

Filipino Seafarers as Sea-based Global Diaspora. Contribution to Maritime Sociology

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ABSTRACT:

Considering several forms of diasporas, in this theoretical paper it is conceptualized as phenomena of contemporary world, primarily of transnational capitalism and informational technology. As specific form of so called sea-based diaspora, we refer to Filipino overseas workers. Indicating the national state as key actor with specific implications on Filipino seafarers diaspora at sea and on land, we affirmed our notion that global diaspora is social construct where different, often contradictory, interest of several social actors at diverse levels of agency are involved. In this context, sea and ship can be understood within third place spatial theory as highly globalized, multiethnic places of experienced diversity. Hence sociology of sea provides methodological and theoretical framework for rethinking social world and sociology itself beyond terrestrial.

Keywords: Filipino seafarers, diaspora, third place, sociology of the sea

1. Introduction

The ideal vantage point – because it combines the effect of movement with distance – is the deck of a ship putting out to sea (Augé, 1995: 89).

Social sciences haven't constructed strong rudder to navigate within *big blue*, as we might picturesquely describe sea. At least not systematically, until recent¹. Sociology of sea appears as theoretical and empirical sub developed, even marginalized, discipline in the main course of sociology. Still, 90% of world trade is conveyed by the international shipping industry. Statement of Helen Sampson (2003) that seafarers are actually transnational actors of global economy with "approximately 250,000 Filipino seafarers working on international merchant vessels, constituting almost a third of the international seafaring labor force" (Sampson 2003: 259), calls for sociological imagination. More than one third of seafarers come from Republic of the Philippines and even one out of five people aboard ships is a Filipino, in accordance to Evita L. Jimenez (2012). Thus, Filipino seafarers are one of largest seafarers population in the world, constituting large world diaspora that will be in focus of this theoretical work.

Revealing actuality and applicability of maritime sociology, here we addressed various sociological issues such as nation, place/space, culture, diaspora, identity, migrations, labor force, market and community in "classical way" and (with)in contemporary perspective. Of course, process of globalization is inescapable within induced terms and processes and combined with micro and macro level of analysis unveils the

¹ From the conference *Sociology at Sea. Culture, Economy and Society in a Maritime Perspective* (Zadar, Croatia, 27 – 29 September 2013) *Summary Book*, Pamela Ballinger in her summary *Adrift on the sea of theory? Anchoring sociology in the lived seascape*, used the expression *oceanic* or *watery turn* to describe revival of several disciplines (literature, history and anthropology) in the past decade. According to author, sea spaces encourage disregarded sociological study and reconsideration of concepts, theory and research in general. We would add that *Conference* in general demonstrated how actualization of sociology of sea and maritime topics can be made within international academic community.

ambiguity of (post)modern relationships which are not one-dimensional but are seeking for interdisciplinarity among social science and other sciences and disciplines.

Our interest in this topic is greatly due to personal participation at International Summer School SSAS – Social Science and the Sea, Joint Seminar on Sustainable Development in European Maritime Regions, held at the Department of Sociology, University of Zadar, Croatia (24 September – 2 October 2013), in partnership with University of Teramo, University of Montenegro, National Maritime University of Odessa and University of Szczecin, financed and supported by Adriatic Ionian Initiative and Central European Initiative.

2. Concept of diaspora

Although diaspora is not a new concept, in the contemporary context it is understood as cultural and social product of transnational capitalism (Okamura 2011); re-formed by informational technology and global communication (Vertovec 1999); shaped by mass international migrations (Wan, Tira 2008). Saša Božić noticed that in the 1990s diaspora "became ambiguous and oversaturated with different meanings" (2012: 116) what is the case until today where diaspora is gripped within global complexity (Urry 2003)² and distinguished by varying cultural styles (Okamura 2011).

Steven Vertovec (1999) argues that diaspora is representing population whose origins are differentiated from their temporary residence. Deteritorialization and transnationalization are essential for diaspora whose social identity intertwines with historical, political, cultural and other changes. Author refers to the term diaspora as social form, as type of consciousness and as mode of cultural production. Here we will briefly present their core ideas, since they summarize what we consider to be classical and (post)modern approach to diaspora.

Diaspora as social form evokes departure, exile and returning to homeland. Dream of returning is important part of this form of diaspora because it combines history of displaced population and proclaim the future journey back to the place of their origins. Leaving as trauma and return as therapy are often used metaphors of this diaspora interpretation. General social category of diaspora, as Vertovec (1999: 1-5) sets, include diaspora as kind of social relationships that are interconnected with historical and geographical moments through terms and processes of migration; collective identity; deteritorialized networks and communication; homeland relationship; solidarity with co-ethnic members; differentiation from host society; tension of political orientations; the economic strategies of collectivism.

Diaspora as consciousness focuses on the experience of diasporic populations, mechanisms of personal and collective memory, issue of belonging. Transnational communities, dual or paradoxical nature of belonging to origin place and/or current residence, awareness of multi-locality, simultaneous histories, fractures of memory – these are all concepts and processes that seek to explain how this type of diaspora is (re)formed within social relations of multiple identities.

² Exact term John Urry (2003) uses in homonymous book to describe complexity as potentially new paradigm within in social sciences that transform perception of science in general. Urry (2003) uses global complexity to outline the very nature of global state and global relations within non-linear, mobile and unforeseeable 'global hybrid' (Urry 2003: 14). Because local (subject) action is combined with global (structural) conditions, the network of implications strikes everyday life. We find this applicable in our discussion on diaspora.

Diaspora as **mode of cultural production** highlights correlation of diaspora and globalization, particularly the process of cultural transformation. Hybrid cultural phenomena, new ethnicities, production and reproduction of transnational social and cultural phenomena, global media and communications – these are recognizable features of diaspora as mode of cultural production. Latter approach points out how inevitable return to place of origins as key element of the diaspora is *passé*. That is, in contemporary perspective diaspora is captured “between (a) globally dispersed yet collectively self-identified ethnic groups, (b) the territorial states and contexts where such groups reside, and (c) the homeland states and contexts whence they or their forebears came” (Vertovec 1999: 5). This approach stress diaspora as challenging term, even process, saturated with ambivalence.

Jonathan Y. Okamura (2011) in book *Imagining the Filipino American Diaspora: Transnational Relations, Identities, and Communities* argues how global Filipino diaspora is imagined as community through transnational and homeland transfers of people, capital, goods and communication. In fact, diaspora is challenging the community concept. Due to its open transnationality, diaspora overcomes common aspects of community (identity, way of life, territory) and reflects social complexity through migration process in transnational capitalism. While principle of community repose on defined population and space-borders as territory of social interaction and relation of their members who share similar patterns of life, diaspora doesn't „fit“ in this fixed/stable/static model because of its transnationality. In that sense diaspora is more dynamic, undone/unaccomplished phenomena. Thus we can constantly re-interpret diaspora, where our referential position is matter of choice.

Moreover, Mary Lou Alcid (2007: 36) emphasizes diaspora as cultural condition and hybrid process on holistic level is postmodern discourse. It's about sentimental experience of being from both places, what Okamura (2011) also underlines when understanding diaspora as simultaneously presence in different places. „Given their transnational scope and ever expanding boundaries, diasporas directly challenge the long held correspondence among nation, culture, identity and place. As people move to different nations, they take their cultures, customs, and ethnic/racial identities with them and thereby create and extend the social space of the diaspora“, underlines Okamura (2011). According to this, diaspora is not only out there, but it is also right here. At the same time person can belong to both parties. Dual belonging paradox is not only of territorial matter, rather way of life of diasporic population. According to sociologist Milan Mesić, nor there are visible boundaries within individual communities, nor the latter are always territorialized. „People can have the feeling of belonging to more than one community, or they can participate in different communities in different periods of life“ (Mesić 2002: 18).

In this manner, we take diaspora as simultaneous place where physical presence within some national border/territory (new culture, place of residence) entwines with “home” culture (identity legacy, place of origins) that is greatly de-territorialized since it exists only as a personal memory. Diaspora, therefore, is a socio-personal construct of political importance that is constantly recreated with subjective aspirations and social conditions in geo-political context.

3. Sea in thirdspace perspective

Generally speaking diaspora is no current phenomena, as was mentioned in previous section. Yet, global diaspora is linked to context of transnational capitalism which Okamura (2011) connects with time and space transformation as (post)modern

state of mind. In similar sense Anthony Giddens (1991) discuss about separation of time and space; Paul Virilio (1986) uses term annihilation of space which intercept computers, networks, information; David Harvey (1990) focuses on time–space compression as dynamic acceleration.

In this paper we are especially interested in Harvey's book *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (1990) where the author suggests that postmodern developments produce new forms of time–space experience, so called time–space compression. As non–objective phenomena, time and space depend over material processes, as they are included in social life that is intensified by informational and communicational technology of late capitalism and becoming more and more reduced, absorbed and homogenized.

Part of that historical change is affecting global diaspora as term and process, as we suggest. Just like post–Fordism captures new mode of accumulation and production, global diaspora is the very example of how time and space are conceptually transformed in contemporary social perspective. In first place, global diaspora redefines the whole concept of space since it captures not only particular immigrant communities, but also their connections with homeland – from communication, sending goods, visits, information exchange as form of staying in touch with homeland events, etc. All of these transfers make a bound of diaspora and their homeland, constituting emotional–economic relationship that is not purely territorial. "Diaspora represents such a new conceptual image with which to map the reterritorialization of space quite apart from the usual coordinates based on physical location, territory and distance. Given their transnational scope and ever expanding boundaries, diasporas directly challenges the long held correspondence among nation, culture, identity and place. As people move to different nations, they take their cultures, customs, and ethnic/racial identities with them and thereby create and extend the social space of the diaspora", Okamura (2011). Similar idea of diasporas comes from Clifford who present the idea of diasporas as social and cultural processes of movement and change. "Imagined as communities, diasporas are transnational in nature rather than mere ethnic or immigrant minority groups situated in a specific nation–state since they represent ways of conceiving community, citizenship, and identity as simultaneously here and elsewhere" (Alcid 2007: 37).

Sociology itself perhaps overlooks wider scope of contemporary changes as is initially identified with territory, land and ground. In that manner sociology is spatial science. Understanding sea itself in *third place* spatial theory may open up some ingrained positions in social sciences, especially sociology. Maritime sociology to that extant provides *other* perspective that is not based on solid ground, but still is scientifically established. It goes beyond mere physical or territorial frame of reference. Thereby we refer to Henri Lefebvre, Edward W. Soja and Edward Relph as one of prominent authors in discussion about the *nature* of space.

Lefebvre's construct of the social space is well known from the book *Production of Space* (1991) that presumes the space through the history, building constructions and social interactions, integrating different spatial phenomena in the unique structure with three elements. This is three–dialectic of space. The first is act of spatial practice whose versions (the country, territory) are included in the dialectic structure of space which is developing through the individual to system time. Second stand for representation of space forms of knowledge. Thirdly, spaces of representation, present the collective experience of space. Within division of sensory, imagined and lived space, Lefebvre (1991) shows how the space is included in social and economic spatial practices, what is statement of constant reproduction the space.

Soja (1996) uses the concept of *third space* in the book *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real and Imagined Spaces*. He understands places as the process. Beside historicity and sociality, space is third existential dimension. Unlike the “first space” (Firstspace), which includes the perspective of the real material world, the “other space” (Secondspace), is representation of spatiality alone across the dominant representative discourse, and the “third space” (Thirdspace) is specific reinterpretation of spaces that are differentiated, polysemantic, diversely experienced as intersections of different ideas and events.

In study *Place and Placelessness* (1976) Relph valorizes the place as active participant in the creation of human identity, feelings and experiences that are often overlooked. Space does not correspond to the idea of emptiness, neither is the container for place. Very nature of place is the dimension of life experience. Author separates the spatial experience that can be instinctively, bodily and direct (for the pragmatic, perceptual and existential space). In the everyday life, spatial models vary, as they mutually re-participate in the human experience. Places are centers of our experiences of world, Relph concludes (1976: 141).

What is common to all this authors is their evaluation of place as part of re-lived human experience, not just physical background for it. Taking example of FOC (flags of convenience) system, one can notice how Lefebvre’s (1991) mark on constant reproduction of the space is on act in globalized shipping business. Led by global shipping industry, approved by national governments and experienced by seafarers alone, sea cannot be restrained to society duplicate, as a figurative container for space. Sea this way can be comprehended as third place in Soja’s manner (1996) – highly globalised, multiethnic, and dappled with different social actors with multiple interests. Marked as highly valuable resource, sea is space of confronted (entrepreneur and national) interests and space of oppression.

Sampson (2003) uses term hyperspace to capture work and life condition of Filipino seafarers at sea ship³, aspect that is often neglected. We find it important because it glances on what we might detect as sociology of everyday life at sea, provoking the terrestrial sociology paradigm.

Hyperspace presents uniform, monotonous, deterritorialized locations that don’t reflect specific culture, but are reduced to business/commercial function. Sampson (2003: 256) places hyperspace somewhere between cultural, since they’re not geospatial, nether cultural vacuums. Hyperspace in that sense corresponds to Marc Augé (1995) conception of non-places⁴. Non-places are products of supermodernity where global exchange of capital, goods, communication and technology interfere:

³ Differentiating Filipino seafarers as *active ones* who are not based in one country but are working all over world and they correspond to deterritorialized, existing within hyperspace and *land-based* Filipino seafarers based in Holland who may be characterized as “transnational” communities. Taking into consideration global, collective, ethnic and multicultural context of residual society and place of origin, we find all three- diaspora forms proposed by Vertovec (1999) intertwine in Sampson (2003) scope on active, on shore seafarers. That is, diaspora as *social form* (concept of homeland), as *conscience* (diasporic experience, dual belonging, multi locality, simultaneous identity) and *cultural production* (globally dispersed, collectively self-identified ethnic group, homeland context, residence – homeland context).

⁴ Contrary to anthropological places, non-places are *not* „places of identity, of relations and of history“ (Augé 1995: 52). Non-places lack of authentic meaning, as they tend to produce experience of solitary individuality, unlike organic sociability associated with anthropological sense of place. They are eminently abstract (Augé 195:82).

“Today’s ships that are built in one country, owned in another, managed from another, staffed with multinational crews and operated in ‘international’ waters, could perhaps be described as archetypal ‘hyperspaces’(...). As result of these structural changes in the shipping industry, there are, at any one time, approximately one million seafarers aboard ships, operating in international ports and waters, who live and work in communities which are multinational and which exist *beyond* national borders” (Sampson 2003: 259-260).

For Steven McKay (2004) seafarers and ships are not just sites of global fluidity, since they present social action at the margins that illuminates the political processes of place and difference-making.

As we understand it, ship is not just a “fracture of land”, nor is the sea “blue society” marked by ordinary social mechanisms, but they are sites and places with specific lived experience. Sea can’t not be regulated just as *other* mainland because sea itself is not empty environment without social context, nor is the blue cultural container. Sociology of sea thus makes us rethink society structure and social mechanisms.

4. Filipino seafarers: sea-based diaspora behind *the flag*

Filipinos are one of the largest diasporas in the world, often addressed with abbreviation OFW as Overseas Filipino Workers. As major provider of seafarers worldwide, seafarers from the Philippines take 30% of the world’s employed seafarers recorded number of seafarers, as Evita L. Jimenez (2012) outlines.

David Camroux (2008) regards OFWs as the country’s largest export commodity with over 8 million of them living overseas. Camroux (2008) accentuates that 10% of the Filipino population live overseas. „Each day they are joined by an average of another 3,000 of their compatriots, i.e. a flow of over a million people per year. When seen in relation to the workforce, the figures are even more startling: some 7 million people out of a workforce of 32 million works overseas, i.e. 22% of the working population,„ (Camroux 2008: 3). For Camroux (2008), people are Philippines’ *largest export*, while Enoch Wan and Sadiri Joy Tira (2008) refer to them as *widely scattered* population in 182 countries. Since they correspond to phenomena of diaspora, and due to their seafarer occupation, we consider Filipino seafarers as sea-based diaspora with specific political connotation in their homeland, Republic of the Philippines. Therefore in this section we single out some of these implications accentuating the key actors on several levels of agency.

Several authors note how in the state of Philippines, Filipino seafarers are known as modern day heroes – pillars of economic development (Sampson 2003; Wan, Tira, 2008). Worldwide, however, they stand for cheap labor (WU Liang 2011: 14); country’s largest export commodity (Camroux 2008); sea-based migrants that keep Filipino economy afloat (Jimenez, 2012). Maybe at first these notions seem as exclusive positions, yet, in the case of Filipino sea-based diaspora, they tend to overlap.

Noticing how social actors on different levels of agency are involved in this discussion, we will provide several examples in order to comprehend their scope and impact on Filipino seafaring diaspora.

Led by Philippine governments with sponsorship of local associations and participation of domicile Filipino population, our first example is considerably symbolical and proceeds on land. It considers strong orientation towards seafaring promotion in the Philippines. For instance, December is known for Overseas Filipinos month; there are nation holidays such as *Overseas Workers Day*, new millennium started with *Year of the Overseas Workers*; festivities of so-called Balikbayan Pilgrims’ programs are orga-

nized, etc. Quite significantly for sea-based diaspora because Balikbayan means *returning Filipino*. „Overseas Filipinos returning to the Philippines for a long awaited visit are engaged in a comparable pilgrimage to their cultural homeland during which they similarly meet numerous traveling companions like themselves living in diaspora. Such a returning Filipino is referred to as a balikbayan, a contrived term coined in the mid 1970s that literally means a returnee to the nation“, notes Okamura (2011). Here we detect elements of diaspora as social form, according to Vertovec's (1999) definition. Also, diaspora as consciousness as Balikbayan Pilgrims' program⁵ makes vivid joins of global diaspora of Filipino seafarers. Socializing with their overseas colleagues becomes the way of getting acquainted with rest of sea based diaspora in which they take part. Balikbayan and other symbolic manifestations held in the name of seafarers can be interpreted as celebration of national values, sacrifice and hard work, promotion of seafarers as role models. According to Okamura (2011), local population plays important part in social branding of seafaring as they are fascinated with consumer goods that seafarers bring to their families, so called balikbayan boxes. That way they get acquainted with seafarers "exotic" part of lifestyle what facilitate their professional re-production and socialize candidates for profession in one of many maritime school⁶.

Lamvik Gunnar M. (2012) outlines in paper *The Filipino Seafarer: a Life between Sacrifice and Shopping* that Filipino seafarers are family based enterprise and that their emigrational and occupational sacrifice is done in the name of their (homeland) family wellbeing. „Filipinos, the largest nationality group in the industry, have one common reason to work at sea: to support their families. The job search, learning the job, collecting funds for enrollment in maritime education and training, and contacting crewing agencies, is a process that often takes years to finish. It is clear that these seafaring applicants invest time, energy and money in the hope of earning the higher wages offered by seafaring jobs, and change their families' economic conditions“ (WU Liang 2011:13). Okamura (2011) states how constant interrelation of Filipino overseas workers with their homeland families (visits, communication, sending goods) is the crucial aspect of overseas Filipino diaspora "because it reveals the emotional bond of homeland and host culture that overseas workers (seafarers) are currently living in. Emotional bond represents link between their origins and current life-work situation which also detach diaspora community from racial-ethnic minorities". According to this, Filipino families are main motivator for seafarer staying at the sea, but probably the main reason why they want to go return in the homeland. That way Filipino sea-based diaspora is fragmented with different tendencies, as complex phenomena in a globalized world.

It seems that behind spotted long-days festivity, there is a whole community engaged in seafaring promotion. Active community involves different social actors – from formal political institutions (organizations), local associations (sponsors) to local population (welcome board). Still, this example is more of introduction framework to a

⁵ Program is initiated by that time president Ferdinand Marcos "to encourage Filipinos living abroad, especially in the United States, to come back and see for themselves what political and economic conditions were like under martial law", by Okamura (2011).

⁶ In Philippines there are more than 90 educational maritime institutions where 40,000 seafarers graduate per year. Government investments in educational structure for seafarers are profitable investment. Overall, Philippines are the major provider of seafarers worldwide, especially officers. One of five aboard ships is a Filipino and in year 2010 POEA registered that Filipino seafarers take 30% of the world's employed seafarers recorded number of seafarers, according to Evita L. Jimenez (2011).

second one, where social actors are more difficult to indicate as they make national (government) – global (different entrepreneurs, agencies) crossover. They are mainly legislatively regulated for Filipino seafarers at sea. Nevertheless, their scope is far wider as it puts in perspective Filipino seafarers position on global labor market.

Further on, we examine a case of so called flags of convenience – FOC system as vivid example of the global shipping companies functioning. “The FOC had been used by the ship-owners to enable them to register their fleets at the very low cost, to operate tax-free and to employ cheap labor to man their usually substandard ships. Most ocean-going vessels in operation are sailing under an FOC where the nationality of the ship owner is different from the nationality of the flag [it carries]. Thus, we have a number of ships owned by German nationals but flying a Panamanian flag; owned by Japanese nationals but flying a Liberian flag” (Barcelona 2011).

In other words, FOC is legal operator for evading the owner’s social obligations to the workers, mostly by legitimizing overseas contract labor work. Using globalized shipping economy as agenda of administration efficiency with no legal delays and complicated procedures, shipping companies seem to participate in modern version of exploitation. As owners of ship register their vessel in low-operating-cost country, work rights, quality of life on ships, wages standard, income taxes, etc. of seafarers are disputable, as contract work labor takes over. A system eases avoiding responsibilities for seafarers in case of accident, injury, even death⁷. Blurred lines of globalized shipping industries once again rise to surface. Not to mention, the country itself regulates conditions and rules for ships so that national government of Philippines is indirectly responsible.

Sampson (2003: 259) argues that “flagging out” is one of the explanations why one third of Filipino seafarers dominate on international merchant vessels. Global, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural crew in the context of flags of convenience is business strategy for cheap seafarers labor force. We realize it as negative aspect of globalization process especially risky for workers, as it leaves them in muddy waters of no one’s land – unsecured and uninsured. „At the same moment that globalization “frees” labor by mobilizing more people into the international economy, migrant workers are increasingly compartmentalized, draped with both old and new ascriptions that shape their identities while limiting their labor market choices” (McKay 2004). As Sampson (2003) observes, going global is about getting cheaper and cheaper labor and avoiding regulatory traditional maritime framework.

Still, not all seafaring proposition are undefined, at least not those concerning seafarers obligations towards the Philippines. Example here is POEA as it stands for Philippine Overseas Employment Administration – national agency of Philippines that runs seafarer business. More precisely, POEA redirects 80% of total seafarers’ weight income to Filipino national bank (Sampson 2003; Wan, Tira 2008; Okamura 2011; WU Liang 2011). “As Filipino citizens, they are required to send dollar remittances back to the Philippines. According to the Philippine government, OFWs have become the Philippines’ major foreign currency earners” (Wan, Tira 2008: 6). Thereby, due to their national economy contribution, Filipino seafarers stand for national heroes. They are heroes in the lenses of government budget, but also they are cheap working force whose work rights flutter on some other flag. Conveniently, indeed.

⁷ „Filipino seafarers suffer from exorbitant fees charged by many training schools, poor working conditions, inadequate food and accommodation, port restrictions (particularly in the U.S.), sea accidents/mishaps, lack of medical care, discrimination, piracy/abduction, and general lack of protection provided by international law...Philippine laws offer no protection and international conventions governing the seafaring industry are either ineffective or cannot be invoked by a country (Philippines)” (Jimenez 2012).

Also, there is another important aspect to it. „Seafarers’ groups in the Philippines have formed an alliance, the Decent Work for Seafarers Alliance to push for the ratification of the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC) which was adopted by member-states of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2006“, states Jimenez (2012). Significantly, unlike several countries, Philippine still haven’t ratify the Convention.

McKay (2004) warns that intense racial divisions of labor in ship industry is another aggravating factor of Filipino seafarers. Despite Filipino seafarers numerosity, mostly they perform work positions of a „lower“ range – primarily as deck hands, engine room oilers, cabin cleaners and cooks working aboard container ships, oil tankers and luxury cruise liners. “Indeed, in an age of increasing transnational migration and de-territorialized production, it is a curious fact that nearly one in every three workers at sea is from a single country, the Philippines. Some 300,000 Filipino seafarers, by far the largest national group, play the world’s oceans and seas(...) Yet this substantial group remains largely invisible in the debates about globalization, transnationalism and migration and essentially unstudied“ concludes McKay (2004).

Taking into consideration given examples in critical sociological position, we interpret the Philippines as *duplex* position – from promoting seafarers as national heroes in which honor festivities and holidays are organized; through legalizing FOC system that, in general, avoids regulating seafarers’ work rights in favor to more flexible shipping system; to establishing national agency that redirects minimum of 80% of total seafarers weight income to Filipino national bank.

Contradictory positions are what capitalism is all about. Focusing on the influence of the Philippine on Filipino seafarers diaspora, capitalism is evident as *contradictory dynamism*. „This contradiction emerges in particularly sharp relief from the dilemmas of transnational labor. At the same moment that globalization “frees” labor by mobilizing more people into the international economy, migrant workers are increasingly compartmentalized, draped with both old and new ascriptions that shape their identities while limiting their labor market choices“ (McKay 2004).

Camroux (2008) refers to the Peter Evans (1995) debate about state dichotomy and stresses how important it is to spot predatory/juxtaposition developmentalist state position, not just weak state/strong one. In the case of the Philippines, the government takes predatory and developmentalist position, simultaneously⁸. How else to interpret a fact that Philippine ensures agencies for overseas workers with dual citizenship, right to vote and to investment. In the same time, the state is investing in world labor market deficit occupations, facilitating work of private sector and, what is significant, provides educational infrastructure for future immigrants as if it is inescapable process.

Dispute promotion on seafarer’s return, government actually benefits from their leaving. Bringing Filipinos back home is a strong symbolic act that is reminding them who they are and where their money belongs as long as they are on the ship. Re-

⁸ „For example, the Filipino state’s control of emigration and its partial cooptation of its expatriate population is indeed both predatory (in skimming off rents) and also developmentalist (in encouraging reinvestment in the “homeland”)(Camroux 2008: 7). Moreover, Filipino state encourages dual discourse of weak, yet, strong Filipino worker in general, which is applied to seafarers as well. David Camroux (2008: 5-7) comprehends historical and contemporary perspective on Philippines as “less developed country providing development assistance to more developed countries through the provision of labor. Through the discourses and narratives surrounding the “new national heroes”, a reflection of a weakness in Filipino national development is reformulated as an expression of Filipino strength“ (2008: 6).

turn to homeland is not dream, but obligation. In this case, reproduction of diaspora becomes state's substructure for further investment. But in this case it is investment of overseas workers back to the state, not the other way round. It is about "advertisement" for future generations of overseas workers and long distance nationalism propaganda, according to McKay (2004).

Neutral term that Sampson uses arguing that "Philippines encourage seafarers to work overseas" (Sampson 2003: 258) and that seafaring is work "forced by government regulations to send money to the Philippines" (2003: 275), tags relevant ideological point that Okamura (2011) identifies precisely. "Because of its crucial contribution to the Philippine economy, the international Filipino diaspora has become a social phenomenon to be celebrated and glorified as a national resource", Okamura (2011). Thus, the role of Philippine state is crucial for constructing the "Filipino seafarer as both pliant cheap labor and national heroes", states McKay (2004). Thereby it is possible, even legitimate, that Filipino seafarers are at the same time cheap labor *and* national heroes or, for Okamura (2011), glorified national resource, rather than source of national shame.

Hence we consider Filipino seafarers as social actors in sea-based diaspora of oppression. Regulated by national law and global labor market, fluidity of the ship and sea is taken under control. In this way, seafarers are stuck between possibilities of sea and rules of mainland.

5. Conclusion

In this theoretical work we present global diaspora as a phenomena of contemporary world, that is transnational capitalism (Okamura 2011); international migrations (Wan, Tira 2008); informational technology and global communication (Vertovec 1999). Because of its fluid, changeable and dynamic character, it is interesting to consider global diaspora as a challenge to the community concept, as Okamura (2011) suggests. In first place, we see global diaspora as a social construct in continuous re-interpretation process where different interests are involved.

As an example of global diaspora we referred to Filipino overseas workers (seafarers) as one of the largest diasporas in the world, with approximately 250,000 Filipino seafarers working on international merchant vessels (Sampson 2003) as the Philippines are major provider of seafarers worldwide (Jimenez 2012). We implied Filipino seafarers as sea-based diaspora with specific connotations in their homeland. Here we stressed out several critical points of *new heroes* of the Philippines, as they are often addressed in their homeland. The role of state of Philippines here is most intriguing as it intervenes in local (festivities as symbolic manifestations on seafaring promotion), national (legislative regulations of POEA national agency who redirects 80% of seafarers income to state bank) and global (legalization of FOC – flags of convenience in favor of neoliberal shipping industry) propositions on Filipino seafaring. Filipino seafarers as pillars of economic growth and national development that *keep economy afloat* (Jimenez 2012), we regard as actors in global sea-based diaspora of multilayer perpetual oppression. Our initial theoretical idea of global diasporas as social construct with complex set of different social actors on several levels of agency therefore affirmed in the case of Filipino seafarers.

As a sea-based global diaspora, the case of Filipino seafarers also demonstrates how space is constantly re-creating and re-producing and how the very nature of space is linked to human agency. Hence sea and ship can be conducted in third place spatial theory as a highly globalized, multiethnic space, within diversity of interests

that re-produce specific experience of those who are involved in. In this manner we comprehend sociology of sea as base for reviewing common, most usual and standard (even neutral) social parameters. In that manner sociology of the sea provides discipline framework for further discussion and analysis, especially of land-based concepts and phenomena in maritime context. Going beyond territory boundaries seems to be challenge of (post)modern society where sea is not the limit.

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