

# Maritime Sociology in the Making

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## 1 The Sea as an Area of Sociological Interest

Several endogenous (connected with the social sciences themselves) and exogenous factors have led to an increased interest in maritime issues. Owing to increased ecological awareness, the seas and oceans are drawing growing attention from society. They also exert an increasingly strong impact (mainly due to maritime transport) on the shape of social life. These and other phenomena contribute to the growing social importance of the sea, and this obviously attracts sociologists' attention. On the other hand, though, sociological theory itself is changing by more favourably considering non-human actors or the area of the sea as an essential platform of social life (Longo, Clark, 2016, p. 463–464).

The perspective on the sea can be and is very different in the social sciences. From an individual perspective, “The sea is one of the greatest ‘things-; a human faces’” (Rancew-Sikora, 2010, p. 137, authors' translation). For centuries, the sea has been explored. However only recently did it become more systematically apprehended and studied as a social space (Gordinier, 2015) (for a long time, science emphasised an “undesirable” differentiation between society and nature (Macnaghten, Urry, 1998)).

The sea can be perceived as a background, a connection of lands, but also as a central place (Rancew-Sikora, 2010, p. 139) (sea means a separation too but most of all a way to other lands). It also serves as a source of income for many people. It is noteworthy that there are over 40 million people employed in the maritime sector, for whom the sea is a workplace, isolated from their families, but the same time, however, it is a place of fulfilment when performing a specific vocational role; a place where their social life takes place (Grasmeier, 2020b). This economic dimension of relations with the sea is often crucial when looking from an individual perspective.

A collective (community) perspective provides a different point of view (Bujak, 1934, p. 24). Many nations with access to the sea based their narrative in times of a struggle for independence or territorial expansion on “anchoring” in seaside areas. Rancew-Sikora discusses how maritime discourse (2010, p. 135) can reflect a nation's collective imagination which, in the case of Poland, is based on remembering the past and its associated symbols, including symbols of nature.

The meaning of the sea is highlighted in culture by anthropomorphisation (this is particularly reflected in the English language). History has recorded the Marriage of the Sea Ceremonies (e.g. in mediaeval Venice or in Poland after regaining independence in 1920 and then at the end of World War II in 1945).

At present, social awareness is growing with regard to problems of the seas, and the oceans in particular. Together with a developing ecological awareness, oceans “grow closer” to people, irrespective of their places (countries) of residence. The social importance of maritime professions is also growing. Consumerism or cultural uniformity as phenomena characteristic of contemporary lifestyles necessitate cheap (maritime) transport. The world we know has never been so dependent on maritime transport which, not without reason, is considered as one of the fundamental pillars of globalisation. This is how we cross the boundary between the sea and land, as we do between cultures and civilisations and slowly drift towards the world of hybridisation (Kim, Li, Yasawa, 2015).

The work of maritime sector workers (a field frequently raising social researchers’ “nautical” interest) also affects the risk of ecological disasters. Sea-related phenomena, here, are not only a sociological issue but also a social problem. Such events go beyond the sphere of ecological awareness. Sea disasters (apart from the awareness-linked aspect) exert a real impact on the life of seaside communities. Numerous analyses of such unintentional events indicate that it is not technology itself (the tangible aspect) that is responsible for them but the human factor, something which should draw special attention. This is in line with the perspective of the social sciences for which, symbolic (showing features of emotions) rather than technical aspects are fundamental in terms of human-equipment-sea-wind relationships (Rancew-Sikora, 2010, p. 152).

Together with the social role of the sea, its place in sociological theory is also changing (Lehman, 2013). As Dorota Rancew-Sikora notes (2010, p. 133), non-human elements begin to play an increasing role in sociological explanations. There is a “redefinition of what has been considered so far to be ‘social phenomena.’” Networks of links and impacts in this vision not only consist of human actors but also tangible objects, technologies and living organisms other than people. Such a perspective is proposed, *inter alia*, by actor-network theory (ANT).

## 2 Maritime Sociology, Ocean Sociology, Marine Social Science

Attempts to determine and distinguish the area of maritime research are not limited to sociology. Similar notions or processes can be observed in other social

sciences. It should be noted that these attempts are usually taken under the name of “maritime,” which lends support to the argument that such a language convention, also in the case of “Maritime Sociology,” should be maintained. Likewise, other fields are distinguished: “maritime anthropology,” (Acheson, 1981, p. 275), – the study of what people do on and with the sea, “maritime psychology” (MacLachlan, 2017) which primarily deals with the human behaviours of those working at sea, and “maritime archaeology” (Tuddenham, 2010) which seeks traces of human nautical activity from the past. It should be added here that this convention is not absolute and the term “maritime” is at times replaced with others. The names of significant scientific journals can serve as examples here: *Nautical Archaeology* or *Annals of Marine Sociology*. Deciding on an appropriate name here is therefore still open to question.

When discussing this issue, it should be borne in mind that the phrase “maritime sociology” is supported by the common use of the following terms: maritime industry, maritime economy or maritime culture, which is important also from a sociological point of view (Oberberg, 2018). Sociological studies on maritime issues often refer to a given sector of the economy (maritime transport, shipyards, fishing). These connections form an argument for maintaining uniform terminology. Nonetheless, it should also be remembered that the name “maritime sociology” will reach European scientists in the first place. In countries on other continents (Asia, North America), what seems to be closer or more adequate, owing to geographical location, is, e.g. “Sociology of Oceans” (Hannigan, 2017) or “Ocean Sociology,” which is very popular in China. The increasing role of oceans in social awareness also lends support to such “oceanic” naming. Concern for oceans is becoming a global issue which is also important in countries with no access to them. Such an “axiological promotion” of oceans – their commonplace presence in social awareness – is undoubtedly an argument for the alternative name “Ocean Sociology.”

An attempt to sidestep this dilemma (sea vs ocean) could be suggesting the term “nautical.” However, it refers largely to the issue of sailing which narrows down the subject of the field in question too much. A similar issue arises with regard to the concept “sociology of maritime workers” (Matejko, 1964) which, by highlighting the theme of maritime professions, also limits discussion of a broad potential area of the subfield.

The interest of researchers of maritime issues in various social disciplines is accompanied by attempts to join their efforts within one interdisciplinary research area. Peter Arbo, Maaike Knol, Sebastian Linke and Kevin Martin (2018) apply the term “marine social science” (a wide, multi- and interdisciplinary approach). They emphasise its importance in explaining as well as offering critical studies on what happens on the seas and oceans as a result of

human activity. Nathanel Bennett (2019), who also uses the concept of marine social science, notes its potential to provide indications for the establishment of appropriate management policies and strategies as well as to support sustainable development. In 2020, the Manifesto for the marine social sciences (Bavinck, Verrips, 2020) was published in which the authors also point to aspects of engaging in this science, and posit its interdisciplinary character and the diversity of methodologies applied. What makes this approach even more appealing is that it corresponds to empirical maritime studies. Individual analyses concerning human work at sea more and more frequently assume such an interdisciplinary character; indeed, they often have more to do with marine social science than a particular, traditionally separated, social science. The second advantage of such an approach is its richer research potential, which results in greater opportunities for institutionalising a new discipline (the possibilities for organising conferences, preparing scientific projects and scientific units consisting of researchers from a range of core disciplines). Undoubtedly, the institutionalisation of such an area of interest would impact the development of specific comprising disciplines (Bartłomiejski 2008, p. 50).

Discernment of the ecological context (sustainable development, how human activity influences sea and oceans) is a good starting point for distinguishing two key “paradigms” of social reflection on the issue under discussion. The first context (closer to the sociology of professions, the sociology of work or the sociology of organisations) refers to human relations (e.g. organisation of work at sea, how the occupational identity of people working in the maritime sector is shaped (Grasmeier, 2020a)). The latter (more of environmental sociology (e.g. Catton, Dunlap, 1978)), combines maritime sociology and the issue of how human activity affects reality at sea. Hence, we are discussing here either the influence of the sea (this perspective is of key importance for maritime sociology in Poland) or the influence on the sea. Maritime sociology seeks its identity between these two vectors of interactions.

### 3 The Specific Character of Sea Phenomena

Bearing different names, maritime subfields which appear within the social sciences share the controversy over whether it is reasonable to separate them. Based on basic sciences, the question arises if focusing on the “maritime” theme is sufficient to identify a relatively autonomous area of science. This is a question about how reasonable it is to go beyond the land-related paradigm of a given discipline. The answer to this question entails adopting a specific definition of sea phenomena. Are they distinctive enough to necessitate a separate

approach? Or perhaps a sea vessel is merely a surrogate for land (Janiszewski, 1967, p. 190), and maritime culture is only a sign of current land culture (Piskozub, 1986, p. 210)? Most maritime researchers have adopted a cautious stance here. Thus, the sea vessel has been considered as an example of the total institution (then a type of organisation known from the land), while maritime culture merely as an analytically distinguished (abstracted for research purposes) sphere of integral human culture (Tuddenham, 2010, p. 5, Westerdahl, 2003, p. 18). This approach, in which the land perspective is taken to view sea phenomena, should be recognised as prevalent in maritime sociology.

An attempt to reach beyond the widely understood land-related paradigm entails the necessity to adopt a particular theory based on which sea phenomena assume an explicitly distinctive character. This specific character can be found in language understood (as in structural linguistics) in systemic categories (Saussure, 2007). The binary division into what is sea- and what is land-related (or land-related and not land-related) would manifest itself here in defined practices appropriate for (peculiar to) both spheres (McGhee, 2003). Adopting such a research (theoretical) perspective, in which actors use different practices of giving meaning through embedding them in the sphere of land or sea, would constitute a good starting point for going beyond the land-related paradigm (at least in the sphere of medium-range theory). This, in turn, would be advantageous (though obviously not necessary) for the scientific legitimisation of marine social science.

#### 4 The Subject of Maritime Sociology

The roots of maritime sociology seem to be international. Academic courses with this name have been offered at American and Canadian universities; while courses connected with the theme of maritime sociology (but not bearing its literal name) are fairly often taught at European universities (mainly sea academies), e.g. in Greece or Spain (Bryniewicz, Kołodziej-Durnaś, Stasieniuk, 2010). For several decades, Cardiff University in Great Britain has been a leading research centre in the field of maritime sociology (Poole, 1981, Sampson, Tang, 2015). What is striking at the same time is how distinctly this discipline is understood in different countries (Janiszewski, Sosnowski, 1984, p. 9). The process of how maritime sociology established itself in an institutionalised form (academic courses) was obviously preceded by a period of dispersed studies on maritime issues.

The interest in the sea as a social space was observed as early as in the works of classic authors in the social sciences. Ferdinand Tönnies analysed working

and payment conditions of members of various marine occupations, as well as the famous 1896–1897 Hamburg dockworkers' strike. A prominent scholar in this field, Norbert Elias, prepared fundamental work on the origins of marine professions (reconstructed by others on the basis of his scattered writings, it was published after his death) (Sowa, Kołodziej-Durnaś, 2015; Elias, 2007; Tönnies, 1897a, 1897b).

In an article from as early as 1981, Michael Poole wrote that the interest in social phenomena in the maritime milieu had been observed for over one hundred years. Furthermore, he argued that the analytical premises in this field of research are not sufficiently integrated with central sociological issues. He divided the main problems that maritime sociology addresses into seven categories: the concept of a social system; community and association; social action and culture; structure, differentiation and stratification; processes (including the patterns of recruitment and socialisation); change with an emphasis on the impact of technology; conflict and deviance (Poole, 1981, p. 207). Poole recalls that, according to Rosengren (1973), maritime sociology revolves around the use and exploitation of sea resources. In the final part of his article, Poole indicates directions for the development of maritime sociology, namely, including expanding interest in occupations with weaker connections to the sea (sea drilling platform workers or sea rescuers); widening the research on the background, education, professional careers, occupational mobility or work satisfaction of ship officers; enriching explanatory concepts with issues related to economic conditions, legal and governmental interference or technological changes; with regard to methodologies, he proposed to reach beyond limitations of approaches connected with the established theory (Poole, 1981, p. 29).

A literature review conducted forty years later shows that, in light of empirical research, the category of people in the maritime professions should be recognised as the principal subject of maritime sociology. What should be particularly distinguished from this large-scale social and occupational category is studies on seafarers and fishers, their work and the social consequences of their work at sea. The category of people in the maritime professions seems to be fundamental to the development of maritime sociology. It, therefore, merits some attention.

Although studies on maritime professions did appear (in their beginnings, they were often concerned with the navy (Berkman, 1946, Elias, 1950, French, 1951, Warren, 1946)), through the mid-1950s, the sociology of professions showed little interest in maritime occupations. Horobin explains that such a meagre interest in fishers was caused by a marginal share which fishery had in the national economy. This low economic importance of fishers was supposed

to translate into a smaller number of sociological studies involving this, crucial for maritime sociology as it was, social and occupational category (Horobin 1957, p. 343). In the second half of the 1950s though, a higher level of interest in maritime professions was observed (mainly seafarers and fishers).

Apart from issues related to maritime professions (working conditions at sea, the status of people working in the maritime sector, recruitment models for these professions, maritime culture), there was a parallel development in reflections on the sea vessel treated as a social platform for nautical interactions (Rodriguez-Martos, 2009). In this historical context, what is noteworthy is the 1958 article by Vilhelm Aubert and Oddvar Arner, "On the Social Structure of the Ship." In this work, the authors attempted to present a sociological vision of the ship by comparing it with a land-based workplace (a factory) (Aubert, Arner, 1958, p. 200). What we have to deal with, here, is a conviction that studies concerning the reality of the sea must be based on "classical models" of sociology (relating to land). The comparison with the factory depicted in Aubert and Arner's article was to lead to distinguishing features peculiar to the sea finally. The land-related paradigm was to serve here both as a starting point and basis for distinguishing a new research field, which in this case was a different (nautical) organisation of work.

The practice of utilising ready-made ("land-related") theoretical structures became a permanent feature of the maritime sociology research tradition. What became especially important in this context was Erving Goffman's concept of a total institution (Aubert, 1965, Fricke, 1974, Dauer, 2009, Zurcher, 1965, Janiszewski, 1987 including the critique on the application of the concept, e.g. Perry and Wilkie, 1973; Gerstenberger and Welke, 2004, Grasmeyer, 2020b, Mevik, forthcoming. The ship is a kind of total institution identified (recognised) on land. Research on the sea vessel was also carried out with the use of categories of systems and structures (Barnett, Stevenson, Lang, 2005). Thus, studies on seagoing vessels assumed a purely sociological theoretical framework borrowed in a way from the land. In the early period, the sea vessel studies (the 1960s and 1980s) were the ones with clearly theoretical embedding prevailing, and an entirely sociological character of the considerations under discussion. This approach is dissimilar to today's social studies on maritime issues (in the considered scope), in which a practical and interdisciplinary context of reflections is common.

The above-mentioned article from 1958 (Aubert, Arner, 1958) depicted the work of seafarers. It was also fishers that started to draw the attention of researchers of social life (in the first half of the 1960s). This resulted in scientific monographs on this subject (Tunstall, 1962, Polańska, 1965). These studies were not only about the organisation of work at sea itself, but they also involved

(in addition to working conditions) recruitment models for the profession and problems related to the social status of people working in the maritime sector. Two research perspectives were shaped in this context that have remained crucial to the present, namely, the “organisational structure of the ship” (among other things, frequently discussed problems of crew downgrading, working time organisation, crew multiculturalism (Ljung, Lützhöft, 2014, Kołodziej, Kołodziej-Durnaś, 2015)) and the problem of the attractiveness of work at sea (including the status of people in the maritime professions or the motivations for working at sea (Stasieniuk, 2009, p. 61)). As has already been discussed, both problematic areas revolve around purely practical issues. The studies related to the organisation of work at sea are to provide solutions to real problems of (often multicultural) crew management. Studies on work motivation and satisfaction with a widely understood attractiveness of work at sea are to contribute to the effective formation of the base of human resources/maritime competences which is indispensable in the operation of maritime transport (Kołodziej, 2019).

Apart from the identified research areas, a relatively high degree of attention was also devoted to the issue of the families of people in the maritime professions. Owing to the long-term and cyclical absence of one of their members (usually the husband and father), these families were characterised by a distinct organisation and newly defined family roles. Researchers were interested in how household duties were distributed (how family functions were fulfilled) in the two periods mentioned above (Thurow, 1991, p. 44–47), or how much work at sea affected whether a marriage was successful (survived) (Kaczmarczyk-Sowa, 1991, p. 131–133). This level of analysis (studies on families) was of immense importance to maritime sociology. In the case of families of people in the maritime professions, it is easy to prove their distinctiveness (specific character) which comes down to functioning in two intertwining phases: the presence-absence of one of the adult family members. This fact distinguishes seafarers’ and fishers’ families from families connected with other dangerous occupations (e.g. miners or construction workers) (see the chapter in this volume and also Sampson, 2013).

The above-discussed field of scientific research (studies on people in the maritime professions) can be encapsulated in three basic research areas:

1. The organisational context – the ship as the platform of maritime interactions (comparing the ship to other organisations/land institutions). Social relationships and roles within the ship (a formal and informal social structure of the sea vessel). A question typical of this research area was about how much the sea vessel could be considered as an example of a total institution, how the organisation of work at sea presents itself and what shape relationships among friends take.

2. The status of people in the maritime professions – the social context. Readiness for working at sea is conditional upon the position which maritime occupations have in the social structure. This issue is connected with maritime education. In a wider context, this topic was connected with the functioning of the system of stratification. What was to serve as a solution to an insufficient maritime workforce was, among other things, the opening of maritime occupations (traditionally male) to women (Magramo, Eler, 2012, p. 397).
3. Families of people in the maritime professions – issues of family functioning in a situation determined by a specific (maritime) organisation of work. In this scope, the situation of seafarers' and fishers' spouses was also examined.

## 5 The Subject of Maritime Sociology – beyond People Representing Maritime Professions

In addition to the subject of people in the maritime professions itself, which is always connected with work at sea, sociologists also explore other “maritime” issues. Above all, the following aspects should be highlighted:

- seaside communities and port towns and cities,
- the influence which the sea exerts on the shape of social reality ashore.
- protection of the marine environment,
- maritime upbringing<sup>1</sup>.

These issues are less frequently identified with maritime sociology directly; nonetheless, it does not change the fact that they are related to “maritime” aspects of social science.

Studying more than just people in the maritime professions as a vocational category and concentrating on seaside communities partially results from the characteristics of maritime activity which people undertake. The subject literature points for instance at the explicit distinctiveness of fishery which is expected to bear features of a local character, a high degree of interdependencies, a traditional form of activity and a certain integrity (involving various aspects of life). This integrity also manifests itself in the subjective sphere.

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term ‘upbringing’ although we mean not only learning about ‘maritime world’ from parents or other relatives but most of all in early education institutions (kindergartens, primary and secondary schools) and various centres where additional after-school activities are offered. We think maritime ‘education’ (as opposed to ‘upbringing’) is more frequently associated with vocational and professional training which is not the case here.

Fishers consider themselves as the fishers' community and not fishing boat workers. Owing to these features, fishers were seldom viewed in categories of occupation but more often in categories of local communities or collectivity. This "collective" perspective is precisely the more appropriate one for this issue. "In this sense, the sociology of fishing has developed as a sociology of fishing communities or societies" (Van Maanen, Miller, Johnson, 1980, p. 1).

Issues of coastal communities, port towns and cities and the marine environment often take directions determined by the identification of changes which occur within them. Transformations taking place within the functioning of seaside communities are often influenced by the changing way in which the sea is utilised. Due to environmental changes and fishing limitations, communities whose income is generated from fishery or whaling (Hamilton, Haedrich, 1999, p. 387–388) must redefine their relationship to the sea. Previous occupational activities connected with obtaining food from nature are being replaced by new strategies aiming at cultural or tourist use of the sea (Chen, Chang, 2017, p. 84–85). A part of this process concerns the redevelopment of fishery, which would not take the form of direct fishing but presents maritime culture related to fishing as a particular attraction (identification) of a region. Leaving residual fishing activity in place might also support tourist activity. Even one fishing boat (in a given locality) shapes the tourists' impressions regarding the culinary advantages (access to fresh fish) of a given region. What clearly is transformed here is the social context of utilising sea resources which affects the organisation, structure and culture of an individual coastal community. This reshaping of the social role which the sea plays is intriguing for researchers of social life in a range of disciplines. Maritime culture is no longer the content of social life but becomes (symbolic) capital instead.

A similarly engaging area of research arises from issues related to port towns and cities. The main area which fascinates sociologists is, again, their reorganisation as a consequence of different use of the sea. The subject literature points, first and foremost, to the procedures of ports, which are distinct (detached) from port towns and cities as the place where ships are loaded. The process is well expressed in the report entitled *The Transformation of European Port Cities: Final report on the new EPOC port city audit: "Markets need ports, but no longer need port cities"* (Warsewa 2006, p. 9). This change depreciates the global role of ports and poses new challenges for port towns and cities. These challenges concern both the objective (spatial development of coastal areas) and subjective spheres (searching for a new maritime identity) (Kowalewski, 2011). What is remarkable is that along with the loss of "maritime identity," the engagement of the social sciences with port towns and cities is growing (Ducruet, 2011, p. 32, 33).

The change in the sea-port town/city relationship occurs in a broad social context. Ports receding from towns and cities means less opportunity for seafarers to rest when their ships call at ports for a stopover. Nevertheless, the necessity to redevelop wharves might be of benefit to residents themselves, who will gain access to new areas of towns and cities. Following these changes, port towns and cities have to redefine their weakened relation (their relationship) with the sea. In significant part, this process takes place in the symbolic sphere. Suitable cultural (including mass events) and educational events are to form a new maritime identity for a region and its inhabitants. Efforts to preserve the maritime character as a factor identifying the distinctiveness (differentiation) of a given region and shaping its specific nature and attractiveness constitute a thought-provoking subject for the social sciences (including sociology).

Another consideration linking the theme of social life with the marine environment is the importance which maritime transport has for the quality of life ashore. Currently, maritime transport constitutes roughly 90% of global transport (Neider, 2015, p. 33). Access to cheap goods is possible due to complex processes of the centralisation and decentralisation of production (Kumar, Hoffmann, 2002). What is understood by centralisation is the ability to manufacture subassemblies on a large scale in one location. Decentralisation means the ability to assemble a final product from subassemblies obtained from various sources. Of key importance to both these processes is the low cost of transport. The potential of maritime transport, therefore, exceeds the simple ability to ship manufactured goods to customers cheaply.

The impact of work at sea (utilisation of the sea) therefore leads to extensive social consequences which also manifest themselves clearly in the cultural sphere. This does not mean, however, that land-related culture is becoming "maritime culture." Nevertheless, globalisation and the processes it entails cannot be fully comprehended without taking account of the role of the work performed by approximately 1.6 million seafarers and probably hundreds of thousands of people in other maritime professions (dock workers, logistics experts, shipyard workers).

What remains somewhat on the margins of basic "maritime" deliberations of sociology is maritime upbringing. In its general meaning, upbringing is an intentional activity aiming at shaping adequate qualities, values or attitudes. Maritime upbringing used to be connected with forming a maritime identity, i.e. creating the national identity in a country with access to the sea and for which the maritime economy had great significance. Maritime upbringing also targeted those who learned maritime occupations – to awake a "maritime passion" so as for them to perform their jobs well and convince themselves that

they had chosen the right profession. Once they started their career on board, the aim of maritime upbringing was to support their adaptation to isolation and separation – living and working conditions on the ship as a quasi-total institution. In socialist Poland, even adult and hardened in their profession fishers and seafarers were the object of attempts to give them political “education” – through talks, film viewings and ideological debates which were organised on board. People working on board ships were supposed to be aware and active in the social sphere (among other things, the aim was to prevent them from defecting in foreign ports) (Woźniak, 1987).

These days, maritime upbringing is to show children and the youth a different, smarter and more value-oriented path to adulthood which leads through cooperation with others, effort, overcoming one’s weaknesses and caring about natural resources (Kołodziej-Durnaś, Kołodziej, 2017).

Today, it is thought that maritime upbringing can serve therapeutic functions (Mańkowska, 1998). The sea is a resource that promotes well-being, contemplation, mindfulness and work on the self. It is as early writers such as Sigmund Freud and Viktor Emil Frankl have stated (Lileikis, 2009). In today’s climate of cultural individualism, the sea, therefore, assumes the role of a mirror reflecting each of us and our paths to personal development.

## 6 Maritime Sociology – the Case of Poland

The history of sociological studies on maritime issues in Poland has been as long as over half a century. The name has undergone modifications, starting from the sociology of people in the maritime professions, through nautical sociology, to maritime sociology.

In the beginning, research on human activity at sea (which Janiszewski mentions in his books, referring to notes included in works of sociologists from France, Italy, the UK and the Netherlands) did not constitute an explicitly separate notion, but was conducted within the sociology of work, industrial sociology, or the sociology of culture. Considered as a decisive year was 1973, when an international scientific conference was organised in New Orleans in the United States on the topic of Maritime Sociology (Janiszewski, Sosnowski, 1984, p. 17).

Ludwik Janiszewski, the father of the Polish maritime sociology, cited the writings of Scandinavian, British, American and Canadian authors. His first important work, entitled “Rybaczy dalekomorscy. Studium socjologiczne” [“Deep-sea Fishermen. A Sociological Study”] was published in 1967 after he had finished a voyage during which he collected incognito field data on board.

Later, other sociologists were awarded academic degrees in maritime sociology studies. Research on maritime occupations, seafarers and fishers' families, shipyard workers, maritime upbringing, organisation and management on seagoing ships was conducted in Szczecin (as well as in Poznań, Gdańsk and Katowice).

The growing number of empirical studies in maritime sociology meant that it was necessary to seek a theory which would synthesise results, form a common ground for already published works and fulfil a heuristic function in regard to further investigations. Ludwik Janiszewski began working on a marine theory. In his view, marinisation processes were supposed to show similarities or parallels to the processes of urbanisation and industrialisation. The transformation of the social milieu under the influence of the sea on human behaviour was believed to mean that what had to be examined was the distinctiveness of work, organisation and management, families or education on seaside areas.

The following were recognised in Poland as the basic divisions of maritime sociology: the sociology of people in the maritime professions, the sociology of maritime institutions and organisations, the sociology of maritime territorial (ecological) communities and the sociology of social processes determined by the impact of the sea (Janiszewski, Sosnowski, 1984, p. 18). Specific functions of maritime sociology were considered to include the description and explanation of processes and phenomena which occurred as a result of human activity at sea and in connection with the sea; examining various institutions, communities and milieux which formed the so-called maritime social reality; analysing collective, organised and spontaneous forms of human activity at sea, under its influence or for the sea; exploring the mutual interactions between biophysical conditions of the sea and social groups involved in sea exploitation; researching the mutual interactions between people during their work at sea and on land; studying the varied impact of human activity at sea and in connection with the sea (Janiszewski, Sosnowski, 1984, p. 32; Index of Current Maritime Research, Cardiff, 1973).

Echoes of the pursuit of maritime themes from the angle of different sociological subdisciplines are found in Wioleta Bryniewicz's book about the origins and history of maritime sociology, in which she advances her "matrix" perspective involving issues from the scope of the sociology of the family, the sociology of culture, the sociology of work and the sociology of cities (Bryniewicz, 2004). However, Ludwik Janiszewski and Adam Sosnowski were of the opinion that maritime sociology was not a microsociology but was located somewhere between general sociology and multiple subdisciplines. Issues it addressed in its narrowed scale could be related to those establishing the status quo of

general sociology. In this way, individual subdisciplines assumed the role of disciplines which are auxiliary to maritime sociology (Janiszewski, Sosnowski, 1984, p. 20–21). In this sense, maritime sociology takes shape alongside other maritime social sciences: maritime history, maritime economics, maritime psychology, maritime ethnology and maritime anthropology. Maritime sociology should maintain close relations with some natural and technical fields such as the physiology of work, marine hydrology, oceanography or marine engineering (Janiszewski, Sosnowski, 1984, p. 25–26).

The particular nature of maritime sociology pursued in Poland is caused by the fact that not only the work performed by people taking up maritime occupations was studied, but also how working in such an environment influences their surroundings on land. In more general terms, it was not the behaviour of marine environment workers itself that was examined but – in a wider context – their families, culture, and institutions.

Sea-related issues enjoyed different degrees of interest in Poland. The following contributed to the development of maritime sociology as a scientific discipline: the attention which this topic drew from researchers at a range of scientific centres in Szczecin, Gdańsk, Poznań and Katowice; running an academic course on the topic of maritime sociology at the University of Szczecin; the publishing of the journal *Roczniki Socjologii Morskiej* [*Annals of Marine Sociology*] published by the Polish Academy of Sciences (the Gdańsk branch) in Poland between 1986–2016.

Factors that hampered the development of maritime sociology in Poland at the end of the twentieth century included, first of all, the systemic transformation and decline of the maritime economy (mainly fishery and fishing enterprises).

Together with a deterioration of the maritime economy during the time of transformation in Poland, maritime sociology was also going through a less intense stage of development. For over a decade now, though, a younger generation has been promoting maritime sociology in Europe. At the 2019 European Sociological Association conference in Manchester, a Pole and a German chaired the maritime sociology session (previous sessions were organised at these conferences in Lisbon in 2009, Geneva in 2011, in Turin in 2013 and in Prague in 2015). Such sessions also took place at national conferences of the Polish Sociological Association (in 2019 in Wrocław; they were formally international at earlier conferences in Szczecin in 2013 and in Gdańsk in 2016). In 2012, a “marine sociology” session was organised at the 26th conference of the Nordic Sociological Association at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik. Zadar, one of the largest cities of Croatia, acted as the host to the large-scale “Sociology at Sea. Culture, Economy and Society in a Maritime Perspective”

conference in 2013. In 2015, a joint German-Polish session in maritime sociology was organised at the German Sociological Conference in Trier.

In 2018, a conference was organised in Warsaw which was a meeting forum for maritime sociologists from Szczecin and representatives of ocean sociology (as this is the name promoted in Asia) from Japan, South Korea and China. These meetings led to presentations given by maritime sociologists from Poland at conferences in Japan and Korea in 2019.

## 7 Conclusion

The topic of the sea and ocean as a space of human activity is frequently pursued today, although it does not always appear under the name of studies on maritime sociology. The natural resources of our planet are now, and they will surely remain in the nearest future, at the centre of many experts' interest. Accordingly, ecological issues being discussed include the degree of water pollution and overfishing in the context of sustainable development; economic issues connected with the deindustrialisation of seaside areas or the automation and mechanisation of work in maritime economy; issues related to culture (e.g. disappearance of the knowledge of local nations connected with the sea and postcolonial heritage) and education (maritime upbringing). Research is also conducted on the safety and legality of work at sea, relations and relationships on ships, stress factors affecting seafarers or fishers (isolation, separation), the global labour market in the maritime professions and the (non-) presence of women at sea.

In addition, sea and ocean resources (as shipping routes in particular) are at the centre of a looming global conflict. The conflict seems to be a particular exemplification of another dispute about what seas and oceans are to be in the context of their connections to the social world. Modern challenges not only relate to the dilemma regarding whether to exploit sea resources or protect them for future generations. The blue-growth concept increases the number of actors involved in sustainable development (with additional wildlife and technological actors), which makes their interrelations more and more dense and complex. It gives hope for the creation of new workplaces and generation of energy and food on the one hand but, on the other, it carries the risk of privatising resources, getting stuck in the network of procedures and management and symbolic objectification of wildlife, which has been uncontrollable until now. Oceans are becoming the object of planning and control, and maritime sociology or – in a wider context – the marine social sciences might provide the knowledge which is critical for this area (Arbo, Knol, Linke, Martin, 2018,

Bennett, 2019). Maritime sociology might contribute to preventing the fragmentation of the experience of natural resources such as water. Apart from serving as boundaries, seas, and oceans might form links (bridges), also in the sense of the universalisation of understanding wildlife as a common good of all humankind (Rancew-Sikora, 2014).

The review of the global literature about the social sciences shows that sea-related issues draw considerable attention today. Yet it is aspects which have not been discussed in the traditional Polish maritime sociology that constitute the main subjects of research. Currently, instead of classical issues relating to work, profession, family, culture or the town/city, there are a growing number of studies about more interdisciplinary topics concerning ecology, piracy, migration or economics and management (Kołodziej-Durnaś, 2014). This can be observed in Germany where the contemporary development of scientific thought about the sea as a social space revolves around ecological issues such as national parks at coasts, environmental conflicts and fishery exploitation policies (Sowa, 2014, Lasner, Hamm, 2015). Hence, what prevails here again is the second paradigm of studies about sea-related issues, which sees a main problem in the impact people have on the marine environment and not in the impact the sea reality has on social life.

In order to gain the status of a fully recognised scientific discipline, maritime sociology certainly lacks important journals discussing this topic *sensu stricto*. In Poland, *Roczniki Socjologii Morskiej* [*Annals of Maritime Sociology*] was published for three decades between 1986–2016 (25 volumes were issued). Although they were becoming more and more valued and grew from being a local journal into an international one recognised abroad (the last issues contained articles written by non-Polish authors in English), they ceased to be subsidised due to changes brought by the reform of higher education. Nonetheless, there are many other significant journals which publish works related to maritime sociology. Recognised ones include *Maritime Policy & Management*, *Maritime Studies*, as well as *Transnav: International Journal on Maritime Navigation & Safety of Sea Transportation*, *Constanta Maritime University Annals*, *Pomorstvo/Scientific Journal of Maritime Research*, *Scientific Journals of the Maritime University of Szczecin*, *Journal of Coastal Research*, *Asia-Pacific Journal of Marine Science & Education*, and *International Maritime Health*. Articles about issues in maritime sociology are also published by prestigious sociological journals such as *Sociology*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Canadian Review of Sociology & Anthropology*, *American Journal of Economics & Society*, *Law & Social Enquiry* as well as *Current Sociology* (Kołodziej-Durnaś, 2014). It still seems, however, that the emergence of, or simply starting a journal which would publish articles strictly about maritime sociology, would strengthen its

position among modern sociological notions and promote the integration of the community of maritime sociologists. This is particularly important in the context of the growing interest of researchers and the simultaneous increase in the amount of diverse social research on sea-related issues.

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