

LIVING ABOARD AS AN ELEMENT OF AN URBAN LANDSCAPE

by

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## CHAPTER ONE: PREFACE AND INTRODUCTION

"There is nothing - absolutely nothing - half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats" Kenneth Grahame "The Wind in the Willows"

This study examines people living on boats in Seattle. In boating circles, such people are known as "liveaboards". "Living- aboard", then, *is* the act of living on a boat. The boats themselves may also be known as "liveaboards".

Liveaboards are found throughout the world. They range from families living on sanpans in Asia, to professional sailors roaming the world, writing travelogs, and making ends meet through temporary work, to the independently wealthy engaging in perpetual nomadic recreation. Liveaboards also exist in many port cities in the developed world. These more sedentary boat-dwellers will be referred to as urban liveaboards. They are the focus of this study.

Life aboard varies significantly between ports. The severity of winters, especially the formation of ice, defines the northern limit of living-aboard, except for a hearty few. Such limits stem from discomfort, immobility, maintenance problems, and possible damage to boats resulting from harsh winters. Local regulations restrict living



aboard in some jurisdictions. Many jurisdictions feel living aboard results in sanitation and taxation problems. Living aboard is also affected by land-use along urban waterfronts. Commercial areas, with heavy ship traffic and little room for yacht moorage, are unlikely to have many liveaboards. However, stretches of waterfront which offer moorage, access to city facilities, employment, and amenities are more likely liveaboard locations. Living aboard may also be encouraged by a region's boating potential. Such potential is enhanced by a mild climate, scenic shores, extensive inland and protected waters, and proximity to other popular boating areas.

Florida and California are considered to have the greatest numbers of liveaboards in the United States. One estimate places the number of liveaboard boats in Florida at four to five thousand. Both states have unusually warm climates, imposing few winter hardships. Florida also has a large number of inlets and bays and relatively easy access to popular cruising areas in the Bahamas and the Caribbean. In spite of cold and ice, however, people have been known to live aboard on Chesapeake Bay and as far north as Canada.

Seattle's winters are certainly harsher than Florida's or California's. The winters, however, are mild and ice-free. Summers, moreover, are less torrid than in Florida or California. Seattle's shoreline is conducive to living aboard. While it is the site of one of the world's largest ports, it also has extensive non-commercial waterfront with moorage for over five thousand boats (Oceanographic

Institute of Washington 1978). The vast majority of these moorages are located with easy access to transportation routes, employment, retail, and cultural centers. The city has a long tradition of waterfront dwelling, in the form of houseboats, and is the center of the region's boating industry. Puget Sound and the passages to Canada and Alaska also offer a vast cruising ground unmatched on the western U.S. coast. The area is also scenic and uncrowded compared to other major boating areas in the U.S.

Living aboard is unusual in contemporary American cities. As such, it provides an example of another housing type which may be studied in terms of residential choice, residential satisfaction, and community formation. It is also unique in the form and location of its tenure. Here, the dwelling is usually owned by the occupant while the space it occupies is usually rented. This is somewhat comparable to mobile home tenure patterns, but there are few other similarities. The boat is also easily moved and can be self-sufficient for several months.

Because industry and commerce dominate land use along urban waterways, residences are rare. The liveaboard thus occupies an unusual location within the city. In Seattle, live-aboards share this situation with houseboats located within bicycling distance of the downtown and plush waterfront houses along Lake Washington.

The boat is also an unusual house-type. In this case, residence

is bound to a particular recreation, boating. Are these recreation and residential choices interrelated? The role of lifestyle, as it includes recreation, can also be examined.

The study of such unusual cases offers an opportunity to test theories which have been derived under more typical circumstances. In the past, such examinations have proven useful (Gans 1962, Ware 1935, Bunge 1971, Spradley 1970). The Chicago School is perhaps the best example, where the development of urban theory was accompanied by a flurry of wide ranging community studies (Stein 1960).

This particular study has two purposes. First, it is an exploratory study of an unusual urban way of life. Its uniqueness calls for examination and explanation. Hopefully this study contributes to understanding a part of the diversity of urban life. It attempts to lay the necessary ground-work for more detailed study.

Second, this study will treat the interlocking roles of residence, lifestyle, and community within the group of liveaboards. As such, it is meant to provide a different perspective on the pre-existing literature on the relations between community, residence, and lifestyle (Hichelson 1970, Keller 1968).

Conveniently, these two purposes are mutually reinforcing. The examination of the unique and distinctive aspects of liveaboards leads to the study of theoretical issues of residence (both location and

house-type), life-style (as a broad issue including recreation), social patterns (including notions of community), and their inter-relationships. Conversely, the study of these theoretically structured issues requires a more general understanding provided by exploratory research.

The following chapter (The Urban Community) provides a theoretical perspective on these issues. The chapter concludes with a series of questions which relate these issues to urban liveaboards.

Chapter Three (Methodology) traces the course of this research, particularly the necessary field work. It points out particular sections of the research method which answer the theoretical questions posed in Chapter Two. Several limitations to the study's findings are also briefly discussed. The sample population is described and some population estimates are made.

Chapter Four describes life-style aspects of the group and formation of community. Chapter Five (Residential Choice) examines the decision to move aboard, the decision to remain aboard, and some sources of residential satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Chapter Six examines the particular urban and spatial contexts of this group, including their ecological interactions with other groups. Chapter Seven looks at the social and community patterns that accompany this way of life.

Figure 1.1: Portage Bay

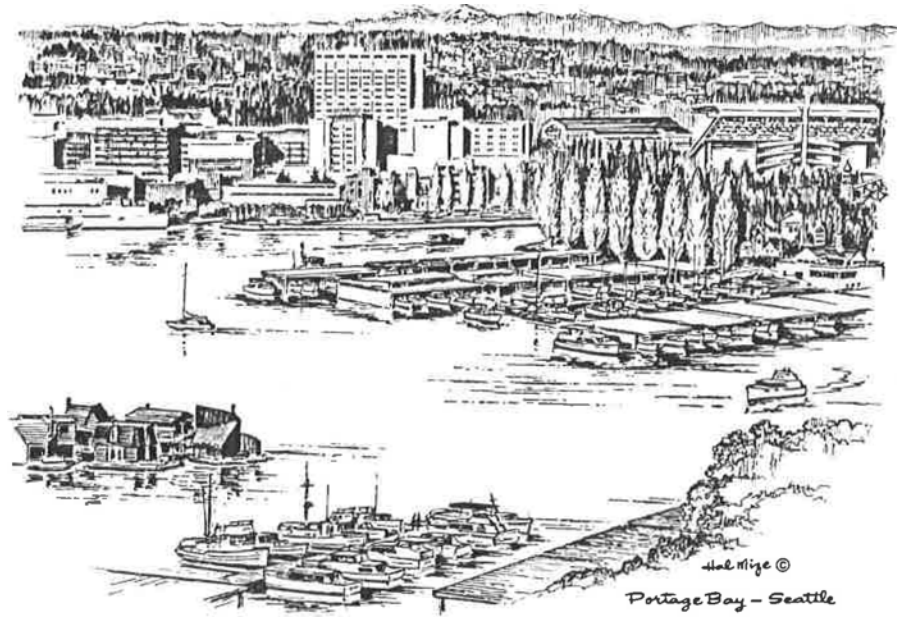
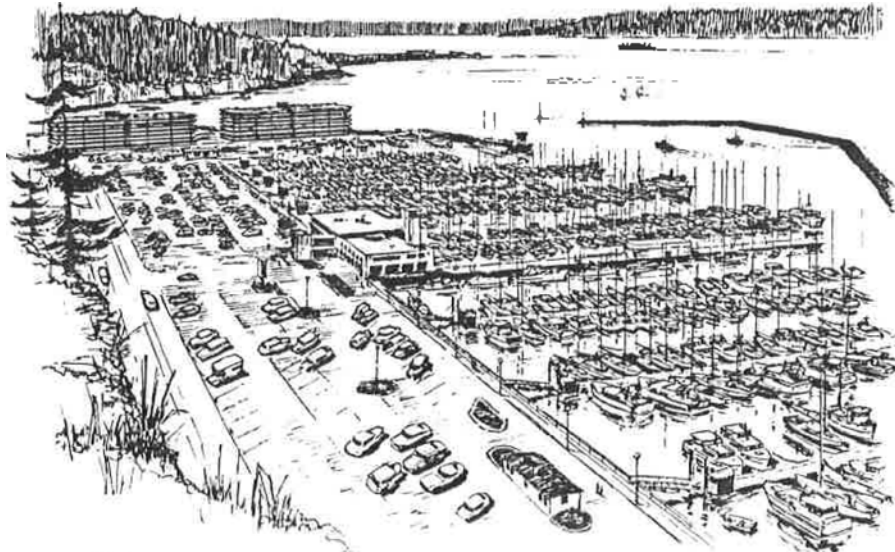


Figure 1.2: Shilshole Bay Marina



## CHAPTER TWO: THE URBAN COMMUNITY

"We shall of course have to measure these expanses of water in relation to human activity; their history would otherwise be incomprehensible if indeed it could be written at all." Fernand Braudel The Mediterranean

Few words in the urban literature are so evocative as "community". It is used both as an ideal to be fostered and protected and as an analytic concept for understanding urban society. "Community Development" serves as a planning objective and the rationale for numerous governmental programs and agencies at the Federal, State, and local levels. Politicians and media call for responsiveness to "the community". Grass-roots organizations call for "community control". Urban researchers expend their energies (and funding) searching for and examining ethnic, ecological, symbolic, spatial, and other "types" of community.

My interest here is not primarily to consider "community" as an ideal or as a policy objective, but rather to examine it as an analytical tool for understanding urban social geography and social process. To do this it will be necessary to define community, discuss its relations with the individual, examine its formation, and discuss its importance for understanding urban social process and pattern.

## WHAT IS COMMUNITY?

Three types of social groupings are often mentioned under the name of community. I shall refer to these as "the group", "the perceived community", and "the social community".

The group is any aggregate of individuals or households holding something in common. This may include neighborhood, occupation, stage in life-cycle, religion, or life-style. While the group is somehow homogeneous, it does not necessarily have any internal cohesion or any capacity for collective action or interest. It serves primarily as an analytical tool for simplifying the urban social realm (Shevky and Bell 1955, Anderson and Egeland 1961).

The perceived community is an image of an aggregate created by individuals. It is a community that may only exist in the minds of outsiders. Such a community may or may not have any internal cohesion but is likely to possess some homogeneous characteristics. It exists because outsiders think, and act, as if it were a social unit (Suttles 1972).

Third, there is the social community which is defined by the perceptions and actions of community members themselves. Members must perceive themselves as a community and must be able to distinguish members from non-members. The social relations of the community must also tend to cluster within its membership. Community members must

have a higher probability of socializing with other members than do non-members. This results in a community possessing a relatively high degree of internal cohesion and focus. This third kind of community is most like the "romantic" ideal of a "community" (Fisher et al. 1977).

These ideas are summarized in Table 2.1. They are somewhat distinct types, but are certainly not mutually exclusive. The presence of homogeneous characteristics or outside images of community (Suttles 1972) will facilitate the formation of a social community. The existence of a group may also facilitate the perception of community by outsiders (as is the case with Social Area Analysis). As such, we can expect to see considerable coincidence of these three approaches to community.

#### THE COMMUNITY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

The "well-being" of an individual may be enhanced by membership in a community. This is especially evident in the case of the social community. Not only does this benefit the individual community member, but it may also help explain why individuals aggregate into social communities.

By focusing activity within a limited circle, members narrow and focus their range of interaction between the individual and his environment. One result is a simpler, more regular environment for the



Table 2.1: Characteristics of Types of Community

	Group	Perceived Community	Social Community
Homogeneous Characteristics	<b>X</b>		
External Perception of Community		<b>X</b>	
Internal Social Focus			<b>X</b>
Internal Identification			<b>X</b>

...

individual. This has certain psychological benefits (Milgram 1970) and allows for greater specialization within this more limited environment. Efforts are directed into a narrow field rather than diffused for lack of focus. The member thus becomes something of a specialist. This is not necessarily a technical specialization, but is a social specialization. He must develop an in-depth knowledge of other members of the social network, as well as the style and format of social interaction that the community shares in common. This may consist of a set of role and role-defined relationships, a common body of technical knowledge, or a common life-style or ideology.

Several advantages also result from involvement in a social network. First, through contacts with others, the individual can monitor a more extensive environment than he could alone. This gives him greater warning of both potential problems and opportunities. Membership in the more focused social network of the social community has an added advantage in that members share common interests. Thus information reaching a member is more likely to be useful to him in the specialty that focusses the group.

Second, the social network is a store of techniques and experiences. This is a range of experience well beyond that of a single individual. Yet members may draw upon it as needed. These techniques and experiences have been developed within the group's specialty and therefore the sharing of such information may be both entertaining and useful to other members of the group.

Third, the social network is a basis for mutual aid and collective action. Individuals with already-established links and common interests will have an easier time banding together as an interest group or merely to exchange favors than will a collection of socially un-related individuals. This may be a daily source of convenience or a basis for political mobilization in matters vital to the group's survival.



#### THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL COMMUNITIES

Since communities are aggregates of individuals, the question of the formation of social communities really concerns how communities gather and maintain membership. Here we are working at the interface of society and the individual, for membership in a social community requires both the acceptance of the individual by the group (requiring an aggregate norm) and the acceptance of the group by the individual (implying an individual choice).

The importance of acceptance by the aggregate is most evident where membership is ascribed by birth, as with ethnic or racial communities. Less obvious examples of ascribed membership include cohort communities sharing stage in life-cycle, such as retirement communities or student communities. These communities have a discrete beginning and end for each member, although the community itself is relatively permanent. Less obvious still is where membership is ascribed by a shared experience, such as a leper colony, or a shared occupation, as with a labor union (Pilcher 1972).

In all these cases a relatively homogeneous basis exists as a prerequisite and initial focus for the community. The existence of such a focus may be a prerequisite for the formation of any social community. Such a focus provides a reason for the clustering of social networks and is a basis for individual identification with the group. Assuming that a group with a more or less homogeneous basis is necessary to form a social community, let us look at the role of individual choice in community formation.

In the course of a lifetime, an individual is likely to belong to many homogeneous groups and have potential for membership in many more. Since the individual can only devote a limited amount of time to activities in each of these groups, he can only be a member of very few social communities at a given time. Thus, the individual's choice in the allocation of his time and energies finally determines his membership (commitment) among these groups and communities.

In summary, then, we can see membership in a group as resulting from an individual choice among a limited number of such groups. These groups may or may not be social communities.

Something of a balance can be seen between socially ascribed aspects of community membership and those of individual choice. A society with a rigid class or caste system, for example, places severe limits on the individual's ability to choose among a variety of communities. Similar restrictions may be imposed spatially by an inability to travel or by constrained or spatially biased flows of information. The role of culture, which contains the values upon which individual decisions are made, is certainly also important even though culture is an aggregate trait as well.

The idea of social choice within cultural and spatial limits may shed some light on contemporary American urbanism. Here, technological innovations and social and economic developments have heightened (within limits) the potential, and perhaps the desire, of many to be exposed to and accepted by a wider variety of groups and already existing social communities.

Under such circumstances we can see the importance of individual choice. In examining choice under fairly unconstrained conditions, a few issues become important. These include possible cognitive limits and biases to choice, the role of values, and the incidence of

reformulating choice (as with stage in life-cycle), and the related issue of choices of limited commitment (read community of limited liability).

#### RESIDENTIAL ASPECTS OF COMMUNITY

The effects of residence on the existence of social communities can be divided into two factors: the role of proximity and the role of housing-type. Individuals sharing either or both of these constitute one type of homogeneous group.

Proximity is the sharing of a situation or common location. This may create a basis of common interest which is focussed spatially. Examples of these interests might include opposition to perceived invasion by undesirable groups, support for the school system, or concern for traffic on residential streets. Such shared interests, as well as a desire to have friendly (or at least not unfriendly) neighbors, encourage the formation of contacts and communities on the basis of proximity.

Given a random pattern of movement to and from a residence, individuals are more likely to have initial and repeated acquaintance with neighbors than with those living farther away.

It is also more costly, in terms of time and convenience, to maintain social contacts at greater distances. On this basis alone we might expect some clustering of neighborhood social networks.

Patterns of movement and residential choice, however, are not random. Proximate location may also be a self-reinforcing result of already-present community ties. This can be seen especially in the case of ethnic groups which desire contact and proximate location with community members and institutions. Individuals may also choose a location in hopes of increasing contacts and membership in certain groups (Ware 1935). However, the range of the individual's choice is limited by his awareness of residential options (Clark 1969).

The impacts of proximity on the formation of social communities will be affected by the transportation and means of communication available to the individual, any pre-existing contacts and interests he may have, and any other constraints or opportunities imposed from outside.

Housing type is a shared form of residential site with similar physical characteristics. This may also form the basis of common interests in the form of shared problems of maintenance, land tenure (rental vs. owner), finance, and outside regulation (building codes, lease provisions, etc.). Since choice of housing-type is also associated with other individual characteristics (life-style, stage in life-cycle, income) a wider basis of common interest can also be expected (Hichelson 1970, 1977). Indeed, choice of house-type may directly reflect the social needs and values of residents (Duncan 1973, 1976a, 1976b, Bell 1968). For instance, families prefer larger

dwellings with outside play area to lower maintenance apartments (Yeates and Garner 1976). Social communities may be expected to form around classes of housing type.

Where clusters of housing of a similar type occur, advantages of both housing type and proximity may coincide. The likelihood of social communities occurring in these situations would probably be increased.

#### THE COMMUNITY AND "THE OUTSIDE"

In an urban setting, a social community does not exist in isolation. It occupies a niche in the functional relationships of the city. As such, it becomes dependent on the functioning of the city via its ecological relationships to other parts and groups of the city. The form of dependency varies greatly with the niche the community occupies, since each niche entails differing relations with other groups and institutions. A community of home-owners, for example, will not depend on land-lords, but will have a proscribed relationship with the assessor's office and the bank which holds the mortgage. The community is also likely to remain dependent on the outside for employment, finance, police and fire protection, etc. It is this extended dependence on other social groups and institutions that makes these urban communities fundamentally different from the traditional community of the rural village.



In addition to occupying this ecological niche, the social community also exists within a cultural milieu. This consists of the system of ideologies, values, and beliefs that give meaning and direction to individual and collective action (Perin 1977).

This cultural milieu may be very diverse across groups and individuals. But given the internal intensity of communication within communities, less diversity can be expected within each community.

Since the community is no less isolated culturally than functionally, we can expect a considerable flow of ideas between the community and the outside. These flows are not random, but are guided through social networks, media, and public education. These ideas may affect individual choice of membership as well as aggregate norms of acceptance.

Importantly, these cultural and functional factors are closely inter-related. The overall functional structure of the city is both the cause and effect of prevailing ideologies and ideas. One need only compare cities cross-culturally to be convinced of this (Mumford 1938). In the American case, corporate capitalism can be seen as emerging from an ideology of individual freedom and private property. Yet, the rise of corporate capitalism is also said to have changed the underlying values and beliefs of the society (Whyte 1956).

## LIFE-STYLE AND COMMUNITY

Much has been said about the role of common life-style in forming social communities (Duncan 1973, 1976b, Bell 1968, Gans 1962 & 1967, Ware 1935). Life-style is considered to be a common ideology or outlook on life. It may be evidenced by common activities, material culture, tastes, and preferences. This may be engendered by an ethnic or religious tradition (Gans 1962, Duncan 1976a) or the result of individual thought and choice (Bell 1968, Ware 1935). This is certainly intertwined with the cultural milieu of the city.

Sharing such a life-style in common may provide a strong focus for the formation of a social community. Such a group provides a common basis, not only of interest, but of communication as well. Communication between members is certainly facilitated by the sharing of common motives, intellectual tradition, and way of understanding the world. This is likely to result in greater social interaction within the group. Association with "like-minded" individuals may also provide psychological benefits to the individual. In an urban setting, additional benefits may be found such as an interest group defending and furthering their way of life and outlook.

Often there are spatial and material spin-offs of life-style. This may be reflected in the amount and location of land desired (Bell 1968, Whyte 1956, Alonso 1960), housing-type chosen (Hichelson 1977,

Duncan 1973, 1976a), and the accumulation of various goods and patronage of services (Ware 1935). Such spin-offs may be the direct result of the "ethos" of the lifestyle or an indirect result of income or occupation associated with a lifestyle (e.g. an artist colony capable of affording only inexpensive housing and needing studio space).

#### CONCLUSIONS

In this last section, I would like to look at the use of the concept of community, as developed here, for understanding urban social geography.

It is impossible to see a social community as a culturally and ecologically isolated and discrete entity. A community is an imprecise, but useful, construct with no firm boundaries. It is mainly a focus, both cultural and functional, which becomes fuzzy around the perimeter. This focus both attracts and holds individuals to the group.

A community is an aggregation of individuals, but not all aggregations are communities. Nor must all individuals be a member of a community. And although it is difficult, an individual may belong to several communities. Membership in a community, moreover, is not merely an "inside-outside" distinction, but is rather a continuum of involvement.

One may envision a loosely structured hierarchy of communities, each with separate, though perhaps related, foci. Certainly, a family meets all our requirements to be a social community. A group of families in a neighborhood may also constitute a community. And at the same time these kinship and spatial communities may be found within an ethnic, religious, or occupational community. Each individual may identify himself and be involved with one of these levels more than another, but identification and association with one of these communities tends to increase identification and involvement in other levels. For instance, involvement in an ethnic community is likely to increase both the probability of residing in an ethnic neighborhood and the adoption of an ethnic kinship structure.

Social communities will also evidence a spatial pattern. This pattern will depend on the focus or foci of the community and its functional and cultural milieu. The need to interact with other members certainly requires patterns of movement and communication to exist. If transportation or communication are somehow difficult, then we can expect proximity to become more important.

If the community has an inherently spatial focus, as with a neighborhood, the spatial properties will likely be a key to understanding the community. In other cases the spatial properties of the community may only be a by-product. Such is the case with many life-style based communities which require cheap or expensive housing,

extensive or intensive land-use, etc. (Ware 1935, Bell 1968). Here, a common life-style may become the community's primary focus with secondary, and slightly different, foci developing around residential location and housing type.

#### URBAN LIVE-ABOARDS

Turning our attention to urban liveaboards several questions can be posed to guide our analysis on the basis of the preceding discussion. First, to what extent are live-aboards in Seattle a social community? Do smaller sub-communities of live-aboards also exist? As defined here, this requires an examination of the extent and character of liveaboard social networks and identification of themselves as "liveaboards". By virtue of their sharing a common house-type and urban waterfront location, liveaboards constitute a group. But can they also be considered a group along other lines, such as by life-style, stage in life-cycle, or occupation? To what extent are they perceived as a community by outsiders such as moorage operators, city officials, or persons thinking of living board?

Second, what advantages does the individual gain from the existence of the community? More specifically, does the existence of the community make living aboard easier?

Third, how can we explain the existence of a live-aboard community? Does the community form primarily because of shared

housing-type, waterfront location, neighborhood, recreational activity, life-style, or some combination of the above? How do aggregate norms and individual choice inter-relate among these various groups?

Fourth, it seems likely that there are important residential aspects to this community. What roles are played by proximity (either by waterfront location or neighborhood) and shared house-type?

Fifth, what is the place of live-aboards in the city? How do they fit into the functioning (human ecology) of the city? What is their place in its cultural milieu?

Sixth, is life-style important in shaping the community? This is inherently related to the cultural milieu. Can a live-aboard lifestyle(s) be found among the preferences, dislikes, and comments of live-aboards?

To begin this analysis, it will be valuable to describe live-aboards as they exist in Seattle. This should provide a basis for both the conduct and the comprehension of further analysis. From this point more specific results may be found to address the previous questions. In this way a more integrated image of Seattle live-aboards may be constructed. As such, it seems more appropriate to address the above questions in roughly reverse order.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND POPULATION PROFILE

### METHODOLOGY

Many methods have been used to identify and study "communities" and groups. These range from various types of participant/observer (Whyte 1956, Gans 1962,1967) and direct observer (Spradley 1970) research to quantitative studies of census data (Shevky and Bell 1955, Anderson and Egeland 1961). Census data concerning liveaboards are not available. Other numerical data are scanty and incomplete. Further, the types of issues the study addresses (Chapter II) do not lend themselves to quantitative analysis without first developing ideas of which variables are important and if and how they can be measured. A participant-observer study would have been costly. (Funds did not allow the purchase or rental of a boat). Thus, fieldwork consisted of interviews, questionnaires, and observations. Most questions were open-ended and of a general nature or were directed at the issues covered in the previous chapter.

Lists generated by open-ended questions, such as reasons for moving aboard, may, in the aggregate, underestimate the importance of items listed. Unlike multiple response questions, respondents are not reminded of factors. For this study the open-ended format also avoided prompting responses which might not otherwise have been made. This would tend to overestimate the importance of factors that had occurred

to the researcher and to underestimate others. In the aggregate, factors are more reliably identified by open-ended responses, but their importance may be underestimated (Bailey 1978).

Living aboard in a city involves not only those actually living on boats, but also moorage operators, city officials responsible for housing and planning, and those involved in the marine industry. Field work for this study involved contacting members of each of these parties and soliciting their comments. Field work was conducted between July and October 1980.

#### Liveaboards:

Two liveaboard samples were solicited: personal interviews and questionnaires returned by mail. All respondents were living aboard or had recently lived aboard within the City of Seattle. No minimum period of living aboard was specified. Respondents had lived aboard for periods ranging from three days to fifteen years (a mean of 3.5 years, a median of 2 years). Those living aboard commercial vessels (primarily fishing boats) were not included as it was felt they were different in character from liveaboard yachts and were more likely to constitute an occupational group. Houseboats, which are essentially houses built on rafts, were also excluded. Aside from lacking independent mobility, it was felt that their distinct historical, cultural, and political context in Seattle made them more appropriate



for separate study.

The interview sample consisted of 38 households (about 50 respondents). A six-page questionnaire was used (Appendix B). All questions did not yield interesting results. The first page of the questionnaire recorded the source of contact (question 1a), date, type of mooring (primarily covered or uncovered slip), propulsion (sail, power, or motor-sail), length of the boat, whether the boat was outfitted for inland or ocean use, cruising or racing, or could only be taken out with difficulty, the character of the moorage (sail, power, or mixed), number of slips in the moorage, the state of the boat's repair, age and sex of each respondent, and space for miscellaneous comments.

The second part of the survey (page 2) covered more specific housing characteristics: cooking facilities, refrigeration, space heat, number of berths (beds), marine electronic equipment, telephone, and 110 Volt power requirements (Questions 1-7). The remainder of page two surveyed household characteristics: number of occupants and their relation, if they had moved aboard together or joined a household already aboard, and the age, sex, education, and occupation of each household member (questions 8-11). This information provided a basic inventory of housing and social characteristics.

A page and a half was then devoted to residential choice and satisfaction (questions 12-24). Respondents were asked where they

lived immediately before moving aboard, where they got the idea to move aboard, if any other changes accompanied the move (e.g., divorce, job change, departure of children, etc.), sources of residential satisfaction and dissatisfaction, intent to remain aboard, and where and when they might move ashore. The extent of prior boating experience (question 17) was sought to help trace the household's involvement in boating as it related to joining the liveaboard group. Respondents were asked to briefly describe living aboard in Seattle. This was intended to be a catch-all question regarding residence. It gave respondents an opportunity to give further sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, as well as to elaborate or summarize what had already been said.

Another page was devoted to social networks and the description of other liveaboards. Respondents were asked about their "best" friends (question 25). How many lived aboard? Where had they met (job, boating, neighborhood, etc.)? Where did these "best" friends live? This information was used to detail their primary social networks. Question 34 touched on the location and extent of other liveaboard and non-liveaboard friends. While responses to these questions were interesting and useful, more careful adherence to the format of the responses and a more detailed line of questions about other friends would have provided more elaborate results. Respondents were then asked about mutual aid among liveaboards, an issue discussed earlier as an advantage of involvement in a social community. Finally, perceptions of other liveaboards were solicited. This was meant to

provide some information on how members viewed the group.

A section on activity spaces was included (questions 29-39). These asked for locations of employment, shopping, and friends, primary mode of travel, and sections of the city visited regularly. Respondents were also asked about membership in formal organizations. Response to most of these questions was inconclusive, lacking in sample size, specificity, and a basis for comparison with other groups.

Questions 40-43 concerned liveaboard relations with the "Outside". Only two external groups were the subject of questions, governments and moorages. The roles of other groups regarding liveaboards were less direct and emerged more from off-hand comments made in the course of interviews and from researcher observations.

The final section (questions 45-48) concerned recreational uses of the boat. How often was it taken out? Where was it usually taken? Did friends often go along? Were any major trips planned? These questions were meant to indicate the importance of the recreational use of the boat.

Responses were solicited primarily by letters with return post-cards placed in suspected liveaboard mail boxes at thirteen marinas. There was an approximate 20% response rate to these letters. Seven liveaboard households were initially contacted at the Sloop Tavern in Ballard, a tavern with an established boating and

liveaboard clientele (see Chapter VII- Liveaboard Society). Wandering along docks resulted in three interviews. Eleven interviews were arranged by referral. Two other referred liveaboards refused to be interviewed (for an 85% positive response rate among referrals). The remaining four interviews originated from other contacts, primarily chance meetings and signs posted at moorages soliciting interviews.

Given the lengthy and open-ended nature of the questionnaire, every effort was made to solicit respondents in an unobtrusive and unantagonizing way. To do otherwise might have increased the number of respondents, but would have likely compromised the quality of the responses. Virtually all respondents were very cooperative and generous with their time and thoughts. The time needed to complete an interview ranged from half an hour to three hours. The average amount of time spent was about an hour.

Fourteen households returned short (two page) questionnaires by mail. This was done towards the end of the fieldwork. Questionnaires, with stamped and addressed return envelopes, were placed in the mailboxes of those who had not responded to the earlier request for interviews. The response rate was about 20%. The overall response rate for those solicited by mail-box was higher than this, including the 20% who responded to the initial request for interviews. The overall response rate was thus about 35%, for two attempts.

The mail questionnaire (Appendix C) was a condensed version of the

liveboards (benefits and problems) and the actual policies of moorages regarding liveboards.

#### Other Parties:

Several telephone conversations were conducted with others concerned with living aboard. These included three city planners, a city building department official, a daily newspaper reporter who had recently written articles about local liveboards, a college professor studying the moorage industry, and a marine trade lobby official. These were conducted early in the research, largely to collect any background work that had already been done. Conversations with city officials outlined the recent history and current attitudes of the City towards living aboard. Other conversations were less illuminating, but confirmed that little prior research had been done in this area.

#### Study Limitations:

Several shortcomings are apparent from the use of this methodology. First, the sample was not randomly selected. Population parameters were unavailable and access to the population varied immensely between moorages. Thus, a random sampling strategy was impossible. Given the relatively unobtrusive means used to contact liveboards, the sample is most likely to be biased in favor of those who were interested in being studied. The sample size (N=53), about

20% of the estimated total liveaboard households, may tend to lessen this problem.

Second, liveaboard and moorage impressions are not necessarily related to actual behavior and attitudes. For the purposes of this study, however, it is assumed that these impressions accurately represent attitudes that help explain behavior.

Third, the quality of the information gathered varies with its source. For example, the quantity and quality of information gathered by mail-returned questionnaires was always inferior to information gathered in-person. There was less opportunity to pursue points, request elaboration, or collect miscellaneous comments. There was also variation in the quality of information gathered by the same questionnaire. This was due to variation in mood, ability to express, and level of cooperation between respondents. This raises problems of comparability between questionnaires and aggregation of individual observations. Information gathered at the individual level can not necessarily be compared between individuals. Nor can information collected by different questionnaires necessarily be compared. However, it is necessary to assume that these observations can be compared and aggregated to produce overall results and conclusions.

Finally, not all Seattle liveaboards live at commercial or public moorages. It is possible to live aboard at anchor, moored to a houseboat, private waterfront house, or condominium, or moored along an

industrial waterfront by some private arrangement. Four examples of this were found in the course of the 'research. However, because of the dispersed nature of these liveaboards, they were impossible to study systematically.

#### SAMPLE POPULATION PROFILE

##### Occupation:

While liveaboards were employed in a wide variety of occupations, by far the largest number were engaged in skilled occupations, and held professional and managerial positions or were craftsmen. Several held clerical positions or were retired. A few would be classified as semi-skilled or unskilled. Table 3.1 shows the occupational breakdown of the sample.

Some of the professions represented included lawyers (4), engineers (8), a college professor, photographer, certified public accountants, teachers, medical technicians, and librarians. Four of those classified as managerial operated their own businesses. Other managers worked for large organizations.

Craftsmen included skilled mechanics, specialty equipment operators, skilled salespeople, and boatwrights. Many of these were employed in the marine industry.

Table 3.1: Occupations of Heads of Household (N=52)

Occupation	Sample Percent (number)
Professional & Managerial	54% (n=28)
Technicians & Craftsmen	22% (n=11)
Clerical	10% (n= 5)
other semi-skilled	6% (n= 3)
unskilled	2% (n= 1)
retired	6% (n= 3)
boating/marine industry	40% (n=17)
other industries	60% (n=25)

Forty percent of the liveaboard households surveyed had some member employed in this job area. Some moved aboard as a result of this occupation. Others found jobs in the marine industry after having already decided to move aboard. Those employed in the marine industry tended to be craftsmen (e.g., boatwrights and fishermen) or clerical staff (e.g., sales), although seven were managers or self-employed.

#### Education:

The sample was also characterized by a high level of formal education. Most had four or more years of college or post-secondary



education. Another third had some post-secondary education. Only eleven percent (n=9) had no post-secondary education. These figures are summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Formal Education Attained by Adult Live-aboards (N=80)

<u>Level of Formal Education</u>	Per cent (n)
High School	11% (9)
1-4 yrs. Post-Secondary	26% (21)
4 yrs. Post-Secondary	33% (26)
more than 4 yrs. Post-Secondary	30% (24)

Traditionally, occupation and education are viewed as indicators of social status (Shevky and Bell 1955). By these measures, liveaboards would be characterized as generally middle class and by no means a poor or disadvantaged group. Within this middle class classification, however, little more can be said. Both craftsmen (generally considered lower middle class) and professionals (generally considered upper middle class) were found in great numbers.

#### Income:

While income data were not collected, the impressions gained from visiting boats and discussing how boats were financed confirms this analysis of the liveaboards' class position. Boats were generally bought with a mortgage, like most homes. In only a few cases was the household able to afford a second residence. In these cases, the

second residence was usually a house that was rented. Housing ashore was seen as an excellent investment. Several liveaboards moved ashore after they were questioned, and sold their boats, to realize the financial advantages of home ownership. Those moving aboard and owning a house usually sold the house only if no other financial arrangement was possible. For the overwhelming majority (n=50), the boat was the primary and exclusive residence. Living aboard requires a significant income to buy, maintain, and moor a boat.

Many could afford substantial boats. But few, if any, in the sample would be considered wealthy.

#### Ethnicity:

Racially, all liveaboards in the sample were White. One Black liveaboard was mentioned by a neighbor. No Asian liveaboards were found or mentioned throughout the research. Otherwise, no particular ethnic groups stood out or were peculiar by their absence.

#### Stage in the Life-Cycle:

While the sample was relatively homogeneous in social status and ethnicity, there was considerable dichotomy in stage in life-cycle. Figure 3.1 shows the relative ages of the sample's heads of household.

Three distinct groups are evident in this diagram. One group consisted of retirees and those preparing to retire (27%, n=16). This

group coincides with those heads of households over age fifty.  
 All

Figure 3.1: Ages of Heads of Household (N=52)

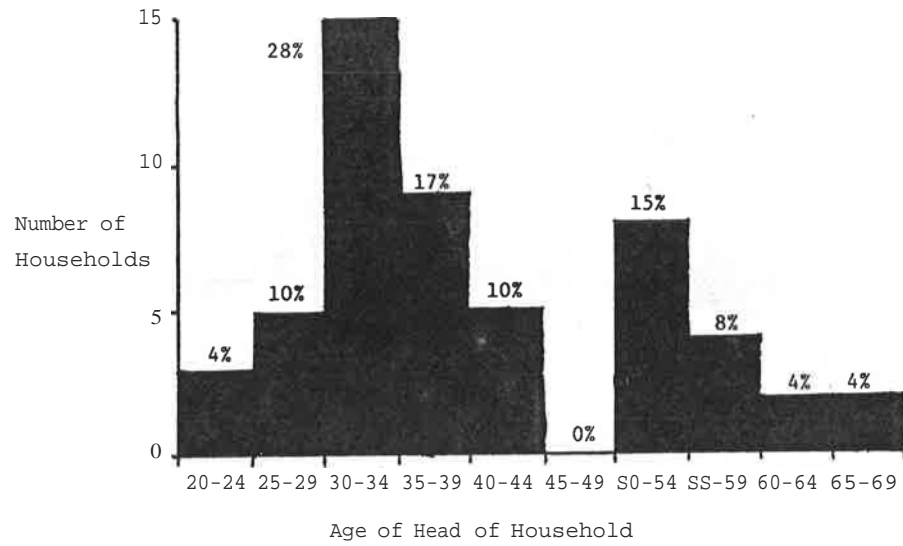
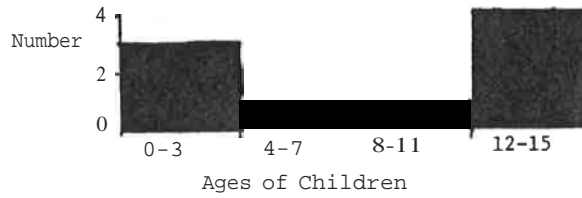


Figure 3.3: Ages of Children in Sample (N=9)



these households were childless. Most were couples who had moved aboard shortly after their children had moved away. This group is designated "pre-retired" in Figure 3.4.

The second group, conspicuous by its virtual absence, is in "mid-life" (23%,n=9). The frequency of living aboard begins to decline about age thirty-five and increases abruptly at age fifty. The absence of this group is attributable to the transition of households into the child-bearing and raising years. This is shown again in Figure 3.2.

The ages of liveaboard children in the sample (Figure 3.3) elaborates on this observation. Of the six households with children, most children were either less than four years or over fourteen years old. The two children between those ages shown in Figure 3.3 belonged to a household which moved ashore in the course of the study. The four older children belonged to two households (two children each), one of which was preparing to begin a world cruise. The three younger children were distributed among three households, all of which intended to remain aboard. All these households, however, had given serious thought to moving ashore.

The third age group was the remainder, aged between 21 and 35 years (50%,n=26). This group could be further divided into singles and couples (see Figure 3.2). The age distributions of these two groups are shown in Figures 3.4,3.5,3.6.

Figure 3.2: Households by Stage in the Life Cycle (N=52)

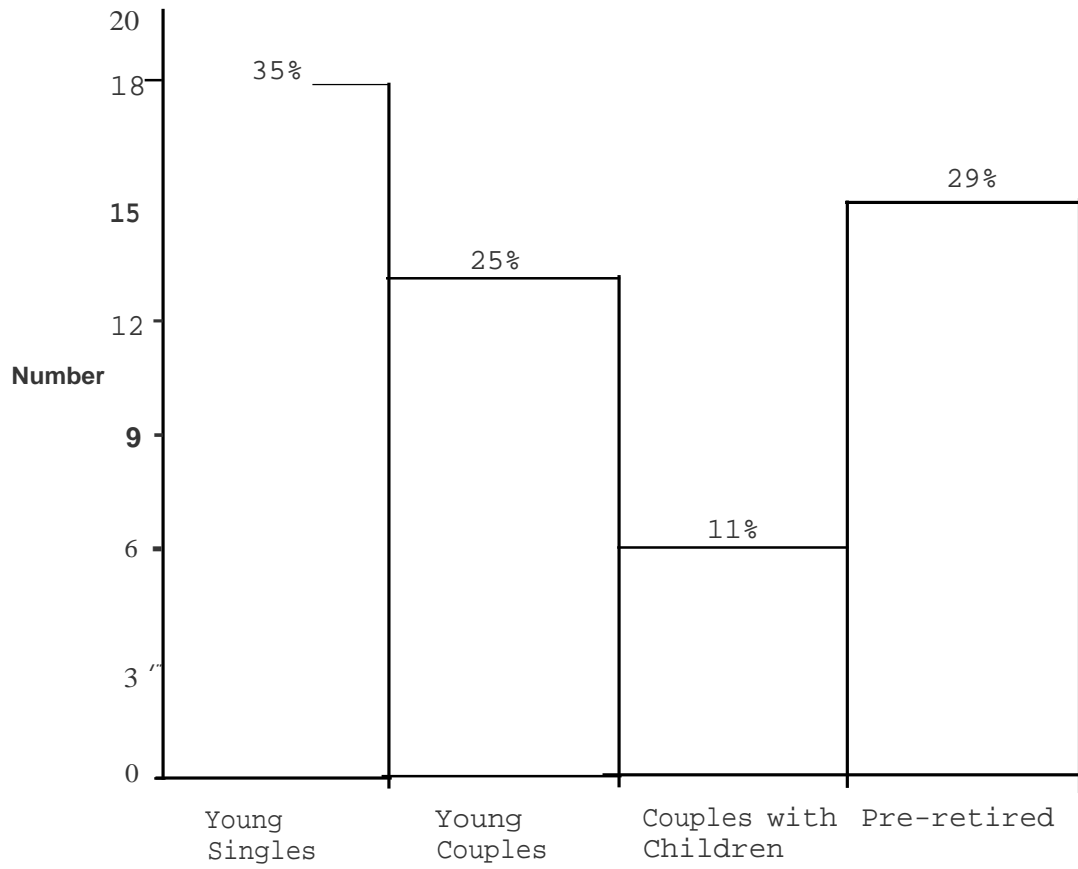


Figure 3.4: Ages of Young Singles (N=18)

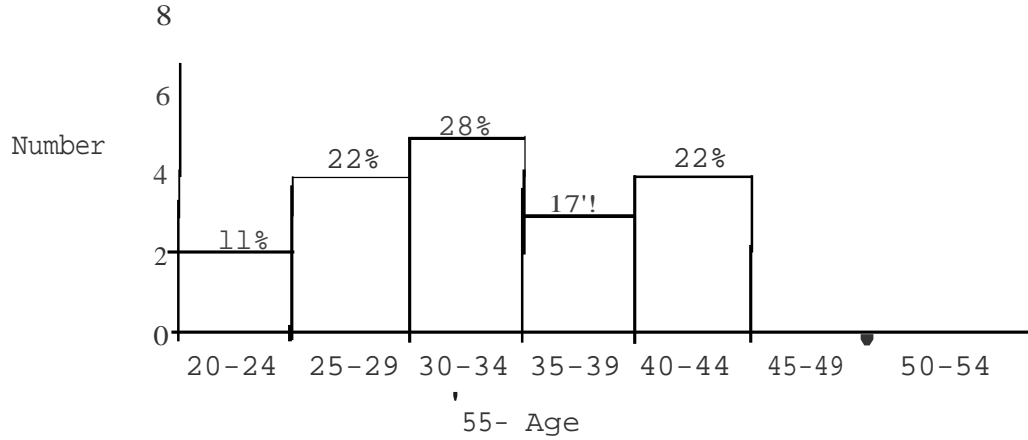


Figure 3.5: Ages of Young Coupled Males (N=13)

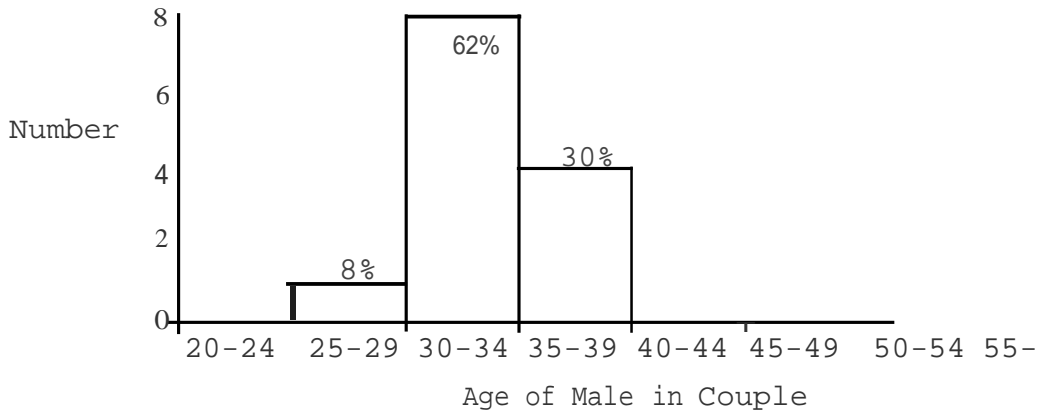
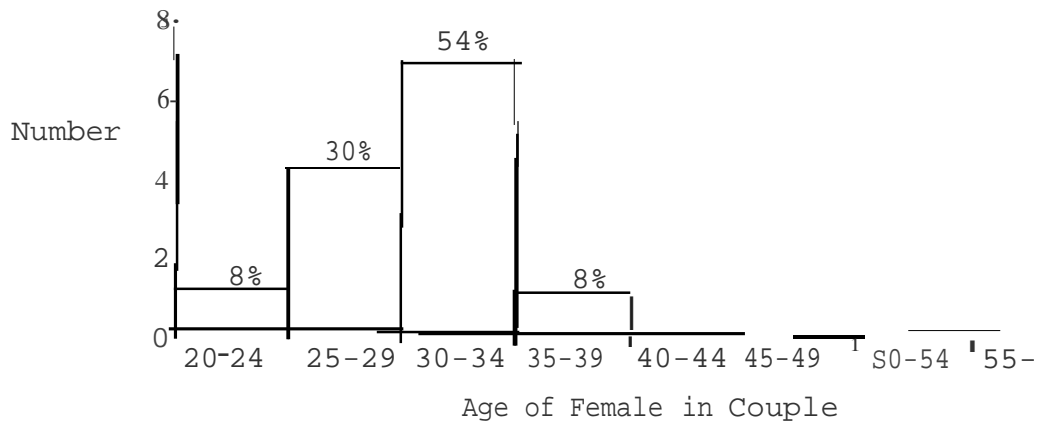


Figure 3.6: Ages of Young Coupled Females (N=13)



Seattle liveaboards, then, consisted primarily of three life-cycle groups, young singles, young couples, and older households preparing to retire after the departure of their children. No evidence was found of segregation of these groups into separate moorages.

#### Boat-Type:

Liveaboards, as a group, owned several types of boats. The most obvious variation is the difference between sail and power boats. Forty-two percent (n=22) of the sample households were aboard power boats. Power boats are generally more spacious, per unit length, than sailboats. They usually have more elaborate electrical and water systems. These might include standard 110 Volt electrical systems with generators for trips and pressurized hot and cold water systems.

This permits more elaborate refrigeration, and cooking facilities, and a greater range of general appliances. The power boat, being a relatively stable platform, has interior space arranged somewhat like a small apartment with a relatively open living room/dining room/galley and more cramped berths forward. Larger power boats (40 feet or more) may contain almost standard living room furniture and approach a small house in spaciousness.

Most power boats are built to plane on the water's surface. This necessitates a lighter construction and rules out the presence of ballast or a deep keel. This allows the power boat to be wider

(accounting for interior spaciousness) and to travel quickly. It also seriously reduces its seaworthiness. The range of the power boat is also reduced, relative to the sailboat, by its dependence on motor fuel. Trawler-type power boats, with displacement as opposed to planing hulls, have a reduced cruising speed, but increased seaworthiness.

Fifty-eight percent of the boats surveyed were sailboats (n=30). Sailboat interiors are generally more austere than powerboats. The necessities of sailboat design (Marchaj 1964) result in a more cramped boat with less room for electrical equipment, elaborate furnishings, or appliances. As sailboats are not a stable flat platform, furnishings, appliances, and interior lay-out must also be conducive and useful to traveling while heeled at a thirty degree angle. The generally heavier construction, presence of a ballasted keel, and reliance on the wind for locomotion give the sailboat a greater cruising range and seaworthiness, but much less speed than a typical power boat. Thus the sailboat may be bought in expectation of coastal or trans-oceanic cruising. Aside from its more romantic aspects, the sailboat has sporting potential in numerous regattas held on Puget Sound and inland lakes.

Another major distinction in boat-type is length. Overall length may be used as a rough measure of interior space (after accounting for sail-power differences). Length may also be used as a rough measure of the monetary value of the boat. Sampled liveboards ranged from



Figure 3,7: Distribution of Sailboats by Length Overall (N=30)  
 Median Length = 37,7 ft ,

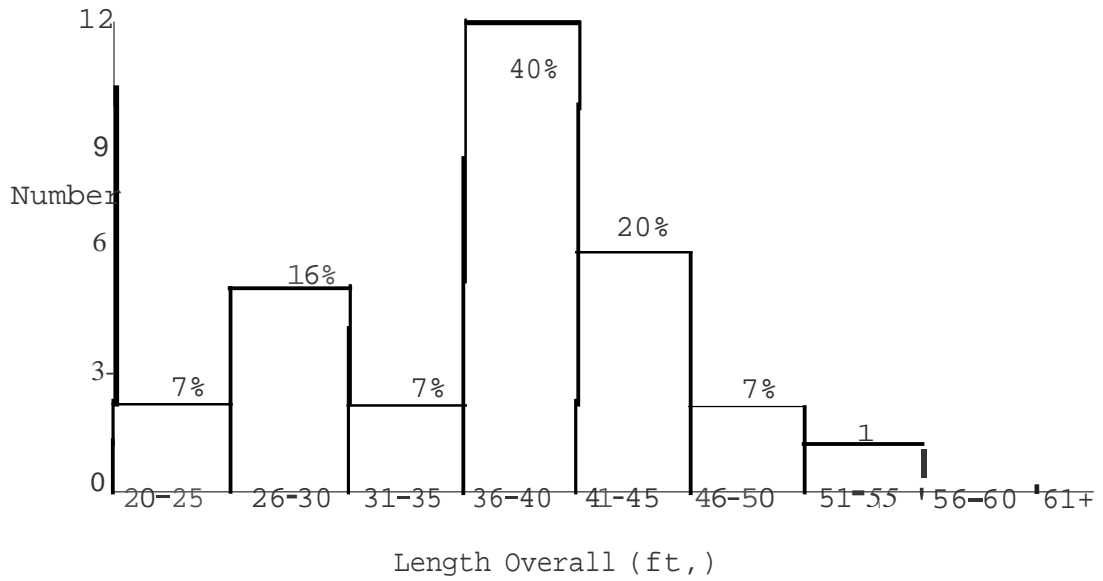
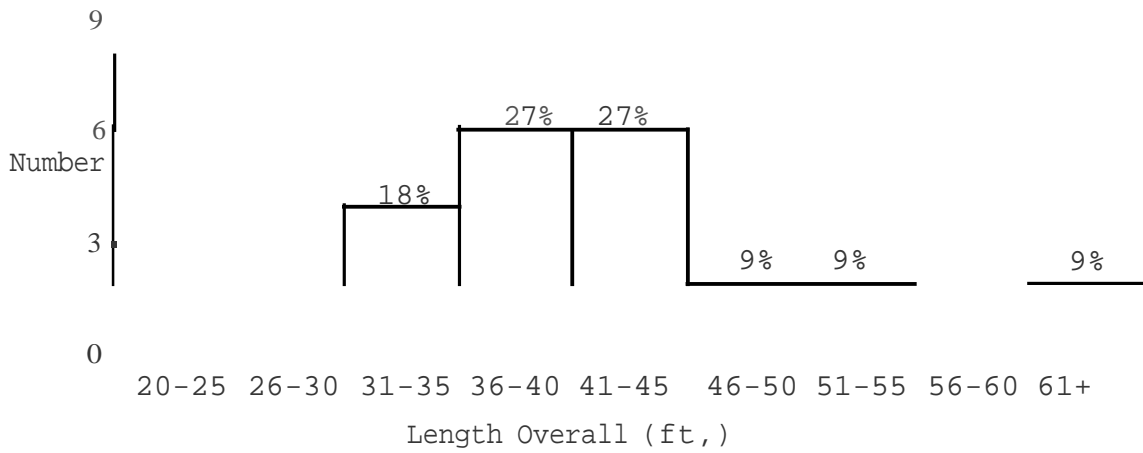


Figure 3,8: Distribution of Power Boats by Length Overall (N=22)  
 Median Length = 42,5 ft .



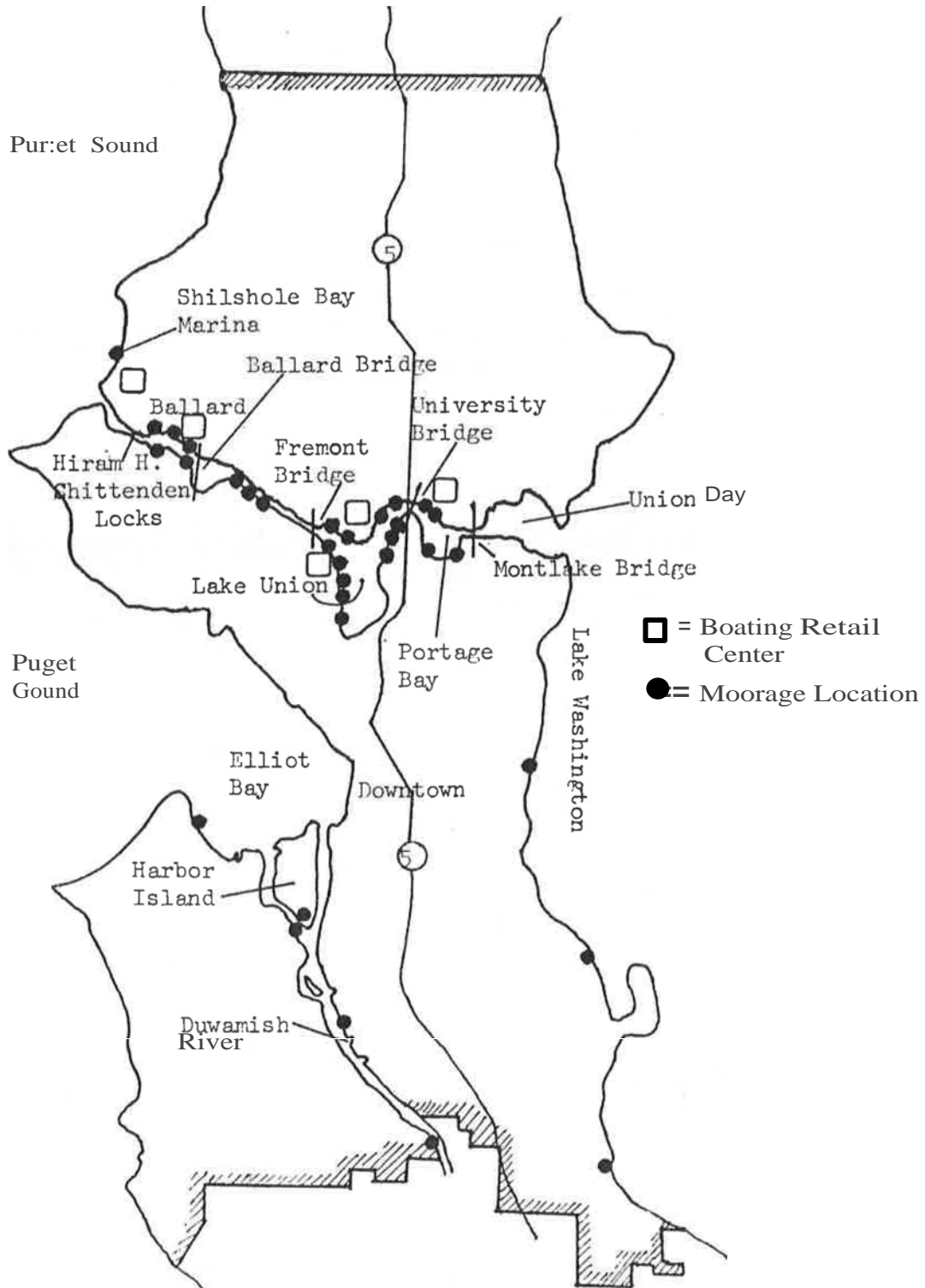
twenty-five to one hundred feet in overall length (LOA). Median overall length was 38.5 feet. Power boats tended to be longer than sailboats (42.5ft. vs.37.7ft.). Only sailboats could be found in the smallest category (seven boats smaller than 30 feet). Tables 3.9 and 3.10 summarize the distribution of the sample by locomotion and length.

#### Population Size and Distribution:

The size and distribution of Seattle's liveaboard population was estimated from three sources: unpublished portions of a complete moorage survey done by the Oceanographic Institute of Washington (O.I.W.) in 1978, a partial moorage survey done by the Port of Seattle in 1980, and a partial survey done as part of this study. These results are combined in Table 3.3 to update the 1978 survey to 1980 data, where possible. Table 3.4 summarizes these results by location within the city. Moorage locations are shown in lap 3.1. Concentrations of liveaboard boats are shown in lap 3.2.

The size of each marina (measured in number of slips) was known from these surveys. However, in several cases, the number of liveaboards was not known. In these cases, the marina was assumed to have the same proportion of liveaboard boats to moorage slips as neighboring marinas. For the city as a whole 222 liveaboard boats were reported. By this method the total number of liveaboard boats in the

Map 3.1: The City of Seattle



Map 3.2: Identification of Moorages in Table 3.3.

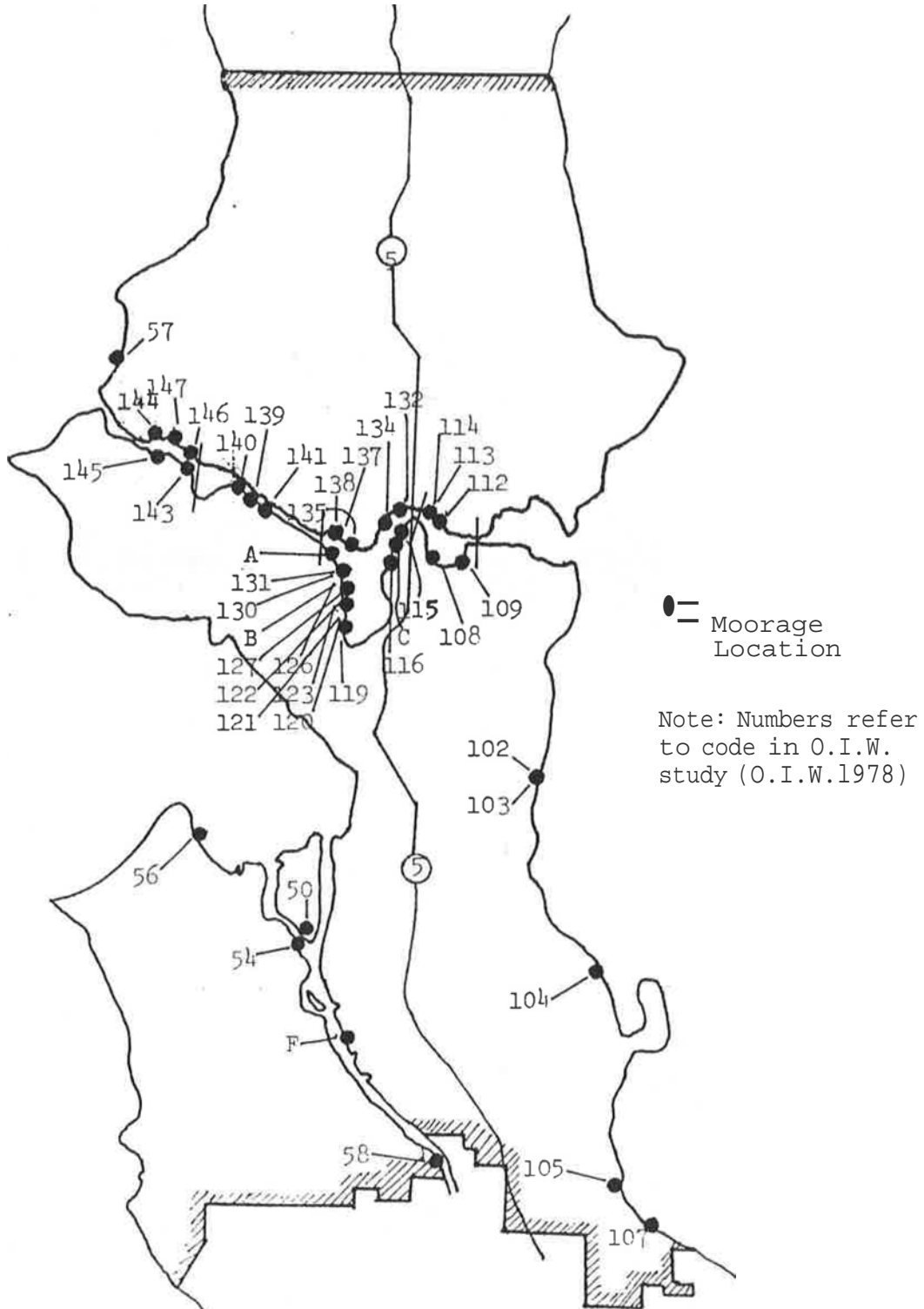


Table 3.8: Seattle Liveaboards By Marina

O.R.W code	Name	Number of slips	Number of Liveaboards
57	Shilshole	1523*	75+
144	McGinnis Marine Ser.	87#	9+
147	Stimson	262#	10*
146	Sagstag	54#	N.A.+
145	Lockhaven	135#	12+
14-3	Salmon Bay	152#	10+
140	Leco	60 *	3+
139	Ewing St,	60#	Allowed#
141	Wheeler Yet Sales	77#	Allowed#
138	Northlake	55#	Allowed#
137	Fremont	105#	10+
135	Tillicum	54	5+
134	Hadley Hook	66*	Allowed+
132	Seattle Marina	130#	10+
A+	Lee's Landing	50+	6+
131	Chris Berg, Inc,	128#	?
13({}	Com, Mar. Const.	100#	4+
B+	Gove's Cove	40#	2+
127	Western Yct Sales	50#	3+
126	Boat World	160#	3+

(continued)

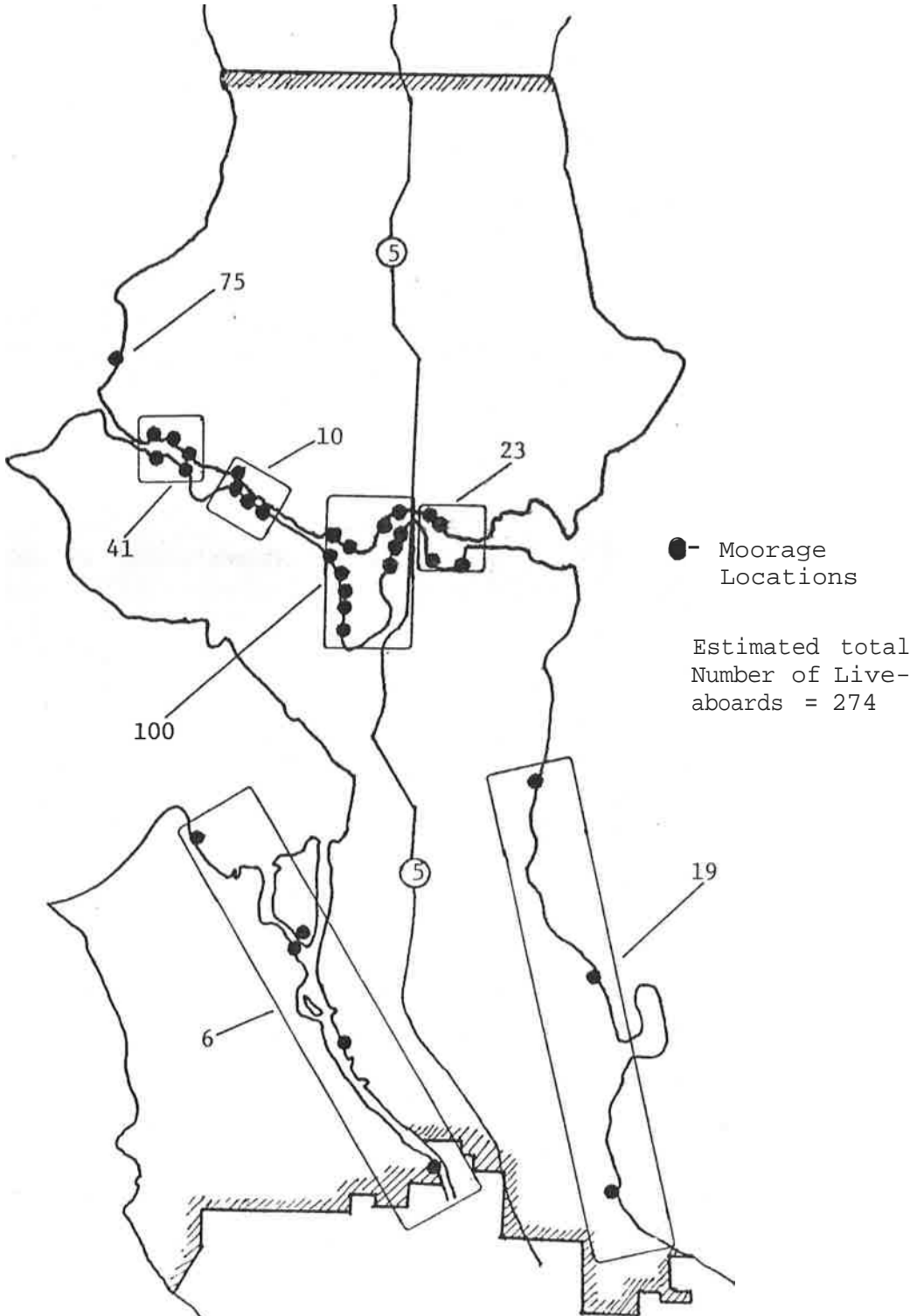
48

O.R.W. code	Name	Number of slips	Number of <u>Liveaboard</u>
123	Puget Sound	40#	2+
122	R.K, Investments	144*	?
121	Marina Mart	160#	10+
120	Latitude 47	26*	3+
119	Admiralty of Seattle	30*	7+
116	Cadranell	127#	0+
C+	Flying Dutchman	28#	6+
115	Thunderbird	65#	5+
114	Boat St,	27#	5+
113	Timmerman's	16*	?
112	Kelly's Landing	130*	8*
108	Queen City Y,C.	210#	Allowed#
109	Seattle Y,C,	282#	N.A,#
102	Leschi	198#	N,A,+
103	Lk Wash Yet Basin	87#	N,A,#
104	Lakewood cathouse	121#	3+
105	Parkshore	193#	Allowed#
107	Aqua	90*	7*
56	Seacrest	100*	N,A,+
50	Duwamish Waterway	105*	1*
54	Pioneer	95#	3+
F+	Riverside	100#	Allowed#
58	South Park	92#	N,A,#

Table 3.4: Number of Slips and Liveboards by Location in City

<u>Location</u>	<u>Number of slips</u>	<u>Liveboards Reported</u>	<u>Estimated Total Liveboards</u>	<u>Per-cent of slips occ. by liveboards</u>
Shilshole	1,523	75	75	5%
Ballard/Salmon Bay	690	41	41	6%
Lk Wash Ship Canal	197	3	10	5%
Lake Union	1,558	76	100	6,5%
Portage Bay	665	13	23	3.5%
South Lk Washington	689	10	19	3%
Duwamish Basin	492	4	6	1%
City of Seattle	5,814	222	274	4,7%

Map 3.3: Estimated Distribution of Liveaboards (1980)





as indicating 250 to 300 boats.) Given that for the sample each liveaboard boat had an average of 1.8 residents, the city had from 450 to 540 individuals living on boats. This is about one tenth of one percent of the city's population. However, their boats occupy about five percent of the city's moorage slips. At several marinas they occupied more than ten percent of the slips.

Living aboard was noticeably less prevalent in the Duwamish Basin and along southern Lake Washington. Both areas are more remote from the city's employment, retail, and boating centers. Moorage operators in these areas, moreover, were less likely to allow liveaboards. One Duwamish operator disliked liveaboards, saying they disrupted the moorage and encouraged vandalism. One Lake Washington moorage prohibited living aboard because the water system was small and usually shut down in winter and the electrical wiring was unsafe at higher loads that would result from living aboard. The Duwamish Basin also suffers from being a heavily industrial district.



## CHAPTER FOUR: LIFE-STYLE AND COMMUNITY

In many ways the live-aboards held a way of life in common. This way of life resulted from intentional choices based on acquired tastes and preferences. They were all dedicated boaters and tended to hold common attitudes towards life ashore and some patterns of personal preference. This common pattern of existence, tastes, and preferences constitute "lifestyle". Lifestyle played a major role in the decision to move aboard, satisfaction with living aboard, and in shaping social-relations within the group and with members of associated groups (such as other boaters). Adherence to this lifestyle was not constant, but tended to be more prevalent at specific stages in the life-cycle. It was also more specific to certain social classes and occupational groups.

### THE LIVE-ABOARD LIFE STYLE

The life-style of liveaboards, like any other, exists only as an ideal-type. It is doubtful that any two live-aboards (or researchers) would have precisely the same formulation of it. However, several important traits are evident. Virtually the entire liveaboard sample devoted large amounts of time, energy, direction, and money to boating. They had roughly similar personal preferences. And they viewed living aboard as different from living ashore.

Boating:

"No one can know the pleasure of sailing free over the great oceans save those who have had the experience." Joshua Slocum Sailing Alone Around the World (1900)

An interest in boats and boating was the most uniform life-style characteristic of the group. It was also almost universally important in the decision to move aboard (Chapter V-Residence) and the social patterns that resulted (Chapter VII-Liveaboard Society).

Interest in boating could have many facets. One could be interested in long-distance cruising, weekend jaunts, day trips, working on boats, entertaining shore-bound friends, or merely being close to the water. Interest, however, was not narrowly based on any single one of these factors, but was quite general. While some facets were more dominant, boating was enjoyed for many reasons. Simply being around boats and working with them was a source of gratification.

This interest extended to liveaboard bookshelves where books on piloting, navigation, boat construction, stories of trans-oceanic passages, and histories of sailing or shipping could be found. Respondents would become more animated if the interview strayed onto topics related to boating such as places to go on Puget Sound, work being done on the boat, boat-trips taken or planned, or exchanges of boating stories. When asked where they shopped for non-food items,

boat stores were usually mentioned.

There were some differences in individual preferences, however. This was generally reflected in the character of the boat owned. Those living on power boats were less interested in sailing and vice versa. Sail and power boats are also suited to different objectives, as discussed earlier. Sailboats have considerably longer range and better seakeeping ability. They are, however, slower and more cramped. Power boats more closely approximate an apartment on the water that can be easily moved.

More quantitatively, sixty percent (n=31) of the sample had extensive (over five years) experience with boats before moving aboard. Most had been boating most of their lives and related the desire to move aboard to their childhood. Only six percent (n= 3) had little or no prior experience with boating. Forty percent (n=17) of the households also had someone employed in the boating and maritime industry. Forty-eight percent (n=24) responded that, on average, they took the boat out three or more times a month. Twenty percent (n=10) mentioned using the boat (qua boat) twice a month. Eighteen percent (n=9), however, took out their boat less than once a month.

The most convincing evidence for the importance of boating is found in reasons given for moving aboard and sources of residential satisfaction, which were covered more extensively and directly on the questionnaire. These are more fully discussed in the next chapter.

Personal Preferences:

"Something of the spirit of our race can be caught by the wording of the rules. 'Yachts must be fully independent and capable of carrying out their own repairs at sea. Crews have no right to expect or demand rescue operations to be launched on their behalf.'" David Lewis (writing of the first single-handed trans-Atlantic race, 1960)

"...The Complete Live-Aboard Book. A step-by-step investigation into self-sufficiency and self-reliance while living aboard a sail or power boat." (from a two page ad in Cruising World, August 1982)

The liveaboards saw themselves as living simple, private, independent, and self-sufficient lives, relative to their on-shore counterparts. Yet, they were neither isolated nor truly independent of the rest of the world. Living aboard in Seattle was frequently described as "the best of both the city and the country". It afforded access to urban amenities such as shopping, cultural activities, restaurants, films, and employment as well as rural amenities such as quiet, isolation, escape, scenery, closeness to nature, and living on the water. As we shall see in the next chapter, these characteristics were sought in the move aboard and greatly valued after the move.

This is illustrated by a couple who moved aboard from the nearby suburb of Bellevue after their children had moved from home. They moved onto a 43-foot power boat. They enjoyed taking the boat to waterfront restaurants and University of Washington football games. A few years earlier, the husband had installed a new diesel engine

himself. They were in the habit of doing all maintenance and other work themselves and took great pride in this. Several flower boxes were found on the deck. When asked why they moved aboard, the husband replied, "to get away from people coming to the door." The wife's response was that they were trying to "simplify" their lives. Indeed, she described life aboard as less complex and was very pleased with this. While this would seem to indicate that the couple had moved to achieve isolation, this is not entirely true. The couple was very active in a local yacht club and often used the boat for entertaining. What they had achieved was a sense of freedom, privacy, and simplicity, yet retained access to friends, sporting events, and an active social life. This is by no means an isolated example. This story, modifying some details, could easily apply across most of the sample.

Boating was an expression of these preferences and an effort to seek their fulfillment. Boating allows escape, isolation, freedom of movement, and closeness to nature. Yet it is also a social activity as demonstrated by the extensive memberships and activities in yacht clubs and boating organizations. Boating allows one to become a hermit at will. Through movement it provides nearly instant escape. It also allows equally quick reunion with other boaters, either at a yacht club, dock, or anchorage, or as a topic of conversation at a cocktail party. It provides a setting for social gatherings, meeting other boaters in a removed harbor or taking shore-bound friends on outings.

## "Alternative Lifestyle"

The liveaboard lifestyle does not exist by itself. It also exists in contrast to living in a house, an apartment, or other dwelling types. People moved not merely because they liked living on boats, but also because they preferred not to live in houses, apartments, or other dwellings available to them.

For a few, perhaps ten percent, the move away had an ideological base. This was rooted in a felt need to create an "alternative lifestyle" that would somehow transport the bearer away from an unwanted way of life.

An example of this was a couple which moved aboard a 37-foot sailboat after marriage seeking an "alternative lifestyle" in the city. They had moved from a house in the city and were very glad to be rid of the accoutrements of modern living. They had left several dogs (though they kept a dog and a cat), as well as television, telephone, and other possessions. They thought living on Lake Union was ideal, enjoying the location in the "hub of metropolis" yet isolated and able to get away to their "own little pond". The boat was taken out about once a week, usually onto Lake Washington. The boat and its location were also enjoyed for fishing (off the dock) and the view it provided of the lake, the city, and the wildlife, particularly ducks and geese. These aspects of life aboard were seen as contrasting to lives lived in dwellings ashore.

Sixty-three percent (n=27) mentioned disliking the shore dwelling they left. A majority mentioned pragmatic dislikes of life ashore. Frequent responses included a dislike of yard work or house maintenance (while working on a boat was seen as an amenity), commuting (for those moving from the suburbs and working in-town), an "inefficient" use of space (where only a small portion of a large house was actually used), lack of privacy, and the lack of change around them.

The move was also often motivated by a search for "something different", an adventure. Seventeen percent (n=7) mentioned moving out of curiosity or because living aboard was "different". As we will see, those moving aboard were at junctures in their lives where experimentation, if not adventure, is common and commitments are relatively few. These were young adults, those separated or divorced, or older couples whose children had grown and left the household. For the young, the adventure was often temporary, until marriage, the addition of children, or "only for a few years". For older households thinking of retirement, the move was a search for a retirement home, one that differed from the larger more family-oriented home ashore.

These three components constitute the foundation of a lifestyle. At its center was a set of preferences and a conception of an ideal life. These attitudes imply that some choices of residence are more appropriate than others. In this case, these attitudes resulted in the



choice of a particular recreation and residence that approached the ideal. This way of life stood in contrast to more conventional ways of life ashore. Thus, living aboard was also sought out by those less satisfied with other types of housing.

#### LIFESTYLE AND THE FORMATION OF COMMUNITY

As we have seen, the group shared not only a common residential style, but also what could be called a common life-style. The group may then become known for a wider variety and number of reasons. In this case, instead of being known merely for living on boats, they may also be known for their involvement with boating, penchant for privacy and independence, or merely being different. This creates a group which is more identifiable both for members of the group and for outsiders.

Being more identifiable, the group is more likely to become notorious enough to be a perceived community. This is especially true for outsiders who have greater exposure to liveaboards such as other boaters and moorage operators. The perception of a group by outsiders, in turn, influences the likelihood of outsiders joining the group. Reasons given for moving aboard clearly demonstrate the importance of this perception.

As expected, those moving aboard came from backgrounds that implied greater exposure to living aboard. Virtually all had been boaters for several years. Forty percent (n=17) made their living in the marine industry. Moorage operators, too, were likely to move aboard. In the course of interviewing, four mentioned that they were planning to move aboard or had at one time lived aboard. Thus, the vast majority of those joining the group shared an interest in boating, often both commercially and recreationally.

The move was also influenced by the perception of living aboard as "different", as mentioned earlier. The attraction of people seeking a lifestyle that is already common within the group tends to preserve the character of the group and its image in the minds of outsiders. The perceived community, then, may possess a character of its own that outlasts the membership of its founders.

The existence of this lifestyle provides a ready-made basis for common identification with the group. Members of the group have more in common than just living aboard. They share an interest in boating and several personal preferences. The group, then, is more identifiable to members as well as outsiders. Such a common image is needed before members can consider themselves as members of the group. It is this image that identifies the group to its members.

Having a lifestyle in common also serves the formation of social contacts and networks within the group. There is a wider basis for

social interaction. Fifty percent (n=19) of the respondents mentioned that their social lives had changed with the move aboard. Their new friends were more likely to be liveaboards or other boaters. The organizations they were involved with were more likely to be yacht clubs. Aside from the psychological advantages of associating with people with similar interests, there is a practical advantage in that the new circle of friends contains people with useful knowledge and skills. Ninety-two percent (n=35) of the respondents mentioned that other liveaboards had helped with problems related to living aboard, such as maintenance or finding moorage. This help was in the form of advice, skills, labor, or tools. Other liveaboards are more likely to possess these resources than non-liveaboards. A social association with other liveaboards thus also provides access to these resources. Liveaboards (much like other boaters) also exchanged knowledge of harbors, boat handling, and moorage vacancies. Forty-two percent (n=16) commented extensively on this mutual aid.

The move aboard and the lifestyle were mutually reinforcing. The move would often be preceded by a change in a person's or household's way of life, such as changes in marital, family, or job status. Alternatively, the household's lifestyle changed with the move. The move was often followed by changes in jobs (usually into a boating related field) and social patterns (usually away from previous friends and towards association with other boaters).

One couple interviewed decided to move aboard shortly before their

marriage in Oregon. They moved to Seattle and bought a boat. The husband found a job selling marine hardware, a job for which he had little previous experience. Their closest in-town friends were all liveaboards which they had met on the dock or through the husband's place of work. While they had only lived aboard for six months, their sources of income, social patterns, and lifestyle had completely changed.

#### LIFESTYLE, LIFE-CYCLE, And CULTURE

As we saw in Chapter II, membership in this group can be interpreted as a function of stage in life-cycle. Households are least likely to join the group when children are part of the household. When liveaboard households expand with the addition of children, they tend to move ashore, thereby leaving the group. This exodus may be interpreted as a change in lifestyle that coincides with a change in stage in life-cycle. The emphasis of the household changes from boating, independence, and disengagement from life ashore to a more familistic orientation (Bell 1968). In contemporary American culture, the raising of children is preferably done in a single family house, on shore (Bell 1968, Michelson 1970). Thus the move ashore.

The departure of children from the household was a reason to move aboard for twenty percent (n=8) of the sample. The departure of children allowed the couple (or individuals in some cases) to devote

their energies elsewhere. While their children remain important, they are no longer constantly concerned with child raising. The house with its extra rooms, large yard, and location in the better school district, becomes obsolete for this new household composition. The parents are no longer so rooted to their location, dwelling type, or way of life. They have lost much of the structure of their lives that the family and familism provided. The move aboard, then, becomes part of a search for a replacement for this structure. They are searching for a "retirement" home, even though only a very few were as yet retired. Typically, these people had used boats recreationally with the family and had always wanted to live either on a boat or on the water. They also valued the freedom of movement that boating affords. For all those interviewed, the move aboard ended the search for a "retirement" home. They intended to remain aboard until overcome by old age.

Life-cycle and lifestyle are not necessarily independent. In the case of this group, adherence to the liveaboard life-style waned with the birth of children and waxed with their departure from the household. Living aboard, then, may only be a temporary departure from a more conventional lifestyle. The arrival of children or marriage, being more traditional activities, signal the end to such a departure and result in a greater likelihood of moving ashore. Similarly, the departure of children reduces the household's commitment to traditional residence and ways of life, making the move aboard more likely.

The liveaboard lifestyle is not isolated from other ways of life. A household may combine elements from this ideal-typical lifestyle with those of other lifestyles, such as those associated with occupation or other passtimes. Moreover, the balance between liveaboard and non-liveaboard aspects of a way of life may vary over time.

## CHAPTER FIVE: RESIDENTIAL CHOICE AND SATISFACTION

The liveaboards are a group based on residence. Entry into the group, therefore, results from a residential choice. Why was this choice made? After the move, how did they feel about their residence? What about living aboard would make them want to move ashore? How do individual responses to these questions vary with the traditional variables of life-style and social class? Do responses evidence a liveaboard lifestyle or community?

### THE DECISION TO MOVE ABOARD AND PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY

Sixty percent of the sample had extensive (over five years) experience with boats prior to the move. Most had been boating for most of their lives. Forty percent were employed in the boating industry. Only six percent had little or no prior boating experience. The liveaboards were quite familiar with boats and boating for recreation before the move.

The recreational use of boats, especially larger boats, usually entails taking extended trips ranging in length from a week to over a month. During this time the boat serves as a temporary residence. In the course of boating, one also becomes exposed to liveaboards by direct observation, personal acquaintance, hearsay, and through the boating literature. Living aboard is particularly prevalent among the

scattered harbors of Puget Sound. Local boaters are particularly likely to have first-hand exposure to this way of life. Living aboard is a well-known option.

Two general origins to a desire to live aboard may be identified; first, from experience boating or knowing friends or acquaintances who live aboard; and second, from a dislike of the previous dwelling or lifestyle on land.

For a few (n=4), living aboard was sought as an inexpensive, almost transient residence. Usually, these persons lived on a relative's boat. In a couple of cases, the individuals also sought something of an investment.

These origins are borne out by the reasons given for the move. Table 5.1 shows responses to the question "What made you decide to move onto a boat?" Since answers shown were suggested by respondents and not prompted by the researcher, these figures probably underestimate actual motives involved in the move. Since most respondents forwarded more than one response, the total exceeds 100%. An average of 3.8 reasons were given by each respondent.



Table 5.1: Reasons Given for Moving Aboard (N=41)

Response	Percent
Economic	71%(n=30)
Dislike of Houses or Apartments	63%(n=27)
Boating interests	58%(n=23)
Preferred Lifestyle	43%(n=18)
Wanted to be near water	29%(n=12)
Prepare for Cruise	20%(n= 8)
Children had left home	20%(n= 8)
Curiosity	17%(n= 7)
Divorce or separation	15%(n= 6)
other responses	46%(n=19)

Some elaboration is needed for each response before they are used to explore the perceptions and motivations of potential liveaboards.

Economic reasons were certainly prominent (71%). Given the expenses of buying and keeping a boat, virtually all liveaboards questioned could have afforded other forms of housing on land (either small houses or apartments). The primary economic motivation was that moving aboard enabled the household to own a boat. The expense of both a home ashore and a large boat was too great for most households. A large number of liveaboards also considered the boat as an investment, usually in lieu of paying rent. Only a few found living aboard less

expensive than living ashore.

Reasons for moving out of other dwellings were the second most frequent category of responses. Sixty-three percent found housing ashore cumbersome or otherwise to their dislike. Many mentioned a distaste for yardwork, cleaning, house maintenance, overabundant and ineffective use of space, acquisition of too many possessions, and commuting as disadvantages of single family housing. Paying rent and lack of privacy were often associated with apartment living. Living aboard contrasted with more typical dwellings along these lines.

Interest in boating was the next most cited reason for moving aboard (58%). This reflects an inherent link between recreational and residential uses of the boat. For many the move was a "natural" consequence of their involvement with boating. Living aboard was seen as affording a more intense day-to-day involvement with boating. The boat is constantly available for afternoon or day trips, maintenance work, tinkering, and appreciation. Living at a moorage also places one close to other boats, boating activity, water, and boaters (including other liveaboards).

A preference for a "lifestyle" associated with living aboard was mentioned by 43% of the sample. This was a preference for associating with other boaters and liveaboards. This lifestyle, as described in an earlier chapter, was also associated with boating and a relatively independent, quiet, simple, and private existence. The use of the term as a distinct way of life.



"... SO I FIGURED THE ONLY WAY TO BEAT THOSE DANG MOLES WAS TO SELL MY HOUSE AND MOVE ABOARD MY BOAT!"

Twenty-nine percent (29%) mentioned a desire to live on the water as a reason for the move. For some, life aboard was largely a more affordable way of living on the water than owning waterfront property or buying and arranging moorage for a houseboat. Being on the water also added to the pleasure of boating.

Twenty per cent mentioned a desire for cruising as a reason for moving aboard. Cruising was generally considered as longer trips, offshore for sailboats and coastal or extended inland trips for power boats. Moving aboard was seen as an opportunity to acquire and outfit a boat that would have such a capability and to experience life on a boat for extended periods. Again, in most cases, financial constraints required that the boat be lived aboard. For a few (n=2), cruising was the primary and over-riding reason for moving aboard. For most, however, the possibility of extended cruising was more a romantic lure than an actual intention.

The departure of children from the household was another frequently mentioned reason (20%). It is obviously specific to later stages in the life-cycle. Since raising children aboard was generally thought bad practice (because of a lack of space and play-mates), it is likely that many households put off the move until their children moved on. This period of the life-cycle is also often a period of household transition where the couple begin to consider retirement (Yeates and

Garner 1976). Many older couples mentioning this reason intended to retire onto the boat.

Curiosity about what it would be like to live on a boat was mentioned by 17% of the sample. This indicated a more noncommittal attitude toward the move. For this group, the move aboard was exploratory and experimental. This reason was mentioned more often by recent liveaboards than longer-term liveaboards.

The move aboard coincided with separation or divorce in 15% of the households sampled. In these cases the man moved aboard while the woman remained ashore. Boats were often considered as convenient havens from marital disputes, even for short periods of time. While the role of marital problems in the decision to move aboard is far from clear, it seems likely that for some the boat developed from a haven to a home in the course of the separation.

Forty-six per cent of the sample mentioned other factors. These included isolation (n=6), investment (n=5), lack of time for use and work on both house and boat (n=3), enjoyment of small spaces (n=3), enjoy working on boats (n=3), pride of ownership (n=2), a place to entertain (n=2), commuting, allergies, and a desire to have contact with a maritime tradition. As the average respondent mentioned almost four reasons, this is not surprising.

The image of living aboard as a lifestyle of intensified boating

is probably the most important factor in the decision to move aboard. This is evident in the frequency of boating-related responses, boating 58%, nearness to water 29%, and preparation for extended cruises 20%. Boating would also seem to be the major underlying "economic" reason for the move, where people with limited capital chose to buy and live on a boat, rather than a house, apartment, or condominium.

The second image of living aboard, as an "alternative lifestyle", appears in the "lifestyle" response. It is still more important in explaining the dissatisfaction with housing ashore (63%). This search can also be seen in the 17% who moved aboard out of curiosity.

These two images constitute distinct perceptions of life aboard that existed among those who eventually moved aboard. Thus we can say that this group was a perceived community among some other boaters and that this perception was a major factor in the decision to move aboard.

#### RESIDENTIAL SATISFACTION AND THE FORMATION OF A SOCIAL COMMUNITY

Having moved aboard, one is no longer an outsider. In this section the focus changes from how living aboard is perceived by potential liveaboards to how it is perceived by liveaboards themselves.

Each member of a residential group has sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the residence. If this perception is shared by

other members of the group, a common image exists which is held by the group. If each member associates this image with the group, members can be said to identify with a community image. Thus, the individual may more easily consider himself a member of the group.

Sources of residential satisfaction also guide our search for clustered social networks. These concerns might form a basis for the formation of social relations. Networks, then, would be expected to cluster around these concerns.

For purposes of discussion, I have divided the analysis of residential satisfaction into two parts, one examining sources of satisfaction, the other examining sources of dissatisfaction.



Table 5.2 shows responses to the question "What, in particular, do you like about living on a boat?" These responses may be interpreted as sources of residential satisfaction. The average respondent gave 7.4 responses.

Table 5.2: Sources of Residential Satisfaction(N=41)

Response	Per-cent	Response	Per-cent
Freedom	64%(n=28)	Living in Small Space	35%(13)
Privacy	63%(27)	Work on Boat	32%(12)
Being in City	54%(21)	Financial	30%(12)
Lifestyle	51%(21)	"Feel"	29%(12)
Easy Boating	50%(20)	Quiet	28%(11)
Water	49%(20)	Wildlife	21%( 8)
People	48%(19)	Prepare for Cruise	16%( 6)
Simplicity	42%(16)	Neat or Different	15%( 6)
Boating	40%(16)	other responses	32%(12)
Scenery	37%(15)		

For simplification, these responses may be generalized into a few categories.

#### Lifestyle:

A "lifestyle" component to residential satisfaction is evident in the responses, freedom (64%), privacy (63%), lifestyle (51%), and simplicity (42%). The liveaboards generally considered their way of life to be relatively unconstrained and free from the normal entanglements of home ownership and the entanglements that come from having many material possessions. Pride was taken in being able to move merely by casting off dock lines and starting the engine. Although usually encumbered by jobs and mortgages, they thought of



themselves as being freer than their counterparts on land. These feelings of independence may stem partially from the high value placed on privacy and simplicity. Many (n=7) took great pride in their relative self-sufficiency. This usually took the form of doing as much maintenance and improvements as possible oneself and reducing material dependence on the outside. Most considered themselves frugal, plowing much of their earnings back into the boat for finance, improvement, or outfitting. (There is a popular saying that a boat is "a hole in the water, surrounded by wood, into which one pours money.") Work on the boat also required considerable investment of time. Many seemed to find fulfillment of this lifestyle in living aboard.

#### Recreation:

Recreational aspects are also evident in the responses, Easy Boating (50%), Boating (40%), work on boat (32%), and prepare for cruise (16%). Residential satisfaction would seem to be related to the enhanced ability to use the boat and the closer proximity to boats and boating that came with living aboard. The frequent mention of enjoying work on the boat and preparation for cruising also seem to indicate that this source of satisfaction is more than entertainment or amusement, but includes a more long-term and deeper involvement in boating.

This particular recreation, moreover, complements the lifestyle mentioned earlier. Boating is a mobile recreation, similar to hiking

and backpacking. It requires an ability to be self-sufficient for periods of a few days to several months. Boating also provides considerable freedom and privacy, allowing the boater to travel for long periods to isolated places or to remain detached at anchor even in a crowded harbor.

#### Environmental Amenities:

Both rural and urban amenities appear as sources of satisfaction. Living in the city was the third most frequent response (54%). Satisfaction from the city stemmed mainly from accessibility to entertainment (films, restaurants, & theater), employment (including a shorter commute to work), nearby friends, and boating activities.

Conversely, several traditionally rural amenities were frequently mentioned, location on the water (49%), scenery (37%), quiet (28%), and wildlife (21%). These attributes, with the exception of scenery, which also included views of the city sky-line, are all characteristically non-urban. The presence of this factor is largely a function of residential location on the water.

Moorages, except on summer weekends, are generally quiet with little activity. Several respondents mentioned that during the winter they virtually had the moorage to themselves. The presence of wildlife was mentioned with surprising frequency, further indicating the non-urban character of living aboard in Seattle.

Many of the liveaboards interviewed believed they had the best of both urban and rural settings. For many, this constituted a principal advantage of living aboard in Seattle.

Other Factors:

Forty-eight per cent of the sample mentioned people associated with living aboard as a benefit. They had a high regard for their neighbors and thought of their neighbors as an interesting and diverse collection of individuals, if not friends. The diversity of backgrounds and personal histories were particularly impressive. More will be said about this in Chapter VII (Liveaboard Society).

Thirty-five per cent liked living in a small space. Satisfaction was found in the simplicity imposed by living in what most would consider an unacceptably cramped space. Two liveaboard boats were only 25 feet long; another was 26 feet long. Five boats (10%) in the sample were less than 31 feet in length. A couple lived on one thirty foot boat. They had found their previous dwellings too large and cumbersome. Features particularly liked about small spaces were its felt simplicity, the inability to collect possessions, the "efficient" use of space, and the handiness of all one's possessions close-by. Several couples felt that closeness encouraged inter-personal closeness, "coziness". Only one couple mentioned that privacy was ever a problem.

Financial reasons for satisfaction with the residence were mentioned by 30% of the sample. For many, the financial ability to own the boat by living aboard provided satisfaction. For some, pride of ownership was expressed. Only a very few thought living aboard was less expensive than living on land.

The "feel" of living on a boat was mentioned by 29%. Many elaborated by explaining that "it is easier to sleep on a boat." This was an intangible satisfaction that differed from normal satisfaction with a home. Clearly a "sense of place" was associated with living aboard.

Table 5.3 shows responses to the question "What do you dislike about living on a boat" and "Is there anything you miss, living on a boat, that you could have if you lived on land". These may be interpreted as sources of dissatisfaction with living aboard. Each household gave an average of 2.7 responses.

Table 5.3: Sources of Dissatisfaction with Living Aboard(N=41)

Response	Per-cent	Response	<u>Per-cent</u>
Space Limitations	56%(n=24)	Creature Comforts	16%( 6 )
Cold and/or Wet	42%(19)	Mildew	15%( 6 )
Shower Facilities	37%(15)	Lack of Garden	11%( 4 )
Lack of Workshop	32%(12)	Space for Child	10%( 4 )
Laundry Facilities	28%(11 )	other responses	26%(10)

Responses may be generalized into two categories, space limitations and climate.

#### Space Limitations:

In spite of frequent mention of the benefits of living in small quarters, the overwhelming majority of negative comments were space-related, space limitations (56%), shower (37%), workshop (32%), laundry (28%), garden (11%), and space for children (10%). Space problems were evident in two ways. First was lack of space for storage and living. This was a fairly obvious consequence of living on a small boat, or even a small apartment. Almost all households had arranged storage ashore. Most stored furniture, out of season clothing, and other less frequently used items were stored in the attic or basement of a relative or friend. Others rented commercial storage lockers.

Second, this lack of space prohibits or lowers the quality of typical household facilities such as a shower, workshop, laundry, garden, or space for a child to play. Showers, if they were present at all, must be small, generally hand-held, and have limited hot water. Showers were often provided at the moorage, a long cold walk from the boat. Other arrangements could also be made, such as showering at an athletic club. The lack of a workshop is particularly cumbersome if any kind of maintenance or improvement is being done to the boat. Both the number and nature of tools that can be kept and the space available

to work are limited. One case was found where three liveaboards jointly owned a workshop on land near the moorage. Many in the marine occupations presumably had access to tools and workspace at their place of work. Most laundry was done at moorage facilities, where available, or at laundromats. Gardens usually had to be restricted to a few potted plants indoors, on deck, or in boxes on the dock. A small green house was built on the dock by one liveaboard, but this was exceptional. Any extensive gardening was impossible. Lack of space for children was a serious consideration for those with children or expecting to have children later. This concern often included worries about interior play-room, the safety of children playing and moving on the docks, and worries about the availability of play-mates.



Climate:

The winter climate was another frequent complaint. Forty-two per cent mentioned problems with cold or dampness, the second most frequent response. Fifteen percent mentioned problems with mildew.

As mentioned in the introduction, harsh climates are particularly important in dissuading people from living aboard. However, while many found fault with the climate, none found it intolerable. The attitudes and physical modifications that were placed between the climate and the liveaboard are of some interest.

Many considered living aboard in summer and winter to be different experiences. Summer was adored and described in superlatives. It was a time of cruising, frequent day trips, and working on the boat out of doors. It was an active period. Winter was described as a quiet, dreary period. Little time was spent out of doors little cruising was done. Few daytrips were made. Some enjoyed this contrast, taking pleasure in the privacy offered by the solitude of winter moorages or merely devoting themselves more to their jobs. But generally the winters were endured more than enjoyed.

All boats had some form of space heat. Many had several forms. Table 5.4 shows the percentage of respondents using each of several sources of heat.

Table 5.4: Sources of Space Heat (N=48)

<u>Heat Source</u>	Percent (n=
Electric	67%(34)
Diesel/Oil	45%(22)
Wood	35%(17)
Kerosene	25%(12)
Propane	17%( 8)

Electric heat was usually supplemental. Small electric space heaters could be used to heat more remote cabin areas or to quickly heat the main cabin. Diesel or oil heat was particularly convenient for diesel powered boats, as it did not require a separate fuel-tank. Wood stoves and fireplaces were common. Users generally found that wood not only provided abundant heat, but also reduced humidity in the cabin and was aesthetically attractive. One user had his wood stove removed, claiming it produced too much heat.

In addition to space heating, 49%(n=18) of the boats had added insulation. Usually this insulation was applied to only selected parts of the boat. Some had insulated cabin roofs, others insulated bedrooms. Rarely was the entire boat insulated. Wood boat owners found that their hulls alone provided ample insulation. Core construction in fiberglass boats also tended to reduce the need for insulation.



Condensation and mildew were also associated with the climate. As noted earlier, this was often a consideration in choosing a type of space heat. Insulation, too, was often more directed against condensation than for thermal insulation itself. Many boats had developed specific arrangements to circulate dry air to remote cabin areas and lockers. This often included coordinating the placement and direction of heat sources, insulation, vents, and occasionally small fans.



As we have seen, the responses group themselves neatly into three major positive factors: lifestyle, recreation, and environmental amenities. They were also grouped in two negative factors, space limitations and climate. The frequent appearance of all these impressions indicates they are shared by the group as a whole. These impressions are similar to the images which resulted in the decision to move aboard. This indicates that the image is implicitly associated with both the individual household and the group. Thus, the individual

must consider himself a member of the group.

Several foci for the development of social networks are suggested. Problems arising from climate and space limitations are common among this group and unique to them. The best advice on solutions to these problems would be found among other group members. One social solution was for a number of liveaboard households to own a workshop jointly. In Chapter VII (Liveaboard Society) we shall see that help with these and maintenance problems was common between liveaboards.

Another social solution on the part of one group of liveaboards was to patronize the same tavern, avoiding both space limitations and weather by doing their entertaining elsewhere.

Lifestyle and recreation also provide foci for social networks. As noted in Chapter II, lifestyle provides a community focus by providing common interests and common terms of communication. The same is true for recreation which, in this case, is closely related to lifestyle.

The people associated with living aboard were mentioned as sources of satisfaction. These people were seen as members of their social network (as friends and neighbors). These were often other liveaboards, but also included other boaters and moorage workers.

## COSTS AND TASTES

As we have seen, "economic" reasons were important in the decision to move aboard. Most households possessed enough wealth and income to afford either an apartment or a boat. They also required shelter. The structure of their preferences (preferred lifestyle, if you will) led them to choose living on a boat. Before we examine this in more detail, it should be noted that income, wealth, and tastes varied considerably. For simplicity, we will compare the costs of boat living, owner-occupancy of a house, and renting an apartment for a single individual, a couple, and a family (couple with one child).

For the single individual, let us assume an annual after-tax income of \$12,000. Of this, \$6,200 is spent on food, gas, car payments, clothing, entertaining, and weekends (Bureau of Labor Statistics 1982). \$5,800 is left for housing, investment, and vacation. An apartment (single bedroom) can be rented for \$210/month (\$2,500/year). This leaves \$3,300 for savings and vacations. For an average yearly vacation, let us assume this single boater charters a 30-foot boat for one week on Puget Sound (\$700 including provisions) and one week is split between two short trips (\$400 total). \$1,900 remains for savings.

Buying a house would be reflected in \$450/month mortgage payments (\$5,400/year), including insurance. This is for a small house in town (cost=\$60,000, down payment=\$20,000, interest=12%, term = 30 years).

Upkeep for the house is another \$400/year. Nothing remains for vacations. Nothing is left for savings, and about \$2,000/year in equity in the house is gained. Total savings is about \$2,000/year.

To live aboard a 32 foot sailboat costs about \$250/month in mortgage (cost=\$30,000, down payment=\$11,400, interest=12%, term=12 years) and 130/month (\$4/ft/month) in moorage fees (total=4,500/year). In addition, \$800/year is spent on boat upkeep and improvements. For vacations, no chartering is done and \$300 is spent on two half-week vacations. \$200 remains for savings. To this must be added about \$1,550/year in increased equity in the boat. Total savings is then \$1,750. Final savings for all three options are about the same, but access to boating is minimal unless the individual lives aboard.

For a couple, let us assume a household after-tax income of \$20,500/year. Of this, \$8,000 is spent on food, gas, car payments, clothing, entertaining, and weekends. \$12,500 is left. An apartment (double bedroom) can be rented for \$370/month (\$4,500/year). \$8,000 remains for savings and vacations. Again, let us assume a one week charter of a 30 foot boat (\$800 including provisions) and two short trips (\$600) as vacations. \$6,600 is left for savings. Renting a small house is probably similar.

If a house similar to the one described above is bought, and \$800/year is spent on upkeep and improvements, \$6,300 remains for

vacations and savings. The one-week boat trip is still taken (\$800) as is one short trip (\$300). \$5,200 is left for savings. To this about \$2,000 in added equity must be added for a total savings of \$7,200.

Living aboard a 40 foot boat is assumed to cost about \$300/month in mortgage (cost=\$42,000, down payment= \$15,000, interest=12%, term= 20 years) and \$160/month for moorage (total=\$5,500/year). In addition, \$900/year's spent on upkeep and improvements. No chartering is done. \$300/year is spent on one short vacation. \$5,800 remains for savings, plus about \$1,350/year in added equity. Total savings amounts to about \$7,150/year. This is more savings than for an apartment, but' roughly the same as a house.

A family is assumed to make \$23,000 after-taxes. Of this \$15,000 is spent on food, gas, car payments, the child, entertaining, and weekends. Some entertaining and weekend expenses have shifted to spending on the child. \$8,000/year remains. Again, an apartment can be had for \$370/month (\$4,500/year). \$800 is spent on a week-long charter. One short trip is taken for \$200. \$2,500 remains for savings.

A house similar to the one above, with the same amount spent on improvements, but with a 30-year mortgage for \$5,800/year. The same vacations are taken (\$1,000/year), leaving \$1,200/year for savings. Added equity (\$1,300/year) raises this figure to \$2,500/year.

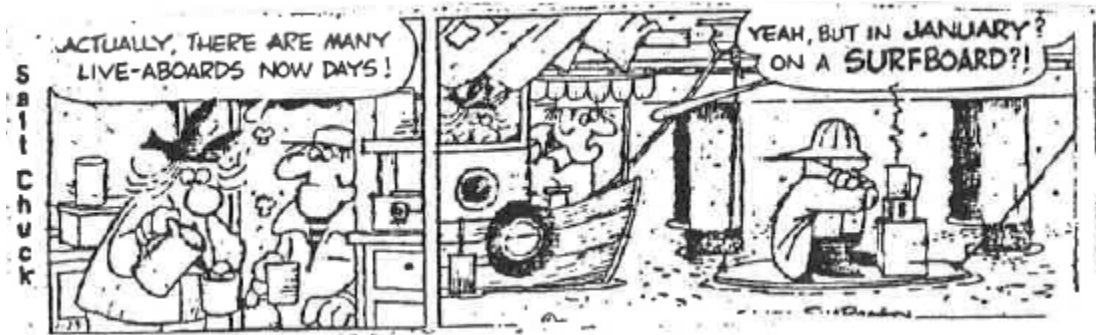
If a 48 foot boat were lived aboard, it would cost about \$350/month in mortgage (cost=\$51,000, down payment=\$20,000, interest=12%, term=20 years) and \$180/month for moorage (total= \$6,400/year). \$900/year is spent on upkeep and improvements. \$200 is spent on one short vacation. \$400 remains for savings. \$1,550 in added equity raises total savings to about \$5,850/year. Living aboard is financially inferior to either other option.

Living aboard for the individual and the couple is roughly the same, financially. With the addition of children to the household, however, the added need for space requires a boat which costs more than a small house. Both houses and living aboard have added financial advantages in the form of additional tax deductions, which were not examined here.

For the individual and the couple, several other financial factors might make living aboard more attractive. Given that the boat's purchase price is less, a smaller down payment is needed. Younger individuals and couples, who may not have substantial savings, may be able to afford the down payment on the boat, but not the house. The boat's lower price also requires a smaller loan, for which arranging financing may be easier. The boat is also a more liquid asset. It is more easily bought and sold than a house. For an individual or couple that may move in a year or two, this may be a reason to choose moving aboard. On the other hand, for a family interested in acquiring stable assets and a larger place to raise children and store possessions, a

house might be favored.

For those choosing to live aboard, the amenities are certainly important enough to be important, as we saw earlier in this chapter. For most liveaboards, it was the desire to have easy access to boating and the water which resulted in the move. The cost of buying or renting a waterfront home in the city was far beyond most of their budgets. Had their incomes allowed owning both a home ashore and a boat, many would live ashore. But this was not an option for most. For all those questioned, the value of access to water and boating was greater than the problems posed by climate and the opportunity cost of space ashore foregone. For those choosing more expensive boats to live on, these amenities also outweighed the financial gains of living on shore.



## CHAPTER SIX: THE URBAN CONTEXT

"Both men and ships live in an unstable element, are subject to subtle and powerful influences and want to have their merits understood, rather than their faults found out." J. Conrad *The Mirror of the Sea* (from Marchaj)

The liveaboards are by no means an isolated or self-sufficient group. They depend on a larger urban market economy for goods and services which could not be provided by the household or group. This market system regulated the supply, cost, and quality of necessities. Aside from the necessities of life (food, etc.), these included moorage, marine equipment, and employment. The economy also did much to shape the options available to the liveaboard (time-off, savings, cost of maintenance, provisioning, new boat, and the location of moorage).

Aside from these material influences, there were also social and cultural influences. Like any urban population (Greer 1962), they were influenced by the diverse cultures and ideas that surrounded them. Indeed, the formation of the group may be partially attributed to the ideas and culture found in Seattle at this time. Furthermore, living aboard was never an exclusive pursuit. In the course of pursuing other interests (profession, marriage, social life, or other recreation), individuals and households were actively acquainted with ideas and habits from outside the group.



Between the world of economic possibilities and constraints and that of ideas and habits lay the social and political system. Such a system governs both the economy and the culture. It provides a social standard of acceptability and basis for compromise between individual, corporate, and public interests. It is at this level that living aboard is judged to be acceptable or not by a city and given a social status. The political system imposed several restrictions on the group. All of these were indirect consequences of regulations on boating and moorages.

The influence of the physical environment is always a touchy subject in geography. In this case, however, there were several important consequences of the topography, climate, and structure of the city which affected the liveaboard population.

#### THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN STRUCTURE

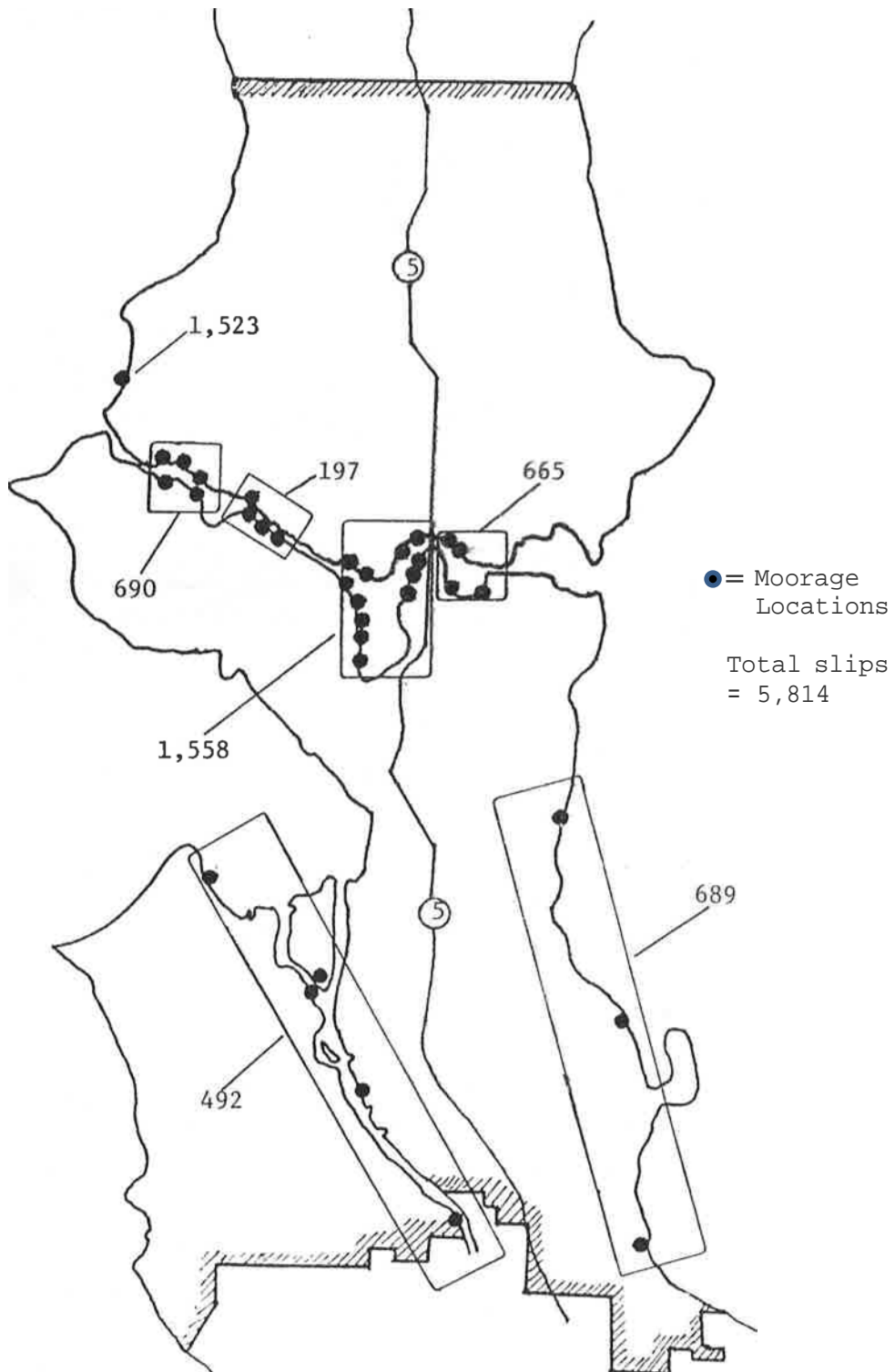
The climate, topography, and physical lay-out of Seattle are all conducive to living aboard. The climate is mild. The average daily minimum January temperature is 33°F and the average daily maximum July temperature is 75°F (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1980). Living on a boat does not require extensive use of space heat or insulation (Residence Chapter). Ice rarely forms on the city's waterways and never forms to the extent that it might crush or damage a hull. The mild climate also reduces the need to winterize engines, sanitary, and water systems on

board. This stands in contrast to the problems imposed by living aboard in cold-water ports.

The city's topography contains extensive shoreline (Map 6.1) providing wet moorage for 5,700 boats. It is one of the largest West Coast ports. Living on a boat requires water. Thus, the presence of water in one part of the city and its absence in other parts shapes the spatial distribution of living aboard. A city with less waterfront (all else being equal) would likely have fewer liveaboards. Urban structure further modifies the waterfront, making areas more or less likely liveaboard sites by virtue of varying accessibility, proximity to nuisances, and moorage availability and cost.

The city has four major concentrations of recreational moorage: Southern Lake Washington (800 slips), the Duwamish River (400 slips), Shilshole Bay Marine (1,500 slips), and the complex of waterways consisting of Salmon Bay, the Lake Washington Ship Canal, Lake Union, and Portage Bay (700 slips). The quality of these areas, as well as other parts of the shoreline, varies with location within the city's structure. Elliot Bay, for example, provides no small boat moorage. Its shoreline is occupied by a major commercial shipping industry extensive container shipping terminals, ship building and repairs, and a grain terminal. Some of the older wharves, directly adjacent to the downtown, have been converted to boutiques and restaurants. The Washington and Alaska ferry systems also occupy several wharves. Its role as a port and its access to downtown has made waterfront property

Map 6,1: Distribution of Moorage Slips (1980)



along Elliot Bay too expensive for small boat moorage.

The Duwamish River runs through the southern warehousing and industrial district. Its course has changed dramatically as the city grew (McElhoe 1950). The lower stretch of the river is now almost completely channelized. Five small marinas are located along the waterway and on Harbor Island, at the River's mouth. Recently, these marinas have come under increasing pressure from nearby expanding industries and the Port of Seattle and will likely be abandoned soon (Seattle Post-Intelligencer 1981).

Southern Lake Washington has six small marinas. This area is directly adjacent to a major residential area. Of these marinas, three handle mainly small outboard motor boats, while others are older facilities with small capacity water and electric lines, making them unsuitable for accommodating liveaboards.

Shilshole Bay Marina is a major public moorage on Puget Sound built behind a breakwater. It is the only major saltwater moorage in the city. It offers an excellent view of the Olympic Mountains and direct access to Puget Sound. Boats from other moorages (except the Duwamish moorages) must enter Puget Sound through the Hiram M. Chittenden locks. This may add from twenty minutes to several hours to the time needed to enter the Sound. Shilshole Bay is also located three quarters of a mile from Ballard, a major center for boating and commercial marine activities within the city. Ballard also contains a

number of other industrial and commercial employers, a wide variety of retailers, and a number of taverns.

The Lake Washington Ship Canal is the most diverse of the city's waterways. Beginning at the Hiram H. Chittenden locks and stretching about three miles to Union Bay on Lake Washington. There are three concentrations of moorage along the waterway and a number of small marinas along the canal proper. Ballard and Salmon Bay constitute the westernmost complex with 700 slips. Intermingled among the moorages are several dry-dock and repair facilities for small ships and fishing boats, some coastal shipping terminals (mainly oriented towards Alaska), and home port facilities for a large fishing fleet.

Proceeding east past the Ballard Bridge there are four small marinas. From this point east to the Fremont Bridge the canal-front is bare except for some commercial and residential uses.

East of Fremont Bridge lies Lake Union, in the center of the city. Twenty-four moorages with 1,500 slips are scattered around the lake (o.r.w., 1978). The lakefront supports eight yacht brokerages, which also rent slips, three dry-dock and small ship repair facilities, a fishing terminal, the bulk of the city's houseboat moorages, a number of restaurants, and several parks (including Gasworks Park). Most of the moorage on the lake is concentrated along its western edge (the east side of Queen Anne hill) forming an almost continuous strip of moorages and yacht brokerages. Two smaller concentrations of moorage

occur along the North edge of the lake to the East and West of Gasworks Park. Mariner's Square, a major wholesaling and retailing center for the marine industry, is located just to the north of Gasworks Park. Several moorages and yacht brokers are scattered along the Eastern shore of the lake. Points around the lake offer excellent views of the city, are well served by public transportation, and are near major concentrations of employment and retailing.

Portage Bay lies East of University Bridge. On its northern shore lie slips and moorages, as well as two small-boat haul-out and repair facilities, a marine retailing complex (of four shops adjacent to most of the moorage), and the University of Washington campus. The Southern shore is occupied mainly by houseboats and slips distributed between Seattle and Queen City Yacht Clubs. The easternmost boundary of Portage Bay is Montlake Bridge, which leads to Union Bay and Lake Washington. These areas have virtually no moorage except for an occasional yacht tied by a private residence.

Briefly, these are some of the physical and locational conditions of living aboard in Seattle. Overall, there is easy access to the city from the waterfront. However, various parts of the waterfront (e.g. downtown and residential shorelines) offer no moorage. Other areas, such as the Duwamish River, offer moorage in an unappealing industrial area, or along southern Lake Washington, offer only limited moorage in a more remote part of the city. The condition of the moorages themselves, their state of repair, the services and facilities they

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offer, also affect the desirability of a moorage for living aboard (Residence Chapter). Relative location within the city also affects this desirability. For those particularly delighted with city life and who desire easy access to urban amenities, locations along Lake Union would be preferable. Those who relish boating on salt water and easy access to Puget Sound seek moorage at Shilshole Bay.

#### THE ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Liveaboards have three special economic needs not found among other urban households. They are particularly dependent on the supply, cost, and terms of provision of moorage, the supply, quality and cost of marine equipment (from boats to clevis pins), and the availability of employment in the marine industry (from which 40% of the households gained some part of their income).

#### Moorage:

Moorage is essential to living aboard and results in a direct dependence on those that control the city's stock of small boat slips. For someone thinking of moving aboard, as well as current liveaboards, moorage was not simply either available or unavailable. Where available, it is provided only on certain terms. Cost, location, likely duration of tenure, security, services and facilities (laundry, showers, etc.), parking, and the personality of the moorage operator

are all factors to be considered. This was demonstrated in the last chapter (Chapter V-Residence). Here, our attention turns to conditions under which moorage is provided (as opposed to the conditions of desirable moorage). For this we will look primarily at the moorage operator.

Consistent with economic theories of urban land-use (Alonso 1960, Nourse 1968), waterfront property is used for private economic benefit. This, of course, is modified by public ownership and regulation of waterfront property. But, by and large, waterfront property is conceived of in terms of its private economic potential. A moorage operator might be interested in and fascinated by boats, but is nonetheless dependent on the moorage for a livelihood. Furthermore, the moorage operator is often only a manager with his continued employment contingent on the moorage's profits and smooth operation.

The liveaboard faces a situation where his ability to find desirable moorage is contingent on how moorage operators perceive the presence of liveaboards will affect the profitability and operation of the moorage as a business. This becomes similar to most other rental situations in that a greater scarcity of moorage would likely result in a greater scrutiny of people seeking to rent moorage.

Moorage in Seattle was considered scarce during the study period, especially in the more desirable parts of the city (Shilshole Bay and the Ship Canal complex). Turnover at the public Shilshole Bay flarina



was allocated by waiting list, expecting to take five to ten years for those at the bottom of the list to get moorage. A 1978 survey (O.R.W., 1978, p.5-12) showed that among 61 responding moorages in the Seattle metropolitan area, there were 3,620 people on waiting lists with an average waiting period of 17.5 months. Private moorages occasionally filled vacancies by waiting lists, but individual factors that might affect profit and smooth operations, luck ("being at the right place at the right time"), and private arrangements were more important. Private arrangements would often occur where a friend or relative of the moorage owner would have precedence in getting moorage. Also moorage might also be offered to help sell boats. This was a particularly common and successful practice.

The operator's perceptions of how the liveaboard would affect the moorage's operation were particularly important. Two judgments result from these perceptions. First, are liveaboards more or less desirable as renters than other boaters? In almost every case the operator had an alternative non-liveaboard choice. Second, if a liveaboard is desirable, is a particular liveaboard household preferable to another?

Twenty-seven of approximately 60 moorages in the city were interviewed. Seventy-nine percent (n=22) allowed living aboard. Thirty-three percent (n=9) mentioned problems with having liveaboards at a moorage. Table 6.1 shows the relative frequencies of specific problems.

Table 6.1: Problems with liveboards at moorages mentioned by moorage operators.

Problem	<u>Per-cent</u>	<u>Number</u> (N=26)
Management Headaches	31%	8
Electrical Demand	27%	7
Garbage Disposal	23%	6
Parking	15%	4
Water Supply	15%	4
Clutter	12%	3
Parties	12%	3
Tenant Organization	8%	2

"Management Headaches" is a broad category of concerns that center around the added problems of managing a moorage that also serves as a residence. These included arranging mail and package delivery, the installation of telephone lines on the dock, opening gates and giving directions to visitors, worrying about the safety of young children living at the moorage, and clearing snow and ice from the docks in Winter. Other problems in Table 6.1 were also considered as management problems.

Many problems had to do with physical limitations of the moorage's facilities. Greatest among these was the added electrical demand created by people living on their boats (both in terms of extra use and added appliances). Most docks were wired when living aboard was less

common and few boats had appliances that used shore power. Operators mentioning this problem often had 15 to 20 ampere circuits. Shilshole Bay Marina, considered to have adequate power, has 40 ampere circuits.

Boats with people living on them were sometimes thought to produce more garbage, which the moorage must contract to haul away. Thus, more of the moorage's space must be devoted to garbage collection and more of its revenue to disposal. (One liveaboard, however, vigorously denied this. She claimed that weekend boaters bringing small highly packaged items contributed as much as liveaboards which used fewer goods than most households and goods that were less elaborately packaged.)

Parking was also commonly thought to be a problem. I was told by two operators that city regulations (Seattle City Ordinance 24.64.120) require one parking space for every two slips. Assuming each liveaboard yacht has two adults, each liveaboard yacht contributes two cars to the lot. These cars are almost constantly in the lot. This is compared to the occasional use of a boat by households living ashore, which only occasionally contributed one car to the lot, usually on summer weekends.

Water supply was sometimes a problem. This usually occurred at small marinas in Winter where pipes could freeze at night and burst. Without liveaboards, water lines would simply be shut off and drained. One operator also mentioned that liveaboards had occasionally monopolized water faucets, permanently attaching water hoses to their

boats. This caused disputes between tenants which inevitably involved the operator.

Cluttered docks and disturbing parties were also mentioned as problems. Especially when a boat was undergoing repairs, tools, pieces of wood, and displaced possessions might occupy the docks or decorate decks. Dinghies and other possessions might also be permanently stored on the dock. Most operators thought this created eyesores and safety hazards. Consequently, most moorages expected liveboards (as well as other tenants) to keep their slips and boats tidy. Only twelve percent (n=3), however, considered the actual clutter created to be a problem.' A similar number found entertaining done by liveboards to be occasionally disturbing, both to other tenants and to the operation of the moorage. Three moorages banned large parties or extensive entertaining.

Interestingly, two moorages feared the formation of liveboard tenant unions. They expected that this would result in a greater politicization of liveboards and the moorage industry. This may have been partially the result of a campaign for a "rent control" initiative in the city at the time.

Seventy-one percent of the sample (n=22) mentioned benefits to having liveaboards at the moorage. These responses are listed in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Benefits of having liveaboards at a moorage mentioned by moorage operators.

Benefit	Overall Per-cent	Percent of Moorages <u>Allowing Liveaboards (N=22)</u>
Security	71%(n=20)	91% (n=20)
Safety for other boats	18%(5)	23%(5)
Companionship	18% (5)	23%(5)

Security was seen as the primary benefit of having liveaboards at the moorage. It was felt that by having people on the docks at all hours, especially in the winter and on weekdays, theft and vandalism would be deterred. Two moorages hired liveaboards at their moorages as night watchmen, formalizing this function. In one of these cases the liveaboard was offered moorage at a reduced fee. Another operator offered a month's free moorage to any liveaboard contributing to the apprehension of a thief. He also mentioned proudly that there was so little theft at his moorage that he had only made use of this offer once. This function, in addition to being the most frequently mentioned, was also the most elaborated upon benefit of having liveaboards. Thus, in most cases, living aboard was accepted because it provided this service to the moorage.

Liveboards were also thought to provide added safety for other boats at the moorage. Many cases were cited where liveboards had noticed a fire on the dock, reported or fixed frayed and broken mooring lines, retrieved boats that were breaking loose, or merely alerted the operator to maintenance and safety problems on the dock. Again, this was a practical contribution to the moorage's operation.

Companionship for those working at the moorage was mentioned with surprising frequency. Some mentioned friendships with individual liveboards. Others valued the regular presence of others at the docks. While this benefit was not expanded upon to anything like the extent that the other benefits were discussed, it indicates that in many cases the liveboard-moorage relationship had non-economic aspects.

This is not to say that liveboards and operators always, or even usually, got along well. There were often different feelings toward liveboards expressed by individuals working at the same moorage. Often, in view of some of the disadvantages mentioned earlier, liveboards were only grudgingly tolerated. In two cases, existing liveboards were "grand-fathered", or allowed to stay, while new liveboards were prohibited in an effort to reduce, and possibly eliminate, the number of liveboards. Only one moorage claimed not to scrutinize those seeking to live aboard. Only one other moorage permitted living aboard after just a short talk with the manager. Elsewhere, the number of liveboard boats was restricted to about ten

percent of the moorage, usually enough for one to three liveaboard boats per dock. The number was usually evenly distributed among the docks and often placed at the ends of docks. This was done primarily to encourage surveillance of the docks and to give each liveaboard privacy from others living on the dock. In two cases, end of dock locations were thought to be more scenic as well.

It was felt that by allowing only a limited number of liveaboards, the benefits would still occur and the problems would be minimized. The character of individual liveaboards, then, came under scrutiny much like that given to those hoping to rent a house. Some operators would prohibit or discourage families with children for safety reasons. Some would discourage parties or entertaining. Some would only accept liveaboards that seemed less demanding of electricity and other services. One case was found where a moorage quietly sought out and offered moorage to a few liveaboards of the right "character". In nearly every case, more people wanted to live aboard than operators were prepared to allow. One operator claimed he could fill his entire moorage of about 80 slips with liveaboards if he wanted. However, he limited it to twelve. Operators were in a position to be highly selective.

Much of the view taken of liveaboards by operators seems to have resulted as much from personal style as actual problems and benefits resulting from living aboard. In at least five cases, operators had either previously lived aboard, were in the process of moving aboard,

or were thinking of moving aboard. One operator's daughter occasionally baby-sat for a liveaboard family living at their moorage. In several cases, operators were, or had been, active boaters. So in many cases the two groups shared interests as well as opposite sides of an economic relationship. In these cases living aboard was accepted less grudgingly. In other cases, where an aura of "professional management" or, in the case of brokerages that also rented slips, "professional selling" was present, living aboard seemed less well received, unless mitigated by individuals within the organization. Here, liveaboards were seen as adding excessive complexity ("headaches") to moorage operation

Liveaboards, themselves, also laid claim to security and safety benefits for their moorages and could cite, at greater length than the operators, examples of their utility. Most were also aware of the problems they were thought to cause. Consequently, many liveaboards sought to lessen these problems where they saw them occur. Many mentioned actively trying to "keep an eye on things", especially where dock maintenance and safety were concerned. (Here will be said about this in the next chapter under Liveaboard Neighborhoods.) There seemed to be a feeling of active intent to avoid problems with the moorage.

This relationship between the liveaboard and the yacht moorage stands in stark contrast to the relationship between Seattle's houseboat owners and moorage operators (Seattle Times 1980). Here, the situation has similarities both in waterfront location and form of



tenure, the residence usually being owner-occupied and the location being rented. A difference, however, lies in the more purely renter-landlord relationship that occurs. The purpose of allowing a houseboat into a moorage is not to aid the moorage's operations, but solely to create revenue. The liveaboard, being exceptional in a yacht moorage, provides safety, security, and rent. This helped create a difference in political styles in dealing with the moorage. Both houseboat owners and moorage operators are active politically with lobbyists to the Seattle City Council and the State Legislature. Their differences are handled by resort to organized conflict and legal forums. Differences between liveaboard and yacht moorage were avoided, especially by the liveaboards themselves. Where this failed, the liveaboard would move, an option not available to the houseboat owner with more moorage restrictions. Neither party has any organization directed against the other, although this was feared by two operators. However, in spite of this relative good-will, moorage, or loss thereof, was one of a liveaboard's greatest worries.



## The Marine Industry

Forty percent of the liveaboard sample households had some member working in the marine industry. In every case, the liveaboard residence was a product of this industry, as were most of their household appliances and materials for repair and improvements. The industry also provided information on boating and boat repair through local retailers, yachting magazines, and for many, through the workplace itself. In addition, the industry also supplied information and equipment for recreational use of the boat. After the discussion of community and lifestyle in Chapter 4, we should not be surprised to see such a dependence on and involvement in this industry.

As mentioned before, someone living on a boat would seem to have an advantage in this industry, especially in the sector devoted to recreational boating. For them, boating is more than employment and recreation, but it is also a home and a way of life. The liveaboard gets satisfaction from working in an enjoyable field and in which the liveaboard is competent. The employer also benefits from this added competence and enthusiasm.

One case was found of a wholesaler/retailer of boating supplies that was owned by a liveaboard couple and employed two liveaboards. According to one of the employees, the owners purposefully sought to hire other liveaboards because of their knowledge, interests, and

reliable character. Seven cases were found where liveaboards or recent former liveaboards owned and operated businesses in the boating industry. This coincidence of living aboard, interest in recreational boating, an working in the marine industry was described as "natural".

Living aboard was also a market for the boating industry. A small sample of seven classified sections from the Sunday Seattle Times showed 640 ads for sailboats over 30 feet in overall length. Of these, ten percent (n=63) were advertised as "good liveaboard" or "liveaboard". A smaller proportion of power boats were advertised as liveaboards. By this measure, a significant proportion of the yacht market was directed, in part, to those interested in living on the boat they bought.

The publishing segment of the boating industry also capitalized on the idea of living aboard. This, however, was more evident in national publications than local marine publications. Two books on living aboard were available in many Seattle bookstores at the time of the study:

Wiley, Jack. Boat Living. International Marine Publishing Co. Camden, Uaine (1976).

Moeller, Jan and Bill. Living Aboard: The Cruising Sailboat as a  
- International Marine Publishing Co. Camden, Haine (1977).

Articles on living aboard also occurred frequently in popular sailing magazines. These were more directed to someone aspiring to live aboard rather than actual liveaboards and more to living aboard while cruising than as a moored residence. They tended to dwell more on boat lay-out, operations, and maintenance than finding moorage.

## THE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

The broader society also exerted an influence on the liveaboard population. It also created an atmosphere which fostered the development of the liveaboard community. The roles of various governmental jurisdictions and the historical development and culture of Seattle illustrate some of these influences.

· Governments:

Governmental activities were generally seen as a threat to the individual liveaboard's independence. Any government regulation of living aboard was seen as leading to stricter regulation and perhaps prohibition of living aboard. This was specifically mentioned by four liveaboards. Some feared that cooperating with this study would provide information that could be used for such regulation.

The beginning of one of the early interviews illustrates this point. Wandering along one dock, I observed a power boat being refurbished. The owner was working on the boat, with lumber and parts stored on the dock and among the rafters of the covered slip. This led me to believe that the owner lived aboard, since a non-liveaboard would likely store materials at home to avoid exposure and possible theft on

the dock. Upon being asked if he lived aboard, the owner responded, "Are you working for the government?," even after being informed of the nature of the study. Upon being assured of no governmental connection, the owner indicated that he lived aboard and consented to an hour-long interview on the spot. Another indication of this attitude was one liveaboard who avoided the Census out of distrust of how the information would be used.

Three jurisdictions caused particular concern: the Federal Government, the County Assessor's Office, and the City of Seattle. The Federal Government's activities affected living aboard indirectly through legislation that affected boating. This consisted mainly of environmental and navigation legislation. Navigation legislation outlines marine traffic conventions, right-of-way rules, and required safety equipment for yachts of various sizes. These were long-standing and well accepted regulations. Recent environmental legislation and regulations, however, caused some inconvenience and concern. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 (Section 312) called for the Environmental Protection Agency to establish sewage discharge standards for all vessels. The Coast Guard was given the task of both establishing regulations to achieve these standards and enforcing these regulations. As part of this effort, approved sanitation devices were required for small boats. Previously, small boats were allowed to release raw sewage directly into the water. Five general types of sanitation devices had been approved:

- 1) holding tanks, which merely store sewage until it can be pumped

into a sewage system ashore,

2) recirculation systems, similar to systems used on airplanes and busses, and

3) three types of processes (Physical-Chemical, Biological, and Evaporation-Incineration) which treat sewage for discharge into the water. (Kissam and Merrill 1977) All these devices were enormously expensive to purchase and install, typically about \$700, but as high as \$7,000. Recirculation and treatment devices were subject to mechanical failure (with disastrous consequences). Charges were frequently made, moreover that all these devices let offensive odors escape. Confusion and delay also resulted from rumors that these regulations would never be implemented and long delays between establishment of the regulations and notification that they would indeed be enforced. With a deadline of January 31, 1980 for compliance, at the time of the study many liveaboards and other boaters were scrambling to decide on and install a sanitation device (usually a holding tank). Only one household interviewed failed to mention these regulations. A few expected the regulations to change or not be enforced. (One rumor went that Puget Sound would be exempt from the regulations because of its large tides and resultant "flushing".)

Another governmental source of worry was the County Assessor's Office. In King County, boats are legally taxable property, like a house. This is true for all boats, including liveaboards. However, the Assessor's Office has no official record of boat ownership in the county and hence no means of assessing value or ownership. Property

tax evasion on boats is therefore easy and is assumed to be rampant. While no one admitted to not paying taxes (and I felt it was unwise to ask), two liveboards brought up that they did pay taxes on their boats, feeling that it was their duty (especially since the boat functioned as a house). Both of these liveboards seemed to feel that others were not paying taxes, although they thought liveboards were more likely to pay than other boaters. Once, I was jokingly introduced to a group of liveboard as a representative of the assessor's office. This would seem to indicate that they had some reason to fear representatives of this office.

A third source of worry was **the** city government. This mainly stems from the city's powers to regulate land-use. And, in fact, this was the source of the only direct threat ever presented to the group. In 1975 a Shoreline Plaster Program was proposed which included a provision that all liveboard yachts be connected to the municipal sewer system. This would have required installing sewer lines on docks and fitting boats with sewer hook-ups. This would have been an incredible financial burden on moorage operators, as well as liveboards. There is little doubt that this would have led to the banning of liveboards throughout the city.

Several liveboards working for the city saw preliminary drafts of the plan and so had advanced warning of this provision. Through networks of friends and acquaintances, about a hundred liveboards were present at the public hearing. This particular provision, however, was

considered to be minor, given the overall scope of the plan. Seeing the turnout and hearing grumblings about the provision, the chairman asked how many of those present were present because of the provision. After seeing the response, it was announced that the provision would be dropped, and the meeting was formally begun. This was the only known organized political activity that a group of liveaboards participated in. Since this time, the city has made no attempt to regulate living aboard, nor was such an effort anticipated.

#### The Culture of Seattle:

Individual responses to the conditions of city life seem to have an underlying uniformity (Wirth 1938, Milgram 1970). These are often assumed to be a need to cope with many strangers and other individuals in close proximity as well as many other employment, recreational, and other opportunities. However, there is also ample evidence that responses to city life vary across individual cities and districts within cities (Milgram 1970, Firey 1945). These different ways of responding to urban life may result from differences in historical development, as well as ethnic, class, and occupational composition. Certainly, this can be seen in the case of the varying lifestyles of immigrant and ethnic groups (Gans 1962, Ware 1935). It may also be seen by comparing the lifestyles of different occupations and social classes (Whyte 1956, Spradley 1970, Pilcher 1972).

The city, then, is a composite of different forms of urbanism, each responding (not necessarily in a deterministic way) to urban



social contexts which vary with social class, occupation, ethnicity, and other historical developments. The pattern and composition of this mosaic, moreover, varies from city to city. Just as each element of the mosaic is a response to its historical and environmental contexts, so the city, as a whole, responds to its context within a greater economy and culture. Thus we may see at least a two tiered hierarchy of responses, one resulting from the context of the city, the other resulting from the individual's more immediate context, the districts and social groups in which he lives. (This is not a stepped, but a fluid hierarchy.) These differing patterns of response to urban life can be referred to as the cultures of cities.

Within Seattle there are a wide variety of cultures. Each is affected in varying degrees by the unique geography of the city. Here, we shall be concerned with the city's culture and history as it affects the incidence of living aboard. This must be only a brief examination of how the culture and development of a city has contributed to the development of one element of its mosaic. The premise here is that living aboard, both as a residence and a lifestyle, has developed in part because of the boating orientation of the city.

Seattle originated as a port city and continues to be one of the largest ports on the American West Coast. It has also become a regional boating center. The region's boating lobby, the Northwest Marine Trade Association, has its offices in the city (with at least one

liveaboard employee). There are several centers within the city that specialize in marine wholesaling and retailing (Mariner's Square, Westlake Ave., and several districts where these activities are common: Ballard, Fairview Ave., Boat St., Seaview Ave., and Northlake Ave.). Boat building, repair, sailmaking, fishing, and support for local fishing fleets are also common. (See Map 3.1)

This prevalence of waterfront economic activity is reflected elsewhere. Three of the city's major festivals are oriented towards boating. The culminating events of Seafair are hydroplane races on Lake Washington. Another major event is a symbolic invasion of the city at the beginning of Seafair by "pirates". Opening Day is the traditional beginning of the boating season. This celebration consists of crew shell races and a massive parade of boats, many decorated around a central theme, led by several large sailboats flying colorful spinnakers. The Christmas Day parade of boats through the Ship Canal reflects both the city's mild climate and boating tradition.

Boating is also a major recreational activity, as evidenced by the city's extensive boating industry. (1) The city has 5,700 slips, one for every 40 households. The Oceanographic Institute of Washington's moorage survey (O.T.W. 1978) mentions nine yacht clubs in the city. Four other clubs were found in the course of research. Several clubs (Corinthian, Seattle, and Sloop Tavern) ran regular yacht races as part of their activities. For larger keelboats, these races could include up to 140 boats. There were also a number of one-design sailboat

fleets in the city which race regularly (including Laser, 505, I-14, J-24, Etchels, Dragons, Solings, •••). Liveboards interviewed belonged to five of these clubs and played a major role in the organization and activities of four of these.

Aside from the water-oriented occupational and recreational groups within the city, there is an active residential group of houseboat dwellers. These are houses built on rafts that are kept at commercial moorages and connected to the municipal water and sewer systems. Over their history, houseboats have become something of a city tradition. Beginning as housing for mill workers, in recent years **they** have become fashionable and expensive homes.

The city's newspapers serve as an indicator of the importance of boating and waterfront activity. Because they are read throughout the city, they also spread information and ideas across groups. As advertisers, they diffuse market information, including information on yachts and the boating industry. As reporters of current events, they convey an image of the city to readers. Each of the city's major boating events mentioned earlier receives extensive coverage, often over several days with large articles on the front page of a secondary section on at least one day. Boat Show coverage (Seattle has two boat shows) also includes an advertising supplement.

The city's newspapers also spread the idea of living aboard outside the boating community. Since 1979, three major articles on

living aboard have appeared in the city's two dailies. Occasional stories on individual liveboards also appear. Articles on living aboard also appear from time to time in weekly and neighborhood papers.

The extent of boating activity in the city, the size of the boating population, and the popularity of boating in the press make living aboard, as a lifestyle centered around boating, well suited to Seattle. The city's population, moreover, is well disposed towards boating and, by extension, living aboard. Indeed, as mentioned in the previous chapter (Residence), most liveboards had a well developed image of living aboard before the move.

#### THE LIVEBOARD AND THE CITY

Like other urban groups, the liveboards were dependent on others for both residence and lifestyle. They differed from other urbanites primarily in their dependence on the moorage industry for slips, the marine industry for jobs, and the government for continued legal status. There were no active political groups of liveboards that were involved in these vital affairs. Indeed, only one incident could be found where liveboards became politically active (the 1975 Shoreline Master Program public hearing). This lack of political mobilization was not due to apathy over the issues. Dependence on moorages and government non-interference was frequently mentioned and lamented. Nor was lack of mobilization due to lack of social organization, as we

shall see in the next chapter (Liveaboard Society). Instead, these problems were handled by each individual household, often in consultation with others. Perhaps this resulted from the value placed on individual self-sufficiency.

This way of handling possible conflicts had several advantages for the group. First, no single conflict between individuals (for example, a moorage and a single liveaboard) automatically widened into an explicit conflict between two organized groups. The liveaboards were a small group, usually not of critical importance to other groups. Moorages and marine industries were already organized through the Northwest Marine Trade Association and the Association of Independent Moorages. Any organized conflict between the liveaboards and other groups would likely be an unequal contest. Consequently, it was not to the liveaboards' advantage to organize.

Second, the lack of organization allowed a greater flexibility to arrive at individual solutions to problems between individuals. Idiosyncratic solutions could be arrived at, or imposed, without the need for acceptance by the larger groups. Typically, however, individual conflicts usually resulted in the liveaboard moving to another moorage.

Third, a politically organized group may be seen as a threat and thus create an atmosphere of conflict, making actual conflict more likely. This was avoided.

Notes:

1-Lacking employment figures, a search of the city's Yellow Pages showed seven pages of "Marine" listings, including 37 marine contractors and 235 marine equipment suppliers. There were 51 listings under "Yacht Brokerages". Under "Boat" and "Boating", there were 17 pages of listings including 41 boat builders and eight pages of boat dealers. These were all within the city limits.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: LIVEABOARD SOCIETY

"It was not at all strange in a life common to sailors that, having already crossed the Atlantic twice and being half-way from Boston to the Horn, I should find myself still among friends."  
Joshua Slocum in Sailing Alone Around the World (1900)

### THE FORMATION OF COHESION

Friendships in urban societies typically form along functional lines (Fisher 1977). Friends tend to originate with an activity such as work, school, residence, club, church, or recreation. In these settings individuals most frequently encounter the same people for reasonable lengths of time. Even after moving, changing jobs, leaving school, etc., these friendships will persist and may even be the origin of new friendships (i.e., through "friends of friends").

The origin of these friendships, as well as the settings in which they persist, constitute the social organization of a group. If there is no regularity to the origins and settings of these friendships, the group, as a group, has no social organization.

The liveaboards had such a social organization. Friendships frequently originated and were maintained by activities related to living aboard. Three areas of mutual interest tended to encourage friendships within the group: boating, a common type of residence, and a common neighborhood.

### Boating:

Most friendships within the group were concentrated around boating activities. This resulted as much from the common importance of boating as a lifestyle as from its importance as a recreation (see Chapter 3-Lifestyle). As such, boating became a vehicle for the formation of friendships about a common lifestyle. Eighty-four per cent (n=32) of the households interviewed mentioned having "best" friends that **they** knew through boating. Fifty-eight per cent (n=22) of the households knew these "best" friends through living aboard, 21 per cent (n=8) through a boating occupation, and 45 per cent (n=17) through other boating activities.

The organization of friendships changed with the move aboard. Fifty per cent (n=19) of the households mentioned that their circle of "best" friends changes to a more boating-oriented group (i.e., more boaters and liveaboards) with the move. In spite of being boaters before the move, they socialized increasingly with boaters after the move and increasingly adopted this lifestyle. I was told by one liveaboard that he had to make a point of seeing non-boating friends because of the tendency to socialize exclusively with other boaters and liveaboards. This may not be typical, but it does illustrate a tendency.

Liveaboards were important members of various boating organizations. These organizations were a focus for social activity.



The Sloop Tavern Yacht Club is perhaps the most outstanding example of a voluntary organization among the liveboards. Its headquarters is the Sloop Tavern in Ballard, not far from Shilshole marina. The club was formed primarily by liveboards from Shilshole Marina and the tavern keeper to sponsor a relatively informal racing series and social activities. The commodore at the time of this study was a liveboard. As a result, the Sloop Tavern developed a boating clientele. The tavern had a regular patronage of about a dozen Shilshole liveboards. One couple described the place as their "living room", where they did their entertaining. It was frequently used for socializing weekdays after work and weekends, especially Friday evenings. The liveboard clientele ranged in age from 30 to 69 years of age about evenly distributed between single men and couples. This group tended to consist of those employed in skilled occupations (e.g., an auto mechanic, a merchant seaman, a heavy equipment operator) but also included several professionals (e.g., an engineer and a librarian). They showed no tendency to come from particular docks at Shilshole marina, but only one liveboard was seen at the tavern that was not from this marina. Several powerboat owners also associated with this group. The tavern subscribed to several sailing magazines, had several mailboxes which were mainly used by liveboards, and a bulletin board for announcing races, soliciting crew, selling boats, etc.

The Puget Sound Cruising Club also had an important cadre of liveboards. The club's activities consisted mainly of monthly meetings, talks on sailing topics, and occasional cruises on Puget

Sound. As opposed to the informal racing associated with the Sloop Tavern Yacht Club, this club was primarily oriented towards "Blue-water", or trans-oceanic, sailing. I happened upon one of their cruises in Port Townsend (in the northwest corner of Puget Sound) in the summer of 1981. Here, I found about a dozen people from about a half dozen boats gathered on a beach for a pot-luck dinner. Most of the talk was about boats and sailing. One couple was preparing to leave for the South Pacific. In describing the club, I was told of its "Blue-water" orientation, cruises, meetings, and large number of liveboard members. Again, the president was a liveboard. The club was mentioned by three of those interviewed as well who told me of a number of active liveboard members.

The Olympic Yacht Club, just being organized at the time of this study, was also largely instigated by liveboards. An interview with one of the co-founders revealed that six of nine co-founders were liveboards.

Liveboards were also found among the ranks of the city's two major yacht clubs, the Seattle Yacht Club and Corinthian Yacht Club. Liveboard members, when interviewed, were always involved in both the club's social and boating activities, with the club's directory prominent on the bookshelf.

There were also a number of informal groups of friends who regularly talked boating or sailed together. These groups were small,

perhaps two or three households. Members were usually also close friends. These groups are difficult to inventory because of their informal and often transient nature. They are important, however, to a description of liveaboard society.

It should be noted that non-liveaboards were also important in these social groups. However, liveaboards were disproportionately important for the size of the group. Liveaboards were consistently more active and dedicated to boating and its attendant social organization and lifestyle.

#### Common Dwelling-Type:

Living in a common type of dwelling also provided a focus for association. Living aboard entailed several particular problems (see Chapter V- Residence). Useful advice on all these problems was more likely to be found among other liveaboards than any other single group. All of those interviewed could recount instances, usually at length, when other liveaboards had helped them with these problems. They had also given similar help to other liveaboards. The impression was given that such help was freely and liberally available among liveaboards, just as information on maintenance, parts, techniques, and places is available among boaters in general.

It is useful to divide these exchanges into two categories, one addressing problems wholly within the group and one addressing

problems between liveboards and the outside. Problems in the group include maintenance, repair, and refurbishing. Any boater has such problems, but for liveboards they are more important and extensive ("close to home" as it were). Living on a boat designed for weekend use places extra demand on water and electrical systems, shower, toilet, refrigeration, storage, workspace, and living space. The boat's being designed for warm-weather use also poses problems of heating and insulation for the year-round, liveboard.

The extent to which these issues were perceived as problems varied tremendously, but, as several liveboards noted, "if you thought they were really problems, you wouldn't be living aboard." The problems were judged as inconvenient, but not serious. They were often seen as small challenges to one's ingenuity. There seemed to be a sense of pride in dealing with these challenges and enjoyment from actually working on the boat (Chapter V— Residence).

The social implications of this were explained to me as follows. Assume *you* are dissatisfied with your present water heater. Fred, who also lives aboard, recently put in a new water heater and is quite pleased with it. You and Fred end up talking about water heaters. What kind does he have? What other kinds are available? At what price? How easy was it to install? Has he had any problems or has he heard of any problems with his or any other types of heater? You, on the other hand, have just installed a new sanitary system (toilet or "head"). Fred is trying to figure out how to comply with the new Coast

Guard regulations (Chapter VI - The Urban Context) without smelling up his boat and without taking up too much space. A similar conversation ensues over sanitary fixtures. Meanwhile, Brad and Janet have been working on insulating their fo'c's'le, something both you and Fred have been thinking about. So the network of interest and aid is extended.

The liveboards may have initially been acquaintances along the dock, at a club, at work, or even have been introduced by a third party knowing of the others' interests. Even if they were friends beforehand, the social networks of all parties are broadened and deepened by these exchanges. And, importantly, these exchanges systematically extend and reinforce the parties' networks within the liveboard group.

Problems between liveboards and the outside consisted principally of finding and keeping moorage. Living at moorages and having frequent contact with moorage operators, they were often well aware of vacancies at their moorage and the operator's opinion of accepting another liveboard. Thus, when a liveboard wished to change moorages, other liveboards were in positions to provide information. Those living at brokerages were especially appreciative of this source of information. They were often subject to displacement because moorage at a brokerage was usually temporary, until the broker could fill the slip with another boat for sale. Thus, there were always a number of liveboards searching for more secure (and better equipped) moorage. Members of the group had special knowledge of vacancies at their own moorage and

the relevant characteristics of the moorage for living aboard. Exchange of such information was an obvious benefit of socializing among liveaboards, although few socialized solely for this reason. It should be noted that this would apply less to Shilshole Marina, where permanent vacancies are filled by waiting list.

#### Neighborhood:

As neighbors, the liveaboards had frequent occasion to see each other and become acquainted. They shared a common parking lot, open dock, and often showers, rest rooms, and laundry facilities. They also shared interests in boating, problems of living aboard, and the protection of their property from theft and vandalism. Having these interests and opportunities in common, it would be surprising not to find some sort of social activity among neighbors. Indeed, liveaboards considered their neighbors closer and more friendly than previous neighbors whom they had ashore.

Because of their concern for property and the value placed on privacy, docks became "monitored" or "defended" neighborhoods. Strangers were noticed, scrutinized, and watched, as I often found out. While conducting fieldwork, I was asked as I approached the end of a dock, "Can I help you?" in an obvious attempt to protect territory. My questioner was a liveaboard, whom I then interviewed. I was often told about this monitoring of the docks. It was mentioned by both liveaboards and moorage operators alike (Chapter VI).

The boundaries of these neighborhoods, in the case of larger marinas, usually extended to a locked gate. This was a barrier open to those with keys. Most people with keys would be known by sight since they commonly used the dock. Consequently, anyone on the dock who was not recognized was suspect. This territorial behavior parallels the findings of Oscar Newman (1973) and Gerald Suttles (1972) in other residential settings.

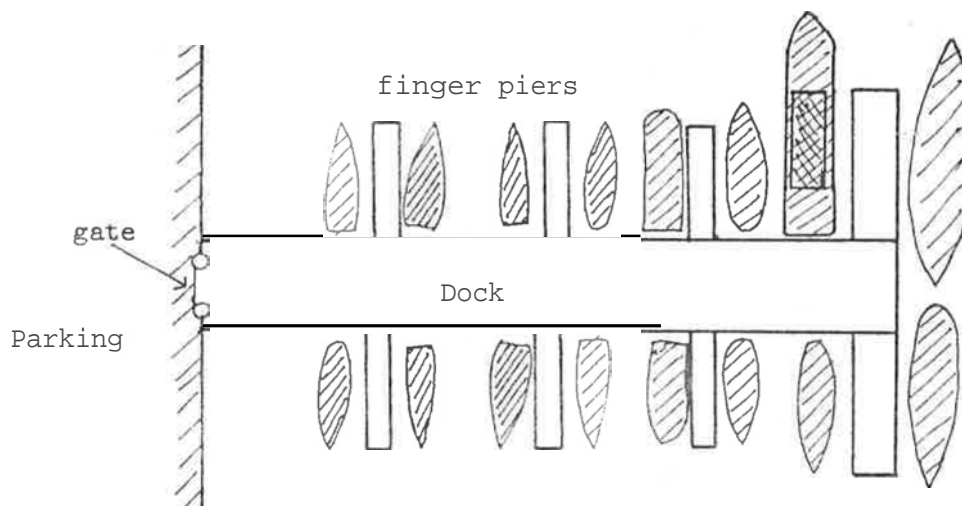
Residents had better knowledge along their own dock than along others, with a "distance-decay" effect. The neighborhood, here, had its most important boundary at the gate of each dock. In one instance, a group of liveaboards decided to have a "block" party. All tenants on the dock (i.e., as far as the gate) were invited.

Shilshole is a peculiar example, however, in that there was also a form of neighborhood across docks. This other level of neighborhood was not so much the result of security concerns, but more from close proximity, the ease of association, and the sharing of some facilities (laundry, parking, etc.).

Aspects of this scrutiny extended beyond the gate to the parking lot and the rest of the marina, although it could not be maintained as intensively here. Scrutiny, like visibility, was most intense closer to one's own boat. The boats (one's own and others') were most intensely guarded. Unrecognized people boarding a boat would likely

cause questioning or a call to police. Several liveaboards claimed to have foiled thefts in this way. The "finger piers" (Figure 7.1), leading to individual boats, were intermediately monitored. People looking "suspicious" (perhaps carrying hadck-saws, crow bar, or leaving with winches or instruments) would come under close scrutiny even on the main dock, before entering a finger pier or boarding a boat. An unassuming researcher might not be closely watched even on a finger pier, but would certainly be questioned if found boarding a yacht that was not his own.

Figure 7.1: Boundaries of a typical liveaboard neighborhood



The role of neighbor provided a basis for exchange based on common household problems and needs. Borrowing tools, seeking advice, and supplying labor are all examples of this. This role resulted from convenience, proximity, and a need for mutual trust.





Neighbors were not typically mentioned as "best" friends. While there were many instances of neighbors becoming friends or "best" friends, this was not automatic. The neighbor was not that of the romanticized "folk" community. Once this initial contact had been established, however, closer friendships (based on personality, lifestyle, etc.) could emerge.

#### LIVEABOARD SOCIETY

The best indicator of the group's social organization came from the responses concerning the origins of "best" friends. These responses are shown in Table 7.1. We can see that boating, occupation, and school (usually college) were important origins of close friends. Other sources repeatedly mentioned were family (kin), friends of friends, childhood, and prior residence. I found it remarkable that the origins of the "best" friends of 38 households could be categorized into so few classifications with so few exceptions.

"Best" friends from boating were subdivided into those living aboard, non-liveaboards known through a boating occupation, and I non-liveaboards known from other boating activities. For those working in the marine industry, boating friends known through occupation were entered both under boating occupation and under occupation. No one interviewed had any fewer than three "best" friends or more than fifteen. The average number of "best" friends was about eight.

The results show the social outcome of involvement in activities. Some of these activities were functional (occupation, school, and prior residence), some primordial (Goldschmidt 1960) (kin and childhood), and some coincidental (friends of friends). However, the most important activity was recreational. As we have seen, this activity also engendered a culture or lifestyle. We saw how this lifestyle also affected residence and occupation (for 40% of the households. Now, we see its influence on patterns of friendship.(1)

We might expect liveaboards employed in the marine industry to have more boating and liveaboard friends than liveaboards employed elsewhere. This would reflect a still greater involvement in boating activities. Those working in the marine industry did have more close friends from boating and living aboard (Tables 7.2 and 7.3).

Table 7.1: Sources of the "Best" Friends of Liveaboards(N=38)

Source	Number of "Best" Friends			
	at least one	several(2-5)	almost all	all
Boating	84%(32)	47%(18)	26%(10)	11%(4)
Living-Aboard	58%(22)	37%(14)	5%(2)	5%(2)
Boating Occupation	21%(8)	11%(4)	5%(2)	
Other Boating	45%(17)	32%(12)	5%(2)	
Occupation	68%(26)	53%(20)	11%(4)	
School	37%(14)	32%(12)		3%(1)
Kin	13%(5)	8%(3)		3%(1)
Friends of Friends	8%(3)	5%(2)		
Childhood	8%(3)	3%(1)		
Prior Residence	11%(4)	3%(1)		
Other	13%(5)	5%(2)		

Other: Women's therapy, church, soccer, other recreation, move from California

Figures are the percentage of households interviewed which found "best" friends from each source and in each relative quantity.

Especially noteworthy differences occurred where all or almost all "best" friends were boaters (53% vs. 26%) and where more than one "best" friend was a liveaboard (69% vs. 34%).

I was surprised that church, family, and childhood or childhood home were not more important. These are traditionally important social institutions (at least among some groups), but did not seem to originate many long-term, close friends among the liveaboards.

From the previous section we would expect to see an internal social network develop within the liveaboard group along the lines of neighborhood, moorage, and yacht club. This did occur. Also, liveaboard friendships developed in the workplace tended to later include boating and liveaboard activities.

Friendships among neighbors developed as previously discussed. Some households tended to be more socially involved with neighbors than others. One liveaboard attributed all his best friends to current or past liveaboards at his marina. Some maintained only neighborly relationships with those on the dock.

Indeed, all liveaboards had at least a neighborly relationship with other liveaboards at the marina (2). They might choose to be reclusive and not actively socialize. But, merely by their watchful presence they acted as neighbors.

Table 7.2: Sources of the "Best" Friends of Liveaboards  
Employed in the Marine Industry (N=15)

Source	Number of "Best" Friends			
	at least one	several(2-5)	almost all	all
Boating	86%(13)	47%(7)	33% ( 5)	20%(3)
Living- Aboard	73%(11)	47%( 7)	7%(1)	13%(2)
Boating Occupation	47%( 7)	27%(4)	13% (2)	
Other Boating	20%(3)	20%(3)		
Occupation	80%(12)	47%(7)	27%(4)	
School	40%(6)	27%( 4)		7%(1)
Kin	13%(2)	7%(1)		7% (1)
Friends of Friends	7%(1)			
Childhood	13%(2)	7%(1)		
Prior Residence	13%(2)			
other	13%(2)	7%(1)		

other: other recreation, move from California

Table 7.3: Sources of the "Best" Friends of Live-aboards Not Employed in the Marine industry (N=23)

Source	Number of "Best" Friends			
	at least one	several(2-5)	almost all	all
Boating	74% (17)	48% (11)	22% (5)	4% (1)
Living-Aboard	48% (11)	30% (7)	4% (1)	
Boating occupation	4% (1)			
other Boating	61% (14)	39% (9)	9% (2)	
Occupation	61% (14)	57% (13)		
School	35% (8)	35% (8)		
Kin	13% (3)	9% (2)		
Friends o Friends	9% (2)	4% (1)		
Childhood	4% (1)			
Prior Residence	9% (2)	4% (1)		
Other	13% (3)	4% (1)		

Other: Women's therapy, church, soccer

Yacht clubs were also important. Fifty percent (n=19) of the liveaboards interviewed belonged to a yacht club. Rarely would one be active in more than one yacht club. Most organized social activity originated in these clubs, as well as most large-group activities. As noted earlier, these clubs tended to specialize. With this followed some specialization of social and other activities. This specialization could occur along the lines of "blue-water" cruising, formal or informal racing, more or less formal socializing, etc.

Friendships often formed in the workplace. Sometimes these would form among co-workers. However, there were also instances where friendships formed across firms, perhaps as a result of business contacts. One liveaboard who managed a sail loft considered all boating friends as business friends and vice versa. Friendships from the work-place tended to be between individuals, rather than having a sort of corporate existence, like a neighborhood or even a yacht club.

In addition to being settings where liveaboards might meet and form friendships, the dock, yacht club, and workplace were also places where friendships could develop between boaters. As liveaboards were also boaters, we might also expect to find a similar structure of liveaboard-boater friendships. This was the case.

Liveaboards rarely formed exclusive groups within a dock, yacht club, or work-place. Instead, gatherings in these settings would

typically consist of both liveaboards and other boaters. **There** was a greater tendency for liveaboards to develop friendships with other liveaboards. But, as we have seen, most circles of close friends consisted of both liveaboards and other boaters.

There were also a number of liveaboards who mentioned having no liveboard friends. Almost forty per cent the liveaboards, in fact, had no "best" friends living aboard (n=20). Three percent (n=1) of the interview sample had no liveboard friends at all. Interestingly, fifty percent (n=6) of the small (N=12) mailback questionnaire sample did not have a "best" friend living aboard. Certainly, many of these households had friends outside of boating and probably had other than "best" friends who lived aboard or boat. One person remarked on a mail-back questionnaire that he considered himself a recluse and had no close friends. Many liveaboards and marina operators mentioned a tendency towards seclusion among liveaboards. I expect most recluses would shy from this study. So perhaps there are others.

I do not doubt that a significant percentage (perhaps 20% as a guess) of the liveboard population falls outside this analysis. They may be recluses or find their friends outside of liveboard or boating groups.



## THE SOCIAL COMMUNITY

We have seen how members of the liveaboard group socialized outside the group along boating, occupational, and other lines. We have also noted a social organization within the liveaboard group (by neighborhood, yacht club, and workplace).

Did a social community exist around or within this social organization? Seventy-six per cent (n=29) of the households interviewed asserted that there was a "community". We must begin by asking how this "community" was defined.

The definition of this community varied. For some (n=2), the definition was not specific. For many (n=15), it was a marina, club, or small group of boating and liveaboard friends.

For others (n=12), this community consisted of an a priori camaraderie among people living on boats. One liveaboard, who had relatively few liveaboard and boating friends, described the liveaboards as a fraternity. If two liveaboards came together, even in some unrelated setting, there was an automatic rapport, friendship, and topics of conversation.

For still others (n=9), the community was similar in character to the one above, but included dedicated boaters not living aboard and

selected boat artisans. For this group, living aboard was often a way of becoming involved in this community (Chapter V— Residence). These descriptions of the social community are shown diagrammatically in Figure 7.2. Nine mentioned several of these communities.

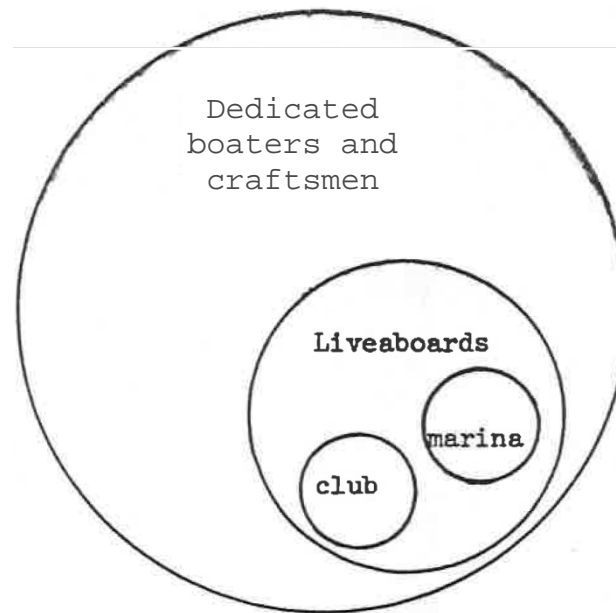
Is there a social community here? Yes, in that all these descriptions contain a notion of dedication to boating and living aboard as a central focus of the community. Dedicated boaters and boat artisans may not actually live aboard, but they are most likely to have lived aboard in the past or live aboard in the future. They already have much in common with the liveaboards.

There is a social community in that there is a tendency for social relations to exist among members of a certain group. This group and cultural focus of the boating lifestyle.

This suggests that our earlier expectation of a social community being entirely coincident with the liveaboard group is faulty. Rather, we have seen that this social community is formed of several groups, with the liveaboards being a central and important group.

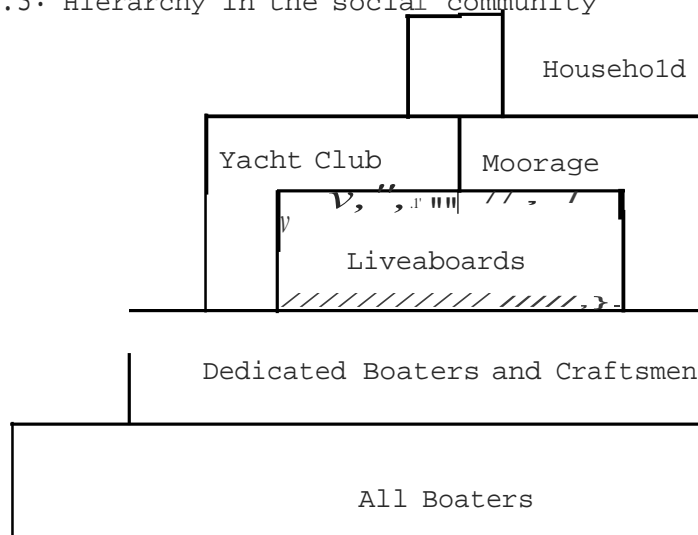
The idea of a hierarchy is also useful. This explains the variations in descriptions given as well as the consistent importance given to living aboard and boating. Such an hierarchy would resemble that shown in Figure 7.3. This hierarchy, aside from the personal

Figure 7.2: Liveboard descriptions of their social community



centrality of household members (spouse and children).has a cultural and functional centrality around boating and living aboard. At the highest levels, proximity is also important. Marinas and work-places have definite spatial limits. Yacht clubs tend to draw members from a limited region. The communities of comraderie among liveaboards, boaters, and the waterfront, however, have boundaries as large as the population and regions where this lifestyle and culture is found.(See Note 1)

Figure 7.3: Hierarchy in the social community<sup>4</sup>



The likelihood of friendship or social contact steadily decreases as one descends the hierarchy. A liveaboard *is* likely to know and be friends with a higher proportion of marina dwellers than liveaboards as a whole. He is more likely to know and befriend another liveaboard than a non-liveaboard that is a dedicated boater. And so on.

The inclusion of a group into the social community is therefore based on the probability of social relations between group members. This results from similarities in personal history, location, and culture as well as functionally defined relationships (work, market, kinship, etc.).

#### CONCLUSIONS

A social community of liveaboards was found to exist in Seattle. However, this community was of a somewhat different character than was expected. The community existed at several levels: the dock, the yacht club, those living aboard, dedicated boaters, and all boaters (see Figure 7.3). At each level members were more likely to become acquaintances and friends than at lower levels. Members at each level were also more likely to form friendships within the hierarchy than with outsiders. In part, this may be explained as an effect of proximity and frequency of contact (especially on the dock or at the yacht club). But a more underlying reason is the affinity between members of each group based on common interests and lifestyle. In this case, members of all these groups were boaters, liveaboards being among the most dedicated. The choice of boating as a recreation and interest was not out of a mere delight in the daily rediscovery of Archimedes' principle. A definite set of personal preferences was identified with this lifestyle (and thus indirectly with boating or a segment of boaters). These preferences were also given as reasons to move aboard

and sources of residential satisfaction (Chapters IV and V).

This community (or hierarchy of communities) was also not rigidly bounded, either internally or externally. Members of different levels of this hierarchy might well intermingle and become friends. But, it was more likely to find friendships develop internally along these hierarchical lines. Externally, occupational, kinship, school, other interests, and personal history usually resulted in liveaboards having friends who neither lived aboard nor were boaters. Typically, liveaboards had extensive friendships outside the community of boaters and liveaboards. Thus, the boundaries of the community are as barriers of variable permeability. Some (e.g., boaters) pass through more readily than others, but none are rigidly excluded.

This situation may be viewed as one of superimposed lifestyle, occupational, kinship, recreational, and personal history communities. This may mirror the functional complexity of urban life. Far from the divisive aspects of this complexity that were seen by Wirth (1938), these city dwellers were by no means socially isolated. The resulting concept of community, however, is far from a close-knit and insulated community in the romantic sense.

The geographic origins and conditions of this community are also of interest. Both the climate and the topography of Seattle are prerequisites for the formation of the liveaboard community described here. A colder climate or a topography lacking in plentiful in-city

moorage and access to Puget Sound would severely constrict the size of the liveaboard community. Physical geography explains the absence of a liveaboard community in Spokane. This same physical geography is a prerequisite to the formation of a widespread interest in boating which, in itself and as an expression of personal preferences, underlies both the decision to move aboard and the formation of liveaboard and boating social communities. Similarly, the structure of the city pushes liveaboards away from the downtown and heavily industrial districts. Had the shores of Lake Union and the Lake Washington Ship Canal become like the Duwamish River, living aboard might assume a different character.

Most liveaboards also live near residential areas north of Seattle's downtown. Their social and economic status is not unlike their neighbors ashore. However, this may be an artifact of both groups seeking areas of the city away from industry and yet accessible to employment and retail centers rather than liveaboards seeking to be near socially similar neighborhoods ashore.

Concentrations of liveaboards are also determined by the location of available moorage. Moorages avoid or are pushed from heavily industrial districts (Chapter VI). The social geography of the moorage and the liveaboard is largely responsible for the acceptance of liveaboards by moorage operators. The liveaboards' ability and inclination to treat the dock as a "defended" neighborhood provides security for other boats and the moorage (Newman 1973, Suttles 1972).

In exchange for this unpaid service, moorage operators accept some of the inconvenience of having residents at the moorage.

The decision to move aboard points up several interesting factors involved in residential choice. The role of lifestyle has already been mentioned in this section. There is no doubt that lifestyle and amenities were the underlying reasons for the move. As we have seen in Chapter V, there was little financial gain to be had by the move. Unfortunately, lifestyle and amenity are both vague and overlapping concepts. A boat may certainly be an amenity, but only because it is valued by a cultural background or way of life.

As we saw in Chapter III, liveaboards were overwhelmingly middle-class, college-educated, and white. This probably has much to do with the background of boaters in general, since liveaboards generally were active boaters long before moving aboard. This homogeneity may also result partially from the income level great enough to buy a boat, but not great enough to buy a house as well.

Finally, stage in the life-cycle was important in the decision to move aboard. Liveaboard households were typically singles or couples. Singles generally either thought of moving ashore after marriage or children or were somewhat older, having moved aboard after divorce or separation. Couples either had no children or moved aboard after the departure of children from the household. This was largely a result of the household's need for space. Couples require more space than



singles. Children require still more space. As we saw in Chapter as more space is needed, living aboard becomes increasingly disadvantageous financially. This may also be a result of the lifestyle emphasis of the household (Bell 1968). Children, for example, require substantial attention, leaving less time and energy to pursue boating. A divorce, on the other hand, allows the individual to pursue interests which might have conflicted with a partner. Thus, there is some reason to think that lifestyle factors are something of a function of stage in the life-cycle.

Conversely, adherence to a way of life or set of values affects the likelihood and time of marriage, birth and spacing of children, life after the departure of children, and probably the incidence and effects of divorce or separation.

This study bears out the importance of the three factors of the Social Area Analysis typology: stage in the life-cycle, ethnicity, and socio-economic status (Shevky and Bell 1955). However, the family status of the group was characterized, not by the predominance of households of one stage in the life-cycle, but by the absence of households in the child-bearing stage, other stages being present. Lifestyle must be added as another factor (Michelson 1970). The decision to move aboard and much of the group's internal cohesion resulted from an interest in boats and boating. Finally, the location and existence of this group was dependent on the structure and geography of the city (McKenzie 1925). Here, the climate, topography, and use of waterfront land were particularly important as necessary conditions for the formation of the community.

## Notes:

1-Eric Hiscock (a noted ocean sailor) describes a year spent living aboard in San Diego where three out of five close friends there were liveaboards. The other two were active boaters. These friends often socialized together, referring to themselves as "The Gang".(Hiscock 1973}

2-With the exception of a very few liveaboards which were not moored at marinas.

3-Similar hierarchies might be found for friends originating from other activities. This is easily seen in the case of kinship, with discretely different levels of familial responsibility for parents, siblings, cousins, second cousins, etc. Work-related and professional relationships could also be easily placed into this framework.

4-The workplace has been left out of this diagram for simplicity. It would be found at the same level and in the same form as yacht clubs and moorages.

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## APPENDIX A: Liveaboard Occupations

Professional and Managerial:

Accountant  
 Artist  
 Boat Shop Manager  
 City  
 CPA (2)  
 Counselor/Writer  
 Engineer (8)  
 Financial Services Sales  
 Landscape Architect  
 Law Librarian  
 Lawyer (4)  
 Manager, Health Care (2)  
 Manager (2)  
 Medical Photographer  
 Museum Staff  
 Nurse  
 Purchasing Agent  
 Real Estate Management Sail  
 Loft Manager Teacher (6)  
 Travel Agency Wholesaler  
 (2) TV Shop Manager

Artisan and SkilledOccupations:

Auto Mechanic (foreign cars)  
 Boat Repair (3)  
 Boat Repair and Delivery

Boat Mechanic  
 Bus Driver (2)  
 Data Processing  
 Fisherman  
 Heavy Equipment Operator  
 Legal Assistant  
 Legal Secretary (2)  
 Marine Sales  
 Medical Assistant (2)  
 Medical Technician Merchant  
 Seaman  
 Refrigeration Mechanic (2)  
 Welder

Clerical:

Boeing  
 Freight Company  
 Insurance Underwriter (3)  
 Juvenile court  
 Clerk  
 Sales (5)  
 Bank  
 Airline

Other:

Retired (4) Laborer  
 Homemaker

## APPENDIX B: In-Person Liveaboard Questionnaire

Liveaboard Survey (Interviewer Observations)

1) Designation: 1a) Source of Contact:

2) date: Location:

4) Mooring Type: slip mooring anchorage tie-up other:

5) Sail Power motor-Sail

6) Approx. Length (LOA)

7) Rig: sloop ketch yawl other:

8) Yacht Capabilities:

ocean cruising inland cruising inland racing ocean racing just dock

9) Character of Marina: sail power mixed

10) Marina size (number of slips):

11) Yacht maintenance/condition:

poor fair good excellent in-construction

12) Respondents:

age comments

1)

2)

3)

4)

13) plantings or other dock

modifications: a) plantings:

extensive some none b) other

modifications:

14) Misc. Comments:

## Boat Characteristics.

- 1) What is the boat's tonnage (net)?
- 2) What cooking facilities do you have? What fuel do you use?  
stove oven other: Fuel:
- 2a) How often do you cook on board (vs. restaurants)?
- 3) What refrigeration do you have?  
ice-box refrig(110V, 12V, 110&12V) freezer(110V 12V 110&12V)
- 4) Do you have a space heater of any sort?  
electric wood kerosene other:
- 5) How many berths does the boat have?
- 6) Do you have any special electronic equipment?  
radio(VHF SW) radar RDF other:
- 7) Do you have any equipment connected to shore?  
telephone sewer 110V-power(what appliances?) water other:

## Household Characteristics:

- 8) How many people live on the boat?
- 9) Are you: single couple family group of friends
- 10) Did you move onto the boat together? yes no
- 11) Can you tell me a little about the people who live on the boat?  
person age relationship education occupation.

1 -

2-

3-

4-

5-



## Residential Choice and Life on Board

In this section of the questionnaire, I'm interested in finding out about your impressions of living on a boat, your decision to live on a boat, and the origins of people living aboard in general.

12) Where did you live before moving onto the boat? For how long?

house condo apt. other-boat other:  
location:

13) Do you live on the boat year-round? What do you do in the Winter?  
(esp. heating, insulation, or changed habits)

f4) Where did you first get the idea to live on a boat?

f5) What made you decide to move onto a boat?

16) Did any other changes accompany your decision to move onto a boat?  
(such as a change *in* jobs or family)

17) What prior experience did you have with boats?

18) What, in particular do you like about living on a boat?

19) What do you dislike about it?

20). Is there anything you miss that you could have if you lived on land?

21) Do you think you will move back on land? Under what circumstances?

22) Where would you live if you couldn't live on a boat?

apt. condo house; city country suburbs, place:

23) Where do you anticipate moving next? In how long?

24) How would you describe life on a boat in Seattle?

24a) How does it differ from other places you have lived on a boat?

24b) Is there another marina in Seattle that you would prefer to live at? Which one? Why?

#### Social Networks:

In this section, I'm interested in how wide-ranging the social contacts of liveaboards extend and particularly whether liveaboards tend to socialize together or primarily with people living on land and the source of these contacts. Please excuse me if this section seems too personal and feel free not to answer any question. 25) On this piece of scrap paper, could you list the first names of your ten "best" friends. Going down the list, without giving me their names, for each person could you tell me a) if they live aboard, b) where you know them from, and c) their approx. residence?

Person Liveaboard? Where know from? Approx. Residence?

26)Can you think of any instances where other liveaboards have helped you with problems related to living on a boat? Circumstances?

27)Have you ever given such help to other liveaboards? Circumstances?

28)What different types of liveaboards are there? Can you describe each kind? What percent of all liveaboards belong to each group?

Activity Spaces and Use of the City:

In this section, I am primarily interested in how liveaboards live in a large city, such as Seattle.

29)How do you usually travel in the city?

foot bus car bicycle boat other:

30)Do you have a car here? yes no

31)In what parts of the city do those that live on the boat work? (person,where)

32)Where is most of your grocery shopping done?

33)Where else do you usually shop?

34)In what parts of the city do friends live?

a)liveaboards?

b)non-liveaboards?

35)What organizations are you active in?

36)Do you belong to a church? Where is it located?

37)Where do you children attend school?

38)What parts of the city do you regularly visit?

39)How often do you take the boat out on short trips? (day trips or short vacations)Where do you go on these trips?

Liveaboards, city agencies, and marinas:

In this section, I am interested in how government and marina policies affect liveaboards.

40) Are there any government regulations that you must comply with?

41) What do marina operators, in general, think about liveaboards?

42) Have marina operators ever helped you out with problems you have living aboard? Circumstances?

43) How long have you kept the boat here?

Non-Residential Uses of the Boat:

45) How often do you move the boat from the dock (mooring)?

46) Where do you usually take it?

47) Do you often take friends with you on short trips?

48) Are you planning any major trips? Details?

APPENDIX C: Mail Questionnaire

Please fold the completed questionnaire and place it in the enclosed stamped self-addressed envelope.

- 1) At which marina are you located?
- 2) How long have you lived on your boat?
- 3) Is your boat: sail power motor-sail (Please circle one.)
- 4) What is **the** boat's length (LOA)?
- 5) Do you have space heat of any sort?  
electric wood kerosene propane diesel other:
- 6) Do you have a telephone?
- 7) What appliances do you run off shore power (110V)?
- 8) How many people live on the boat?
- 9) Could you indicate each person's age, sex, occupation, and education?  
Person Education Occupation  
1  
2  
3  
4
- 10) What made **you** decide to move onto a boat?
- 11) Did you have any previous experience with boats? (please circle one)  
extensive some a little none
- 12) What, in particular, do you like about living on a boat?
- 13) What do you dislike about living on a boat?
- 14) Do you have any problem living on the boat in the winter?  
What kinds of problems?
- 15) Do you think you will move back on land?  
Under what circumstances?
- 16) How often do you take the boat out on short trips? (please circle one)  
3 times/month 2 times/month once/month less than once/month

- 17) Do many of your "best" friends live aboard? (circle one)  
all most some a few none
- 18) Do any of them live aboard at your marina? (circle one)  
all most some a few none
- 19) Do any of your "best" friends work with boats either for pleasure or as an occupation? (circle one)  
all most some a few none
- 20) How would you describe people who are liveaboards? Do they tend to be different types?
- 21) Are there any parts of the city that you regularly visit? What are they?
- 22) What do marina operators, in general, think about liveaboards?
- 23) Are you planning any major trips with the boat? Where to?
- 24) How would you describe life on a boat in Seattle?
- 25) Any special comments, things I should have asked about, things you'd like to add:

APPENDIX D: Marina Questionnaire

MARINA QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1) Position of Respondent: Moorage:
- 2) Does your marina have any special policy for liveaboards?  
For what reasons?
- 3) Does your marina provide any special services for liveaboards, such as mail boxes?
- 4) How many liveaboard yachts are at this marina?
- 5) Are there many different types of liveaboards? How would you describe them? What percentage of all liveaboards belong to each group? (Ask about seasonality.)
- 6) Does the marina have any special problems because of the presence of liveaboards?
- 7) Does the presence of liveaboards benefit the marina in any way?