

Maritime Sociology or Sociology of Maritime Issues? World Literature Review and Some Historical Considerations

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ABSTRACT

The name of maritime sociology has been present in the Polish scientific discourse for some decades now. In the text the author proves that in the world scientific literature the caption is not present but there are many publications which refer to sociological research on maritime issues. The author concentrates on exploring how 'sociology of maritime issues' is conceptualized in academic journals articles. Records (including abstracts and in some cases full texts) of over two hundred and fifty articles published in 1933–2014 available through EBSCO databases were analyzed. The author addresses the problems discussed in them comparing the approaches to Polish maritime sociology as developed by professor Ludwik Janiszewski.

Key-words: maritime sociology, Polish sociology, maritime industry, Ludwik Janiszewski, literature review.

1. Introduction

Since 1960ies till the beginnings of the Polish transformation after communist system collapsed Ludwik Janiszewski (e.g. 1967, 1977) and his followers (e.g. Kaczmarczyk-Sowa 1987; Klepajczuk 1990; Nikolajew 1992) were developing maritime sociology. The main academic centres in which research in the new subfield of maritime sociology were conducted included Szczecin, Gdansk, Poznan. The research was mainly aimed at exploring the social and labour milieu of maritime professions employees such as deep-sea fishers, seafarers, dockers and other port workers. Particular themes of the scientific interest comprised work in the conditions of isolation (in a ship) and specificity of fishers' and seafarers' families, maritime culture, port cities. So the topics of maritime sociology merged with other sociological subfields such as: sociology of labour, organizational sociology, sociology of family, sociology of culture and even sociology of sports. After years of pursuing empirical projects Ludwik Janiszewski started to construct the marinization theory (Janiszewski 1989).

'Maritime sociology' as a coined name has been present for some years not only in Poland but also overseas in the academic world. There were subjects of this name taught in the USA and Canada (compare Bryniewicz, Kolodziej-Durnas, Stasienuk 2010). However, although maritime sociology as conceptualized by Polish sociologists was introduced into the programmes of European Sociological Association conferences (Lisbon 2009, Geneva 2011, Turin 2013, Prague 2015), as well as congresses of Polish, German and Nordic Sociological Associations the name of the subfield itself is rarely present in the scientific discourse. Moreover, although the calls for papers were usually composed of 'classical' topics of Polish maritime sociology, the papers submitted were often referring to quite different issues (but of course associated with 'maritime' issues).

To discover what are the current status of 'maritime sociology' in the academic world and the state of differently (or in a more broad way) comprehended sociological research on maritime issues the author decided to make a review of publications available through scientific databases.

2. Sociological publications on maritime issues – quantitative review

In order to acquire reliable knowledge on whether maritime issues are a popular subject of sociological studies the author conducted quantitative and qualitative desk research of the scholarly papers available in the EBSCO – online research databases. Initially in the EBSCO Host browser the name maritime sociology was entered. But the research results comprised only three articles and after checking their substance the author understood that they were irrelevant. So the first conclusion was: the caption ‘maritime sociology’ does not function in the world scientific literature. But as it is commonly known that maritime issues are covered in sociological research all over the world the two separate entries were inserted in the browser: ‘sociology’ and ‘maritime’. The publications sought were limited to the articles in scholarly peer-reviewed journals. The research results included 245 articles. They were published in year 1933–2014 which may suggest that despite the concept of maritime sociology has been used frequently only in Poland, the subject of maritime issues is not a new phenomenon in scholarly journals articles. As the kind of a database was not specified the search comprised publications of available databases. In the Table 1 the numbers of publications found in particular database have been displayed.

Tab. 1. Distribution of articles in particular databases

Database	Number of articles
Academic Search Complete	150
Business Source Complete	59
MasterFILE Premier	23
EconLit with Full Text	13
GreenFILE	9
Legal Source	9
Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition	8
ERIC	1
Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts	1
Total	245

Source: EBSCO

Academic Search Complete, the first most frequent in the distribution, is a comprehensive multidisciplinary database supporting scholarly research in key areas of academic studies. A hundred and fifty publications out of 245 were placed in Academic Search Complete. Business Source Complete is a database which provides bibliographic and full access to journal articles on various disciplines associated with business: economics, accounting, marketing, management, finance, etc. Almost sixty articles were found in this database. MasterFILE premier is another database which covers full range of subjects. The database EconLit with Full Text is full-text source for economic research including access to the contents of many non-English economic journals. Thirteen articles were tracked there. Additionally in GreenFILE and Legal Source included nine articles each. The first one is devoted to texts dealing with positive and negative influence of human activity into the environment. The other of course refers to legal aspects covered in academic literature. The last two articles were detected in ERIC (Educational Resource Information Center) and in Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition database (one in each). The distribution of publications on sociology and maritime issues provides little information about what the area may cover in the scientific discourse. One of the few things which may be commented on at this stage of this study is the fact that such publications refer to the whole variety of

matters and sometimes merge with the aspects of other scientific disciplines (legal, ecological and medical databases).

The search of articles by means of EBSCO gives the opportunity to sort the results according to the subject in two ways. The first division offers information about the number of articles found matching simply a particular subject and the other one – matching a subject out of the Thesaurus terms. The findings are presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Tab. 2. Articles according to subject

Subject	Number of articles
economic sociology; economic anthropology; social and economic stratification	8
sociology	8
institutional theory (sociology)	7
social aspect	7
economic aspects	6
Great Britain	6
maritime law	6
culture	5
historical sociology	5
history	5
piracy	5
social history	5
18 th century	4
naval art & science	4

Source: EBSCO

Having scanned the table one may notice that most popular subjects are associated with sociology, economics and history. But among the ones not covered in the Table 2 there are: sociological jurisprudence (4 articles), vegetation classification (4), marine sciences (3), navigation (3), shipping (water transportation) (3), social psychology (3), archeologists (2).

Tab. 3. Articles according to subject: Thesaurus term

Subject	Number of articles
culture	20
history	17
shipping (water transportation)	14
research	11
social history	8
sociology	8
discoveries in geography	7
economic development	7
government policy	6
archeology & history	5
decision making	5
historical sociology	5
international trade	5
modernization (social science)	5
naval art & science	5
organizational sociology	5
social change	5

Source: EBSCO

In the distribution presented in Table 3 'history' and 'sociology' (in various lexical forms and phrases) seem to be the most popular categories. The ones with fewer than five matched articles embrace: agriculture (4), immigrants (4), industrial relations (4), labor supply (4), piracy (4), sailors (4), international law (3), marine resources (3).

After analyzing the data in the above two tables it may be said that the majority of articles on combined topics of 'sociology' and 'maritime' may be identified by key categories of sociology, history and economics which is again not a very precious discovery. One thing to be noticed at this point may be an observation that although in the dictionaries the adjective 'maritime' is sometimes limited in meaning to relating to shipping or navigation the range of subjects associated with the articles is much wider and they are much more diversified than just these two fields of human activity at sea. Below are names of journals with the articles on 'sociology' and 'maritime' which may provide some more information on this area of scientific interest and is illustrated by Table 4.

Tab. 4. Journals

Title of journal	Number of articles
American Journal of Economics & Sociology	8
Sociological Perspectives	6
Sociology	6
Social Studies of Science	5
American Journal of Sociology	4
Canadian Review of Sociology & Anthropology	4
Law & Social Inquiry	4
Maritime Policy & Management	4
World Archaeology	4
Analele Universitatii Maritime Constanta	3
Asia Europe Journal	3
Science	3
Social Science Journal	2
Asia Pacific Viewpoint	2
Australian Historical Studies	2

Source: EBSCO

Other journals with 2 articles on sociology of maritime issues included: Biological Conservation (2), Central European History (2), Contemporary Justice Review (2), Current Sociology (2), Economic & Industrial Democracy (2), Environment International (2), Health & Social Care in the Community (2), International Journal of Social Research Methodology (2), Canadian Journal of Higher Education (1). So although the most articles are published in the journals devoted to sociological or social issues there are also some journals dealing with other disciplines.

The search with EBSCO gives also an opportunity to check which organizations are associated with the publications. In Table 5 some of them are named.

Tab. 5. Organizations

Name of organization	Number of articles
European Union	5
ASEAN	2
East India Co	2
Titanic (steamship)	2
United States Naval Academy	2
International Maritime Organization	1
China. Zhongguo Ren Min Jie Fang Jun. Hai Jun	1

Source: EBSCO

In case of only few articles (19) on sociology of maritime issues it was possible to identify organizations as associated with their content. Five of these nineteen texts were referring to the European Union, another one to the United Nations so almost one third of the articles with organizational affiliation are linked with some supra-national associations. Only four articles refer somehow to companies (even if directly to ships in two cases). There is also one legal and one educational affiliation (United States Supreme Court and United States Naval Academy).

Another aspect of publications which may be analyzed within the frames of search through EBSCO online bases is the geography of places the articles refer to. In case of the entries 'sociology' and 'maritime' in the browser the main spots on such a map were as it is presented in Table 6.

Tab. 6. Geography

Place	Number of articles
Great Britain	16
United States	11
Canada	9
China	6
England	4
Africa, Sub-Saharan	2
Asia	2
Australia	2
France	2
Great Britain--Foreign Economic Relations	2
Greece	2
Guangdong Sheng (China)	2
Italy	2
Micronesia	2
New Zealand	2

Source: EBSCO

Other places with two or one article inserted in this distribution comprise among others: Norway (2), Saudi Arabia (2), Southeast Asia (2) Venice (Italy) (2), Poland (1), Jordan River (1), Ireland (1), Indian Ocean (1), Liverpool (1), Taiwan (1).. It seems that in such selection of scientific publications 'sociology of the maritime' may be differently defined. It may mean refer to city, country, a whole continent, region as a part of a country, or a region as a historical or geographical area embracing a few countries or their parts. Maybe the qualitative review of the abstracts will provide some explanations whether there is any coherent definition of maritime areas and maritime issues emerging from the texts and whether different strategies of sociological research are applied in case of different objects of study.

The last distribution offered by EBSCO browser concerns the kind of branch or industry articles refer to. The categories of North American Industry Classification System were used to prepare this list which is partly shown in Table 7.

Tab. 7. NAICS/Industry

Industry	Number of articles
navigational services to shipping	14
deep sea, coastal and great lakes water transportation (except by ferries)	13
marine shipping agencies	13
other support activities for water transportation	13
regulation and administration of transportation programs	8
international trade financing	7
research and development in the social sciences and humanities	6
labor unions and similar labor organizations	4
temporary help services	4
administration of general economic programs	3
all other miscellaneous store retailers (except beer and wine-making supplies stores)	3
coastal and great lakes passenger transportation	3
deep sea passenger transportation	3
emergency and other relief services	3

Source: EBSCO

The kinds of industries or branches which are not presented in the table but are present in the list available in the EBSCO report include finfish farming and fish hatcheries (3), historical sites (3), international affairs (3), port and harbor operations (3), ship building and repairing (3), rice farming (2), administration of urban planning and community and rural development (1).

3. Sociology of 'the maritime' – most relevant articles in academic journals

In the following part of the text the review of articles most relevant to the area of combined topics of 'sociology' and 'maritime' is presented. The crucial questions to be answered are among others: are there any theoretical considerations concerning possible maritime sociology present in the articles, what clearly sociological categories are discussed while exploring maritime issues, how sociology of maritime issues is defined and conceptualized if at all, who are the main actors involved in the maritime processes and finally is the complex 'nature' of this field of study requiring interdisciplinary approach.

One of the most frequently covered topics in the sample of articles review was maritime professions. In 2013 Michael Bloor analyzed the social situation on a globalized mariner pointing out to deficiencies in seafarers training, reductions in crew numbers, long hours resulting in seafarers' fatigue, and failures of global governance of the industry. A year earlier Leah Carmichael and Andrew Herod (2012) presented an article on two maritime professions – seafarers and dockers and their recent fight with the deregulation and liberalization of maritime industry within the European Union. Using the sociological concepts of habitus but also notions from the human geography (e.g. labor geography) referring to these two professional categories (see also Kolodziej, Kolodziej-Durnas 2014 on labor geography of seafarers) they suggest dockers thanks to bigger spatial embeddedness were able to safe their rights in the trade unions contrary to seafarers who constitute one of the most globalized labor milieu. It is interesting that about twenty years before Clifford Donn (1994) suggested maritime industry and industrial relations in this sector in the United States, Australia and Norway need more regulation as facing the conditions of increasing

internationalization, competition from 'flag of convenience' operators and challenging national fleets thanks to e.g. low cost crews obtained from inexpensive labor countries.

Another issue addressed in the publications on 'sociology of the maritime' was organizational sociology and management. Woo with co-authors (Woo et al. 2013) analyzed the themes appearing in the journal *Maritime Policy and Management* (compare also similar analysis by McConville 2013) reporting that there has been a shift from economic issues towards management matters, that ports are more and more frequent theme in the journal and that more and more articles by authors from Asia are published as maritime issues became very popular among Asian researchers.

The perspective of urban sociology is also present in the set of articles selected for this review. Socio-cultural and not only economic aspects of port cities were analyzed in the original Polish maritime sociology. Nowadays these are also the subject of research (Chang, Wang, Sumser-Lupson, 2011) but often in commercial contexts.

Sea as special life and work environment is the topic discussed in some significant articles. Frey, Savage and Torgler (2011) treated the circumstances of the Titanic disaster as a source of data to analyze the natural experiment and check whether social norms in force on land are also valid at sea in case of dramatic event posing a threat to life. Multicultural labor milieu in maritime shipping sector and maritime industry administration is a convenient situation to ask questions about cultural differences. Jan Horck (2004) having conducted a research among maritime university students and graduates concludes that there is a need to offer maritime workers preparation course to cope with crew members of different origin and that unfortunately the differences constitute rather hindrance than a catalyst of fruitful cooperation. Fortunately there are other studies which provide management practices to implement in order to overcome these problems (see e.g. Theotokas, Progoulaki, 2007).

Another theme appearing in the contemporary scientific journals with texts devoted to maritime and sociological issues is ecology. Researchers from Hong Kong (Lai, Lun, Wong, Cheng, 2011) presented 'green practices' in shipping industry aimed at the decrease in pollution volume and environment protection they propose conceptual framework to evaluate practices to diminish damage and provide policy and managerial implications to promote such activities in the maritime industry. Portuguese authors (Videira et al. 2012) explored the efficiency of participatory decision making models in supporting sustainability strategies implementation for marine areas.

Piracy and water transport of immigrants (refugees) constitute another area of interest for those dealing with maritime issues. Piracy has become a modern theme also to be covered in the field of sociological research. It is an example of these phenomena which happen at sea but have significant influence on the social reality in land. Sociologists analyze these interconnections both in historical (see Norton 2013 on piracy at the times early modern English empire) and modern contexts (see e.g. Murphy 2013 or Twyman-Ghoshal 2014).

4. Conclusions

The review of most relevant articles selected by the EBSCO databases browser resulted in a few conclusions. The caption 'maritime sociology' does not function in the world academic journal articles as it was mentioned before. Similarly 'sociology of maritime issues' is just an arbitrary choice of a name. There are no traces of any efforts to construct or theoretically address the attempts to establish a new subdiscipline of sociology dealing with the 'maritime issues'. On the other hand there are plenty of researchers from all over the world and as a consequence many publications concerning maritime communities and maritime industry. The authors of the articles

are not afraid of mixing the sociological approaches with economic, ecological, geographical perspectives. The research reports exhibit interdisciplinary character. Various new subjects are covered such as piracy, management, ecology which were rare or absent in original Polish maritime sociology. One may say social science is very much interested in maritime environment but sociologists have no ambitions any more to establish a new 'pure' subfield of their discipline. The comparison of the 'classical' and 'new' topics on the maritime in sociology is presented in Table 7.

Tab. 7. Main themes of 'sociology of the maritime'

Original 20 th century Polish maritime sociology	21st century sociology of maritime issues
- Maritime professions (sociology of labour)	- Ecology
- Fishers and seafarers' families (sociology of family)	- Piracy
- Port cities (urban sociology)	- Immigration
- Maritime culture (sociology of culture)	- Economics and Management

Source: compiled by the author.

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