Beyond the Economics: Seafarers and the Challenges Posed by Stowaways

Amaha Senu (SIRC-Nippon Fellow)
SIRC Symposium, Cardiff University
29th – 30th of June 2016
Background

- Ph.D. research (started in Sept. 2013)
- Exploring the experiences of stowaways and seafarers,
  Exploring factors influencing the dynamic on board,
  Exploring the maltreatment of stowaways
- Methods- documentary analysis and interviews
Outline

- Profile of the stowaways
- Economic cost
- Experiences of seafarers- at embarkation port, at sea, at next port of call/disembarkation
- Concluding remarks – why focus on the challenges?
The Stowaways

- Men

- Make multiple attempts over a number of years
e.g. one stowaway have been attempting since 1993 up until the interview in 2015

- Live on the streets and often in brutal, violent and crime ridden settings

- Experienced, witnessed or instigated violence
Economic Cost

- According to the IGP&I Clubs report:
  $15.3 million for 1,640 stowaways (Feb 2011 to Feb 2012)

- This cost excludes costs associated with delays or loss of hire which the ship owner deals with

- Pressure on seafarers to secure their ships
Challenges in Preventing Stowaways

- Security duties vis-à-vis cargo work
- Limited time to conduct thorough stowaway searches
- Limited expertise in conducting stowaway searches
- Commercial pressure
Challenges in Preventing Stowaways

Because the stevedores in the Sudan did not know how to handle this cargo, I had to learn how to handle the cargo. I doubled up the crew so that we could work day and night shifts. [...] We were all tired, but after 4 days of work, we were almost done and we could slip our lines at 2:00 o’clock in the morning. But that prevented us from having a good thorough stowaway search. But I was happy to get out and leave the port. (Capt. Joseph)
I was happy to get out and leave the port. We had left the port at 2:00 o’clock and at 6:00 o’clock in the morning, the steward knocked on my door and he was holding up these two guys […] I was mad! I was about as close to murdering somebody as I ever got. I was just thinking ‘Oh you know, there goes more paperwork, more headaches[...]’ I was as close to murder as I have ever been. I’m not a violent person but …. the first thing that entered my mind is all this could be over if we just toss them back in the ocean. But of course, your humanity takes over and you try to do the best you can. (Capt. Joseph)
Reaction upon discovery...

They were brought up and they were asked questions. [...] I mean, what happened on the bridge was just an outburst of ‘why the hell are you here? why the F are you here? how did you come in?’ That was the captain. It was not necessary. I mean it was not questioning. It was outburst really. **You’re adding a hassle into my life sort of thing.** (Capt. Rajav)

When he was outside he meet captain, and the captain start swearing and shouting to the guy straight. He was telling him, ‘why you come to my ship? Now you sick here. You think you are in a hospital or something? You want tablets? Who told you to come to my ship? You come here, you bring problem now. You say you start to get sick now. **But anyway you drink that tablet, but I will santa maria you.** So that guy he come back to the room and he start telling Issa. (Issa, Stowaway)
Concern about jobs

Everybody was afraid what will happen. What will be the reaction of the owners? Everybody was worried about their jobs, job security [...] Because somebody can be blamed. (Ch. Off. Rohit)

The company was unhappy that I hadn’t conducted a good stowaway search. So that didn’t help my chances of promotion. The captain probably paid a bigger price than I did. [...] On the next trip, he was a chief officer again. He got demoted. (Capt. Joseph)
Me I was hiding in the room of seafarer. Me was under the bed and he sleep at night and he didn’t know. 4 days, he come to sleep in his room and me I am inside his room but under the bed[ …] And the seafarer pick up the mattress and saw us two people hiding under his bed. He couldn’t believe that day. When he saw us, he run out and go to call seafarers. He was very scared.(Barrack, stowaway)
Early morning, 7:00, 8:00 in the morning, just finishing bunker, big commotion downstairs. These guys have broken out of the cabins. The steward was trying to take them food. They smashed him inside, ran out on deck, all five of them. And then, took the ship hostage. Took one crew member hostage and threatened to kill him.

Ah, what to do? I go down with the chief officer. And they ran up. ‘Captain, we're going to kill you! You lied to us!’ . And you said this and that. Back to the bridge, immediate phone calls to the security, port police, port authorities, agent, anybody! (Capt. Smith)
Maltreatment of stowaways

- Emotional impact on those seafarers that are not complicit
  e.g. MV Maersk Dubai (1996)
Maltreatment of stowaways

One crew, [...] he came to them and tell them ‘me I am Mr Thomas. These people, what they do to you, me I don’t like. I heard what they are doing to you guys. But me nothing I can do.’ [...] And Mr Thomas and Bosun used to be friends. So Mr Thomas and Bosun when they eat, they keep the food. In the night, middle of the night, Mr Thomas take the food and bring it to them. He say ‘please don’t tell nobody, just keep quiet.’ (Solo, stowaway)
• Growing bond

• Seafarers sympathizing with the stowaways

• Seafarers assisting stowaways
Disembarkation refusal

These people were coming to us to interview us about, and it seems like all of them have the same checklist, about how we are treating them, what are we feeding them, and all of that[...] And then they keep asking us the same questions which we after that realised that it was just a checklist. ‘What are you doing with them? What are you feeding them?’ Of course, we are feeding them the same food that we eat. ‘Are you beating them or torturing them?’ C’mon, why should we torture them? ‘Are you locking them up?’ No, we are not locking them up.

We roamed the world with them for four months, but no one really wanted to take them. And the same thing every port, delays, quarantine, checklists, same stupid questions, nobody’s taking them until the Captain was sacked from the company because of that at a later stage as we know. (Capt. Karim)
Why the focus on seafarers’ experiences?