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CHAPTER 3

The feminisation of maritime activities in France

Being a seafarer and a woman: gender, community and representations?

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A Florence Arthaud dont Eric Tabarly disait qu'elle n'était pas une femme mais un grand marin¹.

Résumé: *En France, les femmes marins représentent moins de 10% des effectifs. Le métier de marin est traditionnellement considéré comme un métier d'homme construit autour d'une division spatiale et d'une division sociale de différenciation des genres. Et pourtant, la féminisation des métiers maritimes n'a pas posé de réelles difficultés. Basé sur les résultats du projet Femmar, cet article présente dans un premier temps quelles sont les adaptations spécifiques mises en place pour les femmes marins en termes d'équipements et de prise en charge de la maternité et des situations de harcèlement. Hormis ces deux éléments, au nom du principe d'égalité homme-femme, la femme marin est au regard du cadre législatif un marin comme un autre. Dans un deuxième temps sera analysée la manière dont les femmes marins expérimentent la vie à bord et la manière dont elles se conçoivent en tant que femmes dans une communauté professionnelle à dominante masculine. Cela*

1) Florence Arthaud, surnommée par les médias « la petite fiancée de l'Atlantique », née le 28 octobre 1957 à Boulogne-Billancourt, est décédée le 9 mars 2015, lors d'un accident d'hélicoptères, près de Villa Castelli en Argentine; cette navigatrice française fut victorieuse de la « Route du Rhum en 1990; en novembre 1986, elle s'était dévouée pour porter secours à Loïc Caradec, qui ne fut pas retrouvé; le 20 octobre 2011, elle chute de son bateau, de nuit au large du Cap Corse, elle sera récupérée un peu plus de 3 heures après l'appel de détresse qu'elle put donner à sa mère, grâce à un téléphone portable, et à sa géolocalisation.

révèle les stratégies d'adaptation des femmes au milieu clos du navire à travers la volonté de gommer leurs attributs féminins et de prouver leurs compétences. Les femmes se définissent d'abord par l'expérience commune de la vie à bord et par le fait d'être marin.

Abstract: *Although the feminization of the maritime activities began more than thirty years ago, the representation of the women in this sector remains a minority and slowly evolves during these last ten years. This low representation of the women is partially understandable as the profession of sailor is traditionally considered as a male profession. In reality, the recent study FEMMAR², realized in France, shows that except for the Navy for which the feminization results from a political will, the arrival of women in the maritime sector takes place without any protest movement and without any modification of the legal framework, apart from measures on maternity leave. It seems now that in the name of the principle of gender equality, the woman is today, with regard to the legal framework, a mere sailor (without consideration of her gender), except for the particular cases of maternity leave and fight against harassments. This assertion deserves however to be analyzed with regard to the sociological acceptance of the arrival of the women in the maritime sector and especially how the women consider themselves as women in a professional community dominated by men.*

2) Femmar (2009-2011), L'évolution du rôle et du statut de la femme dans les activités maritimes (http://www.cdmo.univ-nantes.fr/87966570/0/fiche___pagelibre/&RH=1397064750995&RF=1362487936961)

III. The feminisation of maritime activities in France

The feminisation of maritime activities has started more than 30 years ago, implementing the principle of equality between women and men. However, in this sector, women remain a minority. Indeed, among 1.25 millions of seafarers, 1 to 2% of them would be women. Only 7% of women are officers while 42% of men are officers³. In France, in 2008, women represented 4,48 % of the maritime registered workers, *i.e.* 5,92 % of the Merchant Navy workforce and 3,4 % of the fishing workforce (less than 2 % worked for small-scale fisheries). 1594⁴ women were registered as seafarers, among which 899 worked in shipping (866 in 2005) and 695 in the fisheries sector (687 in 2005). In 1999, it concerned 1396 women. In 2010, women in the French Navy represented 8% of the total embarked workforce⁵, divided in 39 vessels among the hundred ships of the fleet. In 2014, 5,9 % of the seafarers in activity were women, 8,6 % in shipping and 3,5 % in fisheries⁶. This shows a slight increase of the number of women among seafarers in France for the last 20 years.

The low presence of women can be partly explained by the traditional masculine dominant representation of seafaring. The profession was historically constructed as a gender-related group⁷. This was accentuated by the process of maritime registration of seafarers in France until 1965 that allowed only male seafarers to navigate, in the shipping and the fishing sectors. Any feminisation of the maritime sector would have been unthinkable regarding the social and cultural codes that governed the navigation activity.

Seafarers' symbolic spaces and imagination are structured in two axes: the connection to the professional traditions at sea and the relationship to the land and the family. Being at sea, between men, brought them to differentiate people living and working inland including their wives, who became synonymous of home, safety, and stability, from themselves, who are in a moving dynamic when at sea. The relationship to the

3) Rapport du Directeur général sur l'évolution du secteur maritime, Conférence internationale du Travail, 94^e session (maritime) 2006, rapport II, BIT 2006; Belcher P et al (2003) Women seafarers: global employment policies and practices. International Labour Organization (ILO), Geneva; Brickman JP (2012) Recruitment and retention of women in the maritime industry. In: The 13th Annual General Assembly of the IAMU, St. John's, Canada, 15–17 October 2012. pp 193–205; Sulpice G (2011) Study on EU seafarers' employment: final report. European Commission, Directorate- General for Mobility and Transport, Directorate C - Maritime Transport.

4) ENIM. Rapport d'activité de l'ENIM pour 2008, 38 p.

5) France, Ministère de la défense. [Online]: <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/marine/dossiers/le-8-mars-journee-de-la-femme/le-nombre-de-batiment-a-equipages-mixte>

6) France, Ministère des affaires sociales, de la santé et des droits des femmes. [online]: www.femmes.gouv.fr

7) Grövel A., (2007), Dynamique professionnelle et transformation du genre: la féminisation des lycées professionnels maritimes, Mémoire M2, Paris X, p. 59; la présence des femmes y est même décrite comme une pollution; Thompson P., (1985) Women in the fishing: the roots of power between the sexes, *Comparatives studies in society and history*, vol 27, n° 1, p. 3.

land and the sea, two socio-symbolic spaces, contributed to the construction of an identity of sea-men and created a social division of gender roles simultaneously based on a symbolic division of spaces⁸. However, the feminisation of the maritime sector has questioned the evolution of this gender model based on the sexual division of work and the assignation of women to the domestic sphere⁹.

The recent study Femmar¹⁰, conducted in France, shows that, except for the Navy for which the implementation of a feminisation process resulted from a political decision, the presence of women in shipping, fishing or shell fisheries happened naturally without any protest and without changing the legislative framework only for the dispositions relative to maternity leave. The constraints, specific to feminine workers in terms of working rights (hygiene, security and maternity), do not appear as a disincentive element for recruitment¹¹. The technological evolutions and the automation of many work stations, added to the impact of ergonomic studies, have transformed the activity of seafarers. It requires less physical strength. The supposedly weaker bodies of women do not appear as a problem. Also, the presence of women in maritime activities has not deeply modified the work organisation unlike in other sectors such as the prison surveillance staff¹². Sailor women are not regularly associated by the masculine colleagues to their psychological and physiological weakness.

As in any professional sector, women's entry on ships has required and still requires the differentiation of equipment for men and women. The law forces to install sanitarians, showers and cabins dedicated to women, as recall in the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, by the International Labour Organisation (ILO)¹³. In general, these material transformations for hygiene and the improvements in terms of health and security, due to the arrival of women aboard, also benefited to all the workers.

8) Trompette P., Saglio J., Dufoulon S., (1998), La différence perdue: la féminisation de l'équipage du Montcalm, les documents du C2SD, p. 108 et 109

9) Daune R. (1986), Travail professionnel et travail domestique, Etude exploratoire sur le travail et ses représentations au sein des lignées féminines, Paris-Aix en Provence, Ministère du travail/ CEFUP, Université de Provence, cité in Grovel A., *op. cit.*

10) Interdisciplinary project conducted between 2009 and 2011, in the University of Nantes. Femmar (2009-2011), L'évolution du rôle et du statut de la femme dans les activités maritimes. [Online]: http://www.cdm.univ-nantes.fr/87966570/0/fiche___pagelibre/&RH=1397064750995&RF=1362487936961

11) Tritarelli M. (2010), femme marin, une réalité de management, mémoire technique de fin d'études, ENMM Le Havre, 2010, p 18

12) Malochet G., (2005) « Dans l'ombre des hommes, la féminisation du personnel de surveillance des prisons pour hommes » Sociétés contemporaines 3/2005 (n° 59-60) pp 199-220

13) International Labour Organisation, (2006) Maritime Labour Convention, Titre 3, règle 3.1 Norme A 3.1 n° 9

According to the principle of equality between men and women, it seems that women working at sea are seafarers as men for the law, except for the particular cases of pregnancy and harassment (1). This assertion must however be confronted to the sociological acceptance of women within the maritime sector and to the way they perceive themselves in a professional community that is mostly masculine (2).

1. The protection of women's working conditions on board

The *Code des Transports* does not mention any arrangement specific to gender, except, as it is also stipulated in the *Code du Travail*, what concerns the protection of women as mothers. The protection of women working at sea, in the case of pregnancy, presents some specificity compared to other professions. Although the legal framework dedicated to the fight against harassment is similar aboard or inland, the specificity of the working place, a boat, creates some difficulties to apply the law.

1.1. A framework limited to the protection of women as mothers

Inland, legislators have ruled several times to «protect maternity»¹⁴. Pregnant women are therefore protected against risks of discrimination during the hiring process and benefit from a scheme suspending the employment contract that forbids the employer to fire them for a motive linked to the pregnancy.

During the period of pregnancy medically confirmed and during the period of contract suspension, an employer cannot terminate an employment contract, unless he can prove a serious misconduct of the person or the impossibility for him, for a reason not linked to the pregnancy or the birth giving, to maintain the contract. Any dismissal for other reasons is invalid and is sanctioned by the award of damages (although reintegration should be the normal consequence of invalidity), that correspond to the salary the woman should have perceived during the period starting from the day of the dismissal to the end of the break plus 4 weeks (C. trav., art. L. 1225-4-1). But the protection of pregnant women goes beyond a simple suspension of contract for maternity leave (assimilated to a period of effective work). The protection against dismissal is absolute: no dismissal can take place or be pronounced during the period of suspension. The dismissal will be invalidated and the woman will get her work back.

14) Pélissier J., Auzero G., Dockès E., *Droit du travail*, Dalloz 25^e éd, 2010 n° 397 et s; Hardouin M., (1997) « Grossesse et liberté de la femme » *Droit social*, 287; Berthou K. et Masselot A., (1999) « Egalité de traitement et maternité », *Dr. Soc.*, 942.

Finally, during her pregnancy, a woman is also protected regarding the execution of her work. An occupational doctor can note the necessity of a temporary affectation of the pregnant employee to another function (C. trav., art. L. 1225-1). Also, the time spent for compulsory prenatal exams is considered as an effective period of work and is paid. Once back from a maternity leave, the woman must be reintegrated in her initial work, but she can also ask for working part-time or for benefiting from a parental leave.

If women working at sea also benefit from this protection, the implementation of maternity leave is specific to the maritime context. Indeed, although the dispositions of common law should be applied, the particularities of the ship create some difficulties as it is in movement and a working place far from the coast. The vibrations and the noise pregnant women are exposed to can constitute factors of miscarriage risk. This results in considering a pregnant woman as inapt for navigation. She is disembarked although there are no measures allowing her to get a replacement income before the official start of the maternity leave.

Until recently, women working at sea did not expressly have the right to maternity leave as ruled by the article L. 1225-17 of the French Code du Travail, or to an adoption leave¹⁵. It is only in 2006 that the legislators partially ended this juridical insecurity. The Law n° 2006-10 of 5/01/2006, transposing the directive ° 92/85/CEE of 19 October 1992¹⁶, inserts the article 5-2 in the *Code du travail maritime*, listed in the article L 5542-37-1 of the *Code des Transports*, and stipulates that articles L. 1225-1 to L. 1225-15 of the French *Code du travail* apply to women working at sea and to maritime school students. This means they now benefit from provisions relative to the protection of pregnancy and from a temporary assignment to another job on the recommendation of a seafarers' doctor.

Although the decree implementing this law has not been published yet, the future text should plan that woman seafarers get a guaranteed salary during the suspension of the employment contract, composed of an allowance borne by the seafarer's social welfare and of a complementary indemnity borne by the employer (C. transp., art. L. 5542-37-1). This project of decree aims to create a specific protection as soon as the pregnancy is medically diagnosed, a job on land in case it become impossible to navigate or if the redeployment is impossible, the allowance of a replacement income. The employment contract will only be suspended during this period.

15) Droits Maritimes, dir. Beurrier J.P., Dalloz, 2015-2016

16) Directive n° 92/85/CEE du 19 octobre 1992 concernant la mise en œuvre de mesures visant à promouvoir l'amélioration de la sécurité et de la santé des travailleuses enceintes, accouchées ou allaitantes au travail, JOCE L 348, 28 nov. 1992.

III. The feminisation of maritime activities in France

For now, only the *arrêté du 30 janvier 2015*¹⁷, modifying article 24 of *arrêté du 16 avril 1986*¹⁸, indicates that «*Any gynaecological disease that by its form, its evolution, its therapeutical requirements, can engender a risk to a person susceptible to find itself professionally far from appropriate medical help, is incompatible with navigation*». *Pregnancy must «be the object of a specialised evaluation that takes into account the forbidden tasks according to the Code du travail, the living and working conditions aboard, the geographical distance imposed by the type of navigation, the professional exposure to infectious, chemical and physical agents, in particular to mutagenic or toxic substances for reproduction and the organisational factors such as the night work. Pregnant women and mothers, up to 6 months after giving birth and during the period of breastfeeding, benefit from an increased medical surveillance. The state of pathological pregnancy is incompatible with navigation.*».

Like before 2006, women are declared medically unfit, while the Directive 92/85 states that «*the notion of adequate allowance in the case of maternity leave should be considered as a technical reference in order to determine the level of minimal protection and it should not be interpreted as implying an analogy of pregnancy with sickness*». As a result, when no redeployment on land is possible, the *Etablissement National des Invalides de la Marine (ENIM)*¹⁹ must provide an extra-legal allowance to cover the period between the unfitness statement and the legal maternity leave. However, the extra-legal allowance, equivalent to 90% of the salary, the rest being covered by the complementary insurance, is non-mandatory and subject to a social inquiry. A text regarding pregnant women who navigate on ships being at sea for less than 24 hours (small-scale coastal fisheries, shell fisheries, port towage) delays the grant of the allowance to the 21st week before the term of the pregnancy, leaving these women with no specific care, unless the pathological character of the pregnancy is recognised.

Yet, the Directive 92/85 of 19/10/1992²⁰ stipulates that «*the measures concerning the organisation of work that aim for the health protection of pregnant workers, and those who have delivered or are breastfeeding, would not be useful if they are not complemented by the maintenance of rights linked to the employment contract, including the maintenance of a payment and/or the benefice of an adequate allowance; considering that the measures concerning the maternity leave would also not be useful if they are not associated to the maintenance of rights linked to the employment contract, including the maintenance of a payment...*».

17) JO 10 févr. 2015, p 2348

18) JO 4 mai 1986 p 6013

19) In charge of the special national security regime for seafarers in France

20) Directive 92/85/CEE du Conseil, du 19 octobre 1992, concernant la mise en oeuvre de mesures visant à promouvoir l'amélioration de la sécurité et de la santé des travailleuses enceintes, accouchées ou allaitantes au travail, JOCE L 348, 28 nov. 1992, p 1

It also provides in article 5 that *«if the redeployment into another job is not technically or objectively possible, or cannot be demanded for justified reasons, the concerned worker is, in accordance with law or national practices, dispensed of work during all the period necessary to her security or health protection. The measures of the present article are applied mutatis mutandis in case a worker doing an activity forbidden according to article 6 becomes pregnant or breastfeeds, and informs her employer»*²¹.

Finally, it stipulates in article 11, in regards with the rights under the employment contract, *«In order to guarantee to the workers, under article 2, the use of rights concerning their security and health protection recognised in the present article, it is planned that: 1) in cases referred to in articles 5,6,7, the rights under the employment contract, including the maintenance of a payment and/or the benefice of an adequate allowance for workers under article 2, must be carried out, in accordance with national laws or practices»*.

The Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, adopted by the ILO, provides that absences at work must be counted as periods of service, except for seafarers employed for periods under one year²².

1.2. The fight against harassment

As stated in articles L. 1152-1 of the French *Code du travail*²³, *«no employees must support recurrent acts of moral harassment that aim for or result in a degradation of the working conditions that could be a danger to the rights and the dignity of the person or that could alter its physical or mental health, or jeopardise its professional future»* and L. 1153-1, *«the acts of harassment from anyone with the aim of getting sexual favours for oneself or another person are forbidden»*. The French law classifies the acts of harassment, whether it is moral or sexual, among the violations of human dignity²⁴.

21) Section II - Dispositions générales, art. 5 - Conséquences des résultats de l'évaluation

22) Titre IV Norme A4-5 Sécurité Sociale

23) Concernant la Marine nationale l'article 178 de la Loi n° 2002-73 du 17 janvier 2002 modifie l'article 6 de la Loi du 13 juillet 1983 en y incluant directement la notion de harcèlement moral et prévoit des sanctions. Le harcèlement sexuel est aussi abordé mais seulement dans ses conséquences. La Loi n°2005-843 du 26 juillet 2005 - art. 6 condamne à une sanction disciplinaire les mesures fondées sur *«(...) le fait qu'il a subi ou refusé de subir les agissements de harcèlement de toute personne dont le but est d'obtenir des faveurs de nature sexuelle à son profit ou au profit d'un tiers; le fait qu'il a formulé un recours auprès d'un supérieur hiérarchique ou engagé une action en justice visant à faire cesser ces agissements; ou bien le fait qu'il a témoigné de tels agissements ou qu'il les a relatés»*.

24) Recommandation de la Commission européenne du 27 nov. 1991, JOCE L. 49 du 24 février 1992, p 2

Moral or sexual harassment is still too often treated by silence, at sea or inland. Employees always have difficulties to speak of intimate experiences or sexuality in the context of work relationships. The legislative and societal concerns do not erase the feeling of shame of the victims. We observe that inland, women rarely speak of the aggression to their close surrounding (never to the husband), to a union representative or to the occupational doctor. Often, the absence of union representatives in the company forces them to carry exterior procedures that will often not succeed, by lack of discussion spaces where the fear to generate a conflict in the company could be outgrown. The ones that have the courage to break the silence must also face the difficulties encountered between the complaint and the judgment (at work, in the family, in the society).

These difficulties are clearly accentuated aboard, because of the weight of socio-cultural rites in a working society mainly masculine. But the behaviours are also exacerbated at sea by the exiguity of the working place, the distance from the family and an activity often dangerous, conditions that make the revelations difficult for the victims. The fight against harassment raises a sociological problem specific to the situation on board, also because the working relationships on board are specific and speaking can have consequences on how the victims of harassment will access justice.

The fight against sexual and moral harassment can be efficient only with the participation of all the actors involved in the texts: employers, unions, occupational medicine. But what could the solution be for a victim of harassment aboard, out at sea, when the delegates on board turn a blind eye on the situation and the employers do not listen to any demands? The French *Code du travail* does not identify other representatives in land, but the specificity of the working relationships on board allows another person to intervene: the captain, whose specific status invites us to question his role and responsibility when there is inaction in a proven case of harassment. There are no particular plans against a «harassing» captain. In the French law, this situation would be judged at the level of criminal law and the repression of criminal infractions and intentional faults. It concerns moral or sexual harassment that are intentional faults engaging the personal responsibility of the offender²⁵. If a captain perpetuates moral or sexual harassment, he engages his personal responsibility and can be condemned to pay his victims damages without the need of criminal justice.

25) Cass. Soc. 21 juin 2006, JCP 2006 – Entreprise et Affaires- 2513, p. 1801 n. S. Prieur; Radé C. (2006), Harcèlement moral et responsabilité au sein de l'entreprise: l'obscur éclaircissement, Dr. Social, p. 826.

But what about a captain deliberately ignoring harassment acts from one crew member, or who simply does not listen to information that evoke repeated acts and abuses? *A priori*, the *Code du travail* does not give a captain any obligation concerning the fight against harassment as the articles make some references only to the employer and the staff representative institutions. However, it is different if we consider the article 1 of the *Code disciplinaire et pénal de la marine marchande*.

As the authority on board, the captain is responsible for the behaviours of the crew members aboard the ship, and therefore, must stop any illicit behaviours. As soon as his inaction harms the victim, there is a failure to assist a person in danger as repressed in article 223-6 of the *Code Pénal*²⁶. It justifies that criminal charges should be engaged against the captain. The captain, as the representative of the naval armament on board, is responsible regarding the security. Therefore, he must inform the employer of harassment acts and also implement any measures necessary to stop the risk²⁷. As a result, an intentional inaction must engage his responsibility and allows an action from the civil party in front the criminal-court judge. Beyond regulatory elements, we must insist on the pedagogical role given to the captain. In an environment predominated by ancient masculine habits, he should raise awareness on the necessary evolution of social relationships at work.

In France and in Spain²⁸, recent cases, that witnessed very violent harassment acts²⁹, showed the difficulties the victims had to be listened to, the inaction of staff representative institutions and the absence of punishments against the harassing staff. This proves a double discrimination as, most often, these acts concern the hotel staff on board as if the status of women officers implies more respect, partially protecting them from these acts. A hierarchical caesura³⁰ is added to the sexual caesura. This could be explained by the fact that the technical competencies of women officers are the best integration vector as they rely on traditional modes of regulation through the transmission of knowledge. This also shows how the identity of the seafarers is not only built on a social division of gender roles but also on a symbolic division of spaces (land/sea)³¹ that complicates the specificity of the sector even more.

26) Chaumette P. (2006), Accident du travail maritime et responsabilité pénale, note sous Cass. Crim., 20 sept. 2005, navire Angélique-Emilie, DMF, pp. 584-595.

27) Cass. Crim., 13 mars 2007, chalutier la Normande, obs. P. Bonassies, DMF 2007, n° 686, pp. 881-886.

28) G. Proutiere-Maulion, O. Fotinopoulou Basurko (2010), Harcèlements à bord des navires: le droit commun appliqué aux spécificités, *Revue de Droits des Transports*.

29) Intimidations, sexual aggressions, rape and homicide attempt

30) Lacombe Ph., (2005) Enquête sociologique sur la Marine nationale, La documentation française; La féminisation de la Marine nationale entre évidence et questionnement sociologique, *Revue du Champs de mars*.

31) P. Trompette, op.cit

The ship, as a collective working and living place, was traditionally considered as an enclosed world and a manly universe. The idea of belonging to the community of seafarers was based on a masculine identity that structured the sociability on board, from communication to cooperation at work. Nowadays, it is being a seafarer that is the structuring element, not being a man. The spatial division, in land and at sea, does not systematically imply a sexual division of work between men and women. It rather evokes a division between seafarers and non-seafarers based on shared competencies and the confrontation to the dangers of the sea. Sharing risks, *i.e.* the unpredictability of meteorological conditions, the hardness of working conditions in a sometimes hostile environment, contributes to the construction of a feeling of belonging to a professional group³², beyond gender issues. By acquiring a culture of the sea, *i.e.* knowing common technical skills, sharing life aboard, reacting in front of danger³³, women, especially the ones doing the most valorised and technical tasks, build a sailor identity that takes over their sexual identity they tend to withdraw.

2. Women seafarers: seafarers as others?

While the feminisation of the maritime sector appeared to be impossible because of the social and the cultural codes that seemed to govern it, the results of the project Femmar showed that the feminisation happened with no real difficulties. Although the occupation of seafarer is still considered as a masculine one, the working conditions show that there is mostly no rejection of women from male seafarers, and that there are few problems linked to gender in the different types of activities. The recent evolution of the conditions for embarking women shows that the maritime sector does not avoid the development of women's place in socio-professional spaces. This development can be explained by the professionalization of generations of men who benefited from education in a mixed environment and by the increasing share of economic and social responsibilities³⁴. What should be now questioned is the relationships these women have with their bodies and their dressing strategies. During the interviews conducted for the project Femmar, the women insisted more on the way they live their femininity aboard than on their specific working conditions.

32) Grövel A. (2007), Dynamique professionnelle et transformation du genre: la féminisation des lycées professionnels maritimes, Mémoire M2, Paris X, p 119

33) Tritarelli M. (2010), Femme marin, une réalité de management, Mémoire technique de fin d'études, ENMM Le Havre, p 38

34) La féminisation de la marine nationale, entre évidences et questionnement sociologiques, [online]: www.iufm-pacifique.nc

2.1. Does the appropriation of social codes on board happen through the cross-dressing of the feminine body?

Many women have underlined that they pay attention to the way they dress on board (no make-up and jewels, neutral clothes when there is no uniform). This can appear as a strategy of integration³⁵. The objective is to avoid any provocation in an enclosed and masculine environment. They adopt neutral behaviours and appearances in order to demonstrate by a strict and serious dress that, as women, they can equally assume the tasks. They must face two major challenges: to be both socially and professionally accepted by the group. The expression «prove yourself» regularly comes back in the women's interviews, independently of the maritime sector they work in. However, the higher the function is, implying more responsibilities, the more women must «prove themselves».

Indeed, dressing with clothes collectively perceived as typically masculine allows the women to create some possibilities of socialisation with the men, especially outside the working hours. It is also a strategy to reverse the sexual stigma, necessarily suspect, and to desexualise themselves by cross-dressing with masculine sexually neutral elements (as masculine is the referential pole). This contributes to a critical distance to their sexual assignation³⁶. The access of women to the professional group happens through virilisation because the professional system relies upon power relationships between the masculine and the feminine.

These changes, embodied into masculine attitudes, indicate practices that go beyond a simple neutralisation of feminine assets: the young women try to take over the social codes assigned to men. On board, the feminine body adopts an attitude to integrate a group; inland, it adopts another one, letting the social codes of the professional world aboard. It goes from one position to another one, and vice versa. The young women, who were interviewed, acknowledge these metamorphoses. Some affirm they do not mind this two faces game while others suffer from the variation between two antagonist attitudes: the masculine and the feminine³⁷.

However, the temptation to erase the feminine assets could hide an unconscious form of protection and barriers against the masculine colleagues. Harassment takes different forms and dimensions. To denounce an aggression creates a risk for the victim to be excluded from the group. The minimisation of verbal aggressions or inadequate behaviours can appear as an adaptation strategy to not enter in the

35) Tritarelli M. *op. cit.*

36) Clair I. (2005), Des jeunes de banlieues « absolument traditionnels », *Lien social et politique* n° 53

37) Kitada M. (2013), Code of behaviour at sea: women seafarer's shipboard identity management, *WMU, J. Marit Affairs*, 12: 213-227

game, and get caught into sexual roles³⁸. That explains the need of barriers, through their own effacement (do not exhibit their femininity, do not reply and do not be too friendly), to avoid the confusion between the two sex³⁹. As a result, to find their place as women, in the maritime sector, they adapt the feminine assets (clothes, make-up ...) consciously or not.

Although they are mostly well accepted, women on board must also adapt to masculine norms. The physiological differences between men and women still play an essential role in the representation of the job. Indeed, the body incarnates the idea of gender specific competencies: «*The physical strength remains the men's characteristic, and so are courage, endurance, the love for risk, the technical capacities ... while women are supposedly without these natural masculine qualities*»⁴⁰. Women are judged competent for their job according to their body's capabilities. The body plays a role regarding the determination of functions, status and actions adopted by women. It will orientate towards a type of work, of professional competencies marked by the sexual division. Certain gender qualities are associated to some jobs. These conceptions were developed based on a binary system of comparisons that ruled the professional world, the social relationships and that reduced the position and role of women within the social organisation of work. As underlined by Grovel, «*the difference between sexes is always and in all the societies, ideologically translated into a binary and hierarchical language. We should not forget that the access to a seafaring job requires a physical aptitude certificate – that institutionalises the strength of the body as a qualification and allows a reproduction of seafarer's social characteristics*»⁴¹. Women have to prove they will be able to do a man's job aboard.

2.2. Erasing the woman beyond the seafarer

The work cohesion on board conducts therefore inevitably towards the erasing of womanhood beyond the seafarer. The survey and the interviews realised during the Femmar project prove that the women working aboard do perfectly assume their role and technical functions. They are the first to claim that «*there are no women on board, only seafarers*»⁴². Embarked women do not perceive themselves as sexed individual but refer to themselves according to their belonging to a group. Many defend the idea that they do a men's job, and some affirm they are happier doing a

38) Cromer S. et Lemaire D. (2007), L'affrontement des sexes en milieu de travail non mixte, in *Inversion du genre, corps au travail et travail des corps*, Guichard-Claudic Y., Kergoat D.(coord.) Cahiers du genre, L'Harmattan.

39) *Ibid.*, p. 7

40) *Ibid.*, p. 7

41) Grövel, A. *op. cit.*, p. 69

42) P. Trompette, J. Saglio, S. Dufoulon, *op. cit.*

masculine job⁴³. This invites us to think that the question of men/women relationships and the division of work aboard is erased by the homogeneity of a group, the one of the seafarers⁴⁴ that is defined as a universal category.

The ship, as a collective place where people work and live, was traditionally considered as an enclosed world and a men's universe. The masculine identity used to shape the feeling of belonging to the seafarers' professional community. This identity structured the forms of social life on board. This article, based on the project Femmar's results, has developed the idea that it is being a seafarer, and not a man, that is now structuring the forms of sociability and work on board. Shared competencies and experiences of difficult working conditions (unpredictable forecast, hostile environment...) partake to the creation of a feeling of belonging to a common professional group⁴⁵, beyond the gender issues. By acquiring a professional culture of the sea, a common language, an expertise in technical tasks, by sharing the life on board and because of the necessity of a common reaction in front of danger⁴⁶, women have developed an identity of seafarer that win over the feminine identity on board. However, life aboard mixes working and after work life. Women develop strategies to ease the enclosed experience aboard and avoid inadequate situations. In case of harassment, this creates difficulties for women to speak about their experience. The conditions on board create confined situations, in the ship and the group. Therefore, we have identified how the captain has a responsibility in listening to the victim and reporting harassing acts to the employer.

43) *Ibid.*

44) In French, the word «*marin*» is a masculine name that cannot be declined into the feminine. In current language, *marin* designates a person (man or woman) working on board under the authority of a captain. Seafarer is a neutral term as well.

45) Grövel A., *op. cit.*

46) Tritarelli M., *op. cit.*