Protest: Contested hierarchies and grievances of the sea

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Introduction

As Linebaugh and Rediker (2000) note, the sea holds great theoretical and empirical potential as a scholarly interest for those seeking 'histories from below', or contemporary accounts of protest politics. Their much-celebrated work *The Many Headed Hydra* illuminates, amongst other hidden histories of struggle, the revolutionary narratives of protest, disobedience and organising forged within and across the Atlantic Ocean to foreground previously downplayed acts of sailors, workers and pirates. Such works indicate the illuminating nature of sea-based protest and the specific need to situate this resistance in relation to the dynamism of the sea. Their work points to the ever-transforming notion of maritime geography, and the need to position resistance in relation to the changing processes of domination that grievances are made in response to. Such efforts link with wet ontologies, what Steinberg (2013: 165) describes as a perspective whereby 'the ocean becomes the object of our focus not because it is a space that facilitates movement – the space across which things move – but because it is a space that is constituted by and constitutive of movement.' This spatial understanding of the sea can be deepened through a greater sensitivity to power relations and an acknowledgement of the processes of domination and resistance made and found within such spaces (Sharp et al., 2000). Here, this chapter considers examples of sea-based resistances to extend understandings of maritime spaces.

The chapter surveys existing academic works on maritime protest and in a latter section briefly draws upon my own archival research on sailor organising and protests associated with early twentieth century radicalism in Glasgow. Bringing together these contributions, allows the chapter to consider those acts of protest found at sea, protests constructed through movement across the sea and landed protests articulating grievances of the sea. This spatial approach to maritime protest can be understood through the lens of radical geography but also complicates and extends some understandings of protest conceptually. Thus, the chapter will begin with a brief theoretical reflection on spatial and temporal conceptualisations of protest to shape the engagements that follow. It will then consider three scales of maritime protest with reference to historical and contemporary examples. The chapter concludes with some wider comment on the enduring and contested nature of ocean protests.

Theorising maritime protest

Routledge (2018) has understood protest through 'emergence', identifying that resisting acts relate to, emerge from and shape particular places and spaces. His conceptualisation asserts the merits of a radical geography that engages with how space influences or shapes the dynamics of contentious politics. Such comments follow a longer tradition of radical geographers that have engaged with radical, alternative, protest geographies. A search through the associated and influential radical geography *Antipode* journal though, would suggest that the vast majority of protest geographies have concerned themselves with landed matters (for exemptions see Menon, et al. 2016; Stierl, 2018; Dunnavant, 2020). Here, it is argued that the ocean provides plentiful opportunity for extending these debates, particularly

around territorial and emergent understandings of protest, and more broadly developing conversations around the spatial politics of protest (see also Halvorsen, 2015).

As such, the relational power dynamics of the sea must be interrogated. Linebaugh and Rediker's (2000) work famously notes the potentiality of the pirate ship to position the sea to be viewed a site whereby power relations were inverted and transformed. They draw upon the term 'hydrarchy', borrowed from the upper class member Richard Braithwaite who used the term in the 17th century in his description of the mariner, to consider the dynamics between the maritime state in its pursuit of control 'from above' and 'the self-organization of sailors from below'. This positioning of the ship and the ocean more broadly, as holding possibilities for protest even in the most extreme circumstances of structural control, discipline and punishment, allows for recognition of protest through numerous means including 'small acts', collective political organising and demands articulating aggregating grievances. Whilst Linebaugh and Rediker's work is integral to the chapter that follows, Featherstone (2005, 392–393) has noted that there is a tendency in their account to 'treat space as a fixed backdrop to political activity' whereby '[i]deas, tactics and radical experiences flow and move across space, but these circuits remain unchanged through these processes.' Such comments inform the approach taken below, whereby three 'cuts' of maritime protest are engaged with to indicate the significance of spatial relations when unpacking resistance at sea.

Although the spatial elements of agency provide a structuring device for the chapter, it is also essential to engage with the temporal elements of such acts. As such Chakrabarty's (2000: 66) notion of 'history 2s' is helpful here, foregrounding pasts that 'may be under the institutional domination of the logic of capital and exist in proximate relationship to it, but they also do not belong to the "life process" of capital.' By engaging with protest through 'other ways of being', the chapter illuminates the possibilities for protest to be constructed as inclusionary and progressive (such as the alternative political visions and humanitarian acts considered below) but also potentially exclusionary (such as the violence and racialised hostilities considered below). To consider this diversity of positions, the chapter draws upon and blends together historical examples with contemporary issues to indicate the enduring, variable and contested nature of protest within ocean spaces. This allows the chapter to suggest a temporality of protest that compliments the spatial approach, and allows for recognition of intense moments of action alongside the longer trajectories of movements, as part of wider movements articulating aggregative grievances with potential for unintended outcomes (see Hughes, 2020).

Such temporalities suggest a need to think of maritime protest beyond associations with spontaneity. Guha has stressed this in his work on *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* identifying how spontaneity is often wrongly ascribed to particularly disruptive forms of protest from a top-down perspective, creating a potential 'moral outrage' which fails to consider the political elements that shape and mould such acts (Nolan and Featherstone, 2015). Although focusing on insurgency located on-shore, Guha's comments, which he links to the work of Gramsci, remain important for a framing of maritime protest:

> There is no room for pure spontaneity in history. This is precisely where they err who fail to recognize the trace of consciousness in the apparently unstructured movement of

the masses. The error derives more often than not from two nearly interchangeable notions of organization and politics. (Guha 1983:5)

This questioning of spontaneity is important for the wider aims of the chapter, particularly in the following section, and raises questions over how subaltern agency is considered and represented. Guha was constructing a direct reply to Hobsbawn's (1959:5) notion of the 'pre-political' and 'social banditry' of protesting rural peasants whom he considered to have 'no organization or ideology' and to be 'totally inadaptable to modern social movements'. This portrayal carries a pre-conceived concept of politics and organisation, which undermines the possibilities within Guha's work for illuminating agency from below. Below, resistance is considered through a continuum of maritime protest acts, including those that might appear seemingly marginal or unorganised, to consider multiple examples of ocean protest and to indicate the sustained resistances to dominant powers.

There is thus a need for 'imaginative connections' to be made between events which may be portrayed as 'minor topics' and those considered 'important issues' (Searby et al, 1993:20) as asserted by E.P. Thompson and others who have utilised the 'history from below' tradition to uncover a variety of protest acts (see Featherstone and Griffin, 2016). To pursue such constructions of maritime protest, this chapter considers these theoretical influences in relation to three scales of maritime protest. Firstly, the chapter considers protests acts found at sea, secondly, the chapter considers protest acts as connected and shaped by experiences of the sea and thirdly, the chapter considers landed protests articulating sea based grievances. This multi-scalar approach to maritime protest is developed to engage with a wide repertoire of protest acts whilst the multiple examples drawn upon move across historical examples and contemporary disputes to indicate the enduring presence of ocean based protest. These examples are deployed to illustrate the particularity of disputes and protest strategies but should be read in conversation to acknowledge the connections between the scales of protest considered below.

Maritime protest at sea

Hasty notes how the materialities of the ship reflect the complexities of power relations found at sea. His work on 17th century pirates shows how the ship itself was manipulated and moulded to create a ship space that:

> [E]xisted as a real, lived and dynamic space, one crafted by pirates in their own image with their own ends in mind. The ship functioned as a technology of mobility and speed, as a locale for piratical politics and as a space of multiple contestations, and revealing their spatial practices in modifying this space sheds much needed light on their intriguing way of life. (Hasty, 2014: 364)

Such contestation held radical possibilities as Hasty considers through the remodelling of the ship deck following a pirate takeover to foster more horizontal hierarchies. Hasty notes how these radical possibilities are similarly stressed by Rediker who suggested that the pirate ship provides a specific space whereby it was possible to view 'the world turned upside down' (Rediker 2004, 61), acknowledging how pirate captains and workers would coalesce and work in a co-operative manner. Whilst similarly acknowledging these radical possibilities, Hasty is keen to identify the uneven nature of such radical spaces, noting differences between pirate ships, whereby some ships would maintain more vertical hierarchical structures (e.g.

clear distinguishing of captain space) and the prevalence of radicalisms and exclusions, of prisoners for example, on board certain ships. This uneven distribution of power within particular ships begins to indicate the contested nature of maritime spaces and more specifically the plurality of potential protest practices.

A challenge within these structures is to identify the multiplicity of resisting alternative acts from subaltern groups and individuals. Davies (2013) has utilised assemblage theory to consider such diversity through his study of colonial navy sailors during the 1946 Royal Indian Navy mutiny. He identifies the spreading of mutiny and violence following strike action on His Majesty's Indian Ship (HMIS) Talwar, a shore installation of the Royal Indian Navy (RIN) in Bombay. He notes how the grievances associated with this action 'included issues ranging from the banal (the poor food served in the RIN), through to the overtly political (the continued British rule of the Indian subcontinent).' The initial mutiny was supported by subsequent strike action with Davies describing how a further 20,000 sailors 'mutinied' in military stations across South Asia and as far as the Andaman Islands and Aden.

Davies' engagement with such a wide ranging set of seafaring grievances and protests associated with the strike allow the seafarers political agency in their own right, rather than the dilution of grievances through overarching narratives or attributions of spontaneity. Elsewhere, Davies (2020) has considered how such maritime anticolonial activisms reveal 'how 'nationalist' ideas were inherently stretched beyond the territorial limits of the landed 'ocean' space'. Through engagements with the shipping routes of the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company he illustrates how 'the dreams of industrial nationalist development that spurred much swadeshi organising were also often internationalist in nature' (p. 69-70, emphasis authors own). Such moments are often difficult to measure in terms of their success, as they may be suppressed in the short term and restricted in enforcing immediate change. What they are indicative of though, is the resistant nature of colonial labour and the plurality of protests emergent from maritime spaces.

This diversity of political positions within protests links to the diversity of strategies and places where such maritime acts might be found. Featherstone has also utilised Guha's conceptualisation of subaltern historiography to consider how subaltern protest might be found in unexpected places. He revisits the Royal Navy Court Martial from July 1797 whereby six mutineers from the *Grampus* ship, as part of a wider 26 ship Nore mutiny, faced trial for their protest actions, which included pay related demands but also wider democratic political views. Featherstone notes that the associated records document how the mutineers 'circumvented the logics of the trial to assert the justice of their actions' through declarations reflecting their democratic cultures. Featherstone (2009: 785) concludes that:

> Rather, this has located the court-martial as part of the ongoing struggles aboard the ship and as an element in the routes and connections that shaped sailors' mutinous cultures. These struggles were to continue to shape mutinous dispositions aboard the ship after the Nore mutiny.

Featherstone's detailing of the court martial narratives begins to reveal longer trajectories of protest acts, beyond the immediacy of an event, to indicate the makings of 'assertive subaltern political identities'. More broadly, these works indicate the possibility for disobedience to be framed as protest. Such constructions of disobedience as protest is

particularly crucial to consider in scenarios where organised resistance may seem unlikely. Rediker (2007) for example has considered the 'small acts' of resistance found on the 17th century slave ship. In *The Slave Ship: A Human History* he notes how slaves resisted the inhuman conditions, violence and terror of their passage, through acts such as hunger strikes, jumping overboard and insurrections. He considers how these acts reflect practices of mutual aid and survival, positioned within 'the beginnings of a culture of resistance, the subversive practices of negotiation and insurrection' (Rediker, 2007: 350). Accounting for this specificity in the nature, spatiality and articulation of protest acts is crucial for a critical exploration of maritime protest (see also Dunnavant, 2020). In doing so, the acts raised here connect with previous comments regarding the emergent spatial-temporal nature of protest.

In contemporary times, the sea remains a space of disobedience, activism and direct action. Couper et al. (2015) note the prevalence of mutinies and exit practices in modern fisheries where fishers respond to 'intolerable conditions'. They identify the Indonesian island of Tual as being a space where such exits are particularly frequent, noting how it has held between '700-800 Burmese (at any given time) who have fled from fishing boats'. Couper et al also note the continued prevalence of mutinies and violence within fishing industries. Exiting can be considered a protest strategy, particularly when framed within a punitive work regime. Such protest narratives can be read alongside strike action and viewed as contributing towards successes of fishers in courts, such as those in New Zealand where the government developed increased regulation of working conditions and pay, through a Code of Practice in 2006 and a decision in 2016 that only NZ flag vessels would be allowed to fish in particular zones. These acts were made in response to the activism of trade unions and NGOs regarding the intolerable working experiences of fishers within these zones. Environmental groups and anti-whale hunting protest have also utilised disruptive acts in their efforts to prevent environmentally detrimental fishing and hunting practices. Sea Shepherd (n.d.) for example are a conservation group noted for using direct action, including ramming and disabling pirate whalers, in their efforts to protect marine life (see McKie, 2017). To extend and deepen accounts of the sea's role in capital accumulation and globalisation, these contemporary disruptions indicate the sea to be a continued site of direct action, resistance and contestation.

Humanitarian acts in more recent times have been similarly positioned as holding potential as political dissent. Stierl (2018), for example, points to a 'humanitarian spectrum' of NGO activities that seek to turn the sea in to a less deadly space in the context of large-scale Mediterranean migration. The scale of such rescues are undoubtedly commendable for the thousands of lives saved from precarious and life threatening border crossings, but such acts might not immediately appear as a protest act. Stierl notes though, the importance of political imaginaries in shaping the positionality of humanitarianism, as NGOs may be co-opted by the state (in this case the EU) or alternatively, might be considered as a vehicle to critically challenge border practices. Thus, the article notes those organisations that are positioned in political opposition to existing regimes, and here the chapter considers these activities within the maritime protest repertoire as these actions are explicitly situated against EU refugee schemes. Sea-Watch, a search and rescue organisation operating in the Central Mediterranean, for example, has was always envisioned their work as an outspokenly political intervention:

> We have decided to fight for the humanisation of politics. Hospitality should once again be the norm. A civil sea rescue service must be created. The EU is not willing to do so. Therefore, we are taking the initiative (Sea-Watch 2015 cited in Stierl, 2018).

As Peters (2013) has noted, ocean spaces have remained a site of resistance to authority. The challenging of the EU state policy noted here and the potentiality for breaching maritime borders highlights the contested nature of ocean regulation that can also lead to conflict arising from border crossing and sea-based grievances. Menon et al. (2016) for example illuminate the contested nature of boundary crossings of Indian and Sri Lankan fishers and the emerging conflicts that arise from such acts. Their article considers the associated artisanal activism in the Palk Bay Fisheries to consider the contested dynamics of capital accumulation associated with the fishing industry. Their works indicates how, at different times, artisanal fisher activism (following conflicts with trawl fishers) have been successful in establishing no-go zones for trawler fishers, yet conflict still remains with fishers refusing to follow regulations. Sinha (2012) has noted similarly successful organising practices from the Indian Fishworkers' Movement during the late twentieth century who were able to establish a 3-kilometre exclusive fishing zone for artisanal fishers in the North Kerala region. These acts are indicative of the sea as a contested and dynamic space, but such acts are often informed by a wider set of connections beyond their particularity, and these connections are considered further below.

Maritime spaces and connected protest

Whilst protest acts are found on the ship and across the ocean, maritime spaces also play a crucial role in connecting radical alternative visions and activisms. The ocean is integral to the connectivity of transnationalism and solidarity but also the experience of travel itself and multiculturalism at sea has played a crucial role in informing and shaping the geographies of protest cultures of individuals and collectives. Here, the chapter briefly reflects on two related elements to this, firstly the protest geographies of individual lives shaped through the sea and secondly the multi-scalar possibilities of shared protest geographies developed through the spatiality of the sea.

Gilroy has shown the possibilities of this approach through *The Black Atlantic*, which engages with 'the long neglected involvement of black slaves and their descendants in the radical history of our country in general and its working-class movements in particular' (Gilroy, 1993:12). He considers the Atlantic as 'one single, complex unit of analysis' forming part of a 'webbed network, between the local and the global'. This positioning of a fluid and relational Atlantic facilitates a far more transformative sense of the spatial politics of maritime protest, and specifically those resistances associated with race and racism, than those that impose fixed notions and assumed politics on the basis of place, ethnicity and nationhood. More broadly, Linebaugh and Rediker note the shared influences of maritime cultures that informed political cultures on previously uninhabited or remote islands in the Caribbean, highlighting how resistances of the sea informed politics on land. In particular they note how seventeenth century radical Atlantic traditions informed the buccaneers in America whereby seafarer culture developed a 'Jamaica discipline' that 'boasted a distinctive conception of justice and class hostility towards shipmasters' and 'featured democratic controls on authority and provision for the injured' (Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000: 158). There is an indication here of the significance of travel and exposure to difference as being a critical factor in the making of radical and alternative cultures.

Chris Braithwaite was a Pan-African seafarer and activist during the early twentieth century, whose life was profoundly shaped by experiences offshore. In his article '*Mariner, renegade and castaway*', Hogsbjerg (2011) describes the political life of Barbadian Braithwaite to reveal a similarly connected and transatlantic life of organising and protest. Hogsbjerg notes Braithwaite's involvement in resistance activities, such as demonstrations in London on behalf of the Scottsboro boys and wider campaigning on 'militant anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist' matters through the Negro Welfare Association. Such political sentiment and world-view can be attributed to his wide ranging maritime and transnational experiences. During the previously mentioned Royal Indian Navy mutiny, Davies (2013) similarly notes the influence of travel upon Balrai Chandra Dutt, which informed his involvement with the RIN mutinies previously discussed, identifying an 'embodied cosmopolitanism' felt through the 'lived experience of travelling, seeing other's struggles against grievances, and recognising that these political struggles have parallels with one's own.' Whilst political biographies of activists such as these indicate the influence of mobility on the individual, it is also clear that maritime geography of protest was also profoundly shaped by the particularity of ocean experiences. Here, Braithwaite's life is again revealing, with his Pan-Africanism reflecting networks and connections shaped through his seafaring life, such as the 1930s campaigns to defend Ethiopia under military threats from Italy. Quest (2009: 122) has noted how Braithwaite mobilised seafaring networks to facilitate 'direct action to undermine the economy of Italy and smuggle weapons to Ethiopia'. Such connections begin to reveal the spatiality of maritime protests and potentiality for wider geographies of protest activity through disruptive transnational influences, actions and solidarities, countering the wider mobilities of the state and capital.

A further strategy of resistance shaped by maritime spaces is evident through the distinctive sharing of seafarer objections through petitions for example, which would highlight shared concerns and issues. These developed through novel strategic practices such as the eighteenth century round robins whereby sailors would write petitions and letters signed in a circular manner to reflect horizontal organising practices and to make the attributing of leadership impossible. Rediker (235) describes such practices as an 'instrument of protest' reflecting 'a cultural innovation from below, an effort at self-defense in the face of nearly unlimited and arbitrary authority'. The reality of the punitive conditions within which such acts emerged makes the moments and practices of solidarity and protest amongst seafarers even more noteworthy. Silverman (2000) for example notes practices of labour internationalism at sea whereby exiled seafaring unions during the Second World War received refuge and support from British trade unions seafarers, reflecting a 'brotherhood of the oceans'. He also notes the limitations of such solidarities though and how exclusions, particularly experienced by Chinese sailors, forged and maintained during these times, reflected a less open vision of protest geographies as is considered further below. Thus, whilst the sea contains numerous examples of protests that influenced a broad politics of transnationalism and solidarity, these spatial linkages often culminated in actions or held repercussions for events which took place onshore. The final section of this chapter considers such moments where maritime protests meet onshore communities and institutions.

Onshore protests of maritime grievances

Sea related protests are not only formed, connected and situated in the oceans though. As hinted at above, they are also deeply connected to places on-shore, particularly the formation

and evolution of port and fishing communities (Tabili, 2011). Early twentieth century grievances around ocean related labour relations reveal the exclusionary potentiality for ocean disputes protested on land, whereby worker conflicts became racialised (Hyslop, 1999; Jenkinson, 2009). In this regard, maritime grievances can be viewed through their engagements with place based institutions such as the state, trade unions, shipping companies and boarding houses. Thus, the associated ports and fishing communities have occasionally become sites of maritime related resistance and conflict. This was particularly evident in Britain during the early twentieth century, where increasingly racialised articulations of seafarer grievances primarily around worker's rights, pay and working conditions, culminated in events such as the 1919 seaport riots that took place across British ports such as Cardiff, Liverpool, South Shields and Glasgow (Jenkinson, 2009). Tracing the longer trajectories of these grievances and protests provides an example of how maritime protest met landed places, such as the Albert Docks in Liverpool, Cardiff's Tiger Bay, Glasgow's Broomielaw and South Shields' Mill Dam.

My own archival research in Glasgow has shown how racialised grievances were prevalent in the early 20th century. The *Forward* newspaper for example reported seafarer concerns in an explicitly racialised manner. J.O'Connor Kessack and R.F. Bell published a series of articles in 1911 that claimed to detail the grievances and demands of British seamen. Both of these figures were significant labour organisers within the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union (NSFU) and their articles illustrate the ideological nature of their concerns, with different sections of their articles entitled 'The Chow Invasion', 'The Cheap Asiatic' and 'The Asiatic Peril' detailing their views, one example being:

> The Asiatic in times of danger is a miserable cur. He may suit the convenience of an officer, whose boots he would lick, and perform the menial duties without demur, but he has to be kept in his place by fear and authority. When occasion arises he can be the most arrant villain, sneaking and bloodthirsty, with an utter disregard to all that is lawful and authoritative. His colour, religion, and all that belongs to him, is associated with all that is alien to us. ('Seamen's Demands', *Forward*, 13/5/1911, p.8).

Bell was secretary of the Glasgow branch of the NSFU and his articles revealed some of the more overtly racist views within British seafaring unions at the time. These views were part of wider 'war of words' that shaped events that followed. Routledge's (2018: 137) has proposed a 'war of words' as 'the creative utilisation of activist media [that] can create protest cultures' which can become 'a critical tool in generating sites of potential.' Such actions and media cultures are integral to protest geographies, as vehicles for articulating demands, whilst also contributing towards direct actions themselves. Seafarer grievances such as these during the early twentieth century were regularly found within trade union based publications, including those of their own printing press, such as the *The British Seafarer*.

In this instance such hostile rhetoric, similarly found elsewhere and consistently present across the UK, informed exclusionary and hostile events and moments such as the 1919 seaport riots whereby violent clashes occurred between white and non-white sailors, including the deaths of black sailors in Liverpool and Cardiff. Such disruptions reflected tensions within ocean spaces and racialised protests in localities. They also had wider effects with a 'colour bar' established by shipping companies in collaboration with trade unions

during this period (see Jenkinson, 2008). The violence noted here must also be viewed as being globally connected, such as those activisms considered in the previous sections, as Hyslop (1999) notes through his characterisation of an early 20th century ‘white labourism’ whereby imperial logic provided transnational solidarities, and consequently exclusionary policies towards non-white labour, amongst particular workers.

Within places defined by such exclusionary political practice, the subordinated and marginalised workers had to develop their own strategies to resist the changing regulations of particular places that were integral to their employment. In Britain, these acts are hard to trace in the early twentieth century with non-white voices often missing (Bressey, 2006). However, fragments remain within the records of primarily white trade unions, such as those acts of Chinese sailors, being indicative of ‘getting-by’ strategies. Despite the extreme forms of disciplining, control and slavery, it is vital that non-white workers are not positioned simply as victims and without their own forms of agency, as it is clear that there are plentiful examples of resourcefulness from people of colour, where possible and strategies to circumvent authority. One example of this is their negotiation of language tests before boarding ships:

> The language test – Merchant Shipping Act of 1906:
> British subjects were exempted from this language test: therefore all Chinamen hailing from Hong Kong and Singapore escaped examination under the Act. This led to a number of men from all of parts of China claiming to be born in Hong Kong and Singapore in order to escape the language test.[1]

In Cardiff for example 84 per cent of Chinese sailors claimed to be from Hong Kong or Singapore and it would be expected that similar responses would be made in other British ports. Manipulations of tests such as these posed a direct challenge to authority of both the ship-owners and the trade unions considered here (unions had previously applied pressure for a language test), whilst providing an example of the agency of the Chinese seafarers within these contentious maritime work spaces. Actions and co-ordinated decisions such as those to counter the language test illustrates the significance of ‘unofficial’ action amongst workers and also highlights the uneven contestation over employment. Tabili (1994) notes how sailors originating from colonial countries would also ask ‘for British justice’ (albeit often unsuccessfully) and campaign upon their grievances and issues from a British standpoint, given their previous service to the colonial government. Such campaigns, including those of the ‘Delegates of Coloured Seamen in Glasgow’, often took the form of petitions whereby sailors would protest their working conditions, living situations and experiences of welfare provision (see Griffin, 2015).

Despite such hostilities and conflicts, onshore protests of sea-based grievances were also, and continue to be, forged through more inclusive solidarities with like-minded groups and the sharing of concerns. During 1930, in South Shields for example, large meetings and gatherings organised by the Minority Movement articulated a more progressive and inclusive vision of seafaring organising whereby white and Arab workers protested against rota systems that were used at the detriment of non-white workers. Satnam Virdee (2014: 93) notes how such actions provided a ‘working class solidarity against racism [that] was to resonate in the minds of working people throughout the South Shields area.’ Smaller acts

[1] Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick, National Union of Seamen Archives, MSS.175/3/14/1-2

were also evident in seaports, with boarding house owners and women for example often protesting on behalf of sailors and campaigning and demanding improvements to working and living conditions (see Lawless, 1995). In more recent times maritime protests have continued to engage key place-based institutions, such as the state. Co-operatives and trade unions in India for example, have played a crucial role in supporting fishworker movements to establish state implemented regulation protecting their rights to fish (Sinha, 2012; Menon et al., 2016).

Similarly, landed demonstrations have indicated the connectivity amongst sailors and international solidarity between workers. International connections were visible in Glasgow for example during labour demonstrations in the early twentieth century, reflecting solidarities and protests shaped through the connections of the sea. In May 1917 for example, over 200 Russian sailors, from a warship lying in the Clyde, participated in a march of over 25,000 Glasgow citizens at Glasgow Green. The demonstration, organised by the Glasgow Trades Council, the Glasgow Labour Party, and the ILP, formed part of a broader movement against the First World War (*Forward*, 2/6/1917, p. 3). During the demonstration the Russian sailors were presented with a red flag and they presented a memorial steamer to the Clydesiders in return. One of the Russian sailors also spoke at one of the platforms at Glasgow Green alongside Emanuel Shinwell (Chairman of the Trades Council and seafaring union leader). These periodic international connections within Clydeside combined with the specific activities of the organising labour bodies and introduce a previously downplayed diversity to the direct actions during this period. In more recent times, this potentiality for landed social justice campaigning related to the ocean has been illuminated through the work of Winchester and Bailey (2012) who highlight the role of the international conference in bringing together social justice campaigners from seafaring communities. Their work engages with the 'seafarer forum' as part of a wider international conference framework. In this instance, sailors had opportunity to articulate grievances over pay discrepancies between sailors of different nationalities. Such conferences provide opportunity for grievance to be articulated and heard by associated employers and governments. This onshore articulation is crucial for the highlighting shared economic inequalities, human rights abuses and poor working conditions.

Moreover, the 'war of words' practised through sailor publishing practices, continues with regular attempts made to articulate grievances emerging from contemporary ocean spaces. Tang et al. (2016) note the multiple grassroots efforts to raise awareness of Chinese workers' rights through online activism. They highlight efforts to illuminate health and safety concerns for Chinese sailors, and the awareness raising practices of families who are connected to an injury and or death at sea. Such small acts of protests can be positioned alongside the wider and collective efforts of sea connected trade union movements. Sinha (2012) for example identifies the role of trade union protest in Alleppey, India, during the 1970s whereby confrontational and militant actions, such as 'gheraos' and hunger strikes, were used to successfully fight for sea regulations to protect artisan fishers' ability to work within 3km of the shore. Such wide ranging and potentially intersecting maritime protest acts reflect important intersections between ocean-based grievances and landed protests.

Conclusions

Maritime acts of protest are well placed to theoretically advance recent debates regarding resistance, and particularly those found recently within geography regarding spatial connections and political reach (see Harvey, 1996), linking with those that have stressed more relational constructions of protest and resistance (see Routledge, 2003, Ahmed, 2012). This geographical emphasis has challenged a conceptualisation of resistance as being potentially limited by its boundedness through the particularity of place or singular grievances and demands. Such thinking appears more appropriate for a protest geography of the sea as it caters for the spatially connected processes and influences evident within protest acts, such as those considered above.

The acts of resistance raised here are indicative of this spatial approach to maritime protest both in terms of contributing grievances and resultant ripple effects. As a result, they are difficult to separate neatly into categories, as might be suggested by the structure of this chapter. In contrast, it is perhaps more helpful to think of a repertoire of protest geographies that are distinctive yet often inherently connected. Thus, the three geographies of protest considered above should be viewed relationally. The seaport riots considered in the latter section were not isolated, discrete events but in contrast were shaped by experiences at sea and connected by the sharing of experiences on ships and in ports. Similarly, the contemporary humanitarian efforts of Sea Watch are found at sea but must be considered in relation to the place-based experiences of those involved and their grievances, articulated through various means, towards the landed governance of key actors such as the state.

These acts of protest, from the small acts to those that targeting political change, from progressive, inclusionary and co-ordinated moments to reactionary and exclusionary activisms, must be positioned within their wider context, though, what Mitchell (2011) describes as the 'world as it really is'. To simply consider the acts of resistance or organising practices, would be to ignore the dominating structural and conditioning influences, of colonialism, slavery and capitalism found within maritime geographies, and the associated exploitation of difference. Due to the focus of this chapter, protest acts have been foregrounded but such acts should not be considered in isolation. Thus, whilst acts of exiting, sabotage, violence, strikes, demonstrating, communicating, humanitarianism and charity might appear marginal within these contexts, it remains vital to uncover their presence to complicate the geographies of the sea and to acknowledge the presence of alternative and resistant visions that similarly illuminate wider controlling and structural influences.

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