

A Short Introductory Note on Maritime Sociology

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The topic of the sea and society is not new to sociology. Some of the founding fathers of sociology have researched specific maritime spaces. For instance, in 1896 the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies analysed the working conditions and wages of different maritime professions, as well as the major strike of 1896/97 in Hamburg (Tönnies 1897a, b). Today, Tönnies is regarded as the founder of *Maritime Sociology* (Fechner 2010). But also for other classical sociologists, maritime spaces were not unfamiliar. Norbert Elias was interested in studying the careers of naval professionals (Elias 1950) and intended to publish a book on that topic. Unfortunately, he did not finish his naval studies but some of his texts are available (Moelker 2003; Moelker, Mennell 2007).

In contrast to other subfields of sociology, *Maritime Sociology* could not be established as a research network with an international Research Committee until today. The ad-hoc group »Maritime Sociology: Polish and German Perspectives on a Sociology of Maritime Spaces« during the Congress of the German Sociological Association (DGS) in Trier (Germany) was the first attempt to refresh activities of *Maritime Sociology* in Germany and to start a Polish-German dialogue on maritime issues bringing together scholars from sociology to begin a discussion on the interrelations between society and the sea.

Maritime Sociology in Germany

Remarkably, whereas *Maritime Sociology* is established in Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian, and East-European countries (Poole 1981; Prahl, Schack 1992), today there is no such sociological sub-discipline in Germany. Even though there are German sociological studies on maritime issues concentrating on the ship as a total institution (Lisch 1976) or on industrial sociological research (Abendroth et al. 1979), all efforts to professionalize *Maritime Sociology* in Germany have failed. In the 1980s, there was an attempt to institutionalize a working group called *Maritime Sociology (Arbeitsstelle Maritime Soziologie; 1985-1992)* at the Institute of Sociology at the University of Kiel. It focused on instruction for master and doctoral theses, lectures, and the publication of rele-

vant research (Prahl, Schack 1992; Schroeter 1994). Unfortunately, this pioneering work was not continued after the disintermediation of the working group.

During the last two decades there are particularly interdisciplinary approaches to the social construction of the sea and the coast. Some scholars concentrated on the perception of coastlines and pictures of the coast (Döring et al. 2005; Fischer 2004; Fischer et al. 2007; Meyn 2007; Prahl 2005), others on the acceptance of coastal national parks (Beckmann 2003) or environmental conflicts (Krauß 2001; Krauss 2005, 2007; Sowa 2014a, b). Recently, only a few sociologists have focused on issues pertaining to the social changes of fisheries. Kristin Kube (2013) analysed biographical narratives of deep-sea fishermen in Germany as a profession – which disappeared in the 1990s due to changing underlying conditions. She focused the case of Bremerhaven as a former West-German fishing port and elaborates on the lifeworld and identities of German deep-sea fishermen as important protagonists in the history of the city. In contrast, Tobias Lasner (2013) examined the decision-making process of a present phenomenon inside the fisheries community, which can be seen as a direct reaction towards socio-economic transformations in our times: the adoption of innovative aquaculture practices. The grounded theory research showed that some fish farmers adopt an ecological innovation while others do not (Lasner, Hamm 2014). Lasner was interested in including fisheries issues in sociological research (Lasner 2009). Frank Sowa did research on the whaling controversy (Sowa 2013a, c) and explored the emergence of a new collective community identity in a contemporary whaling town in Japan after the whaling moratorium of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) came into force (Sowa 2013b, 2014c). Results of the ethnographic fieldwork confirms that whaling is still a part of the collective memory of the town: whalers and non-whalers construct their identities through the articulation of a strong attachment to the traditional whaling town and their ancestors. While whaling activities on the sea and on the land are decreasing the symbolization of whaling is increasing. Ulrike Kronfeld-Goharani worked on ocean security (Kronfeld-Goharani 2013) and discourses of sustainability in regard of the High Seas and oceans (Kronfeld-Goharani 2015). She asked by using a discourse analysis how the sustainability concept has been developing in maritime affairs.

Despite these encouraging trends, *Maritime Sociology* is not used as an umbrella term to refer to sociological studies on maritime issues in Germany. These developments of *Maritime Sociology* contrasts with the developments of *Maritime Sociology* in Poland.

Maritime Sociology in Poland

In Poland, a totally different evolution can be observed. Polish sociological studies on maritime issues go back to at least to the interwar period. However, these early publications lacked empirical research. The empirical research associated with *Maritime Sociology* perspective started after the Second World War when Poland acquired greater access to the sea – with the maritime industry becoming an indispensable part of a recovering economy. Poznan, Gdansk, and Szczecin became major academic centres of *Maritime Sociology* (*socjologia morska*). The term for the

new sociological sub-discipline was coined by Aleksander Matejko (1964) and Ludwik Janiszewski (1994), who published an introductory article devoted to it in 1994. Between 1950s and 1990s, scientific research on the relations between men and sea was thriving. It included numerous projects and studies on marine professions, trade and fishing vessels' crews, seamen's and fishermen's families, port cities, organization and management in maritime industry companies, and seaside local communities – often published in the scientific journal 'Annuals of Marine Sociology' issued by the Polish Academy of Sciences in Gdansk and Szczecin.

The name for a new sub-field of sociology dealing with seaside communities was evolving in Polish science during communist times from *sociology of people of sea* via *nautic sociology* to *Maritime Sociology*. Matejko talked about a »sociology of people of sea« and a »sociology of social communities living and working at sea, at the seaside or in sea regions« (Matejko 1964). In 1971 Sztumski introduced a »nautic sociology« which deals

»with exploring the impact of nautic professional activities into the process of shaping human coexistence, making research on the various structures emerging as a result of this coexistence (e.g. vessel crews) and various social creations both material (e.g. seamen's role models and nonmaterial (e.g. superstitions) and analyzing special institutions established in the process of conquering sailing areas« (Sztumski 1971).

Ten year later, Wozniak speaks of a »nautic« or »maritime sociology«:

»The subject of nautic sociology (maritime sociology) is most of all phenomena and processes of emergence, development, and collapse of various social communities the life and work of which contribute to the character and intensity of society's and state's efficiency« (Woźniak 1981).

After years of declining interest in *Maritime Sociology*, paralleling the decline of maritime industries during the years of Polish post-Communist transformation, one may observe its revival now. In recent years, more and more Polish authors have discovered the fisheries and maritime sector as a potential research field for *Maritime Sociology* (Bartłomiejski 2011; Bryniewicz et al. 2010; Kołodziej-Durnaś 2014; Kołodziej, Kołodziej-Durnas 2014; Kowalewski 2011).

Attempts to Institutionalize *Maritime Sociology*

Thanks to Polish activities, there are attempts to institutionalize *Maritime Sociology* to national sociological congresses in Poland and Germany. During the 15th Polish Sociological Congress from 11th to 14th September 2013 in Szczecin (Poland) one session was held with six contributions. This ad-hoc group »Maritime Sociology: Polish and German Perspectives on a Sociology of Maritime Spaces« during the 37th Congress of the German Sociological Association (DGS) from 6th to 10th October 2014 in Trier (Germany) offered one session with also six contributions.

On an international level there was the session »Marine Sociology« during the 26th Conference of the Nordic Sociological Association from 15th to 18th August 2012 at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik. This session was organized by Þóroddur Bjarnason (University of Akureyri) and included four papers. In addition, a huge international conference was organized by maritime sociologists from 27th to 29th September 2013 at the University of Zadar (Croatia). Under the theme »Sociology at Sea. Culture, Economy and Society in a Maritime Perspective« keynote

lectures, poster presentations and seven sessions »Plenary session«, »Cities and the sea«, »Fisheries and shipping«, »Culture, society and the sea«, »Ecology and maritime environment«, »Island communities« were offered with 29 contributions.

Sociologists also introduced a research stream »Maritime Sociology« to the Conference of the European Sociological Association (ESA) in Lisbon 2009, Geneva 2011, Torino 2013 and Prague 2015. The development is encouraging: Whereas the research stream »Maritime Sociology« during the 9th ESA Conference from 2nd to 5th September 2009 in Lisbon had one session and seven contributions, the 10th ESA Conference from 7th to 10th September 2011 in Geneva had one session and five contribution and the 11th ESA Conference from 28th to 31st August 2013 in Turin took place with the three sessions »The Problems of Seaside Areas Local Communities and Institutions«, »Maritime Professions« and »Ecology« and eleven contributions. This year 12th ESA Conference, which will be held in Prague from 25th to 28th August 2015, will host a research stream »Maritime Sociology« with five sessions »History and Future Perspectives of Maritime Sociology«, »Maritime Professions and Inequality«, »Sociological Imagination on Maritime Issues: Sustainable Development and the Sea«, »Knowledge of the Sea: Integrating local and indigenous knowledge with scientific knowledge« and »Sea and Culture: The Construction of Identities in Seaside-Communities and Port Cities«. The organizers expect 34 contributions.

Sociological Research on Maritime Spaces

In general, there are many reasons to focus research on maritime spaces. Maritime spaces include oceans as well as coastal areas, spaces which are at risk nowadays. Ecological crises (overfishing, decline in biodiversity, climate change, eutrophication, ocean pollution), economic crises (de-industrialization, whaling moratorium, structural change, development of alternative industries) and cultural crises (destabilization of collective identities of seaside and island inhabitants, cultural practices of sharing, inhabitants' knowledge, local traditions, transformations of maritime professions) cumulate in these maritime spaces. So far research on maritime issues is dominated by natural science disciplines. The protection of maritime natural sources and the need for sustainable development demands research on the *human factor* and a sociological perspective on maritime spaces.

In this way the subject of *Maritime Sociology* deals with various communities, institutions and social processes associated with basic directions and forms of human activity at sea. *Maritime Sociology* may be defined as a particular sociological sub-field which deals with research on collective, institutional and spontaneous forms of different usually economic human activity at sea, under the influence of sea or for sea with special attention to conditions and social consequences of this activity (Janiszewski 1985). Wioleta Bryniewicz (2004) in her book synthesizing the 20th century development of *Maritime Sociology* postulates the 'matrix' perspective of *Maritime Sociology* genesis and suggests the following sub-fields of sociology contributing to *Maritime Sociology*: sociology of family, sociology of culture, sociology of labour, urban sociology, sociology of sport. Agnieszka Kołodziej-Durnaś (2014) called the research conducted within the Polish

Maritime Sociology perspective as the classical *Maritime Sociology* approach (associated with the subjects of the sociological sub-fields enumerated in the matrix perspective). The 21st century research seems to be more frequently associated with organization and management, ecology, piracy, immigration. *Maritime Sociology* as a sociological sub-field is connected to several other sociological subfields. The aim of proclaiming a *Maritime Sociology* is to gather the research and theory on these topic in order to foster better networking and collaboration among researchers.

Polish and German Perspectives on a Sociology of Maritime Spaces

The aim of the ad-hoc group »Maritime Sociology: Polish and German Perspectives on a Sociology of Maritime Spaces« during the Congress of the German Sociological Association (DGS) in Trier (Germany) was to start a new dialogue. This dialogue should include the exchange of theoretical perspectives on maritime spaces in a historical perspective (from the founding fathers of sociology to the concept of marinization) and the presentation of fields of empirical research (sustainability on the high seas, innovators in aquaculture, seaside local communities in crisis, construction of collective community identity) including a variety of sociological methods (discourse analysis, grounded theory, qualitative interviews, ethnography).

Altogether there were six papers accepted as contributions to the ad-hoc group, three Polish and three German papers. On the Polish side Robert Bartłomiejski and Dr. Maciej Kowalewski (University of Szczecin) talked about »The Founding Fathers of Sociology on Maritime Social Issues«, Dr. Arkadiusz Kołodziej and Dr. habil. Agnieszka Kołodziej-Durnaś (University of Szczecin) presented a paper called »The Concept of Marinization – Research Areas of Szczecin Maritime Sociologists« and Dr. Żaneta Stasieniuk and Dr. Urszula Kozłowska (University of Szczecin) were accepted to have a speech on »Crisis of Seaside Local Communities – the Example of Szczecin«. On the German side Dr. Ulrike Kronfeld-Goharani (Kiel University) gave a speech on »Understanding Sustainability on the High Seas. Discourses of Sustainability«, Dr. Tobias Lasner (Thünen Institute of Fisheries Ecology, Hamburg) spoke about »Being Deviant in the Blue Growth: A Sociological Approach of Innovators in Aquaculture« and Dr. Frank Sowa (Institute for Employment Research, Nuremberg) offered the paper »Seaside Communities in Crisis: On the Construction of Collective Identity in a Japanese Whaling Town after the Moratorium«.

The ad-hoc group »Maritime Sociology: Polish and German Perspectives on a Sociology of Maritime Spaces« was a good point of departure to discuss how sociology is approaching the subject of maritime spaces and what kind of strengths and weaknesses are associated with such a perspective of *Maritime Sociology*. Among the participants of the ad-hoc group there are ideas of collaborating in the future. Let's see if there will be a sociological future of *Maritime Sociology*. Things don't look bad at all.

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