The relationships between ship staff and port personnel
Introduction
Methods

- 9 ethnographic voyages (a total of 244 days at sea)
- 87 semi-structured interviews with seafarers on board
- 303 vignette-based interviews conducted in UK, India, Philippines, Singapore and China/on board
- 2500 interviewer administered questionnaires in UK, India, Philippines, Singapore and China
Places where researchers went with ships
Places where shore-based fieldwork was conducted
Issues

- Corruption
  - Facilitation ‘gifts’
  - Raiding provisions
  - Financial extortion
  - Fraudulent bunker supply

- Theft of items from the ship

- Unprofessional conduct of port officials
Facilitation ‘gifts’

- 91% of seafarers experienced gift-giving (95% for deck seafarers only)

Experience of gift giving across the world (%)

- Suez Canal
- South East Asia
- China
- Indian Subcontinent
- West Africa
- South America
- Black Sea
- Other parts of the M. East
- Turkey
- European Union
- Others

Among deck officers only, about 60% believed that demands for gifts were becoming more or less common.
‘[...]The captain refused to give them anything. He said that he did not give anything to anyone. As a result of that, the ship was arrested for some supposed serious deficiencies. They were fined more than 100,000 USD because they supposedly found expired products. The company paid the amount, they had no choice, and the ship was blacklisted while everything was being rectified. So sometimes it is much better to give gifts; they are not very expensive. But it depends and it's up to the captain to decide for himself.’
81% of deck side seafarers stated that companies or charterers usually paid the cost of cigarettes and drinks.

“We have to stay and it is a problem for the [company]…because it will cost money. The guys who own the pier, they will say ‘now you are occupying this [place] and you are finished to go but you are detained’ and so on. ‘We need to have money for every hour you are staying at the pier.’
31% had direct experience of working for company which bans gifts
61% believes that unilateral bans on gifting made life on board difficult

‘The problem is with management companies, I’m not talking about my company, what happens is the master in the first place if he refuses [to give gifts], ‘okay I’m not doing this’, [...] and then if you have a damage like somebody cutting off your line [in retaliation], then you’re questioned by the company ‘why didn’t you just give it to them and finish it off’. So all this thing, it ultimately comes [back] to the master.’
Raiding Provisions

- 73% of seafarers had direct experience of provisions being taken by shore-side officials from their ship

‘It is not theirs! Even if they asked for it, it is still the ship’s property. That is for the crew members, they are not part of the budget. In my first visit to Ukraine I saw how they do it like they are ‘shopping.’ They just get what it is that they want and if they are in the gangway, they could not even carry it with them. They get the expensive cheeses, drinks and other alcoholic drinks. This can also include fruits that are not commonly found in their country.’

‘They can buy all these things but we can’t buy you know. Once like suppose we are going to Africa everything has finished then what we are going to do. We can’t do anything now we have to wait for the next port to buy.’
Financial Extortion

- 69% of seafarers stated that they had experienced being on a ship when shore officials asked for cash.

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<th>Experience of cash extortion</th>
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<td>WEST AFRICA</td>
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<td>SOUTH EAST ASIA</td>
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- 68% of seafarers worried about demands for cash.
- 80% of seafarers felt it was stressful.
Difficulties of doing the deal

‘So I have to pay, for the four crew, a total of $3200. So the owner said, take first the document before giving the money. That time that I gave the money, I received the document of my crew without any hassle.’
Agent as part of extortion

‘But normally, there is connivance between authorities. Most of the time the agent is part of this. The agent is paid to give us information. [...] Imagine how much [...] the company [pay] of the agent, it is about $10,000.00 to assist us and then they show that kind of service? So most of the time, yeah the agency has something to do with this. This is the ugly truth.’
Personal extortion from seafarers

‘[…] So I said, ‘Okay fine, do one thing. Tell me your name’, I told the agent, ‘Tell me your name, I’ll speak to the company, that the agent is saying like this’. So he said ‘No no no, no names, no names. I’m just helping you’. So I told him that ‘Agent is not helping me, he’s helping the custom’. But still then the custom officer said that ‘okay fine, the crew don’t give the money, but officer give ten dollars’. For what, I don’t know. It’s for them only.’
Fraudulent bunker supply

- 87% of engineers had been on a ship where less fuel had been supplied than claimed by the supplier
- 85% had experienced being supplied with poor quality fuel
- 93% recognised that these practices add to seafarers’ stress on board
The stress of bunkering

‘Very very stressed. It is like having 50 cups of coffee every day for you have thoughts about how you will explain it to the company. […] Why do they have to cheat? Well, it is because the gain is millions. Imagine that those in the bunker barge [people] are wearing Rolex watches. […] For the barge people, easy money. So stressful for us on board.’
‘If it is 20 - 50 tonnes it is very huge amount and then there is a big problem for the Chief Engineer to cover it up, like if it is 5 tonnes, then he can adjust 0.5 tonnes every day, he can show an extra consumption if it is 5-10 tonnes, but when it is 50 tonnes, then you have only a week’s [voyage] … 50 tonnes to cover up 50 tonnes is very big.’
‘[…]Previously C/E could reserve some 'pocket oil' of extra 10-20 tons to balance the shortage in case. Now the extra oil reservation is not OK. […]The working pressure of C/E before was not as significant as today. Now due to the strict pollution control, and the oil reading, the major pressure, […] is originated from this issue.’
Theft of items from the ship

- 53% of seafarers have experienced theft from the ship
- 21% of seafarers have experienced having their personal possessions stolen

Items stolen:
- Paints, tools, ropes and hoses
- Personal property of seafarers
‘It [theft] happens a lot when the vessel is in dry dock. Because in dry dock actually, the entire vessel is open to everybody. And ... we had one of our projectors ... the one which is used for crew entertainment. [...] So the crew one was robbed while the vessel was in dry dock, and the next day the officer’s one was also robbed [...] yes, it does happen.’
‘But now there are pirates who use more violent strategy. Depends on the port. In poor countries, you can really expect stealing. I experienced before that even our mosquito repellent were taken by a riding crew. That was in Egypt. But keeping items is a hard decision for the captain cause what if a fire occurs? So it really is hard. [...] Safety always comes first so the nozzle should be put where it should be even if there is a chance that it will be stolen. At least you are safe. The concern on board is always budget. But then if port state control officers visit the ship they will ask why there are no safety equipment. Penalty is also a lot!’
Unprofessional conduct of port personnel

- 21% of seafarers had experienced dealing with drunk port officials

- 57% of seafarers (deck officers) felt pressured to finish manoeuvring more quickly
Pilots in haste

‘I had a situation like that in Taiwan, which was in very bad weather, rough weather, wind force 7 or 8, so leaving berth in the middle of the night, and he was just saying ‘it is a small boat so if I go out, if you drop me in the pilot station, it will be difficult for the vessel to come back’, so he just wanted to get off just before the breakwater, and it was like a short pilotage, and he left. [...]’
Summary

- Corruption
  - Facilitation ‘gifts’ – not antagonistic generally but can seriously cause stress for seafarers
    - Raiding provisions
  - Financial extortion – usually passed on to shore-based company personnel or P&I clubs
  - Fraudulent bunker supply – can be stressful owing to the lengthy validation process

- Theft of items from the ship – seafarers feel vulnerable when certain items get stolen

- Unprofessional conduct of port officials – can be risky and tends to pressurised seafarers to manoeuvre quickly
Thank You!