years. And then I was into a succession plan for food and beverage, and that was in a time when we were developing many leaders, when we were growing with the fleet. So we had the opportunity to do shadowing in the quick service area. So, I was a quick service manager in all the areas. I was head server, I was restaurant manager and dining manager, everything there ... it was a great experience there (10).

It should be noted that shadowing as an instrument of career development needs a stronger inclusion of the shipboard management, not only because it needs to be organised on board but also because the crew members might not be available for their original positions, so that fellow crew members of those areas need to cover the temporary loss of manpower.

In order to support career development, the company in focus has installed two policies. As outlined above, crew members in the deck and engine departments might have to participate external training in order to obtain certain licences. To ease the financial burden for these crew members, as some of the courses are quite

expensive, the company introduced an educational reimbursement policy, whereby the course fees will be covered by the company if the crew member commits himself to stay with the company for a certain minimum period. Another policy is that crew members who want to be promoted or swap departments into another area of the business are required to take part in a training session to learn the career navigation approach of the company. Here, the shipboard HR function has a prominent role as the training officer provides the training.

In the career management approach of the company in focus, the shipboard HR function provides some support, for example by providing promotion letters. Additionally, if the crew member becomes eligible for certain benefits with the promotion, it informs about these benefits and helps the crew member to administer them. On the tactical side, the shipboard HR function contributes to the process by recommending candidates and exchanging information about their performance. But again, the HR strategies and procedures are designed by shoreside HR, and the main responsibility for the process is also located there.

6.4.4 Summary on career management

This section about career management is important for two reasons. A professional career was identified as motivation to commence and continue seafaring, and the management of careers is a means to attract and retain cruise ship staff. Professional careers are aspired to by individuals both within the deck and engine departments as well as in the hotel and entertainment arena. The outlined dualist HRM approach entails that a career management for the former group needs to consider the highly regulated education, which might slow down their career progression, in contrast to the more flexible HRM approach for the latter group.

It is a current phenomenon that people strive for faster career development, which is an expectation the company has to cope with. The HRM approach of the company used in the case study seems to be rather cautious. As noted above by some interviewees, it normally applies the instrument of stepping down when commencing a shipboard employment and the instrument of stepping up before a promotion to the next level position is processed. Despite this, promotion occurs frequently, and is in fact necessary because of the high turnover rate. There are also promotion peaks when a new cruise ship is set into service. For the applied HRM approach that results in a dualism of being cautious and develop people into positions as a developmental measure on the one hand, and being forced to react at short notice due to pressures emerging from high turnover rates and growth strategies on the other.

The company in focus also applies the tools of succession planning and shadowing. How frequently these tools might be used would need some further investigation, but in the example the application of this tool originated in the growth of the fleet. This shows that beneath the constraints emerging from high turnover rates, HRM can be effective and proactive by setting up developmental processes and creating career possibilities.

Two policies have been identified within career management; an educational reimbursement policy for marine and technical staff, and a career navigation policy for crew members who want to apply for a next level position or change the business area. The responsibility for the career management process lies with the shoreside HR function, which also designs the HR strategies and procedures. The shipboard HR function supports, either via administrative HR tasks or by exchanging views and information about potential crew members and career development initiatives.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the HRM approach of the cruise ship owner company. Based on the complexity of the environment within which the cruise ship owner company operates, it needs to develop ways to cope with specific problems and issues. This awareness will help to understand that any debate on HRM in the cruise ship industry needs to take the context of the cruise ship sector and its specific workforce into consideration. The analysis is based on discussions of three key HR activities that are linked to company's investment in its human capital, namely recruiting and selection, retention and career management.

The problems and issues that arise from the outlined challenges like labour shortage, a declining interest in seafaring careers in traditional maritime countries, high turnover and a diverse composition of an international workforce are manifold for the cruise ship owner company. Often the shoreside HR function applies a reactive approach on certain developments, and an HRM approach that can be characterised as short-term in focus with no strategic component. There are some initiatives to cope more proactively with the situation. But the influence of these measures is sometimes negligible, since when it comes to money and career, there are some noticeable limits of HRM.

To cope with the demand of delivering new cruise ship employees at lower levels, the cruise ship owner company has outsourced parts of their recruiting process and works with procurement allies in a variety of local labour markets. A side effect of this is a loss of control over recruitment quality on employment candidates, and

only indirect control over the initial information a potential candidate receives about the employment on board. The final selection is still in the control of the cruise ship owner company. But diversity necessitates using a huge amount of local procurement allies that operate in different markets, which is a challenge for the central recruiting team.

In addition to the issues emerging out of the outsourced recruiting process, an extensive two-pronged approach in HRM was detected. Whereas the recruiting and selection process for the group of officers and almost core staff is kept in-house, the huge demand on lower-level employees made outsourcing a logical step.

As money and career is an important motivator for commencing and continuing cruise ship employment, the cruise ship owner company reacts by offering better terms and conditions or setting up temporary policies that balance economic disadvantageous developments. However, the HRM approach considers soft aspects as well, like meeting crew members need for familiarity, or fostering a contemporary management style on board. As mentioned in the literature review on the hard versus soft HRM approach (see chapter 2.3.5.3), HRM has a mixture of hard and soft dimensions, but the former almost always predominates the later.

On career management the HRM approach needs to consider, for nautical and technical staff, the highly regulated issue of education, which can slow down career progression, as opposed to the flexibility that exists with hotel and entertainment staff. Another determined paradox is the cautious career development approach, which is often coupled with the rapid promotion conducted on short notice of less experienced individuals due to high turnover and growth related demand.

Referring back to the different perspectives on HRM and its relationship with organisational strategy and performance as outlined in the literature review (see chapter 2.4.3), it was not intended to assess this complex relationship here. But the results show that the shoreside HR function rather uses single HR practices instead of a properly selected "bundle" of these HR practices. That indicates that these single HR practices do not effectively contribute to organisational performance. A horizontal integration as well as a vertical integration of these HR practices as outlined in the configurational approach is missing.

Single HR practices are often incomplete as emphasized by Progolaki and Theotokas (2010, p. 582), who revealed in their field study on the application of the resource-based view within Greek-owned shipping companies that they are easy to imitate. As outlined in the literature review (see chapter 2.4.2) the resource-based view is a dominant theory within strategic HRM research that provides a conceptual perspective with a focus on internal resources as a basis for sustainable competitive

advantage. But especially the manning approach discussed above proved a primarily reactive and short-term HRM approach that only provides a short-term competitive advantage. In order to gain competitiveness in the long term, the cruise ship owner company needs to focus on the application of the resource-based view and develop an "integrated" set of HR practices that supports the development of a strategic human resource of high value, rareness and difficulty for competitors to replicate.

The characteristics of the HRM approach as outlined above, namely short-termism, dualism, and an extensive use of procurement allies, confirm that the company in focus of the present study reacts with its HRM approach on the contextual conditions in a certain way, which answers research question Q1 and proves that any debate on HRM in this challenging environment needs to consider the context of the cruise ship section and the specific workforce.

To answer research question Q2, there are subordinated HR functions to the central HR department that provide specialised HR work. As structure determines the responsibilities for HR work, it was examined by answering research question Q3 that the shoreside HR function keeps control over the outlined HR strategies and policies, as well as their implementation on board, which gives it a prominent position in the collaboration with the shipboard HR function. Additionally, although not strategic in focus due to the many challenges the context of the cruise ship section provides, the shoreside HR function provides a big portion of tactical and transactional work for the cruise ships.

The results presented here have some restrictions. First and foremost the analysis and interpretation is based on data that has been gathered with the main focus on HRM on cruise ships, with limited information about the shoreside HR roles and responsibilities. Secondly, the analysis reveals many other areas where further research is needed. For example, a much more differentiated analysis of motivational factors for choosing a shipboard profession, a deeper understanding of the relationship between commitment and motivation in this subject area, the significance of the identified motivational factors for the different HR strategies, the question about control over the HR processes, and more knowledge about the possibilities and constraints to apply certain HR tools should be examined.

7 HR ACTIVITIES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

7.1 Introduction

The last chapter provided a deeper understanding of the nature of HRM in the cruise ship owner company and the roles and structure of the shoreside HR function. This is an important contextual element in which the management of human resources on board cruise ships takes place. Additionally, the company's internal context determines roles and relations of the shipboard HR function. The latter will be the focus of the next chapter. This chapter analyses the question of what HR activities dominate on cruise ships and what specific characteristics these HR activities have.

The results of chapter 6 revealed that the HRM approach of the cruise ship owner company is reactive and short-term in focus, and that a pure strategic orientation is absent. In order to cope with the challenges faced in this industry, some proactive initiatives have been identified. The lack of strategy in HRM approach is one of the main points made in the last chapter. An analysis of the HR activities on board cruise ships will provide an insight into whether there is a strategic element within shipboard HR work as is generally expected from an HR business partner role.

In the first part an answer on 'what are the core HR services of the shipboard HR function to support the shipboard operation and what core HR services does the business expect' is sought (research question Q4). The analysis is based on findings from an assessment conducted in the company used in the case study by its organisational development department. The purpose of the assessment was to understand responsibilities and challenges of shipboard HR team members and to seek opportunities to better align the HR roles to a shoreside HR business partner model. I was granted access to 'phase one' data, which entail the initial questionnaire and in-person shipboard interviews results.

The second part is concerned with 'what specific characteristics do transactional, tactical and strategic HR activities encompass within the cruise ship environment' (research question Q5). This whole chapter was originally part of the next chapter, which complemented the previous chapter, but it became a separate chapter, albeit small, when it became apparent that the volume of information justified this step.

7.2 Assessment of HR activities

An assessment to identify the core HR activities and services was conducted in the cruise ship owner company between September 2009 and January 2010. The purpose was to identify the positioning of the shipboard HR function as a supporter of the business and to gather perspectives on what the core HR services should be. That includes an understanding of responsibilities and challenges shipboard HR team members are facing as well as a search for opportunities to better align the shipboard HR roles to an established shoreside HR business partner model.

First, an initial electronic survey was completed by twelve shipboard HR team members (see appendix 3) and twenty-three shipboard leaders, which are also named as clients here (see appendix 4). In order to validate the findings from the survey and identify HR activities and services that the business wants the HR function to provide, additional interviews were conducted with twelve shipboard HR team members and forty-one shipboard leaders as well as other stakeholders. From these interviews only a summary of the results has been made available.

Detailed information relating who the respondents and interviewees were was excluded in the documents provided to me, except the information that they were all were in shipboard functions. And also further information on how the data was gathered is lacking. It is only known that it was an employee of the company's organisational development department that conducted the survey and interviews. From a methodological standpoint there are some deficiencies with this secondary data. But as it is a rich source for the purpose of the thesis, its usage can be justified as an opportunity I could not ignore.

Although the assessment contains questions about the HR structure and function, HR mission and vision, collaboration of the HR function on board with shipboard leaders as well as HR team members' competencies and experiences, the focus here is on HR activities and services provided by the shipboard HR function. Therefore, in this chapter only information on this issue is used out of the data gathered within the assessment.

Shipboard HR professionals and shipboard leaders were asked to choose five out of ten HR services, which they thought were the top priorities for the next two years. Figure 11 presents the results by way of a contrasting juxtaposition of both groups for each item.

Both groups mainly appear to be in agreement that talent and succession planning (28 of 35), organisational and crew effectiveness (27 of 35), and leadership training (25 of 35) are the top three priorities of HR work. There seems to be less of an

agreement on new hire training (25 of 35). Although it had the third highest nomination, shipboard leadership gives this item 20% higher priority than the HR professionals. Not more than half of the nominations within both groups were given to compliance and employee relations (14 of 35), strategy development support (13 of 35), and diversity (6 of 35). The lowest score was achieved by the item 'others' (4 of 35) with the particularity that the nominations came only from the group of shipboard leaders.

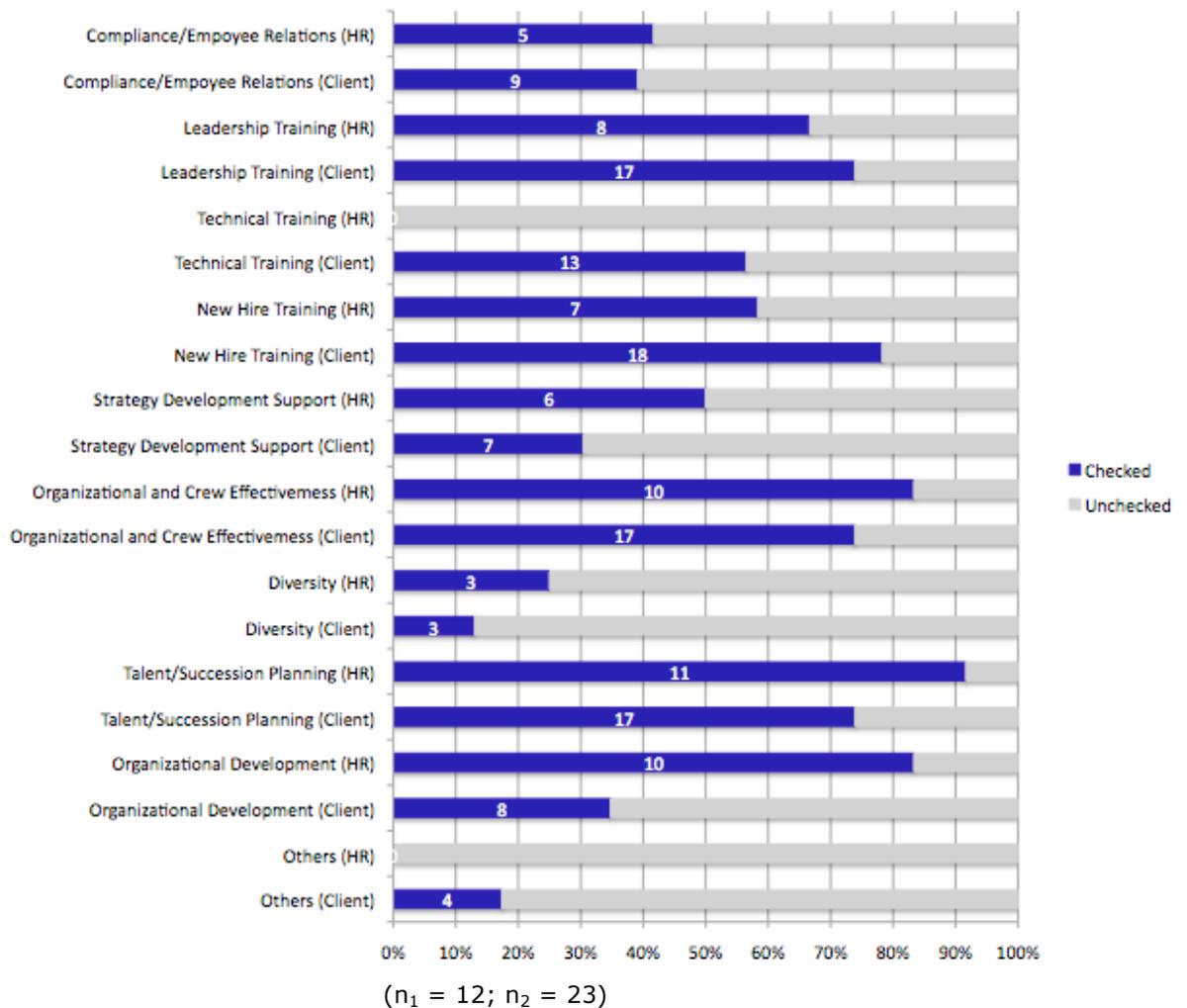


Figure 11 HR priorities for the next two years

Source: Author, derived from survey results.

Two out of three items of the low score group in which both groups are mainly in agreement (diversity; strategy development support) can be classified as strategic HR work and the other one (compliance and employee relations) as tactical work, whereas all items of the high score group fall under the classification of tactical work. The picture outlined so far implies that tactical work is the main focus of shipboard HR work, whereas the demand for strategic work is negligible. Transactional work is not considered here.

Both groups completely disagree not only on the item 'others', which was mentioned the least amount of times, but also on technical training. Technical training was not nominated by any HR team member and no HR professional considered it to be his duty to at least organise technical training. The view of shipboard leaders on the other hand was that the HR function was at least the contact for this topic. Accordingly, only shipboard leaders named the rubric 'others'. There is no explanation what they mean by 'others', but it appears likely that they are referring to the administrative tasks which are not being considered here. In point of contrast, a huge number of the HR professionals see their priorities in organisational development, whereas in comparison the clients group rates this item nearly 50% lower. Slight differences can also be determined for the items 'new hire training' and 'strategy development support' (about 20% difference). These results outline that there is disagreement between both groups as to what HR work has great value to shipboard leadership.

When asked what works well in their current work with the HR function, shipboard leaders highlight the management advisory role and the communication between both sides. This is similar to what the HR professionals answered to the relevant question. The next most frequently mentioned area was in regards to the compliance and enforcement function, where shipboard leaders appreciate the expertise of HR on policies and procedures and their support on employee relations, similar to the group of HR professionals. The third most mentioned topic, again from both sides, is learning and development, and it should be noted that particularly leadership training was emphasised by the HR respondents. This leads to the conclusion that the collaboration between the HR function on board and shipboard management is quite sound and that the HR function is highly valued for its advisory role to shipboard leaders as well as for its expertise on HR policies and procedures. Therefore, employee relations and training will most likely continue to be core functions of shipboard HR.

With regards to the question of what could be improved, shipboard leadership emphasised administration and leadership development, which goes beyond leadership training and includes career management. HR professionals stressed the strategic side of the work they would like to perform. They want to be a thought partner for their clients, help them with business decisions, provide strategic support, and be utilised more for organisational development. Additionally, they want to be recognised beyond their expertise for shipboard policies and employee relations. Especially in respect to the later issue, employee relations, they feel that shipboard HR takes on unnecessary decision responsibility due to the shipboard mindset that HR needs to approve everything. As a possible solution the

interviewees proposed that shipboard leaders could handle routine crew issues at their level with appropriate training instead of engaging HR each time. It can be concluded here that expectations of the operational clients are not in alignment with the direction in which the HR function wants to develop with the services they provide.

On the question about which current HR work processes in place should be changed or modified, the group of leaders most frequently mentioned HR policies and procedures, which in their experience are overly bureaucratic and cumbersome. The design of HR policies and procedures are generally the responsibility of the shoreside HR function, and the emphasis of shipboard leaders on this area leads to the assumption that the HR activities and initiatives driven from shoreside HR are not always understood by shipboard leadership.

Similarly, the group of HR professionals emphasised administration as an area which needs to be reduced and streamlined. This result emphasises the conclusion that can be drawn from the interviews, i.e. that the shipboard HR team members currently dedicate a big portion of their time to routine crew issues, administrative tasks and training. This work does not necessarily add value and takes away capacity which could be used to perform more tactical work, and in the best case even strategic work.

7.2.1 Summary and discussion of the assessment

The aim of this sub-chapter is to identify the core HR services of the shipboard HR function to support the shipboard operation and the expectation of the business on core HR services. The analysis is based on an assessment that was conducted in the company used in the case study.

The analysis revealed that the main focus of shipboard HR work is currently on tactical work, with employee relations and training as the dominant scope of duties. The shipboard HR function is highly valued for its advisory role to shipboard leaders and its expertise on HR policies and procedures. Although transactional work was not part of the questionnaire, in the verbatim comments shipboard HR team members stated that they dedicate a big portion of their time to routine crew issues, administrative tasks and training organisation, which is HR work that does not add much value to the business and which takes away their capacity to perform more tactical work, or in the best case even strategic work. Although the shipboard HR function aspires to fulfil a more strategic business partner role, in practice this type of work is rather marginal as tactical and transactional work elements dominate. This last concluding sentence is a central aspect of this research. Linking

HRM to corporate strategy and organisational performance is a major debate within contemporary HRM research (see chapter 2.4.3). However, strategic HR work on board of cruise ships seems to be limited or even non-existent, thus causing an interesting conflict that needs some further explanation later on in this analysis.

Regarding the expectations of the business on core HR services, it can first be summarised that apart from some matches on primarily tactical work, there is still disagreement between the shipboard leadership and the shipboard HR function in respect of what part of the HR work currently provided adds the most value to the business. This result is reflected in the expectations on which HR services the shipboard HR function should provide when evolving further. Whereas the shipboard leadership places its focus on administration and leadership development, this goals are not in alignment with the direction in which the shipboard HR function wants to develop, which is towards a strategically oriented business support as mentioned in the preceding paragraph. In addition to the HR services provided, the shipboard leaders group would like to see less HR policies and procedures. This might be due to the fact that these shoreside-driven HR activities and initiatives are not always understood by shipboard leaders.

The analysis of the assessment is important here, as it identifies some interesting conflicts. First, there is the dominance of the tactical and transactional HR work on board, or in other words, strategic HR work still only exists on the fringes of shipboard operations. The specific characteristics of transactional, tactical and strategic HR work will be the subject of the next sub-section, which will outline characteristics of the HR services provided by the shipboard HR function.

Second, there is a different understanding of the role of the shipboard HR function. Whereas the HR function itself aspires towards a more strategic business partner role, shipboard leaders expect advice and support on certain tactical and administrative remits and less HR policies and procedures from shoreside HR. The different HR roles will be the subject of chapter 8.

Not part of this examination of the data were the questions regarding responsibilities of HR services provided on board and the collaboration of the shipboard HR function with shipboard leaders, which will also be dealt with in chapter 8. The reason is that the data I was granted access to was limited to the initial questionnaire and the results of the initial in-person shipboard interviews. Therefore, a recommendation for further research includes a more detailed assessment of the roles and responsibilities, of the challenges the shipboard HR team is facing, and of the opportunities to better align with the business and streamline shipboard HR work.

7.3 Characteristics of HR activities

7.3.1 Transactional HR work

In the next three sections the focus is on transactional, tactical and strategic HR work. The term tactical HR work was chosen here and is interchangeable with operational HR work, which is tactical in nature (Mathis and Jackson, 2005, p. 15). The aim is to examine the specific characteristics of these different categories of HR activities on board cruise ships (research question Q5).

The work that falls under the category of transactional HR work on cruise ships is more or less identical with administrative HR work in shore-based environments. For example, it comprises employees' record keeping, data entry for payroll or training attendance, administration of employee benefits, conducting administrative employee requests, employee status changes, position filling, locating and administering training programmes, updating information for example on bulletin boards about training, job vacancies, etc., financial and non-financial rewards and recognition schemes administration, organisation of meeting or visitor schedules, etc.

However, there are some characteristics that can be linked to the cruise ship environment here. Today, no HR administration could work effectively without using personnel information systems that are set up at least business-area wide, or even company wide. The cruise ship as a floating business unit within a cruise ship owner company is connected via satellite with its headquarter where the systems are installed on a central server. During my assignments on board cruise ships, for example, I experienced both a total loss of satellite connection for a whole working day due to shipping in Norwegian fjords, where the hills on both sides blocked the radio signal, as well as weak radio signal connectivity with satellites leading to frequent system breakdowns, which might have been caused by capacity overload due to too many users on board at the same time or an unfavourable angle to a satellite. As this is not an uncommon occurrence on cruise ships, administrative work that requires an essential usage of central information systems has to be planned in advance, particularly if the above-mentioned issues are predictable for certain shipping areas. The statement of an HR manager confirms the issue:

The connectivity causes challenges, to be able to effectively connect with the global [company] or – should I say – [cruise shipping] segment systems (5).

Some administrative work is specific to the maritime environment, such as check-in and keeping crew members' passports and certificates, administering documents and keeping a crew manifest that needs to be shown to local immigration and port

authorities, crew cabin distribution, etc. A lot of this work is handled by a crew office on board.

7.3.2 Tactical HR work

This paragraph on tactical HR work is structured following the Michigan model developed by Fombrun et al. (1984) with its four key HR management activities selection, rewards, appraisal, and development, which all influence the performance of human resources and serve as a means to achieving organisational goals (Fombrun et al., 1984, p. 41). Here, this scheme is only used as a descriptive frame and an assessment of the Michigan model can therefore be left aside.

Cruise ship owner companies have central recruiting and scheduling departments ashore who recruit new or rehire former crew members and place them on the ships. In general, it can be said that officer and supervisor positions, especially for deck and engine but also for hotel and entertainment, are directly recruited by shoreside recruiting experts, whereas non-officer positions and ordinary crew members for the hotel and entertainment arena are recruited predominantly with the support of external recruitment agencies. In chapter 6.3 this function was outlined in more detail.

Shipboard leaders directly partner with the scheduling or the recruiting team to coordinate their needs for certain positions and quickly refill posts that become vacant. The shipboard HR team is only marginally involved, and more in an administrative way. They might post job advertisements on the vessel, advise crew members on how they can apply for open positions, meet and greet new crew members, and help them through their first weeks on the vessel. Their tactical involvement is mainly limited to the familiarisation phase of new crew members, during which training and induction is provided.

Cruise ship owner companies also operate central compensation and benefits departments. Nevertheless, crew members, especially from Asia, Pacific and Caribbean regions, get their salaries paid out in cash on the ship, which is handled by the crew office. The HR function on board usually does not get involved in compensation questions. The only example of involvement in compensation questions mentioned by an HR manager was during the time a new cruise ship was set into operation, where a regulation for gratuity-earning positions needed to be implemented:

We have been working with shoreside group on the gratuity efforts. So [with the commission of the vessel], we don't have any paying guest here currently on board. But we have positions that are gratuity-earning positions. Well, they have to earn some sort of money or we will never be able to get them here on

board and get them to help us do the work that they need to do. So here we work with our shoreside partners as far as the compensation group to develop a strategy (5).

The creation of the respective policy is the responsibility of the shoreside HR function. The above mentioned partnership should be interpreted to the effect that shipboard HR provides the information about the newly established policy to shipboard leaders and affected crew members, which is an administrative task rather than tactical HR work.

When it comes to benefits, there are a lot of administrative tasks for the shipboard HR function. For example, shipboard HR team members might explain any additional benefits when it comes to promotions, they help administer and make changes on benefits, they ensure that certain privileges are only granted to certain positions as part of their benefits package, and so on. The same applies for continuous service or performance awards, which need to be administered and distributed, sometimes as part of a special ceremony which has to be organised. Tactical HR work on compensation and benefits is rather minimal here, as has been illustrated above.

The key HR management activity of 'appraisal' is illustrated here through the HR activities of performance management, some assessment tools, and disciplinary matters, the latter being included under the term 'employee relations' in the company in focus.

Like in many roles ashore, cruise ship employees' performance is evaluated regularly. The cruise ship owner company has designed a performance management system and processes in order to assess the performance of its officers and seafarers, to identify their training and development needs, and as a basis for rehiring decisions. Due to the constant rotation of crew members and supervisors, and due to the different contract lengths of between three and nine months, performance evaluations happen quite frequently, at least two or three times during a contract.

As an executive housekeeper outlined, officers, in contrast to the other crew members, have objectives that are aligned to the business strategies and which are agreed upon once a year, similar to a shoreside position:

When we are setting the objectives for the year, the company strategy comes all the way from the president [of the company] down to the shoreside steering committee, gets streamlined for the onboard steering committee, then down to the [shipboard] department heads and to the crew members. It works all the way from the top to the bottom, obviously (15).

This mechanism also tells us, that although officers as well as non-officers work on fixed-term contracts, the cruise ship owner company manages them like permanent position holders here, which shows its interest to retain its qualified employees.

The shipboard HR function can also offer other forms of assessment tools, like 360° feedback or the 'start-stop-continue' tool where many respondents assess one appraisee as outlined below by an executive housekeeper:

Maybe we don't use it very often ... leaders, they really want to get thorough feedback from the team. What do you want me to stop doing? What do you want me to continue doing? And what do you want me to start doing? Immediately they want to have a feedback from the team to work on, and HR would actually host this [start-stop-continue feedback tool] (15).

By providing HR assessment tools, the shipboard HR function supports the development of shipboard leaders through an individual evaluation of their leadership style and collaboration with fellow crew members on different hierarchical levels, from which further development measures can be derived. Consequently, it can be emphasised at this point that advising and supporting shipboard leaders is a prominent element of tactical HR work.

The last of the three activities that illustrate the key HR management activity appraisal concerns disciplinary matters, as mentioned above. Misbehaviour or violations of company policies could result in disciplinary or employee relations issues. The overall responsibility for discipline on board lies with the captain but the operative process of investigation and handling disciplinary matters is the responsibility of shipboard leaders, as a security officer confirms:

First of all, the managers deal with discipline, unless it is something very serious like fighting or harassment and that sort of thing. That is part of their job, and that is part of taking care of the people (12).

The company aspires towards achieving consistency in the application of HR policies across the fleet, which becomes most obvious in the disciplinary process. Not only do shipboard leaders seek to consult with the shipboard HR function when it comes to issues, the latter often takes a prominent role in the investigations and in respect of recommendations for a particular outcome. This is not only due to the fact that leaders seek to bear the responsibility on any outcome for their team members but also due to the pursuit of consistency. The shipboard HR function consults with the central shoreside employee relations department, as a food and beverage manager confirmed:

I know that HR is in contact with shoreside, when it comes to situations. And for sure, we also need to have consistency between all the ships, what we are doing here and the message that is coming out here. ... I think it is important to have a central point shoreside to go out fleet wide (10).

Especially in the case of discipline it becomes obvious that tactical HR work is often shared between different stakeholders. Although the shipboard leader is operationally responsible for any disciplinary processes and should conduct the required conversations and investigations, there is a frequent liaison with the shipboard HR function, which might take over responsibilities in respect of the disciplinary process. Additionally, there is a strong influence exerted by the central HR function ashore.

The HR key activity of 'development' encompasses, among other activities, training and leadership development. An executive housekeeper distinguished between on-the-job and off-the-job training:

HR is providing training. ... The operation ... will need to train the crew members on technical competencies, ... even if you have worked for 15 years for [another cruise company], you still have to be trained here in the way we do things right. So we are busy training them on the job duties. We wouldn't have time to guarantee consistencies with training when it comes to the HR-related training, like harassment or the alcohol policy. ... It feels good to know that you are going through these subjects, important subjects with our crew. So when they come back from vacation, ... they have already been briefed about our policies (15).

The statement indicates that training of crew members on cruise ships is an essential tactical HR activity, especially when they are new to the company or the cruise ship industry. This is also confirmed by the following contribution of a business office manager:

These are the people that train us how to live on the ship professionally and personally, and pretty much that is what mainly the training officer does, help them through their first couple of weeks and provide the follow-up whenever a crew member has a question (8).

Shipboard HR professionals facilitate training for new and returning crew on behavioural and leadership topics, whereas job-related training is coordinated within the departments. As safety, security and environmental protection are also important topics on cruise ships, regular training as well as frequent emergency drills are part of everyday life on board.

We all have extremely busy schedules here. It's difficult with training here (10).

The above statement of a food and beverage manager indicates the challenges the business is facing. First of all they have to ensure a continuous operation 24/7, as a cruise ship does not shut down on weekends or bank holidays, like companies do ashore. All crew members, returners anyway but new hires as well, need to be integrated quickly and be as productive as possible due to the fact that many cruise ships operate with a low staffing level to keep costs down. Business leaders

perceive the amount of training as a challenge like the below statement of the same food and beverage manager indicates:

With all this training, ... we are getting more and more loaded on board with this. It is not easy for the crew when they come in to have the amount of training that we have to do in the first couple of weeks here. Right now, our on-the-job training is on the side a little bit, so the crew when we are putting them on the floor, even though they have almost two weeks of training, they sometimes are not ready, because I have so much other training that we want to provide to them (10).

It must be said at this stage that many of the training courses provided on board are mandatory for crew members due to company regulations. Especially when it comes to safety, security, and environmental protection, the company has to ensure that all crew members possess the required knowledge. And of course each crew member has to participate in weekly compulsory crew drills. But also some of the training courses facilitated by the HR function are mandatory for every crew member at the beginning of their assignments to the ship, like the training course on time management regulations. On other training courses like on harassment or disciplinary awareness, the HR function gets lists from the shoreside HR function which crew members need to take part in them. The same applies to leadership training courses. There is some voluntary training offered, that especially aim to develop shipboard leaders further. Training is therefore a highly coordinated task on cruise ships in which the HR function plays an active role.

It can be concluded that training on- and off-the-job is an essential part of shipboard working life for all crew members, which might bring some extra challenges to the operation.

Usually training is provided in short sessions to avoid any disruption of business operations. This is one specific element in regards to training facilitation on cruise ships. Another is the international audience, which forces the training facilitators to adapt their approach in regards to language, conversation speed, and different cultural and educational backgrounds, as a cruise director outlined:

The one thing that the facilitator needs to be careful with because of the diversity in the language is specifically to slow down ... that everybody understands. I have seen people coming out of the training who still do not understand the rules and regulations. They are not adhered to them, because they don't get it. It hasn't been specified enough (20).

If HR team members facilitate training sessions, they are not necessarily trained and experienced facilitators when they start their shipboard employment. This statement is derived from observations and experiences I made during my assignments on cruise ships. In order to support them in this role, central personnel development departments provide detailed facilitator scripts and instruction

material, and especially for leadership programmes they offer a training induction by shoreside-based trainers that come on the ship for train-the-trainer sessions. It can be concluded that a big portion of HR work on cruise ships is the organisation and facilitation of training.

An HR manager pointed out another main aspect within the 'development' area:

What we most have to focus on is getting our leaders to understand what we expect from them as leaders. Because it is a unique industry, a lot of our leaders ... are coming from other cruise lines with their good and bad habits, and they are applying those in the operation. We don't have a lot of partners that we have raised from day one in our culture and with all our values, which rose up through the ranks. ... Here, we hire many of our leaders from external companies (17).

The statement refers to the high demand of leadership development within the cruise ship industry. Certain factors, which are prominent in this industry, lead to higher turnover of people in leadership positions than in other industries. These include an above-average fluctuation rate, especially in hotel and entertainment, compared to similar industries ashore, career possibilities that allow for quick development and promotion onto the next professional level even without extensive experience in the current position and an industry-wide shortage of qualified and experienced deck and engine officers which also leads to available possibilities with other companies. Therefore, in order to ensure a certain standard in leadership, and probably to reduce fluctuation in leadership positions, an increased attention is needed on leadership development.

7.3.3 Strategic HR work

In this sub-section it will be examined whether the shipboard HR function conducts strategic HR work. It is legitimate at this point to ask the question if shipboard HR professionals are even able to work strategically, an issue we will come back to in chapter 8.2.3. Following the statement of an HR manager, the shipboard HR role is heading towards the strategic perspective:

In the ship operation, we are moving towards ... being a strategic business partner here. I think that we can take that further on the spectrum. In the past, we have kind of been there as the administrators and the keepers of policy. But now we are moving more towards a strategic thought partner, so referring things back to the area more, getting the leaders to take ownership of their operation, trying to move towards the overall thought partner versus actual paper pusher (17).

Another HR manager confirms that they want to take the strategic role, and she provides some more insight into how this could be achieved:

The main issue currently for shipboard HR is to align our team to be much more strategic and look at what the overall goals and objectives are to the ship, and how we as business partners support those objectives and goals versus being the police and guideline people. We want to ... help the business groups to be able to meet their business goals through their people, ... help leaders think through what the situations are in their areas that are preventing them from being able to meet those goals, help identify various tools that they would find necessary to be able to meet those goals. Like I said, we want to be strategists, we want to be consultants (5).

To what extent strategic HR work is conducted can best be answered by the business side. A food manager expressed how far he thinks HR is involved in the business:

I would say involve ... yourself with the operation. But I am not sure that the way it is done today is the best way. ... I know you are trying to ... understand the operation, to have an overview of the operation and to see what we feel every day. I am not sure you reached that point yet (16).

And a security officer who sees HR on board 'as a strategic vision type department' outlines what strategic issues the HR function should focus on:

The main focus ... for future development is looking at retention, looking into crew welfare, so the living environment, ... looking into developing the managers as well, to make them – or educate them – that they can deal with a lot of situations in their own department (12).

Retention management and crew welfare are some topics that can be worked on to better achieve business goals. However, the rare indications in the data regarding strategic HR work mirror the impression gained here that the amount of strategic HR work is at best minimal. This is not surprising, considering the strong role of the shoreside HR function as discussed in chapter 6, and the fact that shipboard leaders manage the cruise ship operation and are rather operation-oriented than strategy-oriented in their day-to-day demands.

7.3.4 Summary and discussion on HR work

The aim of this sub-section about transactional, tactical and strategic HR work was to identify the specific characteristics of these types of HR activities on board cruise ships.

Transactional HR work on board, which requires an essential usage of central information systems, is affected by possible and not infrequent satellite connection failures and needs some thorough planning in advance, particularly to the extent these issues can be predicted. There is some transactional HR work that is specific to the maritime environment, for which mainly the crew office is responsible.

In regards to the two key HR management activities 'selection' and 'rewards', the shipboard HR function does not contribute much tactical HR work. Training and induction within the first mentioned HR activity can be summarised under 'development', and providing information on benefits is rather an administrative HR task.

Characteristic for the key HR management activity 'appraisal' is that due to the rotation system, performance evaluations are conducted more often on board cruise ships. In addition to this, the fact that performance objectives for officers are derived from the business strategy on a yearly basis indicates that although employed on a fixed-term basis, this group is managed like permanent employees, thereby highlighting the importance of retaining this group of skilled employees. One of the essential parts of tactical HR work of shipboard HR professionals is advising and supporting shipboard leaders on different HR policies and procedures, another is disciplinary matters, where the shipboard HR function not seldom takes over some responsibilities and tasks for conducting the process from shipboard leaders, among others in order to ensure consistency over the whole organisation. There is a frequent liaison with the central employee relations department, which exerts a strong influence.

A third essential HR activity on board is the training of crew members and officers. Part of everyday life on board for all crew members and officers are on- and off-the-job training as well as regular emergency drills. Participation is mandatory for many of the training sessions due to company regulations. The significant amount of training could be challenging for the business, as they have to ensure continuous operation. For the shipboard HR function, organising and facilitating training on behavioural issues and HR policies and procedures takes up a large portion of their time. This is an active role, as training participation must be a well-coordinated process and is continuously monitored by shoreside HR.

Characteristic for the provision of training is that in order to minimise the disruptions for the business operations, training sessions are usually short. And training facilitators have to consider the diversity and different levels of language competencies as well as the different cultural and educational backgrounds of the audience when conducting training sessions in order to ensure that crew members understand the content of the training sessions and afterwards possess the necessary knowledge. As fluctuation among leadership positions is comparably high on cruise ships, much effort and time is dedicated to leadership training within the shipboard training facilitation.

In regards to strategic work the shipboard HR function has a strong ambition to enhance its strategic role. However, there are certain limitations, as the cruise ship

is first and foremost operation-oriented and less strategic in nature. This is also not helped by the fact that strategic issues are mainly handled shoreside, leaving the shipboard partners with a contributory rather than a leading role here.

The findings of this sub-section just confirm and elaborate some of the findings of the previous sub-section on the core HR services. The shipboard HR team members dedicate the majority of their time to training and development, disciplinary matters, leadership advisory, and the many routine crew issues, which are mainly administrative in nature. Although some key HR management activities such as selection and reward does not play any significant role for the shipboard HR function, it can be concluded that the shipboard HR team provides specific services like training delivery and employee relations that usually are not conducted by an HR business partner, at least in that intensity. Therefore, with all the administration and routine in mind, the shipboard HR team serves as a fully intact HR function.

The unique settings and needs of the maritime and shipboard environment substantiate some specific characteristics like considering satellite connection failures within transactional HR work planning, frequent collaborations between shipboard and shoreside HR functions with shared operational responsibilities, bite-size training sessions with strong considerations of the diverse audience, etc. The prerequisites and particular characteristics require a customised set of HR services.

Specific HR services that are customised to the shipboard settings and that are provided by a fully intact HR function require shipboard HR team members who have a specific level of knowledge and experience in order for them to be able to comfortably provide the identified core HR services on board. Although this was not the focus of the analysis in the last two sub-sections, the importance of these results now becomes apparent twofold. They serve as a basis for selecting, training and coaching new shipboard HR professionals and thereby position them for success within the unique shipboard HR roles. Secondly, they serve as a basis from where the HR function can be evolved further, potentially into an HR business partner direction.

Shipboard HR team members dedicate much of their time to routine crew issues and transactional HR work in addition to the above-mentioned training and development, disciplinary as well as leadership advisory HR tasks. A further investigation on administrative HR work could provide details to identify HR work that does not add value and detracts from performing HR core services. In a second step, it could identify opportunities for streamlining, eliminating, or transitioning low value HR work.

7.4 Conclusion

Chapter 7 addresses shipboard HR activities and their characteristics. It aims to identify the core HR services of the shipboard HR function to support the shipboard operation, including the expectation of the business (research question Q4), and to analyse transactional, tactical and strategic HR activities in regards to specific characteristics that are linked to the shipboard environment (research question Q5).

To begin with the first research question, the core HR services of the shipboard HR function that have been revealed from an assessment of HR activities on cruise ships are employee relations, training and development, and advising shipboard leaders as well as a big portion of dealing with routine crew issues and administrative tasks. This result shows the dominance of tactical and transactional HR work on board. Between the shipboard leaders and the shipboard HR function there is disagreement about the value of single HR activities for the business, and the aspiration of the shipboard HR function to become more strategically oriented is not in alignment with the expectations of the cruise ship operation. This results in a different understanding of the role of the shipboard HR function. Shipboard leaders would like to see less HR policies and procedures, most likely because they do not always understand the HR activities and initiatives driven from the shoreside HR function.

This brings us to the second research question. The cruise ship as a floating business unit provides a unique setting. Much of the transactional HR work on board that is conducted in close collaboration with the shoreside HR function requires consideration of possible connection failures to central information systems, and some of it is specific to the maritime environment. As the key HR activities 'selection' and 'rewards' only play a subordinated role within the shipboard tactical HR work, the attention is on 'appraisal' and 'development'. Performance evaluations take place frequently on board due to the constant rotations. Officers, although on fixed-term contracts like all other crew members, additionally have yearly agreed performance objectives which are linked to the business strategy in order to support the retention of this group. The shipboard HR function dedicates a lot of effort towards leadership advisory and support due to the high degree of fluctuation in respect of shipboard leader roles (see chapter 3.4.1).

The shipboard team provides specific HR services that are not usually conducted by shoreside HR business partners. A big portion is disciplinary matters, where the shipboard HR function takes an important role, particularly to ensure consistency

across the whole organisation. In this respect, it therefore frequently liaises with the central employee relations department.

Another area is training and development. As the amount of training can be challenging for the operation, much is provided in bite-sized training sessions, where the facilitator has to consider the diversity of the audience in regards to language competencies and different cultural and educational backgrounds. Due to the high fluctuation particular attention is directed towards leadership training.

The characteristics of shipboard HR activities reveal that on board a customised set of HR services is provided by the shipboard HR team, which serves as a fully intact HR function, but which only contributes to strategic HR themes that are handled by the shoreside HR function.

Similar to the conclusion in the former chapter in regards to the different perspectives on HRM and its relationships with organisational strategy and performance (see chapter 2.4.3) single HR practices conducted by the shipboard HR function have been identified, but no selected bundle of HR practices. Their contribution is equally not affecting organisational performance, and a horizontal integration as well as a vertical integration is missing.

A main result of this chapter was the identified dominance of tactical and transactional HR work of the shipboard HR function. Strategic HR work was not detectable, which reveals an area of conflict, as the shipboard HR function aspires to take an HR business partner role. In relation to one of the main points made in the last chapter, namely that there is a lack of strategic orientation in the cruise ship owner company's HRM approach, the result is not surprising but nevertheless an important finding.

The knowledge of the above-outlined results is important as it provides the basis to strengthen the HR work in areas where the business requires it. Additionally, it can form a starting point for evolving HR work on cruise ships, potentially in a more strategic direction as is currently aspired by the shipboard HR function.

8 REALITIES OF SHIPBOARD HR ROLES

8.1 Introduction

The HR function has always played multiple roles in an organisation, for example as a representative of management, functional expert, or developer of human capital. However, as outlined in chapter 2.5 the last two decades have witnessed the advocacy of new HR roles. The most popular of these promote HR as a business partner. It is beyond question that the business partner role is important, but new roles encompass new business expectations on the HR function, which can potentially have problematic implications, when these expectations are not met. For example, as partner supporting the business strategy the HR function is expected to add measurable economic value to enhance a firm's competitive advantage, not just perceived value. If it does not add real value to the organisation, it rapidly loses its position.

The aim of this chapter is first to examine the different HR roles of the shipboard HR function, identify the dominant ones, and to gain a complete picture of where the shipboard HR function is positioned in regards to the HR roles outlined in chapter 2.5. This aim is expressed in research question Q6 that poses the question of 'what different roles do the HR function on board entail and what characteristics do these roles have within the cruise ship environment'.

Secondly, the collaboration of the shipboard leaders with the shipboard HR function is examined with the aim of finding out how the shipboard HR function is being perceived by shipboard leaders and what characterises the collaboration of line management with the HR function, which equates to research question Q7.

8.2 Roles of the HR function

HRM on board is the part of management that is concerned with the crew and their relationships within the cruise ship organisation. By planning, developing and administering HR policies and programmes the shipboard HR function supports the organisation to achieve its objectives. On an individual level shipboard HR seeks to facilitate professional growth and maximise individual performance. On an organisational level its core purpose is to make efficient use of existing HRM.

The integration and extension of HR activities on board into a separate department added a new player to the existing shipboard management. The main focus of this sub-chapter is to examine 'what different roles do the HR function on board entail

and what characteristics do these roles have within the cruise ship environment' (research question Q6). The result is important as less pronounced HR roles limit potential HR services the business can request. The different HR roles are derived from the HR role models mentioned in chapter 2.5.1. Additionally, observations and the data collected on board of cruise ships are used in this examination.

8.2.1 Compliance and enforcement function

Numerous laws and regulations govern the employment relationship between the organisation and the individuals the organisation needs to execute its strategy and achieve its goals. In order to help ensure that the organisation avoids financial or reputational harm, HR professionals must understand and navigate the application of these laws and regulations, and finally translate them into effective HR policies and procedures. An important basis for the shipboard environment today is the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) of 2006 (see chapter 3.3.4).

The shipboard HR function has to ensure that compliance of both individual and group behaviours with the derived shipboard HR policies are achieved and maintained in practice. With employee relations in mind a hotel director put it this way:

On board, HR is also termed as the gatekeeper of a lot of policies and procedures, which is very important. You always need a third party, unbiased personnel there who can and will listen to all sides of the story or a case, and then make a call on that (6).

A big portion of the day-to-day work within the HR function on board is to deal with disciplinary matters. Due partly to the somewhat confined environment and the close proximity of private and working life, behavioural breaches of company policy are not uncommon on board. In its function to ensure compliance of behaviours with HR policies and support management in their function of disciplinary supervision, the HR function on board is often referred to as police officer, lawyer or judge as the next three statements from a business office manager, an executive housekeeper and a hotel director show:

Although in some cases or in some perspective, HR might also be seen as the police officers of the ship, but they are also here to protect the crew members as well (8).

You have a lawyer on a different side. But like more of a court, the judge will judge, ok, you saying this, you saying this, this is what I hear. This is what I think (15).

I hate to say this because HR sometimes gets into that terminology of lawyers and we need to remove that tag, they're not lawyers, they are resources, they

are here, part of the crew welfare, but they are here as part of the development, too (6).

The HR function has a very strong role within disciplinary processes on board cruise ships. Investigations are often conducted by the shipboard (assistant) HR managers to ensure consistency within the process, and to have a 'neutral' party involved. These HR professionals provide 'recommendations' as a result of an investigation, which are perceived and taken as decisions, as the statement of an HR manager shows:

No one wants to make these decisions. No one wants to hold people accountable to our common viewpoint and issue written warnings. I mean it doesn't need a lot to get into this business, to be the HR police, but because no one else wants to do it, sometimes we end up playing that role, and I think it is a valuable role (17).

The compliance and enforcement function is a well-established role within the HR function in general. Perceived more as a reactive function, HR professionals should probably have to increasingly emphasise today on taking proactive and preventative measures to forestall, or at least mitigate, the effects of misbehaviour or non-compliant behaviour against HR policies and procedures. A training officer proposed awareness through information and advice on the negative consequences of not following HR policies and procedures as a proactive action:

We have to ensure that our crew members understand exactly why our policies and procedures are in place. They need to understand why we have these policies and procedures in place, and what could happen if they don't follow them, and also what they can do if they think that they are being unfairly treated, whether it be with discipline or just in general (7).

The shipboard HR function has a strong role in compliance and enforcement, where it represents first and foremost the interests of the organisation by ensuring that organisation's applicable laws and HR policies are followed. It is seen as a 'neutral' party here, with a rather reactive approach. Potential for taking proactive and preventative initiatives are seen.

8.2.2 Representative of management

As indicated in the first sentence of this sub-chapter the shipboard HR function is linked to the shipboard management. Within its role of being an advocate for managers HR professionals use their specialist expertise about the management and development of individuals to assist leaders in making effective (here short- and medium-term) business decisions on HRM. This role is often used as an extension of the compliance and enforcement role by interpreting and communicating HR policies, as indicated by a security officer:

I think the way they are using the department on the ship is incorrect. It should not be used to handle all these work disputes. The managers themselves should be dealing with this. The managers should know how to deal with these and deal with them themselves instead of coming in here and loading up HR department with these things. They should take care of it themselves. There is no reason for it to have a whole department just to deal with these things when it is part of your job to do them yourself. I think in that fact it is kind of incorrect on here (12).

The focus of the representative of management role is on tactical HR work. With its professional knowledge the shipboard HR function is contributing to foundational HR practices such as resourcing, learning, talent development, performance and rewards, and also on employee relations, not as a decision maker, but as an advisor and process executer. The role can also include contributions to emerging practices with impact on people management with a less strategic focus like work process design or internal communications.

The shipboard HR function is the point of interface between management decisions on crew issues and the crew itself. It is charged with communicating and interpreting management decisions and processing necessary actions. With these roles in mind a staff captain emphasised the reactive character of this role:

So in many ways, it can be seen as more of a reactive role, the HR function. It is reacting to things that happen rather than going out there and thinking: "What can we do to stop people leaving?" (19)

The representative of management role can be situated in between a strategic partner role that will be considered next, and the functional expert role, discussed afterwards.

This again is a strong role, where the shipboard HR function not only serves as an advisor for shipboard management but also as a link to crew members, as it interprets and communicates management decisions, and sometimes executes HR processes on behalf of shipboard leaders. Again the role's character is reactive.

8.2.3 Strategic partner

In the statement above from a staff captain the reactive orientation of the HR function on board was stressed. But it also indicates by mentioning the example regarding retention management that offering appropriate strategies and procedures to anticipate changes and help managers to steer strategic planning and actions could be part of the role. A security officer put it this way:

I think it should be used more for strategic planning on how to retain employees, more research and development, retention, how can we train people better, even how can we improve people's life on the ship. ... I think they

can better research things, find out what is bothering the crew, and how can we improve that. ... It could be anything from the food in the mess, or like how looking at a particular department, how they are getting along with the manager, or if the manager is having problems as whole with his department. ... Of course, in HR, they are experienced and trained, so they can provide guidance to the men, not necessarily do the works themselves, but provide guidance to the managers and leaders around the ship (12).

And in another statement he stated his view more precisely:

It is more as a strategic vision type department, seeing what issues are coming up and responding to them, instead of going around putting out small fires that managers should be taking off (12).

In general, to become part of the strategic decision-making process of the management, not only capable HR professionals are needed but also enough resources that can step away from operational tasks and contribute to strategic planning. The difference to cruise ships without an HR function is outlined in a further statement of the security officer:

Because on other ships without HR, there are not many people to do that, just look at things. They just have one way that they do it, fleet wide, and this is how it goes, but here you have the capability with the extra personnel, and the experience with other people, varied experience, a lot of experience to really improve people's life here (12).

But a cruise ship first and foremost is an operative business unit whose main goal is to serve and satisfy its guests in order to generate revenue. At this point it is questionable as to what extent shipboard management is capable of working strategically, while its orientation is first of all operational, and the players continuously change due to rotations of position holders. And when shipboard management is not really strategically oriented, the question of how a strategic partner role can be included into the shipboard HR function, is difficult to answer.

Again this examination confirms that the shipboard HR function is rather not strategically oriented. Although retention management is a strategic topic for the company, there is no evidence or signs of any strategic involvement of the shipboard HR function.

8.2.4 Functional expert

On the other side of the tactical orientation of the HR function is the transactional HR focus. HR activities and tasks have to be executed efficiently and quickly in order to respond to the needs of the line management and demonstrate that the HR function adds value to the organisation. This aspect is extremely important in the

HR function on board a cruise ship as can be seen from the following statement by an HR manager:

So seeing the role, coming on the ship for the first time, I was overwhelmed by the amount of administration, almost like we are the HR police. For example, we are reviewing and providing promotions, but also signing written warnings, stuff I never did shoreside. My reaction to that was I want to get out of that business. I think it is not time well spent in my mind (17).

Although a lot of effort has been spent on streamlining and minimising administrative tasks within the shipboard HR function, the need to maintain accurate employee records and undertake transactional HR work will always be an ongoing need, but with an emphasis on excellence in administrative procedures.

8.2.5 Representative of employees

What this role contains is very well illustrated in a statement of a training officer:

Crew members come to us if they're looking for development, if they need help, if they have questions about contracts, things like that. So we are an easy go-to, visible department and area on the ship. I think that gives all crew members a sense of comfort, a comfort to know that they have this location that can help them if they have challenges on board. Even if it is not something that we can resolve on the ship, at least we know where we can turn to. Like counselling, for example, we cannot counsel crew members, but at least we know how to get persons to speak to these crew members (7).

Serving as a representative of management, this role seems to be a direct contradiction to it, or at least difficult to realise. For crew members the shipboard HR function serves as a representative of their concerns to shipboard management. Although it includes this uncomfortable conflict, the role cannot be avoided. Especially at least the HR work on crew welfare makes it a key role for the HR function. This statement can be confirmed for the cruise ship environment by the following quotation of a cruise director:

I think the main thing is being there for the crew, being accessible, and allowing the crew to communicate. Sometimes a crew member may feel that they are being discriminated against, but I think human resources is going through that and then they can investigate it enough. So it is very good to have human resources on board, because they can assist crew members to be comfortable, and that is the whole thing of having human resources here. And if there is something that is a concern, then they are there to investigate it and sort it out (20).

For every crew member the first point of contact when any issues need to be addressed is the direct leader. As mentioned earlier steep shipboard careers might entail less experienced shipboard leaders, who focus rather on running the operation than dealing intensely with subordinates' concerns. And there is no such

representative function as a works council on board. The shipboard HR function is perceived as a contact point that can arbitrate between crew members and between crew members and shipboard management. Shipboard HR professionals know the HR policies and procedures, and can at least provide orientation to a crew member on HR guidelines and how to conduct oneself in a certain situation.

It can be concluded that on cruise ships the representative role for crew members is a strong role. It seems contradictory to the representative of management role, which at least is not the case, i.e. on crew welfare issues.

8.2.6 Human capital developer

The focus of the role as human capital developer lays on HR practices and processes that help individual employees to develop their future role within the organisation. Through for example training and learning, career development, and coaching the HR function develops the workforce, which is seen as a critical asset for the organisation. The importance of this role is seen on cruise ships, as the following quotation from a hotel director confirms:

Development is part of human resources, in terms of facilitating training. A lot of onboard training is facilitated by human resources. They are also a middle person in terms of relating to the training department ashore. The later comes on board and facilitates a lot of leadership training. So they are the middlemen out there that coordinate the training that happens on board. So they play a big role in the developmental part of it (6).

In chapter 7.3.2 the issue involving the need for a high amount of obligatory training on the one hand, and the high demand for leadership training on the other hand was outlined, as were the challenges that this creates for shipboard leaders whose primary focus is on the need to ensure a continual running operation. A response to this was the facilitation of bite-size training sessions. Nevertheless, training facilitation takes a huge amount of time of the shipboard HR function, a well-organised and actively monitored process. This is not helped by the high staff turnover on cruise ships and the ever present philosophy that learning and development is a must if one wants to ensure a continuous level of service and satisfy the need to refill management positions with capable individuals. Therefore the human capital developer role is also a strong HR role.

8.2.7 HR leader

Through leading their own department appropriate HR managers gain respect and recognition of the shipboard management. Within the shipboard HR function traditional areas of HRM such as hiring, training and performance management

need to be applied as professional as across the whole organisation, additionally it must be ensured that this function operates well. The next quotation from a training officer reflects that leading the HR function on board a cruise ship can be perceived all but not dominant within a good functioning team:

The assistant HR manager and the training officer report to the HR manager, but also I see ourselves as working in alignment and we complement each other, because each of us have our own specific roles and things that we take care of. So like the training officer would do crew classes or new hire embarking classes, the assistant HR manager would do leadership classes. The HR manager does not do any classes, but they deal a lot with investigations or whatever takes place. So even though we report to the HR manager, we still have our individual roles that we need to take care of, and we are like the experts in our roles, and when we need to report to the HR manager, we do so instead. It is not like directly above, but it is more or less like to the side, if you can picture that mentally (7).

The quote is an example for a good functioning shipboard HR team. But the HR leader role is more a secondary responsibility of the HR manager, it is expected that the HR operation runs smoothly, as this role is the expert on managing human resources on board for other shipboard leaders. Due to this, the HR leader role does not constitute a core HR function here.

8.2.8 Group HR role

Cruise ships do not operate as standalone business units. There are shoreside-based central support functions that serve all cruise ships of a cruise ship owner company. It is important for the shipboard HR function to be clear with the central HR function on the way they work together, and how they can best support the organisation. A hotel director explained the importance of a central HR function:

You need a central body out there to coordinate the ships, definitely. You need a central body out there to help with big decision-making, bigger investigations, and bigger development issues that come by, also researching what is available in the market. We need to think global, we need people to tell us what is happening globally, get those ideas over there and then put it locally and see what can we implement here (6).

Continuous coordination and adjustments of the various HR tasks and processes have to be ensured through at least regular telephone conferences between the central shoreside HR functions and the shipboard HR function. Another part of the role for the shipboard HR function is to contribute to strategic HR projects and bring the view of the ship to central HR initiatives.

This HR role is based on the wider organisational structure of the cruise ship owner company and is therefore a required role. It also, however, weakens the position of

the shipboard HR function, as the shoreside HR function's influential power on how HR policies and how the procedures are applied on board is powerful.

8.2.9 Summary and discussion on roles of the HR function

This sub-chapter outlines the different HR roles the shipboard HR function primarily has and what the specifics are related to these roles.

Eight different roles of the shipboard HR function were examined. Out of the findings it can be derived that some roles on board are stronger, like the compliance and enforcement function where HR represents the interests of the organisation. Other examples include the representative of management role with its advocacy focus for shipboard management, and the representative of employees role as a key role for crew welfare. The human capital developer role is also important due to the high employee turnover characteristic of the industry. The functional expert role is important as a fundamental basis as it ensures a quick and effective execution of HR tasks and activities.

Virtually non-existent is the strategic partner role, although aspired to by the shipboard HR function. The HR leader role is evaluated as a secondary responsibility of the HR manager and does not constitute a core HR function. The group HR role originates in the structure of the cruise ship owner company, and with the influential power of the shoreside HR function on the application of HR policies and procedures on board it rather weakens the position of the shipboard HR function.

The reactive approach is a typical characteristic attributed to HR roles, for example in the case of the representative of management role or the HR leader role, where it can at best gain recognition of the management colleagues by applying exemplary leadership approaches. Some opportunities for becoming more proactive have been identified in its compliance and enforcement function or as human capital developer, whereas in the group HR role it is a contributor, as it represents the cruise ship view within and provides input to company-wide HR initiatives and projects.

There is some unavoidable ambiguity present within the different roles as the interests of different stakeholders are supported. Titles like police, lawyer, judge, advocate, advisor, developer, bureaucrat, etc. can be found to be associated with shipboard HR professionals. Although the versatile shipboard HR roles seem to be contradictory, like the representative of management and representative of employees roles, all HR roles are interrelated and mutually supportive.

The results of this sub-chapter are important for this research as they identify the strong HR roles of the shipboard HR function, as well as the non-existent ones,

secondary ones and required ones. Four of the strong HR roles are primarily related to tactical HR work, whereas one encompasses transactional HR work.

The four strong HR roles could be related to the key topics for the shipboard HR function as identified further above, namely performance management, discipline, training and development, and advising shipboard leaders and crew members. The question as to what knowledge and especially capabilities are needed by HR professionals to comfortably deliver what the respective HR roles require might be a starting point for further research on HR roles of the shipboard HR function.

The different HR roles under consideration here were derived from the models of the HR role as outlined in chapter 2.5.1, primarily from the HR champions' model from Dave Ulrich. The intention of this research was not to assess Ulrich's three-legged model with the HR functions shared services, business partner, and centres of expertise, as this would mean a focus on the shoreside HR function. That said, it might be a good question for further research, namely to what extent does Ulrich's model influence the development of the HR operation of a cruise ship owner company.

8.3 Working with the HR function

The shipboard HR function aspires to fulfil an HR business partner role as mentioned in chapter 7. But the results of the previous sub-chapter already indicated that the strategic partner role is quasi non-existent on board cruise ships. Nevertheless, other dominant HR roles have been identified that determine which HR services the shipboard HR function can provide.

The interest here is to outline 'how the shipboard HR function is perceived by the interviewees and what characterises the collaboration of line management with the HR function' (research question Q7). In order to answer this, a detailed picture of the partnership should be gained and an indication if the current shipboard HR function meets what the business expects from it.

But before we examine the collaboration of shipboard leaders with the shipboard HR function, different shipboard roles are analysed regarding their responsibilities for HR activities and the extent to which they conduct HRM on board. This provides an understanding on the assumption that HRM on board is shared between different roles, and of the scope of their involvement.

Then in the subsequent three sections HR functions' understanding of the realities of the business is analysed, its affects on line managers' autonomy on HR work, and its alignment to business requirements.

8.3.1 HR responsibilities of shipboard roles

The focus of this section is on different roles and the question, to what extent do certain shipboard positions conduct HRM on board. The aim is to understand that HRM on board is a shared function between HR professionals and shipboard leaders, with sometimes overlapping responsibilities, and to identify the extent of involvement of the respective role, if it is, for example, a contributor or plays more of a decider role for shipboard HRM.

The analysis is based on descriptions of the positions in the shipboard safety management system that outline the responsibilities and objectives of every single role on the cruise ship. Additionally the perceptions of the interviewees on the selected roles as well as the role description as recorded in the ethnographic fieldnotes were used.

First, the highest-ranking position on board was reviewed, which is the captain. Then the three different roles of the shipboard HR function were looked at, the HR manager, the assistant HR manager, and the training officer. A second prominent role on board that was explored was that of the staff captain, who is the deputy of the captain and represents him on some HRM responsibilities. Finally, the shipboard leaders role was examined here.

For each role their position was looked at as well as their collaboration with other positions, on board as well as ashore. Which responsibilities the role inhabitant usually had, if any, on the key HR activities of administration, performance management, employee relations, training and development, managing a team, and crew welfare was then examined. If the corresponding role had decision-making power and/or financial power, or was solely a contributor on the listed functional HR tasks, provided the basis for the focus of the analysis. The result is summarised in table 12:

	Captain	HR manager	Assist. HR manager	Training Officer	Staff captain	Shipboard leader
HR administration		X	X	X		X
Performance management	X	X	X			X
Employee relations	X	X	X		X	X
Training and development	X	X	X	X	X	X
Managing a team	X	X			X	X
Crew welfare	X	X	X			X
Decision-making power	X	X			X	X
Financial power	X	X				

Table 12 Functional key HR activities and dimensions of shipboard roles

Source: Author.

The captain or master is the direct and most senior representative of the cruise ship owner company and the ultimate authority on board. There are certain decisions on a vessel that only the captain can take, which gives him significant status and prerogatives. He holds ultimate responsibility for the safety of the vessel, the safety of all crew and guests on board, and for the protection of the environment. He also has the last word on personnel related matters.

All crew members on board are directed to assist the captain. There are the department heads that support him as well as the whole group of leaders who manage the crew in their respective areas. In close cooperation with the department heads he is accountable for the efficient operation and maintenance of the ship and its equipment. One of the prominent roles that support him in regards to HR issues is the shipboard HR manager, and another is the staff captain, who assumes a lot of responsibilities in this area.

Although the captain is involved in nearly all the functional key HR activities listed here, his involvement is at a top level, whereas much of the operational implementation is conducted by the other roles mentioned in the table above. His decision making power on discipline is the final authority, and the role incorporates financial power as the captain manages for example a crew welfare budget.

A separate shipboard HR function on cruise ships has existed since 1998 with the introduction of the shipboard HR manager role. A main purpose was to relieve operational management positions, especially the staff captain, from transactional HR work. The main areas of HR work quickly turned out to be performance management, discipline, training and development, and advising shipboard leaders and crew members. During the years the shipboard HR function evolved and an assistant HR manager role and a training officer role was added.

The shipboard HR manager is a senior officer position and reports directly to the captain. It has a dual reporting line to a director of HR ashore. The HR manager is member of the shipboard steering committee as well as the safety committee. In general this role has a coordinating function in regards to HR policies and procedures and works closely with the shipboard leadership as well as regularly partners with shoreside HR functions.

In brief, the HR manager role encompasses responsibilities for all the above listed key functional HR activities. The role has decision-making power, but as can be seen with discipline, this power is limited due to the influence of the shoreside HR function. It also has budgeting power, which is limited to planning and maintaining any budget assigned to crew welfare.

The shipboard assistant HR manager reports directly to the shipboard HR manager. With the exception of the managing function this role is involved in all key HR activities similar to and on behalf of the shipboard HR manager. The dominant activities the role is involved in are training and development and employee relation, but it also covers a lot of administrative tasks. The role has neither decision-making power nor any financial power.

Also directly reporting to the shipboard HR manager is the training officer. A focus of this role is on training for new hires and returning crew and their transition to shipboard life during the first weeks. Another part of this role covers a huge amount of transactional HR work. It has no decision-making or budgeting power.

The staff captain is the second in command on board. In the event that the master becomes medically unfit for command or has been incapacitated, the staff captain assumes command of the vessel. The role is a member of the ship steering committee as well as the chairman of the safety committee.

In regards to HR responsibilities this role has a prominent position as the staff captain has, alongside the captain, the overall responsibility for maintaining discipline on board. The staff captain does not only conduct regular emergency drills on behalf of the captain, he is also responsible that the crew is trained on safety, security, and environmental protection matters. As head of the deck department the role includes management tasks. Although the role has no financial power on HR activities, it has decision-making power.

The shipboard leadership role encompasses all listed key HR activities, but naturally the scope of responsibilities and duties vary, depending on the position within the hierarchical system, the number of direct reports who are leaders themselves, and the number of subordinates. In general a leadership function on a cruise ship and ashore does not differ in regards to responsibilities and duties. What is different is the huge amount of discipline matters that occur on cruise ships and the relative proximity of professional and private life, which implies that taking care of the subordinates sometimes goes beyond working times. In addition to its involvement in all key HR activities, the role does not have any budgeting power, but some decision-making power.

It can be summarised here that HRM on board is a shared function between shipboard leaders and HR professionals, with occasional overlapping responsibilities. Not only this, even more stakeholders are involved in the shared key HR activities. For example, the shoreside HR departments for recruiting, scheduling, learning and development, and employee relations have been named as collaboration partners from the interviewees, but also shipboard positions like the

service excellence trainer, the safety, security, and environmental officer, and the crew activities manager.

The intensity of involvement of the aforementioned shipboard roles in key HR activities differs, as does the extent to which these roles conduct HRM on board. Mostly they are contributors in the majority of key HR activities, but the captain in particular also has decision-making and financial power, and to a lesser extent the HR manager has the same decider qualities. Solely decision-making power was determined for the staff captain and shipboard leader role.

8.3.2 HR function and the link to commercial realities

The next aspect that will be examined here is the awareness of the shipboard HR function on how the business operates and what customers need. A business office manager sets his expectations with a focus on engine operations:

I do not expect any HR person to come and learn my operation. They don't even have to shadow when we can talk over lunch or over dinner. ... HR can go around and see the different operations ... to walk from the engine room all the way to the forwards and deck B or C, not necessarily to do the work, but just to walk and see what those engine guys do in the engine room. It gives a whole different idea. ... They have different issues, different day-to-day operation, and it is great for our HR ... to know what is happening with the remainder of the crew (8).

This statement infers that currently the HR function is not seen as knowing the operation as well as it is expected. Although HR team members are located on the vessel, and in this confined cruise ship environment one bumps into each other frequently, this alone does not guarantee a deeper knowledge of the operation as a chief engineer confirms:

The fact that HR is on board does not necessarily mean they have knowledge of each department's operation issues (18).

On the other hand, by having HR on board the chances are higher that shipboard HR professionals gain an understanding from what circumstances the operation is suffering, as an executive housekeeper argues below:

HR on board can better understand what is really going on, why is the dining not focusing that much at that moment, because there are so many issues already there to take care of. While maybe shoreside would say, "I don't understand why so much focus is here and not there". Maybe they don't see that they have other technical issues that they are really focusing on in order for the guests not to suffer (15).

A shoreside based HR function would have more difficulties in understanding shipboard operation, especially when the people working there have not gained any

shipboard experience before. Then the hazard is potentially higher that HR policies are implemented that may conflict with business goals of the operation, as indicated by a training officer:

Some ... areas of the ship owner company, they do not fully understand the process onboard, so they make decisions that would work really well on land. However, because of our operation and the type of audience that we have, it would not work on the ship or it might fail miserably or it might work but for a short period of time. I think more experience of what is done on board would help (7).

There are certain possibilities to get more insight into operations for the HR function. The business office manager on the previous page, for example, mentioned conversations with department heads as well as crew members, and walking around to observe operations, but also shadowing as some possibilities. Temporarily taking over certain roles is also one such solution as identified by a cruise director below:

I think you have done it. You have jumped into different positions ... to see what it entails. ... That is what I did. I did youth activities for eight weeks, I did character manager for ten weeks, and I have been a shore excursion manager in another company. ... I think HR having that in their experience is a big help, knowing what crew members have to go through (20).

From my own shipboard experience I can confirm that on one vessel I worked on, shadowing different positions was common practice for HR team members that were new to this function or the company. Another aspect was to understand customer demands. As an HR manager confirms below, there are certain opportunities to keep up-to-date on customer comments and complains:

Even if that means going to the guest service recovery meeting that I go to every other week. Even though I probably don't understand if I'm getting anything valuable out of that meeting, at least I understand what the guests are complaining about, reviewing the guest comments, looking at the guest complains on a daily basis, being turned into the business like any other operator on the ship (17).

Every manager on board has access to the latest list with guest complaints that mainly the guest service department administers, where one can see what the operation has to deal with. When crew members are involved in a complaint, the HR function might already be involved. As the HR manager outlined, this is one strategy which could be more aligned to business requirements.

8.3.3 HR's influence on supervisor's autonomy on HR work

Line managers have a central role in the management of human resources. They distribute the work and conduct performance appraisals, are the first contact for

their subordinates on employment-related issues, and break employment-related news to employees. And, with a common thrust towards devolution, line managers should become even more responsible for and carry out HR activities soon.

While this development might encourage line managers to get on with HR issues a bit more their own way and take the freedom of interpreting HR policies to meet their needs, the role of the HR function is perceived by line managers to constrain their autonomy on making decisions they feel are in the best interest of the business, as a chief engineer confirmed:

Strangely, the department head is no longer valuable when it comes to judging these situations, clarifying conflicts, and all of a sudden HR intervenes (18).

The shipboard HR function seeks to partner with line managers to enhance their ownership for HR issues, which is summarised above under the term devolution. But on the other hand it is the role of the shipboard HR function to be concerned with achieving consistency on the application of HR policies and how the cruise ship staff is managed. This ambiguity within the role of the HR function has already been discussed in chapter 2.5.2. The inherent tension perceived by shipboard line managers is that they received more responsibility for conducting contemporary HR work, but that interventions from the shipboard HR function increase as well, thus constraining their autonomy.

A training officer confirmed the importance of achieving consistency not only on a vessel but also within the entire fleet:

And also consistency, we have to look at as well, because we have so much growth. ... We have to be consistent throughout the departments, the entire ship, and the fleet (7).

The role of the shoreside HR function is to provide clear HR policies and procedures that the business needs to follow. The shipboard HR function provides briefings and information on these HR policies and procedures to shipboard leadership, and supports the business in the day-to-day application of them, so that inconsistencies are more unlikely to arise. A food and beverage manager confirmed that consistency on employee relations issues on board and over all vessels of the fleet is achieved by the shipboard HR function counselling with a central employee relations department shoreside. Consequently, it is not only the shipboard HR function that affects line management's autonomy in conducting HR work, the shoreside HR function possess strong interventional power to influence how HR work on board is conducted by line management.

Shipboard management accepts consistency but interventions from shoreside should be limited to bigger issues, as the statement of a hotel director below shows:

I think consistency is important, no doubt about it. But I think you have to draw a line. If there are big issues, if there are big decisions that need to be made, I completely agree that these need to come from shoreside employee relations, or whatever department (6).

The statement advocates more autonomy on smaller issues to be granted by the shoreside HR function. The data did not provide any evidence as to whether the same demand was addressed towards the shipboard HR function.

An issue with being consistent across the company was brought up by a chief engineer:

They cannot apply the same judgement standard that they apply shoreside. They cannot apply it to the shipboard side. They have to understand the differences. It is a completely different environment from shoreside. HR must recognise these differences and apply different standards accordingly (18).

The statement refers to a concern that was already outlined in the previous sub-chapter, that shoreside HR team members who are responsible for designing HR policies are perceived to lack shipboard experience and might make decisions that do not fit shipboard practice. Even though when interventions into shipboard HR practice are accepted to a certain extent, these interventions from the shoreside HR function need to be specific to fit to the shipboard environment.

It is not only the shipboard management, which strives towards more autonomy in shipboard HR work. A shipboard HR manager also seeks more autonomy as a necessary requirement to become more of a thought partner for the operation:

The ship operation business ... I would like to see more of a willingness to have a little bit more freedom in the things that we do. I think it's valuable to have consistency where we can, but I think it's also valuable to let go on the things that are low level or that don't need 15 million approvals. ... In my mind, we should have full authority to make those decisions rather than running it by shoreside because if we run everything by shoreside, I think at some point, we lose our credibility as a thought partner and we're just the facilitator (17).

Again the statement refers to the strong interventional power of the shoreside HR function. This does not leave much room for the shipboard HR function to evolve into the aforementioned ambition of becoming a strategic business partner for the shipboard operation. The strong role of the shoreside HR function leads to an ongoing standardisation of shipboard HR work and consistency in the overall application of HR policies, but both the shipboard management and the shipboard HR function experience a lack of autonomy in their day-to-day HR work.

8.3.4 HR function to be aligned to business requirements

From an HR business partner it is expected to be more aligned to business requirements. This encompasses a focus on business goals, to act as agent of change, and the development of expertise and professionalism on HRM. The impact the shipboard HR function has on organisational goals on board can be assessed through determination of the contribution it makes. A quantification of this contribution is hard to realise because of the close working relation of line management and the HR function on putting HR policies and procedures into effect.

Here, we will look into the perceptions of the interviewees on the contribution the HR function makes for them. A staff captain stated:

I don't think the HR function has any bearing on retention. It is how people are treated in the job really. The HR function comes in, when there are some issues probably. So I really don't know how you measure the success of the HR function, to be honest (19).

The statement above indicates that the contribution the shipboard HR function adds to the success of the business cannot easily be specified, a result that is common in HRM research on other organisational settings as well. But what the staff captain clearly outlined is that the shipboard HR function is not a main influential actor when it comes to retention, a subject discussed in the previous chapter (see chapter 6.4.1). Additionally, he attributes a primarily reactive approach of the shipboard HR function to deal with HR related issues.

Having the HR function on board in contrast to having only a shoreside contact is hugely beneficial for a staff captain. He describes the working relationship as being close:

I work fairly close with the HR manager in my position. I get on pretty well with all of them, the ones that I have sailed with, and it is good just to have them on the end of the phone, just to discuss points. ... How it is at the moment, I can pick up the phone or I can just nip downstairs and plunk myself in the office and discuss it, picking up the telephone and trying to phone shoreside HR or sending emails backwards and forwards is not the most efficient way of doing stuff really (19).

The attraction of having the support function on board is also acknowledged by a food manager:

You mean to say if HR is necessary for the ultimate goal of the ship, yeah definitely. I am not saying we cannot live without HR, but definitely it is a plus to have this kind of services (16).

The influence of the shipboard HR function on crew moral and indirectly on retention is outlined in a statement of a food and beverage manager:

There are not too many companies who have HR on board. I think I could say it is a great tool for everybody. If the crew feels that they are treated well and that we have a good system around it, then the crew comes back (10).

All three statements confirm that the shipboard HR function is not only accepted today on board, but that it is also valued as an operational partner to work with on day-to-day issues.

The following statement by an HR manager indicates that the value ascribed to the shipboard HR function also depends on the business area:

I think it would depend on the leader ... if they value the HR role on the ship. I think that the captain finds value in this role ... because you are truly a thought partner for him. ... The staff captain finds value in this role because there are a lot of technical skills and competencies that he has, but he does not have that very emotional side of how you feel and what things are going on. ... The chief engineer then probably would say he finds no value in the role. But again, we don't have a lot of employee relations issues coming up from engineering, so he does not see for the most part a vast majority of our work. I think that the hotel director certainly values the role, and I would have to say the cruise director probably could go either way (17).

The fact that the engine department assigns less importance to the collaboration with the shipboard HR function is also confirmed by the following statement from a training officer:

The engine department usually handles their stories on their own. You don't see them really using HR as a resource (7).

Instead she further argues:

However, people who have very large areas to deal with like the dining room or galley, because there are so many things going on, they might need to have somebody who is an outsider and assist them. So that is when HR basically comes in (7).

But it also depends on the level of the manager. In the following statement a cruise director clearly outlined that his implication with HR is less than his direct reports will have:

I don't think there is that much at my level, that we need that interaction per se. It is mostly if something happens, then we have to have that dialogue (20).

As the last four statements outlined, the collaboration of line management with the shipboard HR function depends on factors like the business area and line managers' involvement in day-to-day HR work. Larger business areas work more frequently with the shipboard HR function than smaller ones, and direct supervisors are primarily the ones that deal with common HR issues. When it comes to important issues and concerns that might have influence on the business, the department heads seek for a thought partner in the HR function.

To be a partner for line management is one function of the HR role. There are certain areas where the shipboard HR function could support line management to do their HR tasks more effectively, as the example of a food and beverage manager shows:

HR should be more a source of help, and support how can we avoid [disciplinary matters] in the future (10).

A food manager emphasised the mediation role the shipboard HR function could offer to line management:

You need that because there is always somebody asking for help, or situations that none of the departments are going to make decisions because they are too scared of it. Or they are going to fight with each other, HR is kind of referee there in the middle. ... I think that is definitely a plus (16).

In addition to the mediating role, the HR function supports shipboard management by taking over some responsibilities in enhancing crew moral, as the example of an HR manager shows:

With the simple function of serving as a third party, as objective person on the ship, we make a huge improvement everyday. In addition I think a lot of the stuff we do, nobody else wants to do on the ship. Nobody wants to have that hour and a half, two-hour conversation with a crew member, who is clearly upset and has no one to let off his or her frustration. Sometimes that is all a crew member needs as just to be their sounding board (17).

An area where contribution of the shipboard HR function is clearly seen is training and leadership development, mentioned here by a business office manager:

The training, it starts directly with HR, not necessarily on-the-job training, but the ship-life training, ... the whole things that you need on the ship (8).

And he adds:

It is HR that facilitates leadership classes. Through the HR involvement we are building our great crew members to become leaders, and then the leaders to become great leaders, where then this becomes the success of the HR team as well (8).

The shipboard HR function has many roles and functions for the line management. It can be a thought partner, advisor for line managers, supporter of HR work, mediator, private conversation partner and an independent contact point for the crew, or a training provider and leadership developer. With the diversity of its roles, the shipboard HR function serves different stakeholders, who appreciate the service they can get on board.

8.3.5 Summary and discussion on working with HR

In this sub-chapter the focus was on the perception of the shipboard HR function and characteristics of the collaboration with shipboard leaders. This includes HR function's understanding of commercial realities, HR function's influence on HR work of shipboard leaders, and its alignment to business requirements.

Before the collaboration of shipboard leaders with the shipboard HR function was analysed, an understanding of the scope of different shipboard roles regarding their responsibilities for key HR activities and the extent they conduct HRM on board, as contributors or deciders with decision-making or even financial power, was acquired. The analysis of job descriptions and perceptions of the interviewees led to the conclusion that HRM on board is a shared function between shipboard leaders and HR professionals, with sometimes overlapping responsibilities. And even more stakeholders ashore and onboard are involved in the shared key HR activities. In regards to involvement in key HR activities the different roles vary; they might be more operational or they may oversee the operational implementation. In regards to the extent to which the roles conduct HRM on board, it was outlined that mostly they are contributors in the majority of key HR activities, but like the captain or the HR manager some roles also have decision-making and/or financial power, even though some only to a limited extent. It can be assumed that much of the decision-making power as well as financial power remain with the shoreside HR function and even other shoreside posts, but this topic needs some further investigation.

The shipboard HR function is not seen by the interviewees as knowing the operation as well as it is expected, and having them on board does not mean that the shipboard HR professionals have a deeper understanding of the commercial realities. But they at least have a better understanding of the circumstances and day-to-day challenges that the operation faces. This is especially important when HR policies and procedures, which might have been introduced by a shoreside HR function from individuals who may lack shipboard experience, sometimes do not work or become a burden for the operation. Ways of enhancing the understanding of commercial realities for the shipboard HR function include conversations with line managers and crew members, walking around and observing the business, shadowing or temporarily conducting certain positions, and being interested in customer feedback.

Shipboard leadership perceives their role as being even more responsible today for conducting contemporary HR work, which follows a common movement towards devolution. But at the same time, the shipboard HR function, which itself seeks to partner with line managers, intervenes in matters of consistency, which is again

perceived as constraining shipboard leaders' autonomy. This is especially so in regards to consistency on employee relations issues, where the strong interventional power of the shoreside HR function on influencing the HR work of shipboard leaders on board becomes apparent. The interviewees seek for more autonomy from the shoreside HR function on smaller issues, and as cruise ship conditions differ from them ashore, the remaining shoreside HR interventions need to be specific to fit in with the shipboard environment. The advantage of a strong shoreside HR function is an ongoing standardisation of shipboard HR work and consistency in the overall application of HR policies and procedures, but next to the shipboard management the shipboard HR function experiences a lack of autonomy in their day-to-day HR work, which is perceived as counteracting its efforts to become a strong partner for shipboard leaders.

The contribution of the shipboard HR function is hardly specifiable. Its contribution to business goals is rather denied and its approach to dealing with HR issues has been viewed as primarily reactive. Nevertheless, the shipboard HR function is highly valued as a partner to work with on day-to-day issues, which refers to its advisory and supportive role on HR policies and procedures to shipboard leaders. Larger departments and direct supervisors more frequently seek the collaboration with the shipboard HR function, and when it comes to important issues and concerns that might have impact on the business, higher ranking leaders work with shipboard HR professionals. The roles the shipboard HR function offers are manifold, and the diversity of HR services that it provides are appreciated by the different stakeholders it serves.

The picture how the shipboard HR function is perceived can in short be illustrated this way: The shipboard HR function isn't linked as expected with commercial realities, isn't autonomous enough to fully become a strong partner, applies a primarily reactive HRM approach, and is highly valued in day-to-day operations as adviser and supporter on HR policies and procedures. The good collaboration is sometimes interrupted by interventional activities. These results are important for this research as they mirror the perspective of line management on the shipboard HR role. Not only this, they help in identifying areas to focus on when the shipboard HR function should be evolved further, as the following paragraph shows.

When transitioning the shipboard HR function from the current state to a future state as aspired, the outlined efforts to enhance an understanding of business realities are an important aspect. The HR services provided by the shipboard HR function need clear definition and consistency in delivery by different shipboard HR professionals, who need to be capable of dealing with more autonomy than has been granted in order to become a stronger partner for the business. Another

aspect is that shipboard HR professionals have enough room to become more proactive, perhaps by freeing them from the routine crew issues and administrative tasks that do not add any value. Enhancing devolution of HR work and shipboard leader's capability to deliver high quality contemporary HR work further supports a reduction of interventional activities by shipboard HR professionals as well as takeover of HR responsibilities from shipboard leaders while the intention was to advise and support on HR policies and procedures.

No distinction was made here between the different roles of the HR professionals. A more in-depth investigation that differentiates between perception of and collaboration with the HR manager, the assistant HR manager and the training officer would provide a clearer basis to determine how every single role could be developed further.

8.4 Conclusion

Chapter 8 addresses the realities of shipboard HR roles. First, the focus was on identifying the dominant HR roles of the shipboard HR function in order to understand its positioning within HR role models as outlined in chapter 2.5 (research question Q6). Then, after an overview on the HR responsibilities regarding shipboard roles was gained, the focus shifted towards the collaboration of shipboard leaders with the shipboard HR function, its characteristics, and if their expectations of HR services of the current shipboard HR function were being met (research question Q7).

The results of the first research question revealed that the shipboard HR function comprises four strong roles within tactical HR, namely the compliance and enforcement function, the representative of management role, the representative of employees role, and the human capital developer role. Another strong role is the functional expert role with the primary focus on transactional HR work. Less strong is the HR leader role, which is valued as a secondary responsibility, and the group HR role, which rather weakens the position of the shipboard HR function due to the strong influential power of the shoreside HR function. The strategic partner role is practically non-existent. The shipboard HR role basically reacts to HR issues. Some opportunities of proactive approaches have been identified in its compliance and enforcement and its human capital developer function, which can be extended further. Although some shipboard HR roles seem to be contradictory, in essence all HR roles are interrelated und mutually supportive. The research further revealed that the key HR activities, as identified in chapter 7 to which the shipboard HR

function dedicates the majority of their efforts, correspond with the strong HR roles of the HR function.

The second research question was preceded by an analysis of responsibilities for key HR activities on board. It was discovered that they are shared between different shipboard roles, and sometimes there is an overlap in task execution. The intensity of involvement of different roles varies on the single key HR activities, and also the extent to which they conduct HRM on board. Mostly they are contributors, while some have decision-making power and even less have financial power. There are even more external and internal stakeholders that are involved in the shared key HR activities. This now leads to the results of the second research question.

The shipboard HR function is not seen as knowing the operation as well as expected, but at least they have an understanding of the circumstances the operation is suffering from and they endeavour to increase their understanding of commercial realities by applying different means. This understanding is important in regards to supporting the business and influencing shoreside HR on common HR initiatives and policies that might not fit the operation.

Shipboard leaders that today have even more responsibilities for conducting contemporary HR work, perceive their autonomy on HR issues to be constrained by interventions of the shipboard HR function, but especially by the strong interventional power of the shoreside HR function. Although they value consistency, they seek more autonomy on smaller HR issues and at most seek interventions that fit to the specific shipboard environment. This strong interventional power of the shoreside HR function also counteracts the shipboard HR function's aspiration of becoming a stronger partner for shipboard leaders.

The advisory and supportive role on HR policies and procedures as well as the diversity of HR services the shipboard HR function offers are highly valued and appreciated by shipboard leaders. However, its contribution to achieving the business goals is hardly specifiable. It is mostly the larger departments that seek collaboration. In respect to day-to-day issues it is the direct supervisors rather than the department heads that work with the shipboard HR professionals, with the exception of more important issues.

The results of this chapter regarding the strong HR roles on board, the collaboration with shipboard leaders and what the latter expect and value from the shipboard HR function, provide an important basis for the continued development of the shipboard HR role.

9 CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

The study set out to specify and explore the management of human resources on cruise ships and HR related roles and relations. The inquiry was grounded in the assumption that effective management of the seafaring human resources is key in the effective operation of cruise ships, a field I became interested throughout my professional development.

Reality proved that research and academic literature on HRM in this sector is more than scarce. This deficiency served on the one hand as a powerful incentive for me to conduct this analysis and contribute to the field, but on the other hand instead of focussing on efficient operations, it led to the focus being moved to broader questions of context, roles and relations. With this in mind, HRM emerged as a particular area of interest specifically relating to how it copes with challenges originating in the context of the organisation.

The present chapter summarises the main results, conclusions and implications of this research. The first section sets out the findings in three sub-sections. First, how the shoreside HR copes with the challenges of context is presented. The interest as outlined in the first three research questions was on how the cruise ship owner company responds with specific HR strategies, policies and procedures to contextual conditions, how the shoreside HR function is framed and what its distinctive role is. A deeper understanding of the nature of HRM in the cruise ship owner company and the roles and structure of the shoreside HR function provides context in which the management of human resources on board takes place and the determination of roles and relations of the shipboard HR function. This leads to the second analysed theme, which is the nature of HR activities onboard cruise ships. The results on the specifics of the shipboard HR work are presented in the second sub-chapter here. My interest, as expressed in the second set of two research questions, concerned the core HR services provided and more specifically, whether they are in line with the expectations of the business. Secondly, I examined what characterises HR activities on board. The specifics of shipboard HR work influence the roles and relations the shipboard HR function can encompass and enter. The results of the analysis as guided by the last two research questions on shipboard HR roles and their characteristics and on collaboration with line management are concluded in the final sub-section here. The relation of these three analysed themes show the complexity that is necessary to consider when investigating HRM on cruise ships.

In the following section, the theoretical implications of the present study are presented. Then the limitations and strength of the analysis and potential to generalise from the study findings are provided as well. The significance and relevance for practice is listed, and in the final section, areas for possible further research are sketched, that build on the contributions to knowledge made by the present investigation.

9.2 Summarising discussion of the findings of the study

9.2.1 *Shoreside HR coping with the challenges of context*

The cruise industry can be viewed as part of the tourism industry, but at the same time belonging to the shipping industry. This dualism determines the organisational environment in which cruise ship owner companies operate. Furthermore, as the analysis showed, the organisational context sets frames and challenges to the nature of HRM. In short it was presented that the cruise industry has had one of the highest growth rates within the tourism industry for decades now, and that the accompanying high demand for new cruise ship employees has led to a labour shortage, not least amongst the large number of lower-level positions on board which are critical to fill. A declining interest for a long-term seafaring career in traditional maritime countries as well as various employment possibilities for experienced seafarers onshore has also contributed to a lack of high quality workers who possess the necessary maritime certificates and licences. Last but not least, the cruise industry today is confronted with a high turnover rate of crew members, and due to increased recruitment from flexible and international labour markets a distinctive diversity within the cruise ship staff has emerged.

The analysis revealed that in response to these contextual conditions, the HRM approach of the cruise ship owner company can be characterised as generally reactive and short-term in focus, and a purely strategic orientation is absent. To cope with the challenges the company is facing, some proactive initiatives have been identified. The analysis is based on examining key HR activities that relate to investment in human capital, namely recruiting, retention and career development.

In the applied HRM approach on recruiting, an extensive dualism was detected. Whereas the responsibility for recruiting and selection of officer positions as well as other core positions remain mainly in-house, procurement allies are used to recruit the large amount of lower-level crew members. Still, the selection of the latter group is the responsibility of the recruitment department, but as recruiters have to

cope with an immense diversity of cultures, and time for interviews is restricted on the conducted international recruitment trips, the amount of effort that is spent for selecting the right candidate here is lower in accordance with the amount of responsibilities that the respective position requires. The accompanying risk is that the cruise ship owner company gives away control for recruiting and initial information of candidates about cruise ship employment to the procurement allies, and that qualitative selection is based on little more than a modicum of trust and a functioning collaborative relationship with the procurement allies. Recruiting is a good example to demonstrate short-termism and reactivity in the applied HRM approach caused by the huge demand for cheap lower-level labour and high turnover. Some initiatives to cope with the situation have been identified, such as the 'Refer a Friend' programme, where crew members are asked to suggest people they know for open positions, or the internal labour market was approached.

When the motivations for commencing and continuing a seafaring profession were examined, one main conclusion was that money is a dominant factor. This result can be transferred to retention, with the consequence that cruise ship employees do not necessarily identify themselves with the organisation they are working for, but rather with the shipping sector or the cruise ship work. That would limit and frame any HRM approach on retention. But again, a dualism was detected. On the one hand there is a monetary and hard component the cruise ship owner company has to consider, as shown with temporary policies to react to economic constraints for certain shipboard groups. On the other hand there is the soft aspect, which encompasses, for example, the applied management style on board or a certain familiarity with the work and the fellow crew members. The latter is obviously more important for those individuals who seek a professional career, which leads here to the next key HR activity that was analysed, career management.

Career was also identified as a strong motivator for commencing and continuing seafaring. While seeking a shipboard career on board as well as striving for a fast career development is a current phenomenon that was found to be present within all employee groups, the group of nautical and technical staff is not as flexible as the group of hotel and entertainment staff, as their career progression is additional linked to stronger educational and professional regulations. Another dualism identified here is that on the one hand, company's approach to career development is cautious, and practices like stepping down when commencing a shipboard employment and stepping up before a promotion to the next level position are applied. On the other hand, the high staff turnover as well as the demand for crew members due to growth of the fleet, lead to a rather reactive HRM approach, with commonly applied direct promotion. This strengthens one of the main assumptions

of this analysis in so far that any discussion about HRM in the cruise industry needs to be located in the real organisational context.

Relating the findings to the different perspectives on HRM as outlined in chapter 2.4.3 it was concluded here that the shoreside HR function, instead of using a properly selected bundle of HR practices, applies single HR practices that are neither horizontally integrated nor vertically integrated. These single HR practices, often incomplete, are easily imitable. An integrated set of HR practices is missing here, but as a result recommended to effectively contribute to organisational performance. And an application of the resource-based view as outlined in chapter 2.4.2 in the cruise ship owner company is seen as needed in order to gain competitiveness in the long term.

The shoreside HR function is the central HR function for the cruise ship owner company. The shipboard HR professionals on their floating business units report to this function. For providing central HR services, subordinated HR functions have been implemented. In this analysis, the following ones have been identified: a recruitment department for marine and technical officers, another recruitment department for all other positions, a scheduling department, a payroll department, and a central learning and development department. There is also a central employee relations department of the corporation.

It was shown in the analysis that in contrast to the aforementioned shoreside HR function, the shipboard HR function serves as a fully intact HR function with less specialisation. Shipboard HR professionals have to be rather generalists than specialists, as they provide a whole range of tactical and transactional HR services within the key HR activities of appraisal and development. Furthermore, with a large portion of their time spent on training and development, and on employee relations, this group provides specific HR services that are not usually conducted by shoreside HR business partners. On the other hand, their involvement in key HR activities like selection and reward can be considered rather marginal.

The structure determines the responsibilities of HR work. Specifically, the shoreside HR function designs and outlines HR strategies and policies, which apply for the whole cruise ship owner company including the fleet of cruise ships, and oversees the implementation of HR procedures on board. It also monitors a consistent application of HR policies and practices within all business units. In contrast, shipboard HR professionals are contributors to and give input from a shipboard perspective to HR projects and initiatives that may lead to the development of HR policies and procedures. The disadvantage of this is that due to rotation, a continuous participation of single shipboard HR team members in HR initiatives and

projects is interrupted by longer periods of absence. That gives the shoreside HR function a prominent position within the HR landscape of the cruise ship owner company, and leads to a dominant role in the collaboration with the shipboard HR function. Still, as an HR service provider for the cruise ships, it conducts a large portion of tactical and transactional work.

To sum up, the analysis revealed that the organisational context sets frameworks but also presents challenges to the nature of HRM in this sector, and that any discussion about HRM in the cruise industry needs to consider the organisational context as well as the specific nature of its workforce. Responding to the first research question (Q1), it was established that the company used in the case study reacts to contextual conditions with a reactive HRM approach that is short-term in focus, and as a pure strategic orientation is absent, it applies some proactive initiatives to cope with the identified challenges. Furthermore, an extensive dualism in its HRM approach was determined. Results to the second research question (Q2) identified the shoreside HR function as a central one with specialised HR functions subordinated, as opposed to the fully intact shipboard HR function. As structure determines responsibilities for HR work, in response to research question three (Q3) on the role of the shoreside HR function, it was determined that it designs and outlines HR strategies and policies for the whole company and monitors the consistent application of HR policies and practices on board. With this in mind, it can therefore be said that it has a prominent position within the HR arena and a dominant role.

9.2.2 *On the specifics of shipboard HR work*

The analysis revealed that the main focus of shipboard HR work is on tactical HR work. And here, the core HR services provided by the shipboard HR function are training and development, employee relation, and an advisory role to shipboard leaders on HR policies and procedures. There is also a huge amount of transactional HR work the shipboard HR function processes, which occupies a lot of the shipboard HR team members' working time. That includes routine crew issues, administrative tasks and training organisation, HR work that does not necessarily add value to the business but detracts from performing more tactical work. Strategic HR work is practically non-existent on cruise ships. The shipboard HR function serves primarily as a representative of the vessel and contributor to strategic oriented HR initiatives. Another explanation for the lack of strategic HR work is grounded in the structure of the cruise ship organisation, in which the shipboard HR function operates, and which is first and foremost operation-oriented. Serving and satisfying guests does not leave much time for the shipboard management for strategic considerations,

which also limits any aspirations of shipboard HR professionals in regards to a more strategic oriented role.

Performance evaluation is one HR procedure subsumed under the key HR activity appraisal, where the shipboard HR function has a strong advisory and supporting function to shipboard leaders. The frame for performance evaluation is set by the rotation system usually applied within the cruise ship industry, as well as the widely used fixed-term contracts for shipboard employees. A rehiring of a crew member after his assignment depends on performance. For longer contracts, the company in focus has defined that at least three performance evolutions should take place. Officer positions additionally have yearly determined performance objectives that are derived top down from the business strategy. Managed like permanent employees here, that should support retention of this skilled employee group, which originates in the lack of high quality workers within the cruise industry.

It can be stated that shipboard HR activities are adapted to shipboard settings. Transactional HR work that requires access to central information systems must consider possible but not infrequent satellite connection losses, which makes the location of the cruise ship an influential factor of work planning. In addition to this, the maritime environment requires specific tasks due to different regulations linked to this sector. A large portion of an HR manager's time on board is spent on employee relations issues, one of the HR activities that are not usually provided by shoreside HR business partners in that intensity. Ensuring consistency of the application of HR policies and procedures is an important topic here, which gives the shoreside employee relations department a supervisory role. In practice, an intense liaison between the shipboard HR function and the employee relations function takes place, with a strong influential position taken up by the latter one.

Training is a well-coordinated process on board that is also monitored by the shoreside HR function. The huge amount of regulations, on safety and security for example as well as on behavioural issues, makes training an important part of crew members' shipboard life. The shipboard HR function is not only an organiser but also training facilitator on HR policies as well as on behavioural and management topics. The latter is necessary due to the importance of leadership development, partly caused by the huge fluctuation rate or because of the growth strategy. As a training facilitator, the diverse set of shipboard employees need to be considered, the difference in language capabilities, as well as cultural and educational backgrounds. For the operation, the amount of training provided to crew members can be challenging. In order to reduce problems and limit the time taken by crew members out of their areas of operation, the majority of training is provided in bite-

size units ensuring that the training participants are never away for more than one hour from their tasks.

These examples prove that there are many contextual factors, external as well as internal, that influences the nature of shipboard HR services. Therefore, similarly to the last section, it can be concluded that any discussions about HRM on cruise ships needs to be located in the organisational context. Also in accordance with last section's conclusion on different HRM perspectives and their relationships with organisational strategy and performance (see chapter 2.4.3) no selected bundle of HR practices conducted by the shipboard HR function was detected, but the application of single HR practices that are neither horizontally nor vertically integrated.

The results of research question Q4 revealed that strategic HR work on board is practically non-existent. Shipboard leaders and shipboard HR professionals are furthermore in disagreement about the value of single HR activities. The former would like to see less bureaucratic HR policies and procedures, and the latter aspires to a stronger partner role. Research question Q5 provided evidence that the shipboard HR team provides specific HR services that are not usually conducted by shoreside HR business partners, like the huge amount of employee relations issues and training facilitation. A variety of specifics have been outlined that are unique to the shipboard environment. The results are important as they can help to strengthen HR work according to business demands, and equally they might provide a starting point for developing a future state of HR work on cruise ships.

9.2.3 Realities of HR roles and relations

Five dominant roles of the shipboard HR function were identified in the analysis. Four of them have a primarily tactical focus, namely the compliance and enforcement function, the representative of management role, the representative of employees role, and the human capital developer role, whereas one, the functional expert role, has a primary focus on transactional HR work. These roles correlate with the main key HR activities on board, namely discipline, leadership advisory, crew member support, training and development, and administration. The HR leader role is rather secondary, as well as the group HR role. But the latter includes a potential risk of weakening the position of the shipboard HR function due to the strong influential power of the shoreside HR function. Practically non-existent is the strategic partner role.

As outlined in the literature review in chapter 2.5 no one conducts all HR roles to the same degree. And when an organisation applies a short-term HRM approach, as

does the company in focus does for different reasons, it is more likely that the strategic partner is neglected. Therefore the above result is no surprise.

There seems to be conflicts of interest between the control aspect of the compliance and enforcement function and the development aspect of the human capital developer role. Furthermore, the representative of management role seems contradictory to the representative of employees' role. However, through the example of the crew welfare function of the shipboard HR function it was shown that the HR roles are interrelated and mutually supportive, and that various HR roles can be conducted simultaneously by the shipboard HR function. The weakness in the HR leader and the group HR roles might be explained by the vague and unclear relation to the other roles. The HRM approach identified for the shipboard HR function in all roles is reactive, although opportunities for more proactive oriented HR initiatives are seen within some HR roles.

The analysis of responsibilities for key HR activities on board showed that HRM is a shared function between different stakeholders. The prominent roles with decision-making power are the captain, the staff captain, the HR manager, and shipboard leaders, listed here in order of influence. Financial power was only identified for the first two. Next to the shared aspect, an occasional overlap in task execution was detected. Therefore, HRM on board is more a series of functions with stakeholders contributing to it to varying degrees. The sharing nature of shipboard roles adds complexity to an HRM approach, and creates a challenge for maintaining consistency. The relationship between roles that contribute to HR work was analysed using the example of collaboration of shipboard leaders with the shipboard HR function.

The impression of the shipboard HR department as reflected by the shipboard leaders is that they highly value the day-to-day support and the diversity of HR services they receive from the shipboard HR function, and they appreciate the advisory and supportive role of the shipboard HR professionals, especially in regards to interpreting and conducting HR policies and procedures. However, the shipboard HR department is neither really linked to commercial realities nor autonomous enough to become a strong partner for the business. Shipboard leaders experience the strong partner as being the HR function onshore with its strong power to interfere, which weakens the shipboard HR function's ability to partner. Nonetheless, shipboard HR professionals have at least an understanding of some of the commercial realities shipboard leaders face due to their presence on board, which enables them also to represent the shipboard perspective when interacting with the shoreside HR function.

Shipboard leaders became increasingly involved in contemporary HR work due to devolution. In order to better cope with the growing responsibilities, they expect to see less HR policies and procedures, in particular those that do not fit into specific operations. On smaller HR issues in particular, they would like to get more autonomy and less interference from shipboard as well as shoreside HR functions, although they appreciate the aspect of consistency on the application of HR policies and procedures. Interventions, if necessary, should at least fit to the specific shipboard environment.

The results from research question Q6 show that the key HR activities as identified in chapter 7 correspond with the strong HR roles. The analysis further revealed that the conduction of these shipboard HR roles is primarily reactive on HR issues, although opportunities for proactive initiatives were also identified. The initial impression that some HR roles are contradictory has in fact not been proven to be true. They are interrelated and mutually supportive. Research question Q7 brought to our attention that the shipboard HR function does not know the operation as well as was expected but at least many of the challenges the operation faced were understood. Shipboard leaders highly value the advisory and supportive role as well as the diversity of HR services the shipboard HR function provides, but they would prefer more autonomy on smaller HR issues and if interventions for consistency reasons are necessary, that they fit the specific shipboard environment.

9.2.4 Summary

The examination of the management of human resources on cruise ships was conducted in three chapters and the results summarised in this section. First, a deeper understanding of the nature of HRM in the cruise ship owner company and of the roles and structure of the shoreside HR function was gained. The main findings were that the company used in the case study reacts to contextual conditions with a reactive HRM approach that is short-term in focus, and a strategic orientation is absent. The shoreside HR function has a dominant role within the HR arena with its responsibilities for designing, outlining and monitoring HR policies and procedures.

This is the context in which the management of human resources on board takes place, and which also determines roles and relations of the shipboard HR function. The analysis of these two issues as outlined in the last two sub-sections demonstrate that HRM on board cruise ships can currently be classes as reactive, short-term in focus and not strategic, with a high dualism in approach, a shared series of function with overlapping task executions, complex in regards to roles and

relations, which includes the strong influential link from shoreside, and framed and limited through a variety of external and internal contextual factors.

The relations of the results of the three analysis chapters show the complexity that needs to be considered when investigating HRM on cruise ships. HRM on board cruise ships currently works, conducted by shipboard HR professionals with their capabilities on tactical and transactional HR work. However, the analysis revealed the potential in this specific sector for enhancements and elevating HRM on cruise ships to a higher level.

9.3 Theoretical implications

As already mentioned in the introduction chapter, within the field of HRM the relationship between HR practices and firm performance is one of the most important academic discussions of at least the last two decades (Kaufman, 2010, p. 615). It was further outlined that many HR issues and challenges have been addressed considering the organisational structure, or the changing role of HRM and of HR specialists. The investigation of HRM in cruise ship organisations, considering the organisational context as well as the relevant roles and relations, demands some theoretical grounding. In awareness of the manifold theoretical approaches within the multidisciplinary field that is HRM, an eclectic approach was used (Boselie, 2002, p. 20).

Pointing to the relationship between HRM systems, organisational performance and business strategy, four different perspectives were outlined in chapter 2.4.3, i.e. the universalistic, contingency, configurational and contextual approach. These models contain different underlying paradigmatic assumptions to explain and predict the contribution of HRM to organisational performance. It was not intended to examine this here but it is one of the most important questions in strategic HRM. By adding constructs, variables or relationships, it is believed that each approach can complement the other approaches. This can exemplarily be shown by reference to HR policies and practices regarding performance evaluation.

Managing performance as in the outlined approach on cruise ships might be the best way for the cruise ship organisation but as has been shown industry-specific factors such as labour markets or employment systems influence the particular way in which HRM is set up. Additionally, it should be noted that the HR activity performance evaluation could not be regarded in isolation. It constitutes one element of a wider HRM system, as the link to retention management proved, which when consistent and aligned to the overall business strategy should lead to a

higher business performance. Although all four models have been criticised for not providing sufficient methodological rigour and research design to explain the complex relationship between HRM, business strategy and performance, they can be useful as a reference framework for future research in this field of interest.

A cruise ship is a floating business unit operating in international waters, which is distant from onshore. At the same time, it is also a social institution. As a place to work and live, it entails characteristics that constitute internal business-specific factors. In order to outline these factors that affect life on board cruise ships as well as the management of its human resources more systematically, Goffman's (1957) concept of total institutions was consulted for this research. The outlined characteristics of cruise ships as a total institution affect the life and management of crew members in a variety of ways and have to be considered in any analysis of HRM on cruise ships as internal business-specific factors.

The concept of Goffman is particularly useful as it helps to explain the results of this analysis that HRM is reactive in nature and lacks a strategic focus. The main characteristics of total institutions come very close to the ones found on board a ship. These are isolation and confinement when the ship is at sea, a formally and hierarchically administered working and living environment with set guidelines, laws and rules for behaviour and control of the crew, and a homogeneity of attitudes within this group. This leaves not much room for a proactive or strategic HRM approach. As the concept of Goffman provides a framework for day-to-day life and the social relations between crew members, the approach is a useful working tool to assist a more thorough sociological study of the cruise ship and its human resources.

The analysis of HR roles is based on the discussion of models of the HR role in chapter 2.5, in which Dave Ulrich's (1997) framework gained a prominent position. Ulrich and Brockbank's (2005a) revised version entails the roles of employee champion, administrative expert, strategic partner, human capital developer and HR leader, four of which were identified for the shipboard HR function, although one with only secondary importance. The difficulty in the analysis is what can be said about the strategic partner role, as it does not currently exist, though the shipboard HR function aims to achieve this. It cannot be considered as a role of secondary importance in this research. Therefore the model must allow leaving out certain roles. The criticism regarding role ambiguity within Ulrich's model is also transferable to the present analysis.

This model is useful in respect of the relationship between HRM and business goals, as it outlines that HR strives to contribute to them. However, although HR provides

rhetorical support on the impact HRM might have on firm performance and on employees as a key resource, on the other hand it comes with bureaucratic procedures that are widely un-welcome. Therefore, the model allows us to understand HR as a professional body and it provides classifications of the different roles HR can take. Yet, the analysis showed that it could not be used in a too normative way as reality proves to be more complex in this regard. It can only be used as a tool, i.e. as a framework to understand the roles of HR.

Whereas Ulrich talks about roles, Goffman sets a framework for internal business-specific conditions and social relations. The originality of the present study is that it brings these two approaches together, which on the face of it are not linked but which are two models that are worlds apart. HRM theory often relies upon abstract, de-contextualised and aspirational models, such as the above-mentioned four different perspectives of HRM's contribution to organisational performance or Ulrich's HR role model. Goffman's concept of total institutions on the other hand offers a more solid social grounding to HRM theory, an important feature of the present study. The combination of both thereby allows us to examine the HR roles and professional relations in a much more detailed manner.

Finally, the hard versus soft HRM debate is useful to have for the purposes of this research. For example, when considering retention, this binary helped in that a soft aspect was identified, namely the management style and familiarity. At the same time, the hard monetary and contractual aspects were also identified as factors to influence employee retention. This shows that even when rhetoric of HRM is part of the individual and therefore soft approach, there is a hard dimension, which is almost always predominant. Both aspects are rather complementary, which also assists when looking into competing functions or roles.

9.4 Strength and limitations

The present study intended to generate data and an insight into HRM in cruise ship organisations as well as into roles and relationships of the shipboard HR function. The results are important and relevant as they contribute to a field of study in which research is scarce. However, the results should be interpreted carefully, as there are some limitations. Early choices on the concept of this research, like the methodology adopted for data collection and how the data was analysed, form the frame and thereby also set out the limits inherent therein, especially when it comes to the generalisation of the results presented here.

The perception of what constitutes acceptable knowledge (epistemological view) within a particular ontological stance determines strategies and methods of generating and analysing information (King and Horrocks, 2010a, p. 10). For the present study, a subjectivist ontological position of constructivism seemed appropriate, as it combines the view that the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors (here shipboard leaders and shipboard HR professionals) determine social phenomena but are themselves influenced by the unique cruise ship culture. Additionally, knowledge generation follows an interpretivist epistemological approach, as the concern is how the social world is experienced and understood by the interviewees. At the same time, my practical experiences within the field will have formed part of the analysis. One should be aware of the subjectivity here as opposed to an objectivist and positivist research framework.

Likewise, a qualitative research approach was chosen, as virtually no research and little prior literature exists on this subject, and a quantitative strategy would be difficult to apply as opposed to a theory generating exploratory stance. The view taken also allows a relatively unstructured approach to the research process. As the aim is to draw more or less generalisable inferences out of the observations for the cruise ship owner company used in the case study, an analytical induction approach was chosen to develop the theory based on the data analysis. Findings, collected and analysed through different ways, for example through qualitative methods, could produce additional information that would allow an extension of current conclusions.

The advantage of using a qualitative approach is that it provides opportunities to draw a more complete picture of the thoughts and perceptions of the respondents, thereby improving the understanding of HR issues (Rodríguez Ruiz and Martínez Lucio, 2010, p. 139). The specific answers of the interviewees to the interview questions are interpreted in a broader context, which allows some conclusions to be drawn that might otherwise not be apparent. Most notable in this respect is the disagreement concerning what aspect of HR work can add the greatest value to the business or the expectations for more autonomy on HR work for shipboard management.

The most appropriate research strategy for the present research is case study, as it helps to understand complex social phenomena. It is particularly well suited to new research areas (see Eisenhardt, 1989, pp. 548-549). However, the applied research strategy is limited to one company. Therefore, the challenge is to disentangle on the one hand what could be generalised and applied to other cruise ship owner companies, and on the other hand what is unique to the company used in the case

study. Although a contrasting perspective for the investigated cruise ship owner company could be gained, the results should not be generalised to other cruise ship owner companies. They might be structured differently, as for example in some companies the HR manager does not report to the captain but to the hotel director instead. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be viewed as representative of the cruise industry as a whole.

The unit of analysis is the cruise ship organisation, and the subunits defined within the case are the group of line managers and the group of HR professionals. A typical case sampling was employed in this research as a sampling technique. This sample focuses on the typical nature of the unit of analysis but it does not allow generalisations in any wider sense as the sample might not be representative for the population under consideration. The cruise ship owner company used in the case study is a typical example within the industry, as it is situated mid-range in respect of market share, net revenue, passenger capacity, and ship count. Additionally, generalisations are not the primary intent of the present study.

The sample selected to assist in achieving the research aim are the above-mentioned subunits, the group of line managers and the group of HR professionals. Crew members have not been included and nor have shoreside HR professionals or shoreside managers, with one exception. Shipboard position holders with managerial responsibilities were primarily selected, as higher hierarchical levels were considered to have a greater insight and a better understanding of the subject under research (Boswell, 2006, p. 1493). However, it must be noted that the integration of the views of all levels of cruise ship staff as well as shoreside managerial and HR partners would have provided a better range of responses and thereby would have given a more balanced analysis.

Sixteen front-line and higher level managers were chosen as interview partners, from which three were contractors. Five HR professionals participated, four of which with management responsibilities. Two of the participants were based onshore, i.e. one manager and one trainer. The sample of 23 can be valued as good, as it meets the various guidelines for sample size proposed by different authors. It can reasonably be expected that the data and findings provide a sound guide to thoughts and practices across the cruise ship organisation. However, the fact that the data collected almost entirely from shipboard interviewees was also used to analyse roles and responsibilities of the shoreside HR function, constitutes an important gap and therefore limits the impact of results to some extent.

My employment as mid-level officer provided easy access to interviewees and additionally access to many events and places an ordinary crew member would not

have had. On the other hand, in my role as an officer and an HR professional, I also experienced some distance to crew members. Having been previously unfamiliar with this specific working environment can be considered an advantage, as it made otherwise ordinary occurrences interesting and allowed me to gain many fascinating first impressions. Working and living in close proximity to those on board provided rich and deep insights into different social processes and interactions. While employed full-time, I was more of a participant than an observer. The only drawback was that time was scarce for research but this was balanced out by the length of my assignment. The interviewees were very talkative and open to my research, with one exception. Some unanticipated issues emerged during the interviews, which led to further interview questions, an advantage of the flexible, semi-structured interview approach. However, some questions also turned out to be too broad or not interviewee-friendly enough, and would need some amendments next time.

A major strength of the present study is that it adds contemporary data to an area of research that has been identified as under-researched, and in which research literature is scarce, a situation which has been outlined in chapter 1.1. By focusing on HRM on cruise ships and asking questions relating to strategic thinking, HRM approaches, HR roles and responsibilities as well as relations, this study has filled a substantial gap in knowledge about the state of HRM in the cruise line industry. It is also rather unique in that it tries to place HRM on cruise ship organisations into the context of total institutions in the literature review.

9.5 Significance and relevance for practice

Taking account of the findings and conclusions of the present study, some propositions can be made for practitioners in this section. The research revealed an extensive insight into HRM on cruise ships. However, it also encompasses the cruise ship owner company and accentuates some characteristics that might be considered important for the shoreside HR function. Additionally, the analysis unfolds the impact business-specific conditions have on the primarily reactive and short-term approach of HRM. In order to strengthen its strategic focus, the shoreside HR function needs to become aware of these business-specific conditions and identify those that it should and can influence. The present analysis can serve as a useful starting point in this respect.

For example, growth strategy, a huge demand for cheap labour, and high turnover rates result in a reactive usage of procurement allies. Some deficiencies have been

outlined, such as the restricted control on recruitment and initial information about cruise ship employment. Therefore, the focus should not only be on the collaboration with these agencies. Instead, an understanding of local education systems of those countries from which the majority of lower-level crew members are hired can lead to cooperation with or setting up own local training centres in order to develop suitable crew members that seek a professional career in shipboard employment rather than just a way to earn a living. Similarly, in regards to the lack of qualified marine and technical staff, close cooperation with marine and technical colleges can be established (see e.g. Hensel, 2008).

The analysis of HR work, HR roles and relations provides a sound basis for identifying the knowledge and capabilities required of the respective roles so that they are comfortably able to provide key HR services. These findings can be used to develop either training courses specified for shipboard leaders or HR professionals in order to qualitatively enhance the delivery of these activities. At the same time they can help to create working aids and process descriptions or they can be used to better attract suitable candidates with the requisite skills and mind-set for shipboard HR roles.

For any cruise ship owner company that intends to assess their current positioning of their HR resources to support company's strategy and close the gap between current and desired alignment with their preferred HR model (e.g. an HR business partner model), the application of the questionnaire as outlined in appendix 3 for shipboard HR team members and appendix 4 for shipboard leaders would be a recommended starting point. The data gathered through the application of the questionnaires could additionally be validated by targeted in-person interviews with shipboard leaders and HR team members. The respective questions if a semi-structured interview should be applied could be deduced from the results gathered through the questionnaires. These interviews could help to gather an even more differentiated insight and sophisticated perspectives on what the core HR services should be. The results might also be a good basis to develop a new or amend an existing HR vision and mission if desired.

If the intention is to further develop the work of HR in this industry, HR roles with different knowledge and especially shipboard HR professionals with different capabilities might be needed. The findings on collaboration with shipboard leaders and on responsibilities for HR work outline the present situation. Building on these, measures can be derived that enable shipboard HR professionals to make decisions swiftly and autonomously and that enhance the collaboration with key shipboard leaders in accordance with the identified business requirements and expectations.

In order for any cruise ship owner company that intends to go this route, a further assessment of HR roles and responsibilities on board and ashore is recommended. To understand all HR responsibilities as well as challenges shipboard HR team members are facing, further interviews with this group of HR professionals should be conducted. These interview results could be enriched with onboard observations gathered by company's organizational development experts. Additionally, the perspectives on HR roles and responsibilities should be gathered from shoreside HR team members and HR key partners (e.g. payroll experts if payroll is organizationally assigned to the finance department), preferably by in-person interviews. The data gathered in this second phase in addition to the above described assessment of what the core HR services should be provides a profound basis to identify opportunities for streamlining, eliminating, or transitioning low value work, refining core HR services, and deriving recommendations for transitioning shipboard HR from current state to the desired future state.

In a third phase, an increased understanding and buy-in from key stakeholders for the identified recommendations and opportunities would be proposed here in order to successfully implement the desired amendments. The first step will be to develop an implementation plan and then to communicate the plan to key stakeholders, before an execution of the plan could be started. An implementation strategy could include different work streams like clarity on the HR roles, shipboard HR team member development as well as shipboard leader development, HR process improvement (e.g. the employee relations process), and the streamlining, transitioning, or eliminating of selected HR responsibilities.

Role clarity might include that the identified core HR services are assigned to the different HR roles like HR manager, assistant HR manager or training officer. These different HR roles might also be assigned to specific client groups. For example, an HR manager could primarily support higher ranking officers and the assistant HR manager could be the primary contact point for lower ranking officers and crew, or the HR manager supports the steering committee as well as the hotel branch, whereas the assistant HR manager supports the marine and technical operations as well as the entertainment branch. Updated HR job descriptions and communicated transition plans to key stakeholders support the process of transitioning shipboard HR roles from current state to the desired future state.

The development of shipboard HR team members can start with a development needs assessment for this group, which results in a development plan. Specific training might be designed and then implemented in order to ensure that all HR team members have the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in the

newly defined roles. The development of shipboard leaders also starts with a development needs assessment, but additionally routine crew issues could be defined that should be handled by shipboard leaders. To empower this group to handle routine crew issues and thereby enable the shipboard HR team to gain more capacity for core HR services, training for shipboard leaders on handling routine crew issues could be designed and implemented.

For improving specific HR processes like the employee relations process, a review team of shipboard and shoreside HR professionals could temporary be implemented that conducts a detailed analysis of the current process, provides recommendations for improving the employee relations process, and develops an implementation plan. The same could apply for streamlining, transitioning, or eliminating HR responsibilities, especially those that have been identified during the assessment as low-value-add. Executing a created action and communication plan should in both cases lead to greater capacity of HR team members for core HR services.

The measures outlined can enhance managing human resources on board. As outlined, HR work is shared between different shipboard and shoreside roles with various degrees of intensity in the involvement. This makes HRM a complex and challenging discipline. Clearly defined HR responsibilities as well as streamlined HR processes are possible means derived from the findings that can help to enhance hard aspects of HRM. At the same time, the implementation of HR policies and practices as monitored by the HR function as well as the knowledge of motivators of crew members to commence and continue a shipboard profession can help to enhance the soft side of HRM on board.

9.6 Suggestions for further research

Research on HRM in cruise ship organisations has not been conducted in a comparable form so far. Several findings came to light during the research, which offer opportunities for further study.

The analysis and interpretation is based on data that has been gathered almost entirely from shipboard position holders, and the main focus was on HRM on cruise ships, with only a limited amount of questions asking to specify the relationship with the shoreside operation. However, as was shown on the exemplary key HR activities recruiting and selection, retention, and career development in chapter 6, the shipboard HR function's involvement is rather marginal in this respect, whereas the shoreside HR function's influence is more prominent. In order to gain a thorough understanding of the role of HRM in this sector, including taking into

consideration all key HR activities, the shoreside operation as a whole needs to be included into further research.

Motivation is an important predictor for employee commitment, which in turn is a crucial element to increase job performance and to achieve organisational goals. In this research, motivational factors have been identified why people commence or continue shipboard employment. In light of the fact that an influential link to the key HR activities was proved, further research appears adequate in order to enable a more differentiated analysis, that distinguishes between different groups of individuals, for example between men and women, young and experienced individuals, nautical and technical staff as opposed to hotel and entertainment staff, officers and ratings, or individuals from developing and from developed countries. A further analysis could also distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, and provide a more in-depth discussion on initial and constant motivators. Additionally, the relationship between (occupational and organisational) commitment and (intrinsic and extrinsic) motivation of seafarers could be of interest for further research.

The shipboard HR team members provide customised HR services to the shipboard setting that usually are not conducted by shoreside HR business partners, such as the delivery of training and dealing with the high amount of employee relations issues. On the other hand, involvement in selection and rewards is rather marginal. The knowledge of these specific HR services provides a basis for selecting, training, and coaching new shipboard HR professionals in order to give them all the tools to be successful in the unique shipboard HR roles. However, the specific level of knowledge and experience shipboard HR team members require to comfortably deliver HR services on board has not been the focus of the present study. Additionally, aspirations have been identified in this research to further evolve the shipboard HR roles, potentially into an HR business partner direction, which leads to HR roles that potentially require different skills and mind-sets. To this end, further research could focus on the knowledge and experience of current position holders, the challenges the shipboard HR team is facing, and what skills and mind-sets are required for a further evolved shipboard HR role. In this respect, a distinction could be made between the different shipboard HR roles, i.e. the HR manager, the assistant HR manager, and the training officer in order to establish a sounder basis for determining how every single HR role could be developed further.

HRM on board cruise ships has been identified as a shared series of functions between different operational and HR-related shipboard roles but also other stakeholders onshore. It should be noted that the focus of the research was not on

the knowledge and capabilities different shipboard roles require for conducting contemporary HR work. Here, additionally and in contrast to the last paragraph, the focus is on operational shipboard roles. As outlined, the involvement in conducting HR activities is different, and while the majority might be operational, some also have overseeing responsibilities. A further distinction was made between contributors and deciders with decision-making or even financial power. Further research on necessary knowledge and capabilities of operational shipboard roles could provide a basis to identify how shipboard leaders' roles could be strengthened in respect to their participation in HR work. This could help to reduce the interventions required from the HR function, and align the necessary skills and mind-sets if HRM on board cruise ships evolves.

Apart from the tactical work shipboard HR professionals conduct, one finding was that they also have to dedicate much of their time to routine crew issues and transactional HR work. This HR work does not necessarily add value to the business and detracts from performing tactical HR services. With the above-mentioned aspiration to develop the HR roles further, or simply to make the shipboard HR function more efficient, further investigation on administrative HR work can help to identify opportunities for streamlining, eliminating, or transitioning low-value HR work.

Investigations on HRM within the cruise industry cannot be conducted without considering business-specific conditions. These are external ones. Additionally, the cruise ship was identified as a highly hierarchical and bureaucratic organisation, and the concept of total institutions was applied here, theoretical approaches that help to identify internal contextual conditions. As theories have not been tested on HRM in the cruise ship setting so far, a topic on which, as previously noted, virtually no research has been conducted, there is a huge gap in HRM theory. The same applies to strategic HRM concepts that have been emphasised here, e.g. the different perspectives that focus on the relationship between HRM systems, organisational performance and business strategy, the universalistic, contingency, configurational and contextual approaches. Closing these gaps needs further investigation, which would be useful for the field of HRM. This is because this present study has also added to the debate on HRM, as it proved that HRM, socially embedded in a wider organisational and external context, cannot be discussed without considering these contextual conditions.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Background and initial thoughts

- When did you join the ship-operation organisation?
- What were your initial thoughts about human resource management in this business unit? What have been the main issues you thought about?

Strategy

- Can you name a strategy for human resource management for the ship-operation business unit? How does the human resource management strategy look like?
- What strategic HR decisions are currently in the focus?
- How do we make sure that all ship-operation related HR initiatives fit into the whole HR infrastructure of the company?
- Does the location of the ship-operation business unit influence the HR strategy?

Structure and reporting line of the HR function

- How does the structure and reporting line of the HR function look like?
- Why is Disney not running the complete HR function from ashore?

Day-to-day operations

- What are important issues in current day-to-day operations in human resource management?
- On which issues can human resource management improve?

HRM across different types of employment

- How does human resource management look like for knowledge-based employment?
- How does human resource management look like for job-based employment?
- How does human resource management look like for contractual work?
- How does human resource management look like for alliance / partner employment?

Devolution of human resource management

- Who are the key players of human resource management in ship-operation?
- Where do you see the responsibilities for human resource management?

Connection ship-operation and ship-owner business unit

- Where do you see the connection between the ship-operation business unit and the ship-owner business unit in regards to human resource management?
- What might be opportunities to improve this connection?

Success of the ship-operation business

- Does human resource management contribute to the success of the ship-operation business?
- Can you name where human resource management contribute to the success of the ship-operation business?
- How does HR gain an understanding of the factors that determine the success of the ship-operation business?

Future developments

- Where do you see possibilities to improve human resource management in a ship-operation business unit?

APPENDIX 2: SHORT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Human Resource Management in a ship-operation organisation

Definition of human resource management:

The term human resource management (HRM) describes the strategic and coherent approach of managing people in organisations. In simple sense, HRM means employing people, developing their capacities, utilising, maintaining and compensating their services in tune with the job and organisational requirement.

This study addresses human resource management in a ship-operation organisation. The aim is to explore

- the characteristic features of HRM in a ship-operation business unit
- the challenges for HRM in a ship-operation organisation
- the developments in HRM to meet these challenges

Research topics:

1. The strategy for HRM in a ship-operation business unit
2. The structure and reporting line of the HR function
3. The day-to day operations
4. HRM across different types of employment
5. (internal / external employment; available in labour market / unique)
 - Knowledge work
 - Job-based employment
 - Contract work
 - Alliance / partnerships
6. Responsibilities for HRM – the key players
7. The connection between HRM in the ship-operation and ship-owner organisation
8. The contribution of HRM to the success of the business

During the interview topics might arise in a different order. No preparation is needed. All information will be treated confidential.

I want to take the opportunity to thank you for your willingness to participate and contribute in this small study.

APPENDIX 3: HR ASSESSMENT – HR QUESTIONNAIRE

Question #1: Please rate priorities for each area of expertise.

Given company's growth strategy, what should HR's top priorities be for the next two years (choose your top five)?

Check Five Only

- A. Compliance/Employee Relations
- B. Leadership Training
- C. Technical Training
- D. New Hire Training
- E. Strategy Development Support
- F. Organizational and Crew Effectiveness
- G. Diversity
- H. Talent/Succession Planning
- I. Organization Development
- J. Other

Question #2-8: Please comment on the following questions:

2 - In terms of your current work with your clients, what is working well?

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3 - What could be improved?

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4 - In terms of your work with the shoreside HR organization (overall HR and functional HR partners), what is working well?

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5 - What could be improved?

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6 - What HR products/services are missing to allow you to enable company's business results?

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7 - Does the current HR structure (groupings, spans of control) support the successful functioning of the organization? How so?

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.....

8 - What HR work processes in place today would you modify or change and why?

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.....

Question #9-17: Please rate and indicate the reason for your rating for each question.

9 - HR has a clearly defined vision.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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10 - HR has a clearly defined strategy.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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11 - Based on our HR strategy, I know when and how to engage with clients.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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12 - HR is an integrated thought partner in the business.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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13 - HR should own the global recognition strategy.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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14 - HR is staffed to a level that enables us to meet business needs.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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15 - HR consistently provides opportunities for development to Officers and Crew.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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APPENDIX 4: HR ASSESSMENT – CLIENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Question #1: Please rate priorities for each area of expertise.

Given company's growth strategy, what should HR's top priorities be for the next two years (choose your top five)?

Check Five Only

- A. Compliance/Employee Relations
- B. Leadership Training
- C. Technical Training
- D. New Hire Training
- E. Strategy Development Support
- F. Organizational and Crew Effectiveness
- G. Diversity
- H. Talent/Succession Planning
- I. Organization Development
- J. Other

Question #2-8: Please comment on the following questions:

2 - In terms of your current work with the HR organization, what is working well?

.....

.....

.....

3 - What could be improved?

.....

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4 - What processes are in place to allow you to provide feedback to your HR partners on their performance?

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5 - Do you know who to go to within HR to support your specific business needs?

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6 - Where do you lack clarity on the individual roles and responsibilities of your HR Partners?

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7 - Does the HR team possess the competencies and experience to successfully perform their roles?

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8 - What HR work processes in place today would you modify or change and why?

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Question #9-17: Please rate and indicate the reason for your rating for each question.

9 - I know when and how to engage my HR partners.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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10 - The HR Manager should be positioned to support strategy at the Officer level.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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11 - The Assistant HR Manager should be positioned to support operational issues.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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12 - The products and services provided by the HR function help me to achieve my business objectives.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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13 - HR is an integrated thought partner in my business.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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14 - HR should own the global recognition strategy.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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15 - HR is staffed to a level that enables me to meet my business needs.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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16 - HR consistently provides opportunities for development to Officers and Crew.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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17 - HR has the right talent to enable me to deliver against my organizational goals.

Please Select One:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Comments:

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