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FIFTY YEARS OF MARITIME SOCIOLOGY IN POLAND

Pięćdziesiąt lat socjologii morskiej w Polsce

Arkadiusz Kołodziej
University of Szczecin, Poland
e-mail: arkadiusz.kolodziej@usz.edu.pl
ORCID  0000-0003-2302-5553

Agnieszka Kołodziej-Durnaś
University of Szczecin, Poland
e-mail: agnieszka.kolodziej-durnas@usz.edu.pl
ORCID  0000-0003-0844-2869

Iwona Królikowska
Polish Naval University in Gdynia, Poland
e-mail: i.krolikowska@amw.gdynia.pl
ORCID  0000-0002-3406-3152

Abstract

Sociological reflection on maritime issues is currently characterised by a certain degree of dispersion; it is carried out in various areas of social science. Some of the “nautical” studies are in the area of sociology of work, sociology of organization, or sociology of occupation. These are all those studies that relate to the category of “people of the sea”. (maritime professions or maritime labour organisation). Other “nautical” analyses are closer to environmental or city sociology. The numerous studies on the port city should be highlighted here. The common feature of these studies is the reflection on the social significance of the sea – its influence on the organization of life of individuals and wider communities. It is stressed that the proximity of the sea is a source of social specificity. The people of the sea (together with their families), according to the research carried out, are different from people of the “land” (Woźniak, 1988, p. 295); as port cities differ (also in the symbolic layer) from cities with no connection to the sea (Kowalewski, 2011). Against the background of the empirical research conducted, there is a discussion about the need for an independent sociological sub-discipline that would address the issues identified (the relationship between the sea and social life). However, neither the name itself nor its subject matter (from the perspective of world sociology) is yet clearly defined.

This situation is somewhat different in Polish sociology, where a nautical sociological sub-discipline – maritime sociology – can be distinguished. The aim of this article is to present the development of this sociological sub-discipline in Poland – its subject, main research directions and key theoretical concepts, taking into account the proper (maritime) economic context.

Keywords: maritime sociology, Polish maritime economy, history of sociology, maritime professions, sea as social space, organizational sociology.

Streszczenie

Socjologiczna refleksja nad problematyką morską charakteryzuje się obecnie pewnym rozproszeniem; prowadzona jest w różnych obszarach nauk społecznych. Część badań „nautycznych” znajduje się w obszarze socjologii pracy, socjologii organizacji czy socjologii zawodu. Są to wszystkie studia odnoszące się do kategorii „ludzi morza” (zawody morskie lub morska organizacja pracy). Inne analizy „nautyczne” bliższe są socjologii środowiskowej lub socjologii miasta. Należy tu zwrócić uwagę na liczne opracowania dotyczące miasta portowego. Wspólną cechą tych opracowań jest refleksja nad społecznym znaczeniem morza – jego wpływem na organizację życia jednostek i szerszych społeczności. Podkreśla się, że bliskość morza jest źródłem specyfiki społecznej. Ludzie morza (wraz z rodzinami), jak wynika z przeprowadzonych badań, różnią się od ludzi „lądu” (Woźniak, 1988, s. 295), podobnie jak miasta portowe różnią się (także w warstwie symbolicznej) od miast nie mających związku z morzem (Kowalewski, 2011). Na tle przeprowadzonych badań empirycznych pojawia się dyskusja o potrzebie stworzenia samodzielnej subdyscypliny socjologicznej, która zajmowałaby się wskazaną problematyką (relacjami między morzem a życiem społecznym). Jednak ani sama nazwa, ani jej przedmiot (z perspektywy socjologii światowej) nie są jeszcze jasno określone.

Nieco inaczej sytuacja ta wygląda w polskiej socjologii, gdzie można wyróżnić nautyczną subdyscyplinę socjologiczną – socjologię morską. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest przedstawienie rozwoju tej subdyscypliny socjologicznej w Polsce – jej przedmiotu, głównych kierunków badawczych oraz kluczowych koncepcji teoretycznych, z uwzględnieniem właściwego (morskiego) kontekstu gospodarczego.

Słowa kluczowe: socjologia morską, polska gospodarka morską, historia socjologii, zawody morskie, morze jako przestrzeń społeczna, socjologia organizacji.

The maritime economy in Poland and the development of maritime sociology

The interest of researchers of social life in maritime issues was partly determined by the fact that Poland gained greater access to the sea after World War II. This change was accompanied by the dynamic development of the Polish fleet or, more broadly, the entire maritime economy and the development of scientific centres in coastal areas.

It is worth quoting some statistics – in 1956 the total tonnage of the Polish fleet was 400 thousand DWT,¹ in 1980, about 4 million DWT (Nikołajew & Leśniewska, 2013, p. 127). Thus, we can observe a tenfold increase of this aspect. Shipbuilding was also a significant element of the Polish maritime economy. It is estimated, that on the eve of the political transformation, the industry employed 50,000 workers (excluding subcontractors) (Wróbel & Frankowski, 2016, p. 152). As early as 2005, Poland was the fourth largest shipbuilding producer in Europe (Dajczak, 2008, s. 124). The dynamic development of fisheries was also not without significance. In 1950, the Polish fleet had twenty-seven deep-sea fishing vessels. Fifteen years later, there were already 139 of them. During this period, the number of fishing boats also increased

¹ DWT (deadweight tonnage) – basic parameter used to determine the size of a vessel.

significantly (from 338 vessels to 533; GUS, 1969, p. 166). These changes were accompanied by a number of important social phenomena. Along with the development of maritime economy, the social structure in the coastal areas was being transformed. All this created an interesting research space for developing scientific centres. The development of sociology in Szczecin was important in this context, where the maritime issues were addressed first and foremost.² These issues were also dealt with by researchers from other scientific centres (Woźniak, 2016, p. 48). One should first of all recall the studies conducted in Poznań (studies by Zygmunt Dulczewski, 1973), in Gdynia (studies by Aurelia Polańska, 1965), and in Gdańsk (works by Tadeusz Olchowy, 1969).

From the very beginning of its existence, maritime sociology in Poland has been focused on studies on people of the sea (research on maritime professions). Therefore, in the initial phase of the discussion on what its name should be, there was a proposal to call it the “sociology of people of the sea” (Matejko, 1964). However, the name ‘maritime sociology’ was eventually adopted. This has been confirmed by a scientific journal published since 1985 (the first two issues were entitled “Maritime Sociology”, followed by “Annals of Marine Sociology/ Roczniki Socjologii Morskiej”) and numerous publications in which the name is used (Janiszewski, 1977; Sztumski, 1971). Thus, it can be assumed that already in the 1970s the name was the most popular and, in this sense, binding term.

The nomenclature, despite numerous doubts, has not changed so far. As a result, “maritime sociology” has embraced a broad area of scientific research that goes beyond the issue of people of the sea themselves. Its area of interest also included: maritime institutions, local maritime communities, and social processes triggered by seaside location (Janiszewski, 1985, p. 18). Such a broad definition of the issues of the discussed sub-discipline (seafarers, maritime institutions, local communities, nautical processes) raised numerous methodological questions. In the background of the discussion on maritime sociology, the question of what is the social context of studies on the sea, what fits into such a defined sociological discipline, can still be heard today (Kołodziej, 2015; Rancew-Sikora, 2010).

Studies of the people of the sea

By people of the sea, in Polish maritime sociology, one understands four basic categories of workers, namely seafarers and fishermen (two categories directly related to the sea) and port workers and shipbuilders (categories indirectly related to the sea).

² This is evidenced by numerous scientific publications and sessions organized by the West Pomeranian Institute: ‘Seafarers’ (1968), ‘Culture on a seagoing ship’ (1969), ‘Seafarers’ time off ashore’ (1972) – Durka (2010, p. 73).

The sub-discipline therefore focused on certain socio-occupational categories, which linked it primarily to the sociology of the professions. Among the categories distinguished, the fishermen's category was of particular interest (1960s and 1970s). Two (foreign) works were considered exemplary in their research: a monograph by J. Tunstall *The Fisherman* (1962) and an article by J. G. Horobin (1957), entitled *Community and Occupation in the Hull Fishing Industry* (Nikołajew, 1994, p. 126). These publications address issues typical of the later development of maritime sociology, namely the problem of work at sea (the issue of motivation to work on a ship, recruitment patterns, "appalling" working conditions, work organization), and the impact of this work on other structures of the social world (family, local community) (Tunstall, 1972). Analytically, one can therefore distinguish here three areas of interest that will become fundamental for marine sociology in Poland:

1. the influence of society on work at sea (e.g. the issue of attractiveness of maritime professions);
2. the organisation of work at sea (internal ship structures – a ship as a social system, or a total institution);
3. the influence of work at sea on the land reality (this issue was described in Poland within the concept of marinization of Ludwik Janiszewski).

The interest of Polish sociologists in the category of fishermen resulted in numerous publications. The most important of these include, in Polish sociology, Aurelia Polanska's monograph *Zawód rybaka morskiego w Polsce/ The Profession of a Sea Fisherman in Poland* (1965), a study by Ludwik Janiszewski *Rybacy dalekomorscy. Studium socjologiczne/ Deep-sea Fishermen. Sociological study* (1967) and Zygmunt Dulczewski's dissertation: *Rybacy bałtyccy. Zagadnienie stabilizacji społeczno-zawodowej/ Baltic Fishermen. The Issue of Social-Professional Stabilization* (1973). The indicated book publications were accompanied by a number of scientific articles devoted to the category of fishermen, which contrasted with the much lower interest in the category of sailors (Sitek, 1969, p. 95). Let us recall that the first monographic study of transport fleet seamen appeared only in 1974 (Milian, 1974).

The broad interest of Polish sociologists in the category of fishermen may be explained relatively simply. The profession is characterised by a number of peculiar features that clearly make it more attractive and distinctive. These features include the uncertainty of fishing success, on which the fishermen's salary depended. This uncertainty has actuated social life on board. The need to compete with nature also encouraged the emergence and persistence of numerous superstitions. This fact, and therefore a certain susceptibility to an extra-institutional explanation of reality, is considered to be one of the factors that differentiates fishermen from land-based people.

These and other aspects of fishermen's work make them a sociologically distinguished category, which has been exemplified in the particular interest of Polish maritime sociologists in this very professional category described above. Despite the

cognitive “assets” of this profession, the interest of Polish sociologists in the issue of fisheries has clearly diminished over the years. The decline in interest in a given phenomenon can often be explained by the tendency to look for new problem areas; a certain exploitation of the studied issues. In this case, however, the declining interest in fishermen had its objective basis – the decreasing number of people working in this profession. Particularly drastic changes were observed in the deep-sea fishing sector. The number of deep-sea fishing vessels in Poland has been successively decreasing since the 1970s. For comparison, in 1970 the Polish fleet had 147 deep-sea fishing vessels; in 2017 – only three. The number of fishing vessels was also reduced from 545 in 1970 to 124 in 2017 (GUS, 2018, p. 42).

The institutional expression of the reduction of the fishing fleet was the closure of deep-sea fishing enterprises. In 2001, PPDiUR “Gryf” in Szczecin was announced bankrupt. A year later, PPDiUR “Odra” in Świnoujście was closed down. In 2011, Dalmor Fishing Enterprise in Gdynia ends its fishing activity.³ These changes significantly reduced the potential for research on seafarers in an exceptionally interesting area of deep-sea fishing (similarly to the shipbuilders (Kołodziej-Durnaś, 2019).

Along with changes in the employment structure of seafarers (a significant reduction in employment in the deep-sea fisheries sector), interest in the second key (for maritime sociology) socio-professional category, namely seafarers of the transport fleet, naturally increased. This category has undergone significant transformations with the political transformation in Poland, but it has not been reduced, as was the case with the fishermen described above. As a result, apart from numerous articles on transport fleet seafarers published after 2000, this category could also be described in sociological monographs. The book of Żaneta Stasieniuk: *Zbiorowość marynarzy w procesie zmian społecznych/ Community of Seafarers in the Process of Social Changes* (Stasieniuk, 2009), Arkadiusz Kołodziej’s monograph *Marynarze floty transportowej w świetle studiów nad struktury społecznych/ Merchant Seafarers in the Light of Social Structure Studies* (2019a) and Iwona Królikowska’s monograph *Załoga statku morskiego jako wielokulturowe środowisko pracy w opiniach polskich oficerów. Wyzwania dla edukacji międzykulturowej/ The Crew of a Seagoing Vessel as a Multicultural Work Environment in the Opinion of Polish Officers. Challenges for Multicultural Education* (2021) should be mentioned here.

³ The decline of deep-sea fisheries in Poland was largely linked to the lack of access (restricted access) to attractive fisheries. Regulations on the rights of coastal states were set out in 1982 in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). As a result of these provisions, individual countries introduce 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zones, which limit access to rich fisheries. Access to attractive fisheries required the payment of appropriate fees to the countries that control them. Additional costs have hindered profitable activities in the deep-sea fisheries sector.

A number of factors indicate that this category of seafarers will also decrease in the future in Poland. The profession of seafarer, as in other developed countries, is slowly losing its attractiveness.⁴ However, this is not likely to be as sudden a change as we have seen with deep-sea fishermen. It is therefore hoped that maritime sociology will develop further in the study of seafarers.

The development of empirical research in the field of marine sociology was accompanied by methodological and theoretical reflection. The concept of marinization by Ludwik Janiszewski was particularly important in this context. This concept (which is important for understanding it) created the theoretical framework for research conducted in Poland; it determined the directions of empirical research.⁵ The “theory” of marinization was not, therefore, a result of the research carried out, but rather a certain analytical network used to describe the “process of marinization”. The process of marinization itself was understood as the influence of the sea (human activity related to the sea) on the social life that remained within the range of this (nautical) influence. The families of seafarers, in which the process was apparently manifested, became a special area of interest. In other words, human activity connected with the sea (especially professional work) was to modify various spheres of human life (Janiszewski, 1991, pp. 3–4). The greatest changes were expected in the area of family functioning.

Research on maritime families indicated their specificity (different from land-based families). The main differentiating factor was the fact of long, cyclical absence of the husband – father. This fact made the family of seafarers and deep-sea fishermen characterized (in the light of the research carried out) as “peculiarly disorganized” (the cyclical absence of the father makes the maritime family remain in a constant state of adaptation to one of the two periods or modes), with a strong internal bond (risk of work at sea and lack of husband-father binding the family together), with a relatively closed (for social life) character (Kozak, 1995, pp. 56–57). These were therefore the distinguishing features of the maritime family, which can be considered in the category of objectivization of the maritime process.

The significant role of the concept of marinization has meant that maritime sociology in Poland can be treated not only narrowly (as a sociology of people of the sea), but also more broadly, as a discipline that studies the process of the sea’s influence on the whole social reality. Such a broad understanding of maritime sociology has included coastal communities and potentially issues typical of environmental sociology in its field of interest. Ecological issues and research on social changes caused by the disappearance of the fishing profession and traditions associated with its practice in Polish

⁴ This change is made up of both economic factors (the possibility of finding a financially rewarding job on land) and cultural changes (e.g. redefinition of family roles).

⁵ This concept is discussed in more detail in the article: *The Concept of Marinization by Ludwik Janiszewski – To Understand the Influence of the Sea* (Kołodziej, 2019b).

research constitute a new area that emerged with the beginning of the 21st century and concerns the functioning of coastal local communities. Karolina Ciechorska-Kulesza (2015) points to the “old” and “new” authors of social changes in coastal villages characterizing the picture of the meeting point of two different worlds – the agricultural part (including fishermen) and the expanding non-agricultural part (authors, initiators of collective actions, resulting from the transformations of the modern Polish village). She draws attention to the disputes over defining the further development of coastal communities by linking marinization to the classic concepts of social capital by James Coleman (1995) and Robert Putnam (2008). Dorota Rancew-Sikora (2011) also wrote about the consequences of these changes, pointing out that in the era of the crisis of fishing and the maritime economy, coastal localities are struggling to confront the protection of natural resources with modernization and tourism development. The author points out the divergence of interests combined with the distrust and hostility of fishermen towards environmentalists – scientists and politicians of the center and the European Union (Rancew-Sikora, 2011, p. 287).

Definition problems

Despite several decades of development of maritime sociology, there is still a dispute over the very name of this sub-discipline in global terms (mainly during international conferences). The dispute should not be underestimated. The adoption of a specific name is connected with outlining specific issues. The recapitulation of the course of this dispute (various proposals and arguments) goes beyond the framework of this article. Its timeliness and importance, however, make it worth quoting here the Polish experience of the process of the emergence (formation) of this sociological sub-discipline, including the process of agreeing on its name.

More than fifty years ago Ludwik Janiszewski published a book entitled *Fishermen of the Sea. Sociological Study* (1967). Earlier, maritime sociology was written by Aleksander Matejko in *Sociology of people of the sea* (1964) and J. Nadolski *Socjologia morska/ Maritime Sociology* (1964) to benefit from the scientific and research base. The notion of ‘people of the sea’, therefore, appeared from the beginning of the development of the issues we are interested in here. The *Sociology of people of the sea* was an important proposal for defining a new (social) maritime sub-discipline.

The very category of people of the sea proved to be a very ambiguous concept. The broadest meaning was given to the various socio-professional categories – even those that were only indirectly related to the sea. This broad group included not only fishermen or sailors, but also shipbuilders, researchers (scientists), port workers, teachers of maritime schools and marine students. In a slightly narrower sense, ‘people of the sea’ were only defined as socio-professional categories directly related to work at sea. First of all, seafarers and fishermen were indicated here, but also (not so

numerous) port pilots or workers exploiting natural resources from the seabed and, as well as Maritime Security Operatives working as protection on ships sailing in high-risk area. In a narrow sense, this category was defined only as seafarers and fishermen who stood out not only in terms of objective, but also subjective (awareness) criteria. In fact, the research identified their clear sense of distinctiveness from land people.

However, the *Sociology of people of the sea*, i.e. the sociological reflection on a certain (defined in various ways) socio-professional category, had its limitations. Sociological aspirations related to the analysis of maritime phenomena were much broader. Hence, the term ‘maritime sociology’ seemed more appropriate (though slightly less precise). This name allowed to study not only ‘people of the sea’, but also processes, institutions and maritime communities (Janiszewski & Sosnowski, 1984, p. 10). Thus, ‘sociology of the people of the sea’ became a subcategory of ‘maritime sociology’, which over time displaced its “narrower” alternative. Nowadays the term ‘maritime sociology’ should be regarded as dominant, although it is worth remembering some of the advantages (greater clarity) of the name ‘sociology of the people of the sea’.

According to Ludwik Janiszewski, the discipline developed in Poland both under the influence of direct practical demand and the requirements of general theory development (Janiszewski & Sosnowski, 1984, p. 13). The subject of maritime sociology is the social reality of the sea (Janiszewski, 1978). Sociology of the sea as a sub-discipline was intended to build a medium range theory (Janiszewski & Sosnowski, 1984, p. 20).

Sociology of the sea was to perform a number of functions. Its aspirations in this area coincide with a wide range of empirical sciences. This sub-discipline was to pursue:

- the cognitive function – the discernment of mechanisms and regularities that govern social phenomena and processes;
- diagnostic function (sociography), i.e. a systematic and cool description of certain spheres of life;
- prognostic function – anticipating the effects of “maritime” phenomena and processes;
- theoretical function – preparation of theoretical models to organize the collected empirical material, explanation of the described relationships;
- the sociotechnical function – transforming knowledge into a set of directives leading to the conscious implementation of changes to achieve specific goals (Janiszewski & Sosnowski, 1984, p. 31);

The particular functions that are specific to this sub-discipline are:

- enriching knowledge about marine communities, environments, institutions;
- presenting the creative role of seafarers, especially their work and how their activity shapes diverse social relationships and develops social personality in particularly difficult and specific natural conditions;

- gradually eliminating stereotypes about the work and life of seafarers, showing the impact of natural, social and cultural conditions on safety and productivity of work and satisfaction with its performance and results, on a micro and macro scale;
- to highlight the impact of various directions and forms of human activity at sea and in relation to the sea on various areas of social life;
- providing a scientific basis for social policy aimed at the most complete humanisation of working and living conditions, with particular emphasis on social relations in the workplace (especially on seagoing ships) and social relations which are formed between crews and their families on land (Janiszewski & Sosnowski, 1984, pp. 32–33).

Facing the changes taking place in the maritime economy, it is worth considering expanding the functions of maritime sociology to include enriching the knowledge of promoting social awareness related to ecology, as well as considering deeper cooperation between science and business and coastal local communities to build a new vision for Poland and the sea.

These issues point to some important “humanistic” orientation of maritime sociology, which had not only cognitive aspirations (related to basic research), but also a clear practical context oriented primarily towards improving the situation of seafarers (e.g. improving conditions and ways of organising work on board ships).

Wioleta Bryniewicz (2004) in her book summarizing the first, national period of development of marine sociology writes about its matrix perspective. She argues that the subject of maritime sociology can be related to subjects from other sub-disciplines, such as family sociology, sociology of work, urban sociology and sociology of culture. Connections between maritime theory and other sub-disciplines are also proposed by Iwona Królikowska (2021) locating her research on the functioning of seafarers in multicultural crews at the intersection of the perspectives of sociology of work, multiculturalism and education. Maritime sociology served as an in-depth analysis of the maritime work environment, and the multicultural and pedagogical perspectives provided interesting answers to questions about adult learning in a multicultural ship crew environment. This remark, thanks to a broad understanding of the field of this sub-discipline, is still important. This is reflected in the series of books on maritime sociology, the titles of which will refer to the previously mentioned related sub-disciplines (family, work, city, culture). The first two volumes of the *International Studies in Maritime Sociology* covered maritime spaces and maritime professions (Kolodziej-Durnas, Sowa, Grasmeyer, 2022 and Kolodziej-Durnas, Sowa, Grasmeyer, 2023).

Institutionalization of maritime sociology in Poland

The interest in the sea as a social space was already visible in classical sociology. Ferdinand Tönnies analyzed the working and pay conditions of representatives of various

maritime professions, as well as the famous dockers' strike in Hamburg in 1896–97 (Tönnies, 1897a, 1897b). The outstanding representative of this discipline Norbert Elias prepared a fundamental work on the genesis of the maritime profession (reconstructed by others from his scattered writings was published already after his death) (Elias, 2007).

Ludwik Janiszewski, who created Polish maritime sociology, referred to the works of Scandinavian, British, American or Canadian authors. His first important work, *Deep-sea Fishermen. Sociological Study*, was published in 1967, after completing a cruise during which he collected field data on board *in cognito*. Later on, other sociologists obtained their degrees on the basis of studies in maritime sociology (Robert Woźniak, Jan Nikołajew, Bolesław Klepajczuk, Włodzimierz Durka). In Szczecin (but also at universities in Poznań – Zygmunt Dulczewski, Jerzy Walkowiak, Gdańsk – Marek Latoszek, Aurelia Polańska, Krzysztof Wszeborowski, Izydor Sobczak, Bogusław Marciniak, Katowice – Janusz Sztumski, Częstochowa University of Technology – Lech Milian) research was conducted on maritime professions, families of sailors and fishermen, shipbuilders, maritime education, organization and management on a deep-sea ship. A section of maritime sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences was established, as well as the scientific journal “Annals of Marine Sociology”.

The growing number of empirical studies emerging within the framework of maritime sociology meant that it was necessary to develop a theory that could synthesize results, provide a framework for already published papers and serve as a heuristic function for further research. In the 1980s Ludwik Janiszewski began working on the theory of maritime sociology, although its concept had been dreamt up to him (sic!) much earlier (cf. interview conducted with L. Janiszewski by Teresa Rzepa and published as part of the History of Polish Sociology series in autobiographies 1997). According to him, the processes of marinization were supposed to be similar, or parallel to those of urbanization and industrialization. The change of the social environment under the influence of the sea on human behaviour was supposed to mean that the difference between work, organization and management, family or education in coastal areas had to be studied.

Ludwik Janiszewski believed that the emergence of maritime sociology is a natural consequence of the development of knowledge – science matures, knowledge accumulates, and with it sub-disciplines are created that deal with various fragments of reality – in this case social reality. However, maritime sociology is also unusual in some aspects. It deals with all three main branches of sociology – social institutions, social communities and social processes (Janiszewski & Sosnowski, 1984, p. 7). Again, therefore, its comprehensive aspirations become apparent.

An important moment for the institutionalization of maritime sociology in Poland was the establishment of the Section of Marine Sociology at the Polish Sociological

Society (1977). In 1979 the Department of Maritime Sociology of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences was established, to which the Laboratory of Seafarers in Gdańsk was subordinate. The Studio was headed by Marek Latoszek until 1983, when it was dissolved for political reasons (M. Latoszek's team announced a competition for the memories of shipyard workers). Also in Szczecin, materials related to the events of Solidarity protests in August 1980 were collected (in 1981 Janiszewski and A. Sosnowski even published an article in the Sociological Studies *Theoretical and methodological proposals for the study of a workers' strike*). In 1990, employees of the Department of Marine Sociology of the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IFiS PAN) were employed at the University of Szczecin, where a similar facility was already operating (this was due to financial reasons – IFiS PAN was not able to finance the works of the Department). In 1986 the first issue of “Annals of Marine Sociology” was published, the first two issues were called “Maritime Sociology”. A total of 25 issues were published (the last one in 2016).

Internationalisation and popularisation of maritime sociology issues – conferences, congresses and international projects

With the deterioration of the maritime economy during the transformation, maritime sociology also experienced a less intense period of development. However, for more than a decade the younger generation has been promoting maritime sociology at home and abroad. In 2019 at the European Sociological Congress in Manchester the Polish-German duo (Agnieszka Kołodziej-Durnaś and Frank Sowa) once again led a session of maritime sociology. Earlier sessions were held at these Congresses in Lisbon 2009 (co-chaired by Agnieszka Kołodziej-Durnaś and Andrzej Michalak), Geneva 2011 (co-chaired by Agnieszka Kołodziej-Durnaś and Manuel Coelho), Turin 2013 (chaired by Robert Bratłomiejski), Prague 2015 (co-chaired by Agnieszka Kołodziej-Durnaś and Frank Sowa). The online Maritime Research Stream at ESA Conference in Barcelona in 2021 was co-chaired by Agnieszka Kołodziej-Durnaś, Frank Sowa and Marie C. Grasmeyer (these persons became also the founders and editors of first two volumes of *International Studies in Maritime Sociology* series 2022, 2023). Such sessions also took place during the national congresses of the Polish Sociological Society (2022 in Warszawa, 2019 in Wrocław, and at the previous two conventions the international sessions in Szczecin 2013 and Gdańsk 2016). In 2015 we submitted a joint Polish-German session of maritime sociology for the German Sociological Congress, which took place in Trier. It resulted in an introductory publication on maritime sociology in both countries (Sowa, Kołodziej-Durnaś, 2015).

In 2018, a conference was held in Warsaw, during which maritime sociologists from Szczecin and representatives of ocean sociology (as that name is promoted by Asians) from Japan, South Korea and China met. The result of these meetings was a trip of the Institute of Sociology staff to conferences in Japan and Korea (inaugural Congress of the East Asian Sociological Association, March 8–9, 2019 in Tokyo and the seminar Ocean and Maritime Sociology, March 11–13, 2019 in Pusan), during which they presented papers on the concept of marinization Ludwik Janiszewski (Arkadiusz Kołodziej) and changes in Polish seaports (Maciej Kowalewski and Robert Bartłomiejski).

In Szczecin, the subject of maritime sociology has been taught intermittently since the establishment of this discipline and the Department of Maritime Sociology at the local university. Previously, maritime sociology had appeared in the schedules of universities in Canada, USA, Spain, or Greece (cf. Bryniewicz et al., 2010).

Maritime sociology was also popularized during conferences with important maritime events, i.e. the 100th anniversary of the Titanic disaster (Chojnowska & Królikowska, 2012) or the 95th anniversary of the Maritime and River League, where involvement in the crisis related to the sea was discussed (Chojnowska & Królikowska, 2013).

Polish maritime sociology has also been cultivated within the framework of international projects such as MENTORESS – Maritime Education Network to Orient and Retain Women for Efficient Seagoing Services, as part of the Erasmus+ program, Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices and Strategic Partnerships for higher education (2017-2019). The result of the project are articles characterizing the changing role of women seafarers, drawing attention to the existence and importance of the problems they face when undertaking work at sea (Królikowska & Męczkowska-Christansen, 2018, 2019). On the basis of the research, the topic of women's work at sea was also promoted within the framework of social projects of an international (promotion of the topic in the URBACT Local Group at the Gdansk Starter Entrepreneurship Foundation, which is a partner in the international BluAct URBACT Network project seeking good practices for the maritime industry) and local character ("Women also build ships" – a project run at the Starter Incubator in the form of a mentoring program, workshops to improve the managerial competencies of female leaders in the maritime and logistics industry, and workshops and webinars to promote work in the maritime industry).

Major books

Today, maritime sociology boasts numerous scientific publications. Doctoral theses in the field of maritime sociology, on the basis of which books were published, as well

as published items that formed the basis of acquirement of habilitation degrees on this topic were created mainly in Szczecin (after the Institute of Sociology of the University of Szczecin was established). These were works by Helena Mrzygłód and Mirosława Kaczmarczyk-Sowa – on marital selection in seamen’s families and conflicts in seamen’s families, by Jan Nikolajew on the profession of deep-sea fisherman, by Włodzimirz Durka on power, the management and effectiveness of a deep-sea vessel, by Robert Woźniak on local maritime communities and maritime education, by Żaneta Stasienuk on the community of seamen in the process of political transformation, by Bolesław Klepajczuk on social ties on a deep-sea vessel. Among newer items, one can point to Urszula Kozłowska’s monograph on Szczecin’s shipbuilders (2008), Arkadiusz Kołodziej’s study (2019) on transport fleet sailors in the light of studies on social structure, Iwona Królikowska’s study (2021) on interactions between crew members of a ship that serves as an international working environment and monograph: *Seafarers’ Time. On Perception of Time while Working at Sea* (Kołodziej-Durnaś et al., 2021).

The direction of change in maritime sociology

The changes taking place in the perception of significance the sea and the maritime economy make it necessary for maritime sociology to seek new paths of development focusing on current problems. These can be characterized on three levels related to changes: natural, economic-political and socio-cultural. The first of these addresses the problems of water pollution, fishing restrictions and global warming phenomena (Rancew-Sikora, 2011, p. 282). It is also the problem of melting glaciers and the economic-political consequences of the emergence of new coastal areas (along with natural resources) and the struggle for dominance over them, which are no longer only ecological, but also economic and political. This perspective also includes issues related to the changes and crises of the maritime industry, coastal and maritime tourism, but also threats, i.e. smuggling of drugs, weapons and people on a global scale or maritime piracy. It’s also the changing regulations of international agreements related to the exploitation of the sea and its resources, as well as human-ship-labor relations. It’s also a study of the impact of these changes on various maritime communities. Here comes the socio-cultural perspective involving the transformation of the identity of seafarers working in a multicultural environment, but on the ground of maritime sociology in Poland it is primarily the study of coastal residents and the socio-symbolic changes in the meaning of the sea. As Rancew-Sikora wrote, it is a search for a new dimension of otherness of “maritime reality” with an emphasis on the study of narratives dedicated to people and their activities related to the sea and coastal areas (2010, p. 135).

It is apparent that there is a need to look for a new discourse for doing maritime sociology supported perhaps by new perspectives i.e. “theoretical inspirations of the material-semiotic approach” (Rancew-Sikora, 2010, p. 158), but also by already mentioned deeper cooperation of science with business and coastal local communities to build a new vision of Poland and the sea (see e.g. Pessel, 2022).

Final comments

Sociology in Poland has a relatively long tradition. Numerous discussions that are currently taking place within this discipline have been analysed many years ago by a group of Polish sociologists. It is worthwhile to take advantage of the earlier achievements of maritime sociology, numerous empirical and theoretical (including purely methodological) studies. For this to be possible, it is necessary to reread the old studies and their conclusions, all the more so as the interest in the maritime context of social life is becoming increasingly visible. Making this work available to a wider audience requires a theoretical reworking (embedding it in a contemporary theoretical context), a certain synthesis of numerous studies and more publications in English.

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