

LIFE SATISFACTION AND ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE CHOICES:
CRUISING AS A LIFESTYLE PROCESS

By

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The purpose of my naturalistic inquiry was to investigate the meanings cruisers attach to their experiences on the ocean. Cruisers are people who have quit their jobs and traded in their land based life for a life afloat cruising on their own boat. For the purpose of this study a cruiser had to fulfill the following criteria: own his or her own boat, live on it, and have made at least one passage. Using an interpretive research paradigm, my study was guided by theories such as Flow, specialization theory, and self determination theory, and by symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework. Through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 25 cruisers, 14 themes and 18 sub themes emerged that describe the meanings cruisers ascribe to their lifestyle. The constant comparative method revealed that cruising most importantly meant freedom and independence from the work-centered, fast paced world of modern day societies. It meant being autonomous. Cruisers also described themselves as travelers who shared a deep attachment and respect for the ocean and nature in general. Choosing the cruising lifestyle furthermore meant being part of the cruising community, and sharing in its values. Cruisers were found to be high on social capital and share a tremendous sense of camaraderie and trust. Cruising was found to be a beneficial lifestyle that positively impacted overall life satisfaction, as well as psychological

and physical well being. A three phase grounded theory model of this lifestyle process was developed.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Boating is an activity that has grown tremendously in popularity over the last 20 years. With over 1260 miles of coastline, Florida offers bountiful boating opportunities. According to the Florida Marine Guide, there are over 700,000 registered boats in the state (www.floridamarineguide.com/floridaboating.asp). This is approximately one boat for every 17 inhabitants. Another 400,000 vessels visit the state annually. There are around 1250 marinas to serve these recreationists. Together, these marinas and boaters have a tremendous impact on the economy. According to the Marine Industries Association, boating in Florida is an \$18.4 billion industry.

Furthermore, boats belong to the attraction of Florida as a tourism destination. The view of a sailboat on the ocean is just as much a part of the vacation as the sun and beach. Marinas and other boating related service facilities also attract non-boating visitors. However, increased levels of boating related activities and coastal development associated with it can have a degrading effect on the fragile marine environment. The positive economic impact of boating brings with it negative impacts on the marine waterways, estuaries and bays. Coastal counties are faced with the challenge of balancing growth in boating with conservation of the marine environment. An increased understanding of boater attitudes and motivation would help resource managers make better decisions about access, public safety, development and the environment. Furthermore, this understanding could help boating manufacturers and marketers as well as other stakeholders in the marine industry such as marinas.

Cruisers are a vital part of the boating industry. However they are special in the sense that boating for them is not just a recreational activity that is engaged in on weekends and days off, but rather a lifestyle. Cruisers have made a conscious decision to quit their land based life in an

effort to lead a more satisfying life. They live aboard full time and are constantly on the move. They oftentimes have no intentions of ever returning to their old jobs. From that perspective this study aims at investigating human satisfaction. What makes this alternative lifestyle so satisfying and rewarding? What benefits do cruisers receive from this lifestyle?

This naturalistic inquiry used an interpretive research paradigm applying symbolic interactionism and grounded theory as a guiding theoretical framework in an effort to better understand boater attitudes and experiences. The following section will explain the problem statement in more detail. Chapter three will take a closer look at the theoretical framework and methodologies.

Statement of the Problem

This study explores the subjective experiences of boaters on the ocean. While these experiences are autotelic, worthwhile in themselves, they bring with them a series of benefits (MacBeth, 1989). Applying specialization theory, this study compared and contrasted these autotelic experiences of ocean motorboaters and sailors. Only a few researchers have studied ocean sailors (Macbeth, 1989; Jennings, 2000) academically. These studies have shown that sailors are part of a subculture. They form a community. No such data are available for powerboaters. Are they part of a subculture? Furthermore, these studies have shown that sailing allows them to experience flow. Flow experiences, in turn, have been linked to positive affect and increased life satisfaction and well being (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). However, no study to date has compared the different nature of boating experiences based on the type of boat.

Studying the different experiences and attitudes of powerboaters and sailors allowed for a direct comparison of the different effects these experiences have on lifestyle and life. Consequently, different experiences might lead to different benefits gained from engaging in the experiences. For example, one type of boating might allow for more flow experiences. From that

point of view, knowing how and where powerboaters and sailors might have contrasting experiences can help link these different experiences to potentially changed outcomes or benefits in their lives.

Specialization theory explains participation in certain types of boating with a progression of skills and knowledge about the activity. However, some studies to date have shown that boating in particular might not follow this linear progression of activity involvement. Instead, some studies suggest that initiation through family members determines boating participation (Aversa, 1986; National Marine Manufacturers Association, 1996). These studies have also shown that males and females differ in the way they were introduced to boating, with males being initiated by their fathers in early childhood, while females are more likely to be initiated as adults by their husband (NMMA, 1996). As such, gender was taken into consideration in this study.

In the United States, recreational boaters boat an average of 17 days out of the year for more than five hours each. Boating, and boat ownership overall, have steadily increased over the past years (NMAA, 2000). Interestingly enough, sailing is the only form of boating that has declined over the years. For example, the purchasing of sailing boats has declined from 51 thousand units in 1970 to slightly more than 19 thousand units in 1998 (NMMA, 2000). Recent studies also report that motor boating is the most popular form of boating. The trend has moved to purchasing larger boats with inboard motors (NMMA, 1996). A Responsive Management survey for example points out, that 85% of all boating is done on motorboats.

This trend away from sailboats towards larger motorboats is interesting. What are the factors behind this trend? What is going on in society that caused this shift? Are motorboats and the kinds of experiences they offer more in line with the expectations and motivations of our

current society? Are there different benefits associated with these two types of boating? This study attempted to fill in some of the missing data on the different types of boaters, namely power boaters and sailors. As such, an aim of this study was to fill the gap of adequate data on power boaters and hence shed some light on this trend away from sailboats to powerboats.

This study used specialization theory (Bryan, 1979) as a framework to differentiate types of boaters. As such, Donnelly, Vaske, and Graefe (1986) explain that there are two types of boaters: sail boaters and motor boaters. Within each of these two categories boaters move along a continuum of specialization: from day boaters to cruisers to racers. Using this framework, I compared motor boaters and sailors in an effort to uncover the differences in experiences and benefits these two types of boating offer. Several studies have looked at the experiences of cruisers. However, all of these studies have focused on cruisers on sailboats. To date, there has not been any study comparing these two types of boating.

This study furthermore investigated cruisers' relation with the marine environment in an effort to enhance understanding of their environmental attitudes and behaviors. What does the marine environment, the ocean and nature in general mean to them? Are cruisers impacting it? Are they ambassadors for the environment?

In summary, this study hopefully has both, practical, as well as theoretical implications. Through semi-structured in depth interviews and participant observation, this study aims at increasing knowledge of cruisers on motorboats as well as sailboats. It is my goal to write up results that are practical and will be easy to understand and apply by resource managers. From a theoretical point of view this study increases knowledge of specialization theory as well as bridge the gap that exists in literature between cruiser on sailboats and cruisers on motorboats. It seems plausible that there should be differences between these two types of cruisers. Both groups

of cruisers have made a deliberate decision to separate for more or less time from society. Are the experiences they seek and the benefits they receive from boating different? As such another goal of this study is to uncover the outcomes cruising has on the overall life satisfaction and well being of these recreationists. The following section explains the purpose of this investigation more closely.

Purpose of the Study

At the most fundamental level this study is based on the belief that we can learn from people who “have gotten it right,” as Mac Beth 1985 termed it. People who have made a conscious decision to separate from mainstream society in an effort to lead a more satisfying life. People who chose to live a self determined, intrinsically rewarding life within the subcultures of ocean cruisers, forming their own communities. Studying the experiences of these cruisers hopefully makes a contribution to better understand human society in general and human satisfaction in particular.

In that sense, this study is informed by positive psychology. Positive psychology was developed as a discipline to offset the emphasis on dysfunction and “ill” that traditional sociology and psychology shared.

The purpose of this study was to give power boaters and sailors a voice to describe the meanings they attach to their experiences on the ocean. Using concepts such as specialization theory, flow, subcultures and psychological constructs such as motivations, attitudes and benefits as a theoretical framework, this study aims at uncovering the differences in ocean experiences, personality, and lifestyle between power cruisers and sail cruisers. Identifying where exactly these differences are might help explain why sailing as a form of boating is declining while power boating as a leisure activity is persistently becoming more popular, as can be witnessed by the number of powerboats purchased and the number of people power boating.

Furthermore, this study took a closer look at specialization theory in boating in an effort to reveal if Bryan's model can be applied or if boating indeed is a special case of specialization through initiation as suggested by Aversa (1986). Previous literature has identified gender as a factor influencing the type of initiation into the activity (NMMA, 2000), as well as attitudes towards the experience of cruising (Jennings, 1999). In this study, gender differences of both power boaters and sailors who cruise will hence be examined. Lastly, this study looked at factors within the ocean experience that contribute to life satisfaction and general well being.

Research Questions

Based on the purpose statement above, the following research questions have been developed:

- **Boating Experience:** How do power cruisers and sail cruisers experience boating on the ocean? What are their motivations for boating? What is their relation with the marine environment? Environmental attitudes? Do they experience flow? What benefits do they receive from boating?
- **Specialization:** Are there multiple ways of entry into the sailing subculture, as Aversa (1986) suggested? If so, do they lead to different specializations based on those experiences? Are there gender differences? Are sailors more specialized than motor boaters as suggested by Donnelly (1986)?
- **Personality/Community/Lifestyle:** Are there antecedent or personality differences between sailors and power boaters? Are power boaters part of a subculture such as that of sailing ocean cruisers? Do they form a community as has been found in sailors? Does the boating experience add to their general well being and life satisfaction?

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter summarizes relevant literature supporting the problem statement of this study. Since specialization theory will be used as a framework to categorize boaters and help guide which group of boaters was looked at, this chapter begins with an overview of specialization literature in general, and boating in particular. Recent studies focusing on sailing ocean cruisers and studies on boating in general were also examined. Since boating can be looked at as a particular opportunity for leisure, a brief summary of literature on leisure was included. Lastly, psychological concepts used in this study such as flow, motivations and benefits were summarized.

Specialization

Bryan (1977/1979) proposed that participation in any given leisure activity falls along “a continuum of behavior from the general to the particular.” Bryan believed that, within an activity, distinct classes of participants exhibit certain behaviors and involvement styles. Involvement style is reflected by factors such as equipment used, skill level, management preferences, setting preferences, attachment to the activity and the social context (Bryan, 1977). As individuals progress along the continuum of specialization from novice to expert, the activity becomes more and more central to their lifestyle, becoming a source of personal pride, self worth and self integration (Kuentzel & Heberlein, 1997). It starts dictating behavior outside of the activity.

My study compared the different experiences of cruisers on sailboats and cruisers on powerboats. The term “cruisers” as used in this study is defined in chapter three. Because cruisers are highly specialized, it is believed that boating is a lifestyle for them and as such dictates behavior outside the activity. Scott and Shafer (2001) summarized literature showing

that, as individuals progress to be experts in the activity they become immersed in the leisure social worlds associated with that activity. Engaging in these leisure social worlds, according to the authors, is a form of personal commitment. The recreationists become dedicated to the values and norms of the social world. This could be important because the different experiences powerboaters and sailors have on the water might have very different effects on their everyday life as well.

Since Bryan's original conceptualization, several authors have studied recreation specialization. Most of these studies have focused on outdoor recreation activities such as: rock climbing (Ewert & Hollenhorst, 1994), fishing (Ditton, Loomis, & Choi, 1992), camping (McIntyre, 1989), canoeing and other whitewater activities (Wellman et al., 1982, Kuentzel & MacDonald, 1992). One defining element of recreation specialization is, as mentioned before, a linear progression on a continuum from novice to expert and the general to the specific.

Scott and Shafer (2001) argued that progression can be understood in terms of a focusing of the activity, acquiring of skills and knowledge and a tendency to become committed to the activity. The authors suggest that a focusing of behavior means "the tendency for individuals to intensely participate in one leisure activity at the expense of others" (p.8). Behavior according to these authors is focused in a way that does not leave time or resources to participate in other activities. Furthermore, the authors state that skill development is "conceptually distinct from past experience" (p.10). Some boaters might have the skills necessary to become cruisers, but unless they have sufficient experience out on the sea they are not cruisers. Keeping this important difference in mind this study focused on past experience of boating while also taking skills into consideration.

Studies most generally used an additive index to adequately predict specialization. However, a study by Todd , Graefe, and Mann (2001) suggested that a self selected single variable “level of development” adequately predicts actual level of development in an activity such as scuba diving. Todd et al used this single item variable and compared it with an additive index. Combining aspects of serious leisure with specialization theory, the authors suggested that a self selected single variable might be an adequate predictor of past experience, skill, and participation, as well as commitment to the activity and equipment owned.

The original model of specialization included a concept called “leisure social worlds”, based on Unruh’s 1979 work. These reference groups of recreationists share the same level of specialization. The original concept refined by Unruh defined social world as:” an internally recognizable constellation of actors, organizations, events and practices, which have coalesced into a sphere of interest and involvement for participants.” Unruh argued that individuals may participate in several social worlds to varying degrees. The author further noted that several sub worlds exist in each social world. He differentiated between insiders, who identify strongly with the social world and “strangers” who limit the extend they get involved in the particular social world, with tourists and regulars being somewhere in the middle. Scott and Godbey (1994) studied bridge players and suggested that there are two leisure social worlds: serious bridge and social bridge. The authors further noted that bridge players readily self identified themselves as either a serious or a social player.

Leisure social worlds help define the norms of behavior, meanings, and preferences of the activity (Manning, 1999). Within these leisure worlds, communication can be informal or formal as in the form of equipment catalogs or specialty magazines. Manning states that individuals move along the continuum of specialization also partly because they assimilate with the

“specialized world view outlined by leisure social worlds” (p. 230). If indeed cruisers are highly specialized in the activity of boating, they should be members of a particular leisure social world, as witnessed by the forming of community. As stated before, some studies indeed have concluded that sailors are part of a subculture (Jennings, 1999; MacBeth, 1986).

Based on the concept of leisure social worlds, Ditton et al. (1992) developed a series of eight propositions in an effort to elaborate on specialization. They were summarized by Manning (1999) as follows:

- Persons participating in a given recreation activity are more likely to become more specialized in that activity over time.
- As level of specialization increases: the value of side benefits will likely increase.
- As level of specialization increases, the centrality of that activity in a person’s life will likely increase.
- As level of specialization increases, acceptance and support for the rules, norms, and procedures associated with the activity will likely increase.
- As level of specialization increases, the importance attached to the equipment and the skillful use of it will likely increase.
- As level of specialization increases, dependency on a specific resource will likely increase.
- As level of specialization increases, level of mediated interaction relative to that activity will likely increase.
- As level of specialization increases, the importance of activity-specific elements of the experience will decrease relative to non-activity –specific elements of the experience.

Several studies have found support for these propositions. As an example within the sailing literature, MacBeth (1985) found that cruisers are more specialized than day sailors and by taking on the norms, rules and procedures of cruising, they form community, belonging to a subculture.

As individuals become more specialized, they also show certain setting preferences. This relationship with the natural environment has been termed sense of place or place attachment.

Place attachment has been studied using two dimensions: place identity and place dependence (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000).

Bricker and Kerstetter suggest that studying these emotional ties of individuals to their surroundings can give researchers an insight into the meaning they attach to outdoor settings. The authors concluded that lifestyle, besides the two “classical” dimensions of place identity and place dependence was also an important dimension. They further concluded that recreation specialization overall is not a good predictor of place attachment. They found that the dimension of centrality to lifestyle was positively related with place attachment, while skill level was negatively related (lower skill level was associated with more place attachment). If cruising indeed is a lifestyle, giving cruisers the opportunity to form community in their own subculture, then cruisers should show some sort of place attachment to the ocean, as argued by Bricker and Kerstetter. As such, I studied the meanings cruisers attach to the ocean and marine environment.

Boating Specialization

Donnelly, Vaske, and Graefe, (1986) were some of the first to study recreation specialization of boaters. They distinguished between sail and power boaters. Within each category, these authors distinguished between different sub categories such as day boaters, cruisers and racers, with racers being the most specialized. They found that the more specialized a boater is the smaller the range of specialization. Degree of specialization places a boater in an activity along a continuum from day boaters to cruisers and lastly racers. Donnelly et al define range of specialization as:” the length of the specialization continuum or in other words the distance between the lowest and highest categories of individuals” (p.83). Furthermore, the authors noted that, in general, sailors seemed to be more specialized than power boaters.

Cottrell, Confer, and Graefe (2004) used Donnelly et al’s model to study boater specialization for boaters on the Chesapeake Bay. They used an additive index to measure range

and degree of specialization, so each person could have an individual specialization score. The additive index consisted of items such as participation, equipment, skill level, or related interests. Agreeing with Donnelly et al., they found day sailors and day motor boaters showed the lowest degree of specialization, while sail racers showed the highest degree of specialization.

Disagreeing with Bryan's (1977) linear model of recreation specialization, Aversa (1986) argued that sailors enter the activity in different ways, depending on their social status. Some sailors will enter the activity through sailing schools, while others enter through yacht clubs (white collar) or boat shows (blue collar). He argued that based on the type of entry, sailors develop certain sailing preferences and distinct expressions of sailing specialization. According to Aversa's model, sailing specialization does not depend as much on level of development from novice to expert but more on social status and mode of entry into the activity.

Kuentzel and Heberlein (1997) set out to compare Bryan's linear model of sailing specialization suggesting a continuum of development from novice to expert with Aversa's social status model of sailing specialization. The authors collected data from sailors on the Apostle Islands National Seashore in Wisconsin. They found no support for Aversa's model. Instead, findings provided evidence for Bryan's 1979 model suggesting that different styles of sailing participation were aligned along a developmental continuum. More specifically the authors stated: "data showed a singular trajectory or progression from novice to expert" (p.318).

Sailing/Cruising Studies

Macbeth (1985) studied long term ocean cruisers and found substantial evidence that they formed a subculture. He was the first to academically study the cruising lifestyle and drew on various sociological theories such as subcultures and deviance. He furthermore used psychological theories of satisfaction, autotelic reward and enjoyment. He concluded that: "cruisers, as cultural 'heroes', can be seen as affirmative deviants. That is to say, given an

humanistic and western individualistic value system their deviance can be seen as contributing to their individual health and growth, and to positive social evolution” (p.1).

Jennings (1999) built on Macbeth’s assumptions and studied self defined cruisers who have adopted and chosen a cruising lifestyle. She investigated the experiences of female and male cruisers. Using feminist methodology she was particularly interested why men and women move from “the center to the margins of everyday life” (p.1). She found that cruisers were motivated by a need to escape the pressures and constraints of their home society as well as to pursue a lifestyle which offered freedom and a sense of personal control, a need to add some adventure or challenge to their lives, or to fulfill a dream. They were also motivated by relationship commitments and a desire to travel and experience new cultures, people and settings.

Boating Satisfaction and Outcomes

According to Mannell (1999), leisure satisfaction can be motivation or evaluation based. If leisure researchers conceptualize satisfaction as closely tied to motivation, a recreationist is said to be satisfied if he or she meets certain needs. Evaluation based satisfaction on the other hand refers to the quality of the experience. Mannell calls this type of satisfaction appraisal-satisfaction. Turner and Fluker (2000) on the other hand, measured satisfaction of a whitewater rafting experience based on the degree expectations had been met. Utilizing a confirmation/disconfirmation framework, they concluded that rafters were generally very satisfied with the experience, and few differences existed between rafters with and without prior experience.

Considering motivation and evaluation based satisfaction, cruisers would be satisfied with their lifestyle if a) they met certain needs (motivation based), or b) they rated the quality of the experience as high. Because of the self-determined nature of cruising (Jennings, 1999; MacBeth,

1985), a motivation based approach to measuring satisfaction seemed more suitable for this study. Indeed, recent studies suggest that boating satisfaction comes more from the ability to be with friends and family and be outdoors. In fact, several studies have shown that naturalistic experiences and social factors are key benefits of boating (Beard & Ragheb, 1983; McMullen et al., 2000; Responsive Management, 2000).

A benefit associated with certain leisure experiences can be defined as either an improved condition, the prevention of a worse condition, or a specific psychological experience (Driver & Bruns, 1999). Benefits can be measured on an individual level (such as better mental health, spiritual growth, or nature appreciation), the social cultural level (i.e. community satisfaction, social mobility, cultural identity), the economic level (increased productivity) and lastly benefits to the environment can be studied (i.e. preservation). Since the benefits approach to leisure has been introduced, several researchers have studied the benefits associated with certain activities. Driver, Brown and Peterson (1991) offered a good overview of literature on the benefits of leisure.

In this study, benefits to the individual were measured in an effort to evaluate the overall impact cruising has on the well being of the cruiser. Flow, as a specific psychological experience, in particular has been shown to lead to several lasting benefits.

Flow

Csikszentmihalyi (1975) argued that optimal experience is the ‘bottom line’ of existence. But what are optimal experiences? According to Mannell and Kleiber (1997), optimal experiences are “states of high psychological involvement or absorption in activities or settings” (p.87). Flow theory suggests that humans have optimal experiences when challenges and skills are equal. It is differentiated from boredom and anxiety. Boredom is characterized by a state of being when there is less to do than “what one is capable of,” while anxiety occurs when the

challenges present outweigh the skills at hand. Flow, as a state of consciousness, is characterized by a merging of action and awareness, a state of being totally involved in what one is doing, a state when conscious processes are ordered. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) described seven characteristics of a flow experience: clear goals, immediate feedback, intense concentration, a sense of control, a loss of self consciousness, the merging of action and awareness, and transformation of time. Early studies of flow used the experiential sampling method (ESM) to study what people do in their everyday lives and the psychological states associated with these activities. In these studies, participants carried beepers, and each time the beeper emitted a signal, respondents were asked to complete a short questionnaire (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1985). Studies have shown that flow is most often experienced while working, that flow is the best predictor of a person's level of activation (i.e. how active, alert and strong he or she feels), that levels of perceived skills and challenges can be adequately measured in everyday life, and that flow (or the ratio between challenges and skills) is highly related to the quality of life (Csikszentmihalyi 1975; Csikszentmihalyi & Graef, 1980; Csikszentmihalyi & Kubey, 1981).

The fact that more people report experiencing flow during work activities than leisure could be explained by the fact that most people engage in passive leisure activities. Mannell (1993) noted, for example, that older adults experienced flow most often in activities that were extrinsically motivated. A closer look however revealed that these extrinsically motivated activities were also more demanding compared to the passive pure leisure activities. He also concluded that for these older adults, more flow experiences led to increased life satisfaction. Other studies have found further evidence that flow correlates positively with mental health (Haworth, 1993,1995; Clarke & Haworth, 1994).

Flow activities are autotelic (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Since sailing, and to a somewhat lesser extent power boating, are demanding, non- passive and autotelic leisure experiences they should offer above average opportunities to experience flow. And if indeed sailors and power boaters experience flow to a greater extent in life than people who engage in less demanding leisure activities, then one of the benefits of boating should be the associated increase in life satisfaction, psychological well being or mental health.

Intrinsic motivation is another characteristic of leisure experiences that correlates positively with psychological health (Iso-Ahola, 1980). Seeking and escaping are the two fundamental motivational dimensions of leisure (Iso-Ahola, 1989). According to Iso-Ahola, people are either motivated by the desire to escape everyday life or by a desire to seek interpersonal and personal rewards. Research has found that people who are fundamentally motivated by the seeking dimension are healthier than people who are escapists in leisure (Iso-Ahola, 1994). Since cruising is self-determined and freely engaged in, it can be argued that cruisers are intrinsically motivated to cruise.

Macbeth (1985) was one of the first researchers to describe flow experiences of ocean cruisers. Using the flow model to explain why sailors participate in the cruising lifestyle, he suggested that cruising is autotelic, rewarding in and of itself, with few extrinsic rewards. More specifically he stated " The process is intellectually, emotionally and physically challenging, it requires constant problem solving; it is freely engaged in; there is a sense of personal control; and there are no extrinsic rewards of consequence"(p. 253). In his study, he compared autotelic scores of cruisers to racers and participants in an earlier study by Csikszentmihalyi, and found that cruisers had a higher autotelic score than racers and participants in Csikszentmihalyi's study. Going through the seven defining characteristics of a flow experience mentioned above,

MacBeth provided examples of how cruising offers opportunities for flow. As an example, he describes the merging of action and awareness while passage making at night or a sense of control cruisers feel through the lifestyle apart from society and human laws.

I view leisure as the overarching umbrella, with specialization as a specific leisure theory, and cruising as an area of study within the field. Leisure studies as a field is interested in the study of life satisfaction and human potential. In my opinion this is also where positive psychology and leisure meet. The next section briefly summarizes and defines leisure.

Leisure

Throughout time, leisure has been defined as time (Veblen, 1899), an activity (Dumazedier) and more recently as experience (Neulinger, 1979), or state of mind (Iso-Ahola, 1980). Veblen defined leisure as “nonproductive consumption of time,” deGrazia (1962) defined leisure as a condition of men, “which few desire and fewer achieve” (p.8). Leisure, in that sense, is experienced within oneself and not dependant on specific times or activities.

Neulinger viewed leisure in terms of intrinsic motivation and perceived freedom. Hence, a person is at leisure when he or she freely chose to do it and is doing the activity for its own sake. Intrinsic motivation is often contrasted with extrinsic motivation, which refers to activities done to achieve some kind of outcome or benefit. Neulinger proposed a paradigm with the dimensions of motivation (ranging from purely extrinsic to purely intrinsic) and perceived freedom (ranging from no freedom to complete freedom of choice.) Work and leisure can be placed on a spectrum differing in the dimensions of perceived freedom and intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. A pure job is characterized by no freedom and intrinsic motivation while pure leisure is defined by perceived freedom and intrinsic motivation. Iso-Ahola (1980) agreed with Neulinger in stating that perceived freedom and intrinsic motivation are central defining elements of leisure. He further suggested that leisure is defined by perceived competence and positive affect.

Leisure, as viewed by Pieper (1967), is a condition of the soul- a state of being in harmony with the world around us. In that sense, sailing and powerboating are specific activities that may offer the opportunity to experience leisure. Hence, boaters who are intrinsically motivated, and feel a sense of perceived freedom, experience leisure while boating.

The Greeks spent the most time thinking about leisure. Plato viewed leisure as the highest form of being. Through his writings, we know that he saw the world that we live in as a mere shadow existence of the true world of ideas and forms. As human beings, it was/is our highest calling to try to understand this world of forms and ideas. This understanding could only come from contemplation, or leisure by a select few. Workers were needed to ensure the existence of a few that could spend their lives contemplating.

Aristotle, one of Plato's students, did not see the world as only a shadow of the true world of forms and ideas. He saw the world as a divinely ordered hierarchy where every living form has its own calling according to its existence. The gods were the highest being in this universe. Aristotle pictures them just playing and contemplating all day. As human beings, we are given a mind and hence are high up on this "hierarchy of life," close to the gods. In fact, through contemplation we can get even closer to them. Aristotle also acknowledged that this contemplative life needed workers who would sustain the existence of these few philosophers. The Greek word for leisure was *scholē*, which literally means freedom from the necessity of labor. Aristotle opposed this leisure with *ascholia*, basically meaning not free from the necessity to work, or maybe as Pieper would view it being bound to the process of work.

From this point of view, boating would be seen as leisure, if it offers opportunities for contemplation. And indeed, Jennings (1999) gives voice to one cruiser who uses passages to:" search for the meaning of life. You do that on night watches. You think a lot about, not just your

life, but what it's all about" (p.197). Overall passages, like other parts of the cruising lifestyle are not always easy. Seasickness and boredom can make long voyages quite unpleasant. In this study I attempted to uncover why cruisers embark on these voyages despite the lack of comfort mentioned above. In the following section I summarized some of the motivation literature that might be of relevance in explaining why people cruise.

Motivation

Motivational theories attempt to explain why some people engage in certain behaviors. Motivation is seen as a psychological mechanism governing the direction, intensity and persistence of behavior (Kanfer, 1990). Direction refers to which of the many goals a person is willing to pursue, intensity to how strongly the person is pursuing the goal and persistence to how long the person is willing to pursue his or her goals.

Motivation is believed to stem from the desire to fulfill certain needs. Human beings are said to be in a constant struggle to stay in a state of homeostasis. While physiological needs refer to a homeostatic imbalance leisure needs are psychological motives (Iso- Ahola, 1980).

Murray, (1938) tried to identify the whole spectrum of human needs and came up with 40 different ones in his manifest need theory. Maslow (1954) on the other hand only described a hierarchy of five basic human needs. At the lowest level are physiological needs followed by safety needs, belonging needs, esteem needs and at the top the need for self actualization. Leisure is seen as very important when trying to meet the needs of belonging, esteem and self actualization, but is virtually not at all important, if physiological or safety needs have not been met. Although Maslow's hierarchy of needs is very useful and used widely, there is no empirical evidence that needs exist in such a hierarchy. It has been found that higher level needs can be achieved even when lower level needs are largely unsatisfied (Witt & Wright, 1992). From this perspective cruisers pursue this lifestyle because they are motivated by a desire to fulfill the need

of self esteem, self actualization or belonging. Indeed, Macbeth (1985) found evidence that “cruisers are concerned that full human potential be possible within mainstream human society.”

The field of tourism and leisure studies has developed certain frameworks, or theories that help explain why people participate in certain activities. Crompton (1979) suggested a model explaining participation in tourism using push and pull factors. Pull factors are destination related, while push factors are origin related. Using this framework, cruisers might be pushed to the cruising lifestyle by a desire to escape society, and being able to travel with no boundaries might pull them to do so.

Optimal arousal theory (Ellis, 1973) suggests that people purposefully seek out conditions of optimal arousal. They are in a constant effort to avoid situations that are under or over arousing. From this perspective; boaters would pursue a cruising lifestyle in an effort to find new challenges and adventures, allowing them to stay optimally aroused.

Community

In his book *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam (2000) argued that social capital is declining in modern day America. The author stated that “whereas physical capital refers physical objects, and human capital refers to properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (p.19). Putnam believed that generational changes, longer commutes and electronic entertainment are all contributing to this trend of less civic engagement and social connectedness. The author proposed that social capital is positively associated with mental and physical health, education levels and reduces crime. In other words, people receive a wide range of benefits from social ties. It could be argued that in building communities within the specific subculture, cruisers are creating social capital. In this study, the idea of community will be investigated.

The first researcher to ever systematically analyze social capital was Pierre Bourdieu (1985), who defined the concept as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (p. 248). Bourdieu was interested in social groups and social class, as well as patterns of power and inequality. He understood the importance of economic capital but argued for an expansion of the concept capital to include other forms of capital as well. Bourdieu suggested that when individuals participate in groups, they will receive certain benefits. He further argued that social relations are not naturally given, but rather something that should be strategically invested in for the purpose of receiving these benefits. As an example, social ties within a group might allow its members to access financial capital or information capital from other members. Social capital in that sense is not an individual property, but rather the collective possession of those connected through the social ties. According to Alejandro Portes (1998), Bourdieu's definition of social capital consisted of two main elements: the social relationships that allow individuals to access the resources of their associates, and secondly the resources themselves.

Coleman (1988) first analyzed the role of social capital in the formation of human capital. Coleman's definition of social capital was closely linked to Bourdieu. However, he included reciprocity expectations, group enforcement of norms, and the consequences of social capital in his analyses. Coleman studied public schools in the U.S. and demonstrated that supportive social networks, or social capital, positively affected high school graduation rates, hence creating increased human capital. Coleman (1990) believed that while social capital has certain benefits for individuals in the group, it also has public good characteristics, since the consequences extended beyond the primary actors to other members in the group. Coleman believed that the

benefits of social capital are possible because groups share mutually acknowledged obligations and expectations, which generate a trust that other members in the group will reciprocate an action. Secondly he suggested that social relations have information potential, meaning members have access to otherwise privileged information of other members. Through norms and sanctions of the group, members are encouraged to act for the collective good.

In this chapter, I summarized theoretical concepts used in this interpretive study. Specialization theory (Bryan, 1979) was summarized and will be a useful guiding framework. The concepts of flow and community have been identified by previous studies as important factors in the cruising lifestyle and thus have been introduced in this section. Flow and community have also been linked by previous research to mental health and overall psychological well being (Iso-Ahola, 1980). As such these two concepts might turn out to be valuable in explaining benefits associated with cruising. Benefits literature and theory has been briefly introduced, since this study will aim at identifying individual benefits to the cruiser. Finally leisure, as the overarching concept has been introduced.

CHAPTER 3 METHODS

This chapter summarized the methods and procedures used in this study. The chapter begins by describing the overall theoretical framework used: an interpretive research paradigm applying symbolic interactionism as a theoretical framework and grounded theory as a data analysis method. This section is followed by sampling methods, the data collection process, data analysis, and lastly trustworthiness.

It should be noted at the beginning of this chapter that while this study is producing qualitative data and is informed by theoretical perspectives from the qualitative research paradigm, it is not a “pure” qualitative study in its truest sense. A short literature review informed some themes pursued in the interviews. Symbolic interactionism is used as a theoretical framework not in its purest sense as a study of symbols, but rather as a way people make meaning of their environments.

Research Paradigm

Using a naturalistic approach, the experiences, benefits and motivations of sailor and powerboaters were investigated. Iso- Ahola (1980) argued that expressed leisure needs measured by standard inventories only reveal “the tip of the iceberg” when it comes to the reasons why people engage in certain activities. Using a naturalistic approach with semi-structured interviews which lead to qualitative data, might help to discover some of the 90% of the “hidden iceberg” of motivations for boating

Theoretical Framework

Naturalistic inquiry is interested in the lived experiences of people in their worlds. As such, I embarked on a journey to meet boaters in their world, talking to them about their experiences. I used an interpretive research paradigm applying grounded theory and symbolic

interactionism to guide me on this journey of interpreting the experiences of boaters on the ocean. This study is furthermore informed by theories taken from sociology, psychology, positive psychology, and recreation and leisure studies. The zoom model (Pamphilon, 1999) served as a useful framework to present data.

Crotty (1998) argued that interpretivism, as a theoretical perspective, is rooted in the thoughts of Max Weber. Weber (1922) believed that, in the human sciences, a researcher should be concerned with what he termed: "verstehen." He contrasted verstehen (understanding) in the social sciences with "erklären" in the natural sciences. Erklären (explaining) is concerned with establishing causality. Crotty argued that historically there have been three main approaches to the interpretive research paradigm: hermeneutics, phenomenology, and symbolic interactionism.

Positive Psychology

Positive Psychology as a discipline is largely based on the work of Seligman (1999) who explained why he founded it this way " The most important thing, the most general thing I learned, was that psychology was half-baked, literally half-baked. We had baked the part about mental illness; we had baked the part about repair of damage...The other side's unbaked, the side of strength, the side of what we're good at." Positive psychology then is the scientific process of studying human strength and virtues as well as optimal functioning. Because of this focus it was used to inform this study.

Zoom Model

The zoom model (Pamphilon, 1999) draws on multiple disciplines in an effort to end up with a transdisciplinary synthesis. It is used as a methodology to acknowledge and maximize multiple perspectives within any one life history. The zoom model encourages the investigator to interpret data on four levels: the macro, the meso, the micro, and the interactional. The macro

level focuses on the sociocultural collective dimension. It investigates what a specific history reveals about culturally specific processes.

The meso-zoom focuses on the individual. The interpreter looks at themes the research participant has constructed during the interviewing process. The micro-zoom level focuses on the oral dimensions of the textual data. Pamphilon (1999) argued that a lot of complexity and emotionality of the told story can get lost when transcribing it to a textual form. Taking the oral dimensions into account will add depth to the interviewee's words. Lastly, the interactional-zoom invites the researchers to acknowledge their place in the research process. The write up of this dissertation was the result of an interaction between the research participants and me as the researcher. As the interpreter of the data, I had an influence on which parts of the narratives I wanted to highlight or elicit.

Symbolic Interactionism

In order to truly understand (*verstehen*), the meanings boaters attach to their experiences, I used symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective. Symbolic interactionism is based on the thoughts of social psychologist Herbert Mead. However, it was not until after his death that one of his students, Herbert Blumer (a sociologist) put these to paper. Symbolic interactionism is grounded in both sociology and social psychology and has three main premises:

- “that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that these things have for them,”
- “that the meaning of such things is derived from and arises out of the social interaction that one has with one's fellows’,”
- “that these meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters (Blumer, 1969)”

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that, in naturalistic inquiry, knowledge is cocreated by the researcher and the study participant. The human is an instrument. Lincoln and Guba listed

several advantages for the “human as instrument” approach such as responsiveness, adaptability or a holistic emphasis. They suggested that” the world of any phenomenon and its surrounding context are ‘all of a piece,’ and the human instrument is the only one available capable of grasping all the buzzing confusion in one view” (p. 193). The researcher is not an objective distant observer, but rather influences the creation of knowledge. Symbolic interactionism further served as a theoretical framework for grounded theory in the sense that all phenomena are subject to change (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Grounded theory accepts this reality and builds change through process into the method. The following section takes a closer look at grounded theory.

Grounded Theory

The constant comparison method of the grounded theory approach was used in this study to analyze the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory lets theory emerge from the data, in other words, the theory is grounded in the data. It explains as well as describes (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Glaser and Strauss suggested several “steps” to take in the data analysis process that will guarantee a good (meaning “well-suited”) theory. I transcribed the taped interviews into written data, leaving ample space on each side of the text for memos and codes. I then commenced the coding process using the constant comparative method. Glaser and Strauss proposed a three fold coding process consisting of: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Through open coding, the researcher identifies, labels, and names different phenomena through carefully reading the textual data over and over. Step two in this process is known as axial coding and refers to the process of relating the different codes or categories to each other. Selective coding is the final step in the process of creating a theory. The researcher selects one core category (or theme) and describes how all phenomena and categories are related. As the researcher codes the different cases, it is vital that he or she engages in what Glaser and Strauss

termed constant comparison. The different categories are constantly compared with each other, the emerging themes and theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data for grounded theory can come from various sources besides interviews. Corbin and Strauss (1990) for example stated that books, newspapers, videos, or government documents are all valid sources of data. As such, memos were also used as vital sources of data in this process. Memos include any kind of short note to me as the researcher, such as observations while I was interviewing, a thought that I have while coding about how themes are connected, and the like. Other forms of data came from e mail conversations between the cruisers and me. Eileen Quinn exchanged several lengthy e mails with me as well. She is a cruiser and a song writer and as such a well known and respected figure within the cruising community. Cruising logs on the internet and personal websites also provided useful data.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggested that while grounded theory has not changed much in form since it was first developed, the method has evolved in practice and as a result, procedures have become more specific. Strauss and Corbin (1998) further built on the original grounded theory adding for example the concept of axial coding. More recently Charmaz (2006) developed a constructivist grounded theory. This study positions itself most closely related to Strauss and Corbin's (1998) approach to grounded theory.

Sample

Donnelly et al. (1986), as stated earlier, argued that boaters can be classified as either power boaters or sailors. Within these two groups boaters range on a continuum of specialization from day boaters, cruisers to racers. As mentioned earlier I focused my investigation of the cruisers on each category.

The sample consisted of 25 sail and power cruisers. Because of their lifestyle cruisers were not very accessible to a "landlubber" like me. To overcome that obstacle, I took several data

collection trips to marinas and anchorages where I could find cruisers. I interviewed cruisers in Melbourne Florida, the Vero Beach Municipal Marina, Boot Key Harbor in Marathon and in Georgetown, Bahamas. I furthermore engaged in maximum variation sampling, along with snowball sampling, both are non-probability sampling methods. As such I interviewed single-handed male cruisers and single-handed female cruisers. I talked with families and couples as well as long term cruisers and cruisers who were within their first couple of months of cruising.

All interviewees were self-defined cruisers. I chose three quantitative criteria all interviewees had to meet to be eligible for the purpose of this study: They had to own their own vessel and actually live aboard it. They also had to actually be on the move somewhere for extended periods of time. These criteria were chosen in order to differentiate cruisers from live-aboards and charter people. Since having a good working definition of a cruiser is vital for the success of this study, I have added the next section to shed more light on this topic.

Defining the Cruiser

There are several ways cruisers can be defined. Time spent on the ocean, no job to return to and cutting ties with society are all important factors. MacBeth (1985) argued that defining cruisers goes beyond the quantitative measures of time spent on the ocean and also includes attitudes, a state of mind and lifestyle. He gives voice to one sailor “It (cruising) is more than passage making. Someone who makes it a way of life. Someone who has a firm attachment to the sea and boats and the life; they just do not see anything else for themselves... no firm base is the criteria.”

MacBeth further differentiated between day sailors, short term and long term cruisers. A short term cruiser is one who “plans a trip from six months to a year and takes leave of absence from their occupation.” Long term cruisers, in contrast to short term cruisers, plan to cruise indefinitely.

The focus of this study was on power and sail cruisers who were currently cruising at the time of study. I considered both short and long-term cruisers; with emphasis on being a self-defined cruiser, as suggested by MacBeth. As such a “cruising state of mind” was a more important criterion than actual time spent on the water. Furthermore, as stated above, to be included in this study a cruiser had to meet the following three criteria:

- own a boat
- live aboard that boat
- have made at least one overnight passage

Sampling Methods

As suggested by the naturalistic research paradigm, I immersed myself in the subculture of sail and power cruisers. I talked to individuals at the places where they live and create meaning, namely Georgetown and several anchorages in Florida. I engaged in purposive sampling such as snowball sampling in combination with maximum variation sampling. In snowball sampling, the researcher asks each person interviewed to suggest additional people for interviewing (Babbie, 2002). The sample will be a nonprobability sample. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested maximum variation sampling to achieve a range of “extreme” cases. I will seek representativeness of the sample through including a wide range of cases. Sampling is completed when adding one more participant to the sample does not add any new information. The sample is then said to be saturated.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a series of in depth semi structured interviews. As a means of triangulation and to collect background data, a short questionnaire was also given to the interviewees as well. Other forms of data came from my personal observations while at the research sites, personal communications with cruisers, cruisers logs on the internet, and member checks via e mail. Observations were written down in the form of researcher notes and memos.

The interview guide was developed with the help of my committee using the research questions as a guideline for developing several themes. Themes addressed by the interview were: motivations for cruising, relation with the marine environment, benefits of cruising, the cruising experience, and community. Within each interview theme I would have several main questions and probing questions. As an example a main question for motivation was: "What attracted you to cruising?" and a probe question was: "Was there anything you were hoping to get out of cruising that your land based life did not offer you?" A main question for the community theme was for example: "Do you think there is a cruising community, and if so tell me about it." The fact sheet that accompanied the interview addressed demographic and background information such as age, profession before cruising, longest passage in miles, year and make of the boat and so on. It also contained a satisfaction with life scale adapted from Diener (1985).

The Interviewing Process

According to Kvale, (1996), "The topic of a qualitative research interview is the lived world of the subjects and their relation to it" (p. 29). He suggested an "interviewer as a traveler" metaphor to illustrate certain theoretical understandings of the interviewing process. The researcher is seen as being on a journey leading to "a tale to be told." And while the traveler is wandering it is not an aimless journey, instead the interview is theme oriented. The interviewer seeks to describe the meanings subjects attach to their lived experience through a structured and yet open conversation.

As a beginning interviewer, I used a predetermined interview guide based on my research questions. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 research participants. Interviewees were informed of their right to withdraw at any point in time through an informed consent form. I further explained to each participant that the information he or she gave during the course of the interview is completely confidential. And while there are no standard

techniques for doing qualitative interviews, I used some standard choices. Firstly, I chose to tape record the interviews and transcribe them. Secondly, I chose to look at the interview process as an “interpersonal situation” (Kvale, 1996) that should be a positive and meaningful experience for both the researcher and participant. As such, I viewed the interview as a conversation between two partners. As Kvale stated, it was my job as the researcher, ”to establish an atmosphere in which the subject feels safe enough to talk freely about his or her experiences and feelings.”

Kvale further pointed out that there are several types of interview questions. An introductory question invites the interviewee to provide the main dimensions of the phenomena under investigation. A follow up question aims at extending the interviewee’s answers. A probing question, in contrast, lets the interviewer pursue the answer “without stating what dimensions are to be taken into account” (p.133). He further indicates that it is useful to use both direct and indirect questions as well as silence.

Reliability and Validity

The terms validity and reliability have often been found to be inadequate concepts in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Instead these authors proposed using terms such as credibility and trustworthiness for internal validity and transferability for external validity. It is safe to say that reliability, in the quantitative sense of being able to replicate findings, is of little importance to most qualitative studies.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

The human as instrument approach can lack substantial trustworthiness. Lincoln and Guba suggested several measures to establishing trustworthiness in naturalistic inquiry. They believed that through prolonged engagement, persistent observation and triangulation, a naturalistic researcher can establish credibility. Instead of dealing with the issue of external validity they

suggested using the concept of transferability. Lincoln and Guba argued that how transferable the findings are to other settings and times should be decided by the reader instead of the researcher. Through thick description by the researcher, the attentive reader will be able to assess the suitability of the data to his or her own situation. One way to establish trustworthiness of data is through triangulation.

Triangulation

According to Patton (2001), “Triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, including using both quantitative and qualitative approaches” (p. 247). However, other qualitative researchers disagree with the notion of combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. Denzin (1978) also identified several types of triangulation. Using multiple data sources, methodological triangulation and investigator triangulation are all ways to improve credibility of the study.

In order to validate my data and give the research study more rigor, I triangulated data in several ways. Besides the taped interviews, I collected data through informal conversations with the cruisers while at the study site for several days. My trips to the different anchorages and marinas were each several days long. This gave me the opportunity to truly live with these cruisers and observe their day to day activities and interactions. As such I listened to the cruisers net in the morning and attended several of the organized activities in Georgetown. The cruiser’s net is in essence a moderated VHF conversation between all the cruising boats. At a specific time each morning, all cruisers who want to participate or listen in, turn their VHF to a specific channel. The cruiser’s net is moderated by a different cruising boat every other week and has four main categories: boaters general, community, business, and regatta week. I further used member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to verify conclusions with the research participants. I used frameworks and theories from different disciplines as a means of methodological

triangulation. The zoom model was a very useful tool to ensure methodological triangulation, as it encouraged me to investigate theories from different disciplines such as sociology for the macro zoom and psychology for the micro zoom.

I further used investigator triangulation by having an independent investigator read and transcribe one of the interviews as well as code it. Comparison between the transcripts and codes of the two researchers added rigor to the study.

Prolonged Engagement and Persistent Observation

Prolonged engagement is a technique used in naturalistic inquiry to obtain accurate data. Investing an extended amount of time in the field will help the researcher avoid making premature conclusions. It enables him or her to establish rapport and trust with the research participants, which will lead to more accurate and in depth data. Furthermore, it will allow the researcher to observe participants in their lived worlds for extended periods of time. Persistent observation "identifies those characteristics and elements in the setting that are most relevant to the question being pursued and focus on them in detail" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985,p. 304). As such, persistent observation adds depth to this study.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

This study showed limitations in several aspects such as data analysis, observation and sampling. Using the human as instrument approach, I was unable to de-center myself. As a white middle class, western female, my beliefs and values affected what I observed and how I analyzed the data. I tried to overcome that limitation by giving my full attention to the stories the interviewees shared with me, making sure I did not miss anything. I also had each person I interviewed refer me to another potential interviewee, which widened my scope of potential research participants.

Delimitations

To make this project achievable, I have restricted the times and locations of the data collection process. The sample for this study was geographically restricted to power boaters and sailors who boat in Florida and the Bahamas during the time of study, namely December 2006 - March 2007. Furthermore, the sample for this study consisted of power boaters and sailors that were actually ashore when I was at the research site. As such, the sample might lack representativeness of boaters who are offshore at that time. However, having interviewed cruisers in various geographic locations, helped overcome that delimitation to some extent. Further studies should be done in other times of year (i.e. summer or fall) and other geographic locations (i.e. the west coast).

Cruiser Demographics

Except for one interviewee, who was originally from Cuba, all of the study participants were Caucasian. Out of the cruisers that had not yet retired, or were still working, all had quit their careers and chose jobs that would fit their cruising lifestyle. The vast majority of these cruisers were not working anymore at all. If they did work occasionally, they usually still quit their careers in order to find any job they could work just long enough to support another couple of months of cruising. Furthermore, all cruisers, except for one, had purchased their cruising vessel second hand. Almost all cruising vessels were made out of fiberglass. The longest passages ranged from 90 miles in one day for a family that just took up cruising five months ago, to 4000 miles in 30 days at sea for a family that has been cruising for more than 20 years. The majority of cruisers had done passages that were three days or longer and several hundred miles in distance. Besides cruising kids, the youngest cruisers I interviewed were in the 36-44 year age range, while the oldest cruisers I interviewed were over 67 years old. Crew size ranged from one

(single-handed men and women) to four (families cruising with children). Cruisers interviewed were from the United States, Canada, Australia and Europe. I interviewed five power boaters and 20 sail boaters. There are about 10 power cruisers for every 100 sail cruisers.

Table 3-1. Cruiser Demographics

| Type of Cruiser (Family, single handed, couple) | Type of Boat (Power or Sail) | Pseudonym | Interview Location |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Retired couple | Sail | John and Jackie | Melbourne, FL |
| Retired couple (early) | Sail | Scott and Stacy | Melbourne, FL |
| Retired couple | Sail | Earl and Lucy | Melbourne, FL |
| Retired couple | Sail | Chuck and Flower | Marathon, FL |
| Couple (quit job) (talked only with her) | Power | Suzie | Marathon, FL |
| Family | Sail | Max and Shannon | Marathon, FL |
| Single handed male retired | Sail | Pierre | Marathon, FL |
| Couple (still work) (talked only with her) | Sail | Lindsay | Marathon, FL |
| Retired couple | Power | Ryan and Linda | Marathon, FL |
| Single male, retired | Sail | Patrick | Marathon, FL |
| Retired couple | Power | Franzi and Jochen | Marathon, FL |
| Retired couple (talked only with her) | Sail | Rachel | Vero Beach, FL |
| Single handed male retired | Power | Joe | Georgetown, Bahamas |
| Single handed female retired early | Sail | Tracy | Georgetown, Bahamas |
| Single handed male retired | Sail | Jerry | Georgetown, Bahamas |
| Young family (talked only to her) | Power | Nancy | Georgetown, Bahamas |
| Single handed male | Power | Fred | Georgetown, Bahamas |
| Single handed male retired | Sail | Sam | Georgetown, Bahamas |
| Family | Sailing Cat | Lisa | Georgetown, Bahamas |
| Family (quit job) | Sail | Inga and Rob | Georgetown, Bahamas |
| Family | Sail | Catherine | Georgetown, Bahamas |
| Single handed female | Sail | Sherry | Georgetown, Bahamas |
| Single handed male retired | Sail | Dirk | Georgetown, Bahamas |
| Family (retired) | Sail | Zach | Georgetown, Bahamas |
| Retired couple | Sail | Helga and James | Georgetown, Bahamas |

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The following chapter summarizes the findings and themes that emerged from the 25 in depth interviews. In chapter one I stated several research questions that I was hoping to address with this study. The write up of the findings follows the order of the themes of research questions. Hoping to make it easier for the reader to follow, I have stated them again at this point:

- **Boating experience:** How do power cruisers and sail cruisers experience boating on the ocean? What are their motivations for boating? What is their relation with the marine environment? Environmental attitudes? Do they experience flow? What benefits do they receive from boating?
- **Specialization:** Are there multiple ways of entry into the sailing subculture, as Aversa (1986) suggested? If so, do they lead to different specializations based on those experiences? Are there gender differences? Are sailors more specialized than motor boaters as suggested by Donnelly (1986)?
- **Personality/Community/Lifestyle:** Are there antecedent or personality differences between sailors and powerboaters? Are power boaters part of a subculture such as that of sailing ocean cruisers? Do power cruisers form a community as has been found in sailors? Does the boating experience add to the general well being and life satisfaction of cruisers?

I developed an interview guide based on these questions in an effort to encourage participants to share information needed to be able to answer my research questions. Through my research trips, I was able to interview a wide range of cruisers. The majority of cruisers are retired couples, which was very visible to me during my research trips. The first three interviews took place in late December 2006 in Melbourne, Florida. All three were retired couples. My second research trip was in mid January 2007 in Boot Key Harbor, which is located in Marathon, the Florida Keys. Again, the first interviews were all couples. Before my trip to Georgetown I had collected 12 interviews, out of which only three were power cruisers. There were no power cruisers at the mooring field in Boot Key Harbor. I found all three of the power cruisers docked

at a marina close to Castaway, a very cruiser friendly restaurant. Castaway, which is located on Boot Key Harbor, offers activities for live-aboards and cruisers such as table talk, where boaters get together and discuss boating related issues. It gives newcomers a chance to just sit in and listen and pick up some useful knowledge. The weekend I was there, Castaway had also scheduled a pig-roast and entertainment throughout the day.

After two research trips I had collected 12 interviews of which only two were single handed men, and only three were power cruisers. It was at that point when I decided that if I truly wanted to engage in maximum variation sampling I had to purposefully seek out single cruisers and families. I planned my trip to Georgetown with the full intention to collect data on more families cruising with children and on single handed cruisers as well as power cruisers. Because of the few power cruisers I had interviewed before going to Georgetown, I started to wonder if I was not in the right places to meet power cruisers. I decided I would concentrate on interviewing more power cruisers and of course single-handed cruisers as well as cruising families.

With these plans in mind, I flew into Georgetown March 2nd- March 5th, 2007. This was also the time that regatta week, which is the peak of the cruising season in Georgetown, where around 400 cruisers stay each winter, was happening. Most of them leave shortly after regatta week. I collected another 13 interviews, of which four were cruising families, two were single handed women, four were single handed men, and three were power cruisers. I was furthermore able to observe and participate in a lot of the cruising life that happened during regatta week.

Throughout the data collection process, I was transcribing the interviews one at a time. The constant comparative method allowed me to create main categories, and themes by reading

through my transcripts over and over again. I furthermore verified major concepts that had evolved through subsequent interviews, as well as member checks.

I had set out on this journey with a narrow focus of what I intended to study. I had intended to compare power cruisers and sailors. As I learned more about the cruising lifestyle, I discovered the depths and complexities of the cruising community. And just as the qualitative research process suggests that one cannot enter into a research project with a preconceived notion of what one expects to find, so I also soon discovered that my data would not allow for such a narrow investigation. What follows are themes that emerged from 25 transcripts, field notes, observations and personal communications.

Themes

The following section summarizes the major themes that developed throughout the study. Research theme one was concerned with the boating experience, that included motivations for cruising, the cruising experience, benefits received and Flow.

Research Question 1: Motivations for Cruising

The first question I wanted to investigate was what motivated people to go cruising. What were they hoping to get out of it? What attracted them to cruising? I asked cruisers these three questions.

The main themes that emerged for why cruisers chose that lifestyle were:

- Freedom
- Travel
- Love of the Sea

Theme 1: Freedom

Freedom emerged as a major theme especially with single handed men. Fred for example stated it this way:

Freedom. Oh absolutely freedom. That is a huge thing for me. I have always been a very independent, uh free thinker. I don't really like rules. I mean I can follow rules and stuff but that is not my strong point.

Fred is a middle aged cruiser who just recently traded his sailing boat for a power catamaran. He has been cruising for over twenty years and works in IT whenever he has to in order to support himself. Especially single handed men portrayed sailing as freedom because you are not subject to any politicians, laws, or other outside interference. When you are on your sailboat it is just the laws of nature and your own codes of conduct. Likewise, Sam is a retired older single handed sailor who also cruised mainly because of the freedom:

I love sailing because I love the freedom. I love sailing. It is a vehicle for me. I am sailing to be free.

Sam looks at cruising and his sailboat as a vehicle to be free. Interestingly enough, a lot of cruisers mentioned how their boat is a vehicle for them not just in the sense of a mode of transportation but a vehicle to the different things they want in life.

Freedom was also described as a major motive by the majority of the couples. Several sub themes of freedom developed in the course of the analysis: being your own person, challenge, escape, and pace.

Sub-Theme 1A: Being your own person

This sub-theme had to do with leading a self-determined life. It dealt with the freedom to make your own choices. Not being dominated by outside forces. For cruisers, their boat is a vehicle to be self-sufficient and independent, or autonomous. John stated it this way:

It's the freedom to not be locked into schedules, not be owned by this company or that company. Ok you pay me a salary or a wage... that means you own me for 8 hours a day not 24 hours a day. And modern companies don't look at it that way. We should be grateful to have a job and if we want you to drop what you are doing and come in here for an extra four hours today or give up your weekend... you know I could stay at a job and get three or four weeks of vacation scheduled and then find out that: 'Oh you are too valuable to be gone for three or four weeks at a time, you take your vacation one week at a time.'

For John freedom meant taking charge of your own time and being your own boss. He told me later in the interview that he would never work for another company again. He is self-employed. Being your own person means the freedom not to be locked into schedules. It is the freedom to be independent. For Earl and Lucy, a retired couple who met while each of them was cruising with a different partner, being your own person and independent was also a major driving force:

Independence and out of the hustle and bustle and out of the stress
Rachel is a retired cruiser that, like many other women I met, mainly cruised because it was her husband's dream. For Rachel and her husband, being your own person was a big motivating factor:

Oh well being your own person. Being out in the outdoors. And you meet so many wonderful people. You go to great places. It is a very laid back type of life. The only stresses are the weather.

Being your own person is concerned with autonomy. Cruising in that sense is a vehicle to be self-determined. It is the ability to "call your own shots," as cruisers might say.

Sub-Theme 1B- Challenge

Being your own person also means being in charge of your own surroundings. It means being independent and self-reliant. A lot of the male cruisers valued the challenge of having to be self-reliant, of putting your wits against the ocean. For Scott, a 55 year old Australian, this challenge brings a lot of satisfaction:

Ah the other thing is the challenge and satisfaction of having your complete own environment. I mean on board the boat we have our own energy source, our own sanitation sources and manage that, we have to have our own water sources, cooking facilities, the food that you put away and what you can stock and store and keep within a relatively small area that can keep you going for a week or period of time. Imagine that whole thing and getting all that going and working, for me it provides a significant amount of satisfaction.

Jerry, a single handed Canadian cruiser who is originally from France and also views the challenge of the cruising lifestyle as a big motivating factor:

The challenge. I like challenge. When I first came to Canada I landed with 14 bucks and I hitchhiked across Canada. And the other time I hitchhiked from Vancouver all the way down to Mexico and then into Miami. Another time I took a motorcycle across the States. They are all challenges and sailing is a big challenge: to be able to handle a reasonably sized boat on your own. I am single-handed.

Male cruisers valued the challenge that the self-sufficient cruising lifestyle is. They received an enormous amount of satisfaction from knowing they can do it. They valued having to be able to figure out all the provisions needed for a successful voyage, being able to fix all the equipment on board and safely navigating it.

Sub-Theme 1C: Escape

Escape was a very important motivating factor for a lot of the cruisers. For cruisers escaping is not a passive avoidance of everyday life. Instead, it is a conscious decision to leave behind, or trade in, the negative aspects of this fast-paced and work oriented American society for a more self-determined, slower-paced life style. In that sense, cruising is the freedom of an alternative lifestyle. It is the freedom of making it a choice not to deal with this rushed and hectic land life anymore. Here are the words of Flower who is a retired high school principal and just took up cruising six months ago with her husband:

I think we were fed up with the traffic up north, the attitudes, the amount of overabundance of people buying and buying and buying and we just wanted a simpler life. And a little bit more peacefulness in our lives. It just seems like ohm... just that rat race all the time...

Flower shared the feelings of several cruisers who were fed up with the excesses of life on land. Cruisers want to escape the overabundance of things, the materialism, the excesses and “people buying and buying.” Several cruisers told me stories of experiencing culture shock when they returned to land for a visit: supermarkets were filled with endless aisles of shampoo instead

of just a choice of two different kinds. When visiting friends and family their houses seemed “cluttered” and filled with stuff. For cruisers, downsizing and leading a simpler life means freedom.

Max and his wife Shannon, who resisted his plans to go cruising for a while, sold everything in order to pursue the cruising lifestyle. They wanted to see things and get away from it:

Since we have been cruising, I have met people from all walks of life. Not necessarily all professions but a tremendously varied profession. From people retired to semi retired to a mechanic, to doctors, to lawyers and I think they are all in it for basically the same thing: They are all wanting that freedom. They are all wanting that break. They are trying to break away... Break away from the madness, life out there on a daily basis...but the talk is always I would sure like to have a place up north. I would sure like to get away. I was born further north. And we have a place there with a stream and woods and stuff, very nice. And I would go there and stay there and light a cigar, open the windows and let it air out. One day I was thinking: I must have arrived. I got a place up north. (Laughs) You know and then its so you know how important it was to people to have a place up north... (they) had spent hours and hours getting there just so they get to breathe a sigh of relief. And then we sold it. And we had people going: Man are you nuts you are selling your place up north? And I said well we got the whole world now. We got a place up north, down south, east and west. Where do you wanna go? And I think that cruisers, no matter what walk of life they come from are on that same quest: its that freedom to get out there.. And not just sail people. There are powerboat people too.

Max and his wife Shannon are sailing with their daughter who they home school. For Max, cruising is a way to “break away” from life. A lot of cruisers used the term “rat race” to describe life on land. Life on land to them means trying to keep up with the Jones’ next door and meeting all the demands of everyday life. One source of stress and negative outside interferences that some cruisers mentioned, besides the demands of work, family and being busy was CNN:

And when you are out sailing the one thing that you are not thinking about is politics, crime in the street, all the stresses that CNN imposes upon us everyday.

A lot of cruisers felt that the stresses they experienced on land as being imposed upon them. They referred to those stressors as outside interferences, or negative vibes. They are not

escaping, but rather they are choosing not to be affected by these outside interferences anymore.

As Tracy said it:

There are not many negative vibes on the water.

Cruising gives these people a chance to go into a completely different direction in their minds, because they are not subjecting themselves to the working world and an overload of stimulation. Cruisers further described how land based life, with all the demands of work, house, family and so forth, can cloud your vision for what is important in life. These are the words of Stacy, a 44 year old Australian:

When you go back to work you tend to forget what is the meaning of the life. Do you really wanna find yourself once in a wheelchair not able to do anything that you always wanted to do? And you just need to decide when to quit. That is me. I always wanted to go cruising.

Opposed to that “cloudedness” of your “vision” of what is important in real life, cruising is the freedom to let your mind and consciousness de-cloud and go in a different direction. Lucy described it this way:

So it is a chance for your mind to go in a different direction and clean. You are not dealing with crime or anything. It is at least the politics you are leaving behind.

A lot of cruisers told me stories about wanting to cruise when they were retired but a wake up call reminded them of how valuable time was, and that you might not get a chance to experience it later. To cruisers, it is not a matter of whether or not to quit this fast paced lifestyle but when. Here is the story of John and Jackie:

When we decided to get the bigger boat a few things had happened: I had three different girlfriends who had lost their husbands to death and within a space of two days my 40 year old niece and our 40 year old neighbors were killed in a car accident and it was one of those like wake up calls which said: We are both in jobs that we are never gonna get pension from. And we said ok what are we waiting for? So we kinda made that decision and would look for the bigger boat and try to do something to make it happen. And that is pretty much where our decision came from.

Cruising is a vehicle for these people to choose to lead a slower paced lifestyle away from the demands of land based life. Because the fast pace of life on land was such a huge push factor for cruisers I chose to make pace its own category.

Sub-Theme 1D: Pace

Being able to lead a self-determined, self-sufficient life where you dictate your own pace was a major motivating factor for cruisers. Suzie retired early from being a pharmaceutical rep. Her husband still does real-estate on the side and supports their cruising that way. Just two years ago they traded their sailboat for a power cruiser, or trawler. For Suzie it was also the slower pace that attracted her to cruising:

The pace for one thing you know being very much slower. Oh the pace .. uh the pharmaceutical industry had become pretty much micromanaged. See this doctor this many times a month, this one this many times a month. Where when I first started it was ohm you went to the phone book and find all of the pediatricians and go in and see if they like our product. So it has become much more stressful.

Suzie and her husband had been cruising on a sailboat for many years. She had retired early because she was tired of the pressures that were put on pharmaceutical reps. She wanted a slower pace and cruising allowed her to do so. Again, her cruising vessel is a vehicle to be able to live a slower paced life.

Theme 2: Travel

Cruising is also a vehicle for traveling. Seeing new places and cultures was one of the top reasons for cruising. Most cruisers would not have the financial means to travel to all the places they are able to cruise to. But most of all cruisers want to have the freedom to explore different places and cultures on their own schedule, permitting them to stay in one place as long as desired. Cruisers see themselves as travelers, as opposed to tourists. They want to truly experience and live in different places. A tourist to them is on a schedule, flies places and stays at a hotel. Chuck and his wife Shannon also quit everything to go cruising with their daughter.

Shannon stated she wanted to cruise to spend time together as a family, when Chuck added that he found the traveling part attractive:

Well and to travel. See the different aspects...we have long range plans, in the next five years we wanna go to the Bahamas and Bermuda and the Caribbean and then take the boat over to the Mediterranean. And so the boat is mainly a vehicle for travel. Seeing things, rather than going to a hotel and spending a week or two weeks. This way you say: 'Hey we will stay here for three months'.

Scott and Stacy are just now beginning to cruise. They had had long term plans to go cruising but wanted to have the financial means to do so. Each month they set money aside. And while Scott wanted to go cruising mainly because of the challenge, it was the traveling aspect that attracted Stacy to the lifestyle:

And the planning, making plans for how to get to a location and what to see there, its all planning its not just touristy stuff. You don't just wanna see the tourist locations. You want to meet the people. That is my drive to get to meet the natives of whatever country. See their lifestyle.

Sherry also shared that love for traveling:

We are travelers! We like to travel. We like to see different things. We like to fish. We like to snorkel. We like to eat well so we like lobster and conch. We like to meet people.

A lot of cruisers see their cruising vessel as a vehicle to the world. It is the traveling lifestyle that attracts them. One cruiser said:" The world is your oyster." Fred also loves the traveling part of cruising:

Living the lifestyle. I mean... You are not just traveling but you are experiencing your travels. Enjoy the people you meet along the way. You are interested in finding new places and new people. To me, that is cruising. The Bahamas, I have tons of Bahamian friends and love them dearly.

Cruising is a means to travel and truly experience the different places and cultures along the way without just being a tourist.

Theme 3: Love of the Sea

Being close to the water, living with and on the water was another major motivating force for cruisers. A lot of cruisers described themselves as water people who would never move anywhere away from the water. Cruising for them again is a vehicle, a vehicle to live on the water. Fred, for example, was always drawn to the water. It was a friend of his who described to him how sailing around the world was manageable by the average person.

I love the water, I love diving and I was a big Jacques Cousteau fan as a kid so uhm the sailing and the cruising and going to the Caribbean and all that really lit up my eyes.

Joe is a single-handed Canadian cruiser, who just recently traded his sail boat for a trawler. He described why he wanted to go cruising this way:

I love the sea. I love the outdoor life and I love the people that travel in that style, that kind of environment. Boaters are one of the nicest people I know of. I like the water, I like the environment... Like I myself I don't have a partner, I would love to have one but I can't. And the love of the sea calls me, so I go.

John loves the water in general and would not live away from it. He especially liked the Atlantic:

There is just no word... but I just won't live where there is no ocean. I don't wanna live on the gulf... the whole gulf coast is garbage to me it's a big lake. I want the ocean. I don't want the ocean being nasty either. The Pacific is not a comfortable ocean. You know when you grow up with it its fine... but I like the Atlantic Ocean it's comfortable. It's where I wanna be.

Jackie explains what role the ocean plays in their cruising this way:

Water has always been our thing all the way through. We have never lived far away from the ocean nor will we ever. We both were just pretty much water people wanting to do more and more and the cruising was just like the next progression

Being out on the water was a major motivating force for cruisers. It is the water in particular, but also being out with the natural elements in general. For cruisers living close to nature was a big part of cruising. One of my other experience related research questions dealt

specifically with the meanings cruisers ascribe to the marine environment. In order to keep with the natural flow of the data, I answer this question here.

Research Question 2: Relation with the Marine Environment

Because being out on the ocean and living on the water was such an important theme for cruisers I wanted to find out what it means to them. I asked cruisers to describe their relationship with the ocean. As I mentioned before, all cruisers, except for one, shared a love of, and for, the ocean. Most cruisers swim and snorkel, scuba and skin dive and spear fish as well as kayak.

Some of the major themes that evolved were:

- Mother Ocean
- Spirituality and Healing
- Beauty

Theme 1: Mother Ocean

Cruisers shared a common respect for the strength and personality of the ocean. I named this theme “Mother Ocean” because that is what cruisers referred to her as.

Sub-theme 1a: Respect

The ocean to them demands respect not just in the sense of:” Do not pollute the environment,” but in a sense very similar to the respect you would give another “human” being: Mother Ocean. You respect Mother Nature by showing her that you acknowledge and respect her power or strength. Here are the words of Jackie:

People who go over there with authority. You know bam bam bam,... can make it very miserable for themselves. You gotta learn to relax and let mother nature have a little bit of a say in what you do. And she doesn't care what your plans are. If it's not a good day to go snorkeling, get your errands done.

Catherine summarized that attitude and respect towards Mother Ocean best:

You get a whole new respect for Mother Ocean. Because I often say:’ I think Mother Ocean just waits for someone to make a mistake. You make that mistake she is gonna get you. And if you treat her with respect and you watch the weather and you watch the waves and you do it properly, you are gonna have a wonderful time.’ I guess you can't do that all

the time but you really have to pay attention. You just can't go blindly out there, because if you do you are gonna get caught in something you don't wanna be in. The ocean itself is beautiful. You have been snorkeling? I mean it is wonderful.

Here again Catherine personifies the ocean as having its own character. Like a mother, Mother Ocean has the ability to "punish" you, if you do not show her the appropriate respect. John and Jackie describe that same philosophy:

Jackie: But I think that most people that enjoy it out there and stay out there ohm have a real love for nature type of thing. Ohm believe in forces not necessarily in a religious matter, but believe that there are forces. John: Mother Nature or something more spiritual to some people.

Cruisers believe that by waiting out weather in an anchorage you not only acknowledge the forces of the ocean, such as strong winds and waves, but you also show respect for these forces of nature. Helga, who has been cruising full time with her husband and is also a member of the Seven Seas Cruising Association explains her relationship with the marine environment this way:

I am enamored with the color of the sea. I love the song:" Mother Mother Ocean." So yes it is a love affair with the ocean and the strength of her. She is a she.

Sam, a retired single handed sailor from Minnesota mentioned how he is fascinated by the power of the sea:

The visual beauty, the color of the sea. The thrill of being in big seas. It is an appreciation of the power of nature. It really is. And harnessing it is an art, not a skill.

Cruisers also refer to the sea as "Mother Ocean" because of the sea's ability to sustain life and provide food. Here are the words of Max:

Well the water... I still consider the ocean the last frontier. We have been to the moon but you know we still don't know what is in the ocean. And that is the last frontier. And there is so much life there. And actually it sustains our life. It doesn't get appreciated. People over-fish it and eat it. And they never think about how many fish are there and what they do and what part do they play in the environment, in the ecological system down there and they don't appreciate it. You know. I have a plaque that says: If it wasn't for boating most of the world's surface would go unused! (Laughs)

Here again, Max mentions that respect for the life the ocean sustains, for the depth of the sea and our ignorance of her.

Sub- Theme 1b: Leave No Wake

Cruisers value the ocean and are very conscious of recycling on board, not spilling oil, and not taking more than needed. Some of them specifically quoted the motto of the Seven Seas Cruising Association as a standard they abide by:” Leave no wake.”

The motto of the seven seas cruising association that we belong to is: leave a clean wake. Simple as that. Venezuela, it bothered me every time I go to the mainland there because of how trashy people were. Most sailors collect their garbage. I mean I can’t speak for everybody but we burn our garbage and we follow our own policy. You can dump tin cans when you are twelve miles or more off shore. Deep water. Earl: If we are not gonna get to a place where we can properly dispose of them we punch holes in the cans and sink them. They rust away quickly so we are not polluting the environment. You have these plaques you are supposed to follow. Like not spilling oil. We are religious about that, we do not spill oil

Leaving no wake is basically a ”Leave no trace” philosophy. But it goes even further than that. It not only means not leaving trash or polluting, but also respecting the different environments and cultures cruisers get to see. It means respecting the local cultures in such a way that a new cruiser will be welcomed with the same open arms as you. This philosophy is in stark contrast to the sport fishermen who in the words of one cruiser just rape the ocean:

...the sports fishermen they come over and their attitude is like... they go way beyond. For example when lobster season ends. They are the same ones they will get 100 conchs, which is illegal. To store their freezers. Just raping it. They will get to a reef and take everything on it whether is it legal size or not. So there is another issue there commercial and sports fishermen...

Cruisers are environmentally conscious and put great effort into living a sustainable life. They live in harmony with the ocean and nature without leaving a wake. They keep their consumption to a minimum and will not take extra packaging materials on board. As an example, they might take the cereal out of the box it comes in to minimize the amount of trash transported and the chance of bringing bugs on board.

Theme 2: Spirituality and Healing

This theme was most often mentioned by women. For these women, water is a place of healing. To them, water in general, but the ocean in particular, is a place to connect to the universal energy and a safe haven when things go wrong. Jackie has been cruising with her husband for the last six years. They would cruise full time if they could afford it. Both of them are members of the Seven Seas Cruising Association. Jackie views the ocean as her calming feature:

It is my calming feature. Whenever... if I am really in trouble, I need to be by water. It has always been and it is my thing. You know if anything is gonna calm me down it is gonna be either cooking or looking at water. If I wanna go to sleep my thing is I dive a reef,....

For Jackie, water is relaxing. It helps her fall asleep. Water is also her haven when she needs help or is in trouble. Lindsay also turns to the water to calm her down. For her, water is also a place of healing:

“Everywhere we go we spend most of our time in the water, we get our food from the water, we get our adventure, we get our new knowledge, we see things and look them up and find out about them. The water also, throughout my life, has been a healing place. You know, if something very difficult had happened in my life I would always no matter where I lived try to get to the ocean and kind of work things through. So living on it is even better!”

Tracy also finds healing in the ocean. But to her that healing is more than a place to turn to when things go wrong. For Tracy her relationship with the ocean is essential in sustaining her mental well being. It is a spiritual experience:

I am a conservationist you know. Do things as natural as possible. I am also a little bit of an anomaly out there because there is not as many women single handing and I sail and very rarely motor. I need 5 gallons of fuel to get from Miami to Nassau. Because I am sailing and when you are sailing you are in nature. Uhm so ,well to me, I guess it is a spiritual thing for me. Because when I connect with nature I am connecting with the universal energy and so ... and it is harder to make that connection when you are in that made up world. Right? You lose that spirituality when you are in that made up world. You are more in touch with that you are just part of the universe when you are out there. So, and I guess a sailboat is the vehicle to that.

Here again we have a cruising vessel as a vehicle. For Tracy, her sailboat is a vehicle to connect with the universe and get away from the “made up” world on land. Catherine also shares Tracy’s view that a sailboat and cruising on it is a vehicle to spirituality. She especially experiences this connection to the universe on night sails:

Oh you are a speck. You realize that you are a speck on the ocean, a speck in the world. You realize you are so tiny and yet it is so beautiful. The stars, the moon, the ripples on the water. The soundlessness as the wind comes through the sail. I mean it is not totally soundless because you got the rush of the water and the wind. But it is just so. It is just you and the elements I mean it is awesome. I think it puts me in perspective of where I am in the world and the universe and with God. And it is just wonderful. You get away from it all. Again that freedom. Just you and this. And it is just wonderful at night.

For Catherine then experiencing the natural beauty of the ocean on night sails is a way to contemplate her place in this world. Being alone in nature and with the elements is a spiritual experience for her.

Lisa also especially experiences healing and introspection when on night sails:

I think for me it is the total silence under sail. And when you have been out for two or three days, all of a sudden, if you are on watch, the stars are so brilliant if there is no moon. Or if there is a full moon. It is just so pretty. And the bioluminescence in the water. And just the way you can look at the water and the sky and it is the same color. There is so much space and tranquility. For me it has been a needed healing bond. It is nice. Whereas when I am back in Fort Lauderdale or anywhere in the States, I never look up at the sky. You just forget. You are in the car. You are in a total other direction I think with your thoughts, your consciousness. It is what matters. I have been lucky.

These women all share a very special relationship with the ocean. Being out on the water allows them to connect to a higher power. It puts them in perspective of where they are in the world. Pieper (1952) might argue that they experience true leisure, a sense of complete harmony with and acceptance of the world around you. But more than that the ocean is also a place where they can find strength and a renewed focus on life. It is interesting that only women mentioned this spiritual and healing relationship with the ocean.

Theme 3: Beauty

All cruisers but one agreed that the serenity and beauty of the ocean was a huge part of the cruising experience. A lot of them were unable to put words to what they felt for the ocean, but knew that there was something about it that attracted them. A lot of cruisers mentioned they could stare at the ocean for hours. Joe was also at a lack of words, but tried to explain the attraction of the ocean this way:

It is something about the water. I don't know about you, but people who look in a fire and they can just stare in that fire and you ask them: "What do you see in that fire?" And it is the same with a big tropical tank and you see the fish and you ask them and they don't know but they love it. Well it is the same with the water, hum I don't know what it is. I could not say what attracts me to the water. The water attracts me I guess that is all. I could not live away from it, it is just something about the water I love. I love the traveling end. Like when I went to Venezuela I went to travel but I always knew I was coming back to the boat again. And I tell you there are some time when I am like beam me up Scotty get me the hell out of here. Because sometimes it is not nice, not nice at all. But I keep coming back. There is something about it. I don't know. I can't come up with a perfect answer for it, all I know is I love it. And I won't stop (cruising) until my health does not allow me to do it anymore. Then I don't know what I will do. I am not looking forward to that day. But I guess I will be one of those people that will go down to the marina and just watch the boaters and talk about the good old days!

Inga and her husband, who just sold a hotel they owned together up in Canada so they can go cruising were also at a loss of words:

There is just something about the water. And people come on boats and you know what they are always happy! I don't know what it is.

Experiencing the beauty of the ocean is a part of daily life for cruisers and every interview was filled with countless stories of beautiful sunsets and sunrises, whale encounters, watching the dolphins play, manatees, watching birds and fish and admiring the colors of the sea. Scott captures the experiences of many cruisers with this description:

The serenity of it all I guess. The other day we saw the sun coming up in the morning and it was a calm morning and you could see the fish breaking the water, particularly when you are in places where you can see the bottom easily. Just sit on the back of the boat watching fish, drop a little bit of bread and all that sort of thing or in the evening you know the moon is coming up and the light across the water even when you are doing crossing, the

moonlight across the water its just wonderful. We were sitting in the cockpit and looking back on the moon just watching it. And then that one morning when was it, it was just getting light and there were dolphins around us. We had 30 or 40 of them. We were sitting up on the bow and they were right there. We have a video of it.

Research Question 3: Benefits of Cruising

In this research question, I tried to explore how cruising contributed to life satisfaction and personal well being. Does it add to physical and psychological well being? In order to find out, I asked cruisers what benefits they received from cruising. When I set out to investigate what effects cruising might have on well being and health, I had no idea about the complexity of benefits that cruisers received from this lifestyle. Cruising tremendously added to life satisfaction and physical as well as psychological well being. One of the major themes that came up is better physical health.

Theme 1: Health

All cruisers agreed that cruising added significantly to their health. One way cruising improved health was because it is a healthier lifestyle than on land.

Sub-Theme 1A: Healthier Lifestyle

Cruising was described as a healthier lifestyle than on land. A lot of cruisers reported hardly ever getting sick, losing weight, staying active and eating healthier. Cruisers attributed the cruising lifestyle for the changes in their health. Being on a boat does not allow them to eat as much junk food as back home because you do not have room to pack it when provisioning. Eating healthier overall contributed to weight loss. Cruising, despite being constrained to a small boat, is also a fairly active lifestyle. Most cruisers do not have cars and have to walk to the grocery store or the laundromat in town. They walk the beaches and swim or snorkel. Here are the words of Fred:

Cause you are walking everywhere, you are swimming. You don't have a car. You don't have the stress that goes along with land life. Yeah it is a way healthier lifestyle.

Every day tasks like getting in and out of your berth or the dinghy are also somewhat physically demanding. Flower and Chuck explained some of the health benefits cruising offered them:

Flower: We eat more simply. We eat very well. But we eat more simply. We do not go out to fancy restaurants as much. We are healthier than we have been. We both lost a lot of weight. Chuck: I went down from a 36 to a 33. And she went down from an 8 to a 4 and this is just since October. Carolin: Wow, that is interesting. I have heard that from a lot of people. Why do you think that is? You think it is because its just naturally a healthier lifestyle? Flower: Well you are active all the time. Transportation is pretty much biking and walking when we are on land. So you know you wanna go to the store, well its gonna be a mile or so and its ok. Carolin: And you don't have as much possibility to eat junk food as much. Chuck: No I used to be into it. I used to be a big junky and into vending machines and Mc Donald's. We also used to eat out a lot on weekends. Big meals with wine and five course dinners and we don't do that anymore. Flower: It is just a different way to live. And I think it is healthier, we are happier and more content.

Earl also agreed that cruising is a way to stay naturally active:

...and you physically feel well too because you get the right type of exercise. Good exercise.

Catherine, who started cruising with her parents and son is a registered nurse. She also described why the cruising lifestyle is healthier:

You know what? Cruisers, I often say we are healthier. Because we aren't ... we have stresses don't get me wrong. If the wind is blowing 60 knots you have stress, trust me. But we don't have I think the everyday stress. I think we are a healthier bunch. We have the sunshine. We have activity. We have fresh air. We are not eating a lot of junk food because we can't carry it with us. So I think we are healthier overall....And I think as a general rule just because you are using muscles and you are on your hands and knees and you are up and down your companion way how many times a day I think we are healthier mentally as well as physically.

Besides eating less junk food and being active and having sun, cruising also adds to health because of a decrease in stress. Most cruisers like the lifestyle because it allows them to get away from the stress on land. Sherry says it this way:

The laid back lifestyle. My blood pressure went down from 145/80 to 100/61. Something must be right. It is just laid back. It is the pressure (on land,) it is a rat race. You know there is always something...

Cruising is not a stress free lifestyle. As Catherine also pointed out, cruisers experience stresses. However, cruisers view the stresses of cruising as “different.” It is a different stress and more tolerable. The only stresses cruisers have are either self-imposed because of time pressures for example or weather related. So again, it is that freedom from outside interferences. You are in control of your own stress. Closely related to feeling less stress is also the slower pace of cruising. Most cruisers further reported hardly ever getting sick:

“We don’t get the flu. People back home are all sick all winter long. They all have the flu. They go to all these places like offices, clubs, church where they share all the germs.”

So cruising benefits the physical health of these cruisers, by lowering their blood pressure, losing weight, and a decreased likelihood of getting sick. Here is an account of Joe, a single handed Canadian power cruiser who I interviewed in Georgetown:

They (cruisers) are all darn healthy people, and young and what do you call them they jump in their dinghy at night and are 65 years old. I can introduce you to a lady who is 88 years old and cruises. Still plays volleyball on the beach everyday. And her husband sits there and watches her. Living on land there is something about it that takes you over. Takes control of your life. You know. I don’t know how to explain it but I know the outside elements play a big part of the majority of people who live on land. That is just my theory on it all. I have no worries here. As long as everything is working. And if it is not working I get it fixed. Right. I can make water, I can make electricity. I can make anything in fact I even have my own washer and dryer on the boat. So I really don’t need to go over there (to shore), if I did not want to. The only thing I have to go there for is to get groceries.

Joe again, besides staying active, is referring to the fact that cruising is a healthier lifestyle because of less external stressors.

Sub-Theme 1B: Psychological Wellbeing

Because cruising is an active lifestyle, it offers a healthy alternative to simply retiring. Retiring can be a time of psychological despair, since it is a time to establish a new identity and purpose besides work. This transition can leave people empty with nothing to do, which leads to feelings of depression and despair and can eventually lead to physical illness and even death.

Retired cruisers mentally feel better because cruising keeps their mind active and gives them a new purpose and identity. Here are the words of Flower:

... it takes you totally away from what I had been doing. So there is not that...oh I wish I was still there or oh I should not have retired... I heard a lot of retirees ohm...get very depressed and sometimes develop physical problems because they don't feel they are worthwhile. And this has just been really good because it is so healthy. I am so physically busy as well as intellectually we are challenged.

So to Flower, the new challenge cruising offered allowed her to immediately get immersed and involved in something else besides work. Keeping mentally and physically active helped her feel better. Franzi had doubts about retiring early from her job and go cruising. She liked her job a lot and got along well with her coworkers. She also found that cruising keeps you mentally and physically young and active:

I know lots of people who sail well into their 80s! That guy next door 82 years old and single handed full time live aboard cruiser. He is still fairly sporty. That is also a benefit of cruising: It keeps you young. You have to constantly be active and move. Retired people who just sit in their apartments grow older faster. Cruising keeps you young and active. Cruising life keeps you young.

Cruising then adds to psychological well being of retirees because it keeps their mind off work and offers them a way to stay mentally and physically active. However, not just retirees reported feeling more content and happy when cruising. A lot of cruisers attributed feeling more content and happy to the independence they experience when cruising. The freedom to plan your day as you want, the lack of negative vibes from other people, the rat race. Cruising allows them to be their own person and in control of their own destiny. Franzi stated it this way:

“I think it is the life in general that we lead. Like even when we get up in the morning and you see your neighbors and you say: ‘Ah another beautiful day in paradise.’ Everybody is happy and everybody smiles.”

Suzie also agrees that cruising adds to her psychological wellness. She finds that she is mentally in a better place:

“We found we rarely get sick. I think it is because you are mentally in a better place. And then you are not around all the people in crowded places where things can get spread...”

Theme 2: Time Together

Time together was a major benefit for families and also cruising couples. In fact, for families that are cruising with children, having more time together was one of the major motivations to choose the cruising lifestyle. Life on land pulls families in different directions. With both parents working, there is little time left for being together as a family. Children are also busy with school and music and sport practices. Shannon, for example, who is cruising with their 14 year old daughter and husband explained how they were in essence leading three different lives on land:

That is one of the things that I was really hoping to get out of it. Is to have a family again. Because when we were back home he worked here and I worked there and our daughter was going to school and she was going here and he was going there. So we had three different lives going on in one house. Max: You gotta plan to get through the day. She has got practice here and she has got choir there and you spend a whole lot of time by yourself even though you are married. You know on Sunday you get in the car and go to church together. And the rest of the week it is all fragmented and when it is fragmented you don't get along. Because you never know what the other person is thinking. You never have time enough to get feedback.

For Shannon, cruising was a way to reconnect with her husband and daughter. Cruising allowed them to share experiences together and live one life instead of three. Cruising gave them time as a family to just play and be with each other. Shannon proceeded to tell me how this lifestyle enabled her family to just have fun and goof off together:

Things like a couple of months ago and we were all laying there, because you know you go to bed when the sun goes down to conserve energy. And we are all laying and all of a sudden he is being goofy and next thing we know we get our flashlights out and we are all doing finger puppets on the wall. When was the last time you did that with your kids? Its stuff like that is just way too cool. Oh what were you doing last night? Uhm making finger puppets on the wall!

Inga and Rob have been married for 10 years. They are middle-aged adults and have two sons ages seven and nine. They owned a successful hotel and catering business in Canada, which left them little or no time to be with their kids. They said:

We quit all that. It took too much time away from our children. We have a seven and a nine year old. The business was 24/7. There was just no way. We finally made a decision that: No our kids need us. And so we just kind of said enough and sold everything and .. take a break ... We never saw Rob from 6 in the morning to 11 at night. The boys would not see him. So just being able to be together. And a lot for me as a mom has to deal with kids. What is going in their heads. What is coming out of their mouth? You don't have control. We lose our kids to the public school system the best hours of the day. And then they come home and you have homework in the afternoon and you are busy and have dinner and you know get ready for bed. And so now we experience every little thing. I learn to just find how different they are. How funny they are. How silly they are. You can appreciate.

Being together as a family and having time together as a family are benefits Rob and Inga were hoping to get out of cruising and are getting from their cruising lifestyle. Couples were also mentioning how cruising has allowed them to spend time together again and as a result respect each other more. It allows these couples to reconnect to each other. Life on land leaves little time for couples to be together. A lot of the cruising couples reported how their relationship strengthened as a result of time spent together.

Cruising then is a way to “escape” the fast pace of life on land in exchange for a slower lifestyle that allows for more time to spend together. It is also an opportunity to live on the water and travel with a relatively small budget. Cruisers often mentioned how this lifestyle allows them to have the best water views without having to pay the price of a waterfront condo. Another benefit cruiser experience is personal growth.

Theme 3: Personal Growth

Sub-Theme 3A: Mastery of Challenges

Cruising is a way of getting to know yourself better. It is the freedom to follow your creative urges and the satisfaction of successfully dealing with the challenges that this lifestyle

poses. Especially for men, the challenges of “putting your wits against the weather and the water” and leading a self-efficient, independent lifestyle bear a lot of satisfaction.

..it is part of that self satisfaction thing if you are able to get from point A to point B without running the engine, or only running it to get yourself in and out, when you are in close quarters or something like that. I mean that is sort of part of the challenge as well. And being able to make sure you use the environment to your advantage so the ocean currents for example, the winds, and to be able to plan and make those passages. Without just having the brute force if you like of the engine pumping away that’s gonna do it all for you.

Cruising men valued the satisfaction they get out of being self-reliant in the sense of having to be able to fix parts if they break and keeping everything running. In that sense, cruising requires a sense of ingenuity. Both women and men often mentioned how being a “minimalist,” is both freeing and satisfying. Being a successful cruiser requires one to be able to survive with a limited amount of physical possessions in life. This is especially true for cruisers that sold everything in order to finance their cruising lifestyle. But even cruisers who could financially afford to keep a condo somewhere in the States often gave accounts of how happy they were with the smaller space and limited material possessions. It takes less time to clean so instead of spending one day each weekend in house work they are able to spend time together and just enjoy life. For Catherine getting rid of her material possessions was a freeing experience. Most cruisers reported experiencing a sense of culture shock when returning to the States after an extended time cruising: homes seemed cluttered with too many possessions, and an overabundance of things, and supermarkets felt overstocked with aisles and aisles of choices the consumer has to make between different brands of the same product. In stark contrast to this excess that defines life on land, cruising is a freeing experience.

Women also reported an increase in self confidence. Mastering the challenges of changing your lifestyle, provisioning the boat for long voyages, successfully learning how to handle

different challenging situations all contributed to an increased sense of confidence in themselves.

Here are the words of Jackie:

It has definitely done good things for my self independence. Knowing I can do certain situations and things has been good for me. Knowing I can be in control.

Even with careful planning, cruising can pose unexpected challenges due to weather changes, gear failures or the like. Knowing that they can successfully overcome these challenges gave these women a tremendous amount of self confidence.

A lot of cruisers further reported that introspection and time to get to know yourself were important benefits:

I am getting to know myself. I spent most of my life raising kids and doing this and the other and never really got to know myself. I have been by myself for three and a half months now and found out I kind of like myself. That was a big benefit getting to know myself. Spending some time with myself.

Sub-Theme 3B: Maturing

This theme applies mostly to children growing up in the cruising community. Both parents and children reported several personal growth benefits from being raised in the cruising lifestyle. Inga and Rob for example noticed a major change in their seven and nine year old sons after only a few months of cruising:

Rob: They matured a lot more. We had friends visiting in December and they had the same age kids out of the same class. So we had something to compare. And the difference was so huge. We really noticed it then. Inga: And that was really only after 4 months of being on the water. The responsibility. Oh yeah: in only 5 months. Responsibility. I would do everything at home. I would wash dishes because we have to get them to violin or soccer or,... so for me to do it was faster. You have a lot of time on the boat so its now we all. And the more we involve them in boat chores the more they are taking on.

Lisa, who has home schooled her 17 year old daughter and is now home schooling her son also witnessed how her kids matured because of the cruising lifestyle:

I feel really lucky that I did not have to be at jobs that my husband just retired when I met him. That the two of us did not put the kids in day care. We are together 24 hours a day seven days a week. It is a little intense sometimes. But you share a lot. The kids they are

independent, resourceful. They are also used to a lot of adults in different cultures. My daughter has done two Atlantic crossings. They are really open to food from different cultures. They are just... don't wanna go to the mall or have a cell phone. When we go back to the States it is more of a culture shock for them to be at home!

Lisa feels very thankful to have been able to raise her kids away from the negative influences of land based life in the States. She values the nature imprint her children got by being raised on the ocean, and she knows they will always find a source of comfort in nature. However, she does look at raising kids while cruising as “something lost and something won,” because of her children’s inability to adjust to life in modern day America.

Zach also raised his kids while cruising. His daughter is now studying at a major university in Florida and showed no signs of not being able to adjust to life on land. As a father of two children, Zach values the maturity and awareness his kids developed as a result of being raised in the cruising community:

The biggest difference is... They hang around with so many adults. You interact with adults as equals in the cruising community. I don't know how that came about or what or why. It took me a little bit of time to get used to it. But everything is on a first name basis. Because of that, the kids are so comfortable around adults. They are not intimidated at all. They are very mature. Having to shake someone's hand and looking them in the eyes and say nice to meet you. Just stuff like that. We enjoy them having those attitudes. And some of the independence some of the awareness of weather and the dangers you just don't get that at home.

Catherine raised her son cruising with her partner and her parents. Her son was able to jump from her boat to her parents' boat, and when her parents grew older would take on more and more responsibility of sailing the boat for them. His grandparents gave him their cruising boat for his 19th birthday. Through this time together, Catherine was able to witness how her son also became more responsible and mature:

We were all together and being here in Georgetown and sailing the Bahamas through the Abacos as well. And have those special moments. Not often will a 16/17/18 year old boy take off with your mom and spend an extended afternoon hiking through the bush, going across to the other beach and looking for shells and treasure and swimming together. I mean you just don't get that time one on one (on land). And you can tell the difference in

my son. You will probably notice that in a lot of the cruising kids. They are very mature. (They have) a lot of responsibility, because they have chores on the boat. You will probably notice that they are very mature. That they can talk to adults in a very mature fashion. Because they are around them. Not that they are missing out on their childhood, I mean they are still here doing childhood things with each other. They just have a different atmosphere. I think too they are protected from a lot of the media. Or they are not introduced to that media. And they are not introduced to that negative influence that we see in other places. Here it is more protected. Maybe it is not real life but it is just wonderful. I mean what a great way to grow up, without having all that negative in your life.

While these cruising kids matured through the responsibilities they took on living on the water, cruising parents value the environment their children can grow up in. All parents mentioned that the lack of negative stressors benefited their kids.

Research Question 4: Flow

Flow, as a specific psychological experience, can also be a benefit of cruising. I wanted to investigate if cruisers do indeed experience Flow, as suggested by MacBeth (1989). In order to find out, I would describe some of the defining characteristics of Flow and prompt cruisers to tell me about the situations when they had experienced a similar situation. Overall, cruisers did recognize the Flow state of being from my descriptions and had experienced it. I did get more in depth description of the feeling from women. Flower, for example, experiences Flow when she is sailing:

And it's.. when you are actually sailing you are totally immersed in what you are doing. You are using all your skills. You are using problem solving, strategy skills, ohm all that all the time. So it takes you away from other things that could be bothersome. It was good for me because it so immersed me in this other world compared to what I was doing that I did not have that time to worry so much about where I had worked and what was going on. It kind of keeps you in the moment.

For Flower, having to use different skills while sailing allows her to be in the moment. These Flow experiences enable her to enjoy her new lifestyle by keeping her mind and thoughts centered on the tasks at hand, instead of worrying about her old job. A lot of women also

experienced Flow when anchored. Jackie for example gave an account of a snorkeling experience:

I think you have good times a lot of the good times were more... we were out snorkeling. I went out snorkeling and by the time I came back I was shaking and nauseous and I had been out snorkeling for so long that I had dehydrated myself. All of a sudden I realized that we had been out for four or five hours. But we were having such a good time and the water was so comfortable. Everything else I just wasn't paying attention to myself at that time. And all of a sudden I realized how long it had been since I had put any liquid in me. So I guess it is kind of the same thing that you are just so wrapped up in what is there and how pretty it is and how great it is that you just don't pay any attention.

For Jackie, experiencing nature is a Flow experience. She gets so wrapped up in what she is seeing while snorkeling that she forgets about time, forgets to eat or even re-hydrate herself! For a lot of cruisers living close to nature is a major part of the lifestyle, and enjoying it can definitely be a Flow experience. Suzie shared a similar story. She is cruising on a trawler with her husband and is able to completely immerse herself in the experience of nature while cruising:

I definitely experience that. I have to look at my watch to see what day it is!

Carolyn: What specifically is it in cruising that lets you experience that (Flow)? Suzie: Well even moving down the Intracoastal and you are watching the clouds and the country going by. And we have had as many as 12 dolphins in the wake of our boat and they are jumping and going under the boat. And you know when you are so involved, and gosh I am getting a little hungry and you look at your watch and gosh its 12:30. (laughs) And then even getting into a book or things like that. You know I am gonna do that for an hour or so and then you look at your watch and it has been 2 hours.

When I asked Lucy about the Flow experience she mentioned painting right away. Lucy likes to paint the water and sea life when at an anchorage. She experiences Flow while painting. When I asked her if she ever experienced the same feeling while cruising she replied:

Oh yeah. That is one of the beautiful things about it! It is hard to explain because it is something within you that gets closer to your soul.

So for Lucy, cruising is about experiencing Flow. She cruises because it allows her to be in Flow. She explained it as something within you that gets closer to your soul. I think for her Flow

means being completely in the moment. Stacy also experienced Flow frequently. Here is what she answered when I asked her about it:

(laughs) I do that all the time. I have a tendency when I do something I just forget. Scott (jumps in): She is extremely focused.. not exactly a multitasker.

Pierre, a single handed cruiser from Savannah, Georgia experiences Flow most often when he navigates:

Like when you navigate and all that stuff. You forget everything. All your problems are gone. You don't know it's been hours days or two three gone. All of a sudden it's gone. Because you really have to focus on what you are doing. And when you are on the ocean, it's as close to nature as you can be. It's like people in the old times. It's pretty good. It's a lot to focus on. It's like a moving house. It's a lot of things you have to focus on. You know on the boat, you have the sails and the water and electricity.

So for Pierre, navigation, in conjunction with being out on the ocean, is a Flow experience.

When he navigates and is out in the open ocean he gets so involved and focused on what he is doing that he forgets how long he has been out there. Joe also experiences Flow on long passages. For him, it is harder to get into that feeling when he is just island hopping and dropping the anchor after a six hour sail. When he is truly out on the ocean for long periods of time, days just seem to fade into another and his mind is left in the moment:

So what happens, in the sense of you lose track of time and everything, is when you get into that routine like you just forget about the rest of the world. Like I will tell you a story. I left from Trinidad and helped people move their boat. It was 19 days on the ocean. I have done a lot of crossings before but 19 days was the longest. But after about three days you lose track because one day goes into another day and another day and another day. And uhm like people say to me what do you do, what do you think about? And you know that I don't honestly know what I think about. I think your brain goes blank and in a sense, you are watching the water flowing past you and you got the fishing lines out and before you know it, it is six o clock at night, it is getting dark, And you reduce the sail down. And I had two other people with me a man and his wife. And we take shifts. Two hours on, four hours off. And uh and you get into your routine and you lose track of the world. But it was a beautiful feeling.

Other cruisers stated that because navigating requires so much attention and focus you cannot forget about your surroundings. In contrast, a good captain will always be fully conscious

of everything that goes on around him. Maybe a Flow definition for cruising would include being in the moment instead of a loss of awareness of time and surroundings. It is the feeling of being in the moment that causes the decreased awareness of time and one's surroundings. When navigating, it is exactly that complete being aware of your surroundings, living in accordance with natural rhythms such as sunrises and sunsets or different tides that cause you to be in the moment.

All cruisers experienced the loss of an awareness of time. Watches bear little meaning when cruising. Instead lives are dictated by a more natural rhythm. John said it this way:

Well I always lose track of time. Watch? I mean what is a watch? I don't wanna know what time it is! If my stomach says eat, we eat.

In fact, most cruisers wear no watches. It is the freedom of not having to keep track of time that is attractive to cruisers. Max also has an account of losing track of time:

Like the other day I was like I am sorry but is it Sunday? But when you are cruising Yeah you do lose track of time. The only time frame you have is the weather. It is easy to lose track of time because the clock is no longer controlling your life. You know. There is no: Oh I missed the bus. Shannon: Yeah it's like oh the sun is going down must be time to go to bed. Oh the sun is going up must be time to get up!

Cruising is very much a Flow like lifestyle. Time no longer controls your life, instead you are living in a more natural rhythm. It allows you to be in the moment, whatever it is that you are doing at the time. Fred explains how cruising allows you to constantly be in the moment. It allows him to just focus on his life and forget the outside world, except for when he occasionally goes ashore somewhere and finds CNN on a random bank TV:

Oh yeah because it is not important. When you are doing this, the outside world really is way way in the background. I mean your daily life depends on you monitoring the weather and making sure your boat is capable of being out here without sinking underneath you and the rest of the world has really not come into mind except for when I come into town and happen to see CNN on the bank TV screen or something.

When I established my research questions, I was interested in the difference between power cruisers and sail cruisers. I had speculated that these groups might differ in the Flow experiences. My data suggested otherwise. The Flow accounts above are from sailors and power cruisers alike. They both seem equally as likely to experience Flow. Both groups are equally detached from the time keeping and both are able to live in the moment, be it in navigating or admiring the natural beauty of their environment.

Research Question 5: Cruising Experience

This question is concerned with the meanings cruisers ascribe to cruising. What does it mean to them?

A lot of the themes that came up here were already mentioned as motivating factors. Cruising is freedom. It is a lifestyle. It is being with like people. It is seeing places and experiencing nature. It is being self reliant and self sufficient.

Theme 1: Freedom

Cruising means freedom: freedom to break away from the rat race and negative outside stressors of everyday life on land. It is the freedom to be in control of your own destiny, and being your own boss. It is autonomy. Cruising is freedom from being locked into schedules. Freedom to move around from place to place as you please and freedom to surround yourself with like people. Sherry speaks for many cruisers when she stated that cruising means freedom:

Freedom. That is what it is freedom. Freedom to come and go as you please. Don't feel like moving, don't move.

Fred also agrees that cruising means freedom:

Freedom, serenity, uhm meeting people from a lot of different areas and seeing a lot of different areas.

Sub-Theme 1A: Independence

Cruising means being independent. Independent from traditional work schedules, pressures on land. Because of that independence, cruisers have to be self-reliant. They have to have a sense of ingenuity. Being savvy on how to fix things and adapt to what Mother Nature gives you.

Cruising means being self reliant and self sufficient.

Right, some people call it freedom, some people call it independence. So it depends on which word kinda suits that person. That's the whole thing you are kinda calling the shots... well and the weather the weather is calling the shots too.

Sub Theme 1B: Respect

A respect for each other and the local cultures you travel to as well as a respect for Mother Ocean and the environment. Cruisers share a respect for the beauty of nature and the ability to live with it. The freedom cruising offers brings along with it a responsibility for one's actions. Cruisers genuinely love and respect the ocean.

Every year cruisers in Georgetown show the local people of the town how much they appreciate them by taking on a project. As a result, cruisers have painted and fixed up the local library, contributed to the local schools, built large picnic tables and a stage in regatta park, built restrooms at the Ball Park, or swing sets for some of the local parks.

Cruisers further respect each other. In the cruising community, what people did before bears little to no meaning. Titles, achievements and material possessions are of little importance. Cruisers respect each other for the person they are. Here are the words of Jochen and Franzi, a couple on a power cruiser:

And the other thing that is nice, nobody looks at your title or what you did before. Franzi: Yeah for example we just now found out that one of the other cruisers here is a doctor. We have known him for years. Its always just I am Jack or I am Joe.

Theme 2: Lifestyle

Cruising is a lifestyle. That theme was mentioned over and over again. By the very nature of cruising, it is not something that can be done half heartedly or on the side. One cruiser said: “You cannot just step off.” Cruising is not a weekend activity. It is a lifestyle. It means subscribing to the “cruising attitude.” It means living the life and experiencing it. Cruising means trading in your land based lifestyle for an alternative one. Once you have lived that lifestyle for a while, it is hard to switch back:

“...it is a lifestyle. A way of life. It is not for everybody. But there are not a lot of cruisers that cruise for years and then stop other than for health reasons.”

Most cruisers share a love for that lifestyle. It is a way of life they chose. For Joe, cruising is the only way to live his life.

Cruising? It is a lifestyle. That is what it means. It is a lifestyle. I truly love it. I don't know how long I can do it with health and all that but it is my style. It is my way. That is why I call my boat 'My Way'

Sub-Theme 2A: Cruising Community

Living the lifestyle also means being part of the cruising community and buying into the cruising attitude. The cruising community shares one value above all, and that is helping another cruiser out in any way possible. Being part of the cruising community also means that you truly enjoy meeting other cruisers:

The people. The people are great.

For Helga, cruising is her life mainly because of the community aspect:

It (cruising) is our life. This is our family these people. This is our neighborhood, the people on other boats.

In fact when I asked cruisers what they like about the cruising experience all of them named: meeting the people as their favorite part of cruising. Even cruisers who were not

motivated by the social aspects of it named meeting people as the aspect of cruising they liked best:

Meeting all the people. Look at all these people we would never have met.

The cruising community was a major part of the lifestyle. The sense of family and togetherness cruisers experienced added tremendously to well being and life satisfaction.

Because this theme came out so strong, I decided to make it its own theme. As such I will further elaborate on the cruising community in a following section.

Sub Theme 2B: Being on the Move

Cruising means being on the move. By the very definition of it, cruising means always being on the way to somewhere. Owning a boat and living on it is not cruising. It is being a live-aboarder. Live aboarders are different in the sense that they are still part of the land based life. They go to work and still subscribe to the values and ideologies of land life. A cruiser cut all ties to land based life. Some cruisers might own a condo somewhere so they have something to return to or stay at when they go visit family. But, for the most part, a cruiser's life is on his boat. Cruisers like to see new places. The cruising community further moves with the weather pattern. Cruisers tend to migrate south when it gets cold up north, and move back up north so they can be out of reach of hurricanes for the summer. It is a seasonal migration. Long term cruisers also move with the weather but might cruise further south. Here are the words of Earl:

It is a moving community. It is not organized. It is a loose society. Kinda like gypsies. The community moves with the weather patterns. A lot of people will cruise to New England and Maine in the summer and then they all move to the Bahamas in the winter. So the same flotilla of boats is moving roughly the same time every year. And actually around the world it's that way with cruisers. Because they have to follow particular weather patterns in order to make a move from here to there.

Besides moving with the weather patterns, being on the move means genuinely wanting to see and experience new places. Zach enjoys seeing new places, but as a father especially values that cruising allows him to show his kids some of the world:

The ability to go and see different places and spend as much time as you want. And to introduce the kids to travel.

This love for traveling to new places is something that all cruisers share. Next to meeting new people, seeing places was the other aspect of cruising all cruisers liked.

Research Question 6: Community

The cruising community is characterized by a tremendous sense of camaraderie among cruisers. Cruisers help each other out in any way they can. They exchange spare parts and knowledge, help each other fix broken parts, and constantly look out for one another. As an example, some of the cruisers I had interviewed would go out of their way to get me in touch with another person to interview. When I showed my appreciation of that effort, cruisers would just say that I was now part of the cruising community and this is what they do: help each other out. The community aspect in my opinion is the strongest theme overall that came out of this study. To cruisers, one of the best attributes of the cruising lifestyle is the people they meet along the way and the sense of community they share.

Theme 1: Camaraderie

Cruisers are almost religious about helping each other. This help is given completely voluntary and without expectations of being rewarded for it. It is almost like a cruising code of conduct. It is just what cruisers do. Sam is a single handed Canadian sailor who recently had to rely on the cruising community to help him:

I was in trouble the other day. I would not be facetious, I did almost drown and I called for some help. And three dinghies appeared just like that. There is a definite sense of community.

John and Jackie give a good account of the camaraderie cruisers share and the way they look out for each other:

John: (Somebody would say) I need help. Jackie: I need help now. In fact, that would happen. Somebody would say: I need help, and all you could hear was: Where are you? John: What is your problem Jackie: What do you need? All of a sudden you hear somebody go: 'So-and-so your boat is slipping.' And two or three different dinghies would head out towards it to help and make sure the boat was ok and wasn't gonna hit anybody. Somebody would grab the anchor... That type of stuff happens all the time.

The camaraderie cruisers share is probably the biggest manifestation of the cruising community. In places such as Georgetown or Marathon, where a lot of cruisers congregate asking for help and knowledge is even easier because all cruisers listen to the cruisers' net in the morning. However, even in areas where there are less cruisers and therefore not as much structure, getting help is very easy. Catherine also had to rely on the voluntary help of cruisers when a fire broke out on her boat:

We are so willing to help each other. All you have to do is get on the radio and say can you help me. If you haven't, you should listen to the cruiser's net in the morning. Because there is asking for parts, asking for assistance. Come help me fix something. Trading of goods back and forth and trading of knowledge. This is a special area. But even if you are in a different area. We had a fire on board not here but up the chain further and people would still come to us with ice and generators and equipment that we needed to repair. And all you have to do is get on the radio and people are there to help. Or word of mouth just goes around. Like we have had serious accidents along the way and people are right there to offer medical assistance or drugs or dressing supplies. To offer whatever they can.

Sub Theme 1A: Pay it forward

There is a philosophy of "paying it forward" between cruisers. It is a part of the cruising state of mind cruisers subscribe to when they choose this lifestyle. Instead of compensating the helper, the cruiser who was in distress will pass it on and help somebody else. Tracy explained it this way:

...there is that thing of passing on the energy. So, if somebody helps me, they will say oh don't worry about paying me, the way you pay is to help the next person. And so you get that connection and again it is almost like a spiritual thing because you believe in the connection.

Sam also explained how you help each other because you pass it on. Once you have been helped it is your turn to help somebody else:

Because they understand the challenges we face and the risks that we take. And everybody that helps is at one point in need of help themselves. And yeah you know I wish somebody would help me and usually they did. So it is your turn now.

Sub Theme 1B: Shared Experiences

Where is that sense of camaraderie coming from? Besides the paying it forward philosophy, cruisers share a common but separate history. They can relate to each other's experiences and understand what the other is going through. They have either experienced a very similar situation or know that it could happen to them any time. There is a sense of understanding that everybody will be in need some time. One cruiser gave the analogy of a farming village. Farmers all have their own fields, but yet they all know what it takes to have a successful crop. They are all interested in what the weather is doing. Because they have separate yet shared experiences they can relate to each other and want to help. Sam said it this way:

Because they understand the challenges we face and the risks that we take. And everybody that helps is at one point in need of help themselves.

Theme 2: Family

This theme evolved because the cruising community is often compared to a family. Cruisers stick together and help each other just like a family would. Cruisers look out for each other. Catherine describes the cruising family this way:

As you can probably see the cruising family is a unique identity all to itself. There is no place else I think where you can find that kind of camaraderie. This kind of friendliness and family feeling.... And I think that is the part of cruising I like best, the people.

Cruisers also share a common interest which bonds them together. They enjoy each other's company. They exchange stories and tips on where to go. The cruising family lives on

spontaneous get togethers and opportunities to be together. For Franzi, cruising is such a wonderful experience because of that feeling of community and family:

You meet so many interesting people. It is like a big family. And you anchor in a bay and get together and it's like you have known each other forever. You get together and have cocktails. And one person knows about this and the other about that and if you need help everybody helps. Like I said it is like one big family.

Sub Theme 2A: Being with like people

The cruising community is like a family in another aspect: Because of their common interests, they share a strong enough bond to keep together for life. For Sherry, the friends she found cruising are very special:

“(You) make new friends. But the friends you make here, those are the ones you keep for life, because you have so much in common.”

Lucy also values her cruising friends because they share a special bond. She found it hard to put that special relationship between cruisers into words.

The thing about cruising is that you make friends, it is an intense time to make friends because you are coming and going and ladada and you are just on different schedules. And you might not see them for a year or so. But there are still just as...it is just something...I don't know if you have ever had friends like that, where you might not see them for years, and no contact, and then you see them again and it's the same and it is a magical thing. It's wonderful.

Cruisers value the family feeling they find in their cruising community. Every cruiser has boat cards that get exchanged just like business cards would. Boat cards show the boat name and contact information such as e-mail or VHF frequencies. Cruisers will usually write on the back of the card where they met that person. The cruising family strives from a love of being around each other. Jackie described one of those spontaneous encounters on a deserted island as one of her favorite cruising memories:

And we were there with a bunch of other boats, just various people and off away we watched one of our friends that we had met other years come in. So we got in the dinghy and hopped over there and his name is Herman.. and they said hey great so and so just called and they are on the way here too. They are behind us by a few hours and they just

caught this huge snapper. And they don't know what to do with it. I know you guys know what to do with it... and we are gonna organize a potluck. So I said ok... so here we are in the middle of nowhere and we just go around the different boats: hey potluck tonight its gonna be on my boat. Cause we got the bigger boat there. So we ended up with 14 boats of people all on our boat. Everybody brought stuff. We had fish cooked three different ways, people cooked it on their boats and brought it over, we had uhm one of the guys played music and his wife sang. So we had a cocktail party and we ate til we were stuffed. Then we sat around and sang, everybody was perched wherever they could on the boat. We had a full moon and it was like this is as good as it gets. You know it was just one of those perfect moments. But it was one of those moments that just came together, cause the right people were there at the right time. All it takes for a party is just hey lets do something. And boom everybody comes everybody brings something. When you go to a party its known you bring what you drink.

Cruisers will spontaneously organize pot luck dinners on the beach, get together for sundowners, or share a fish somebody caught. Cruisers also get together to play cards, go snorkeling or sightseeing in town.

Sub Theme 2B: Trust

There is a tremendous amount of trust in the cruising community. Because cruisers are constantly on the move they have to meet each other fast. Cruisers trust each other. Flower explained it this way:

And there is a lot of trust it seems that people ohm meet each other more quickly and have a trust faster than in a neighborhood. In a neighborhood, there were people like 2 houses away that did not talk to us for 18 years. You know where here, or in any of the areas,... Can I help you?

That trust in one another is a big part of why the cruising community feels so much like a family.

Cruisers are loyal to another and help each other. Catherine also gave an account of that trust among cruisers:

(Cruisers) offer whatever they can. And without knowing your neighbor. You would never run next door to your neighbor on landside. Carolin: Why is that? Catherine: I don't know. Why is that? If somebody stands on the side of the boat here and says: ' Help me help me.' we are all over there. We don't even know this person. But if you were to have that happen on landside would people run the same way? I doubt it. Isn't that amazing? Here is another example. We leave our mail over there in a box and we trust a total stranger to take that mail back to the State side for us. It is income tax, it is checks, it is important information

that needs to be taken care of. And we trust a total stranger to take it over and mail it for us. Would we do that if we were State side? I think there is more loyalty between cruisers. Both cruising women put that trust and willingness to help in stark contrast with life at land. On land you do not even know your neighbor, let alone knowing his problems and helping him or her out. Most cruisers attributed that difference in trust and willingness to help to that fact that people on land are busy. They work all day and barely have time to spend with their own family. And while that is a big part of the difference I think there are more factors.

Theme 3: Georgetown

Georgetown is a very protected harbor in the island chain of the Exumas in the Bahamas. The Bahamas are only 60 miles from the US and are therefore easily accessible as a cruising destination. With new technology, even new cruisers can make the passage from Florida to the Bahamas in about 10-12 hours. Because of the ease of accessibility, the beautiful weather in the wintertime and a huge protected harbor that can easily accommodate over 500 boats, Georgetown has become a Mecca for east coast cruisers.

In contrast to the cruising community in other areas, Georgetown is very organized and structured. There is a cruisers' net every morning at 8:00 on channel 72. Every week a different boat moderates this coconut telegraph. The cruiser's net consists of four different categories: business, boaters general, community and regatta week. Using their VHF, cruisers will call in and ask for help, share parts, announce important meetings for regatta or share any other business. I listened to the cruiser's net religiously every morning when I was in Georgetown, in order to get a good sense of the community there. On my last day, another cruiser was looking for a taxi share to the airport. Her sister had come in to visit and was taking the same flight back as me. So the cruiser's net allowed me to partake in the cruising community and share a taxi ride

back to the airport! The cruising community manifests itself very differently in Georgetown as compared to other areas where cruisers might congregate.

For one, Georgetown attracts over 400 cruising boats each winter. This has interesting implications on the cruising community in Georgetown. As opposed to the spontaneous and unstructured encounters cruisers share in other areas, the cruising community in Georgetown is very structured and organized: it is summer camp for adults. Jackie explained how different Georgetown is this way:

Some places like Georgetown. ... I keep going back to Georgetown because Georgetown is different than a lot of the cruising places. Because so many people go there, they go there for a long period of time. So people... it's summer camp for big people. It's just what it is. I mean it's organized. There is volleyball on the beach and there is yoga on the beach and it is organized.

This summer camp finds its culmination in regatta week, that is organized by a committee of volunteers from the cruising community. Regatta week includes activities such as races for kids and adults, children's day, a variety show and several competitions between cruisers such as coconut harvest, sand sculpture contest, small boat races and volleyball as well as softball tournaments. I was able to personally witness the volleyball tournament and the small boat races.

Besides regatta week, cruisers organize workshops on the beach. Some of the more popular workshops are: women in cruising, a morse code workshop and a weather workshop. The weather workshop is held by Chris Parker, who is the weather man in the cruising community. His ability to accurately predict the weather and send cruisers a personalized weather report for their specific location has made him an almost religious figure in the cruising community.

At the time when I was there, the cruising community in Georgetown consisted of 400 boats. With that many cruisers in one place the cruising community takes on a different feeling. All of a sudden there are rules. There is competition over specific anchor spaces and which dinghy gets the right of way going under the bridge to go to the local market. This regulated

aspect of the cruising community is perceived as negative by some cruisers. Fred, who values his independence and freedom, is one of those cruisers. He refers to the cruising community in Georgetown as “Camp Georgetown:”

I mean down here in Camp Georgetown. Because it is, it is like a winter camp for older folks. And this regatta they are having right now is the culmination of the camp. 50% of the boats will leave in about another week. And will no longer be a campy atmosphere with all the cliques that are together and all the infighting with the people being the radio police and all the people trying to make rules and enforce rules and tell you exactly how to live your life and what you need to do and... And it is exactly what cruisers are trying to get away from, what I am trying to get away from. And I don't like being PC and doing all the stupid things. And a lot of them come down from the States. A lot of them come down for the “Cruising Community” here in Georgetown. And then they do nothing but try to tell people how to use the radio, tell people how to run their dinghy, tell people what rules they should follow. Different people just think they know better than everybody else and they want to push their views on everybody else.

Some cruisers like the activity in Georgetown and for others, the organization and regulation that comes with it is reason enough to stay away from Georgetown, or at least not get involved in the activity aspect of it. There is a choice of participating as much or as little in the activities of the cruising community in Georgetown. Joe for example stays away from almost all activities, but enjoys his daily morning coffee with other cruising men on the beach. Lisa also would prefer to stay completely away from the organized activities in camp Georgetown but will get involved because she values the contact and activities her kids get from it:

But it is so organized all the activities. It is wonderful, I was involved with kids day, cause I have kids. And I support all the activities the kids do, but I am not really one to join the activities. In the winter when people come, it is so regimented, it is a camp for grown ups. And there is a lot of rules all of a sudden. And ohm it is very amazing to me. There is a workshop in everything: basket weaving, relationships, religion. And I find it rather comical. Where the people don't really go out and meet the Bahamians or see the islands. And instead of getting away from things they set it up just like the way they had it. They need rules. And you can see the successful people that have been able to afford to buy a boat, they were leaders. And everybody wants to be an Indian chief. So I don't really get involved.

So is it human nature that when we get together in big numbers we want to all be able to have a say, to be an Indian chief as Lisa called it? Tracy had a very interesting theory on why the cruising community in Georgetown is so regimented:

I have a Scottish friend who said you know the Scottish farmers had it figured out a long time ago: If you put one too many cows on the field suddenly there is no milk production, there is fighting and all that. Now you take that one cow out of the field. So it means even in nature there is a cut off for the density of population. And what is that? You cannot actually see it. It is not something that can be quantitated and I think that on land when we have cities you have put too many cows in that field. And so, if cows show that what makes you think humans would not? Right? So, it has to happen to humans and so it is the fighting and the oh and all that stuff changes so to me what happens out cruising and in island communities is more the natural, life and we created the artificial by putting too many cows in the field. And then you get all that stuff going on and it is not gonna be the natural. So now you get away from that and it is like ok, just take that one cow off the field and life goes back to normal. You know.

Tracy believes that, in other areas, cruisers are leading more of that natural life, with not too many cows in the field. That is why cruisers in those areas are friendly and helpful and will not show signs of that elbow fighting culture we see on land. So with 400 cruising boats in Georgetown we again have put “too many cows in one field” which shows in cruisers trying to regulate and control each other. So maybe it is an issue of carrying capacity, the technical term for Tracy’s theory.

Because of the nice weather and easy accessibility, Georgetown is also the destination for a lot of cruisers who just want to escape the cold weather up north. According to Tracy, the cold weather up north is what creates a lot of cruisers. Georgetown is as far as these cruisers will go. Some of them motor the whole way over just to get there, drop their anchor and stay at “Camp Georgetown” for a couple of months before returning back home for the summer. Are they cruisers? Some of the long term cruisers would argue that even though yes technically maybe, to them they are not really cruisers. Here are Joe’s thoughts on this subject:

What you see here (in Georgetown), the majority of these boats they come up and down every year. They come from the States and they take their boat back in the summer and

leave it or whatever they do. And then come back down the next year. They are cruisers but they are not the long distance cruisers. Right. They are cruisers in their own mind, but this is as far as they go. Out there is called the dark side. And most of these cruisers do not like overnights. They will do an overnighter from the States to here, cause it's the easiest way and the only way you can do it. But that's the only (cruising) they will do.

Power Cruisers and Sail Cruisers

When I began this study, I specifically wanted to compare power cruisers and sailors. One of the aspects I was interested in was whether or not power cruisers experience community as sail cruisers do. I also had two other research questions dedicated to comparing power cruisers and sailors:

- Are there antecedent or personality differences between sailors and power cruisers?
- Are power cruisers part of a subculture such as that of sailing ocean cruisers?

Throughout the course of my data collection, I continually changed my view on this topic. I had designed my study in a way that I would get two different sets of data that would enable me to make the comparison between power cruisers and sail cruisers. One set of data came from the interview questions themselves. I incorporated several questions that asked the cruisers directly about the differences. For example, I would ask cruisers if they would make a difference between power cruisers and sail cruisers. I also asked about the community aspect. The other set of data came from my direct interviews with power cruisers. I thought that if I noticed that this group answered some of the questions distinctly different from the sail cruisers, I could conclude that there was a difference. It was difficult for me to find true power cruisers. After my trip to Marathon, I had finally interviewed three of them. All three were on trawlers. This new piece of information made me believe that maybe there were three cruising groups: power cruisers, trawlers and sailors. However, through some in depth member checks and some further investigations on the topic (such as in my following trip to Georgetown), I discarded that idea

rather quickly. What follows here are my conclusions on power cruisers and sailors based on the data.

According to one cruising couple, there are three main groups in power cruisers: There are the sport fishing boats, the mega yachts and there are trawlers. If we stick to the definition of a cruiser as owning the boat and living aboard, we can quickly see that neither sport fishing yachts nor mega yachts would be considered power cruisers. Sport fishermen do not live on their boats. Owners of mega yachts usually have a crew that will drive the boat for them and also do not live aboard. This point was also made by Suzie, who cruises on a trawler. She was one of my member checks. Here is what she had to say:

We cruise in the 8 to 9 knot range, but some cruise at 15 knots. When you get to the mega yachts that cruise in the 20 knot range, they usually have a full time crew that moves the boat and then the owner flies in for a few days. I don't really consider these folks cruisers. I think that it is a different mindset altogether. We really haven't met many of what I would call true power cruisers actually cruising. I think that since they can go so fast, for them the objective is 'being there,' 'not the getting there.'

Most power cruisers are on what is called a trawler. Trawlers are very spacious inside and cruise at about the same speed a sailing boat would. Some power cruisers now are on power catamarans, which are just now coming on the market. So the only true power cruisers are basically on trawlers or a power catamaran. One of the sources I used to finally arrive at this conclusion is member checks. I also asked this question to a cruising couple that is well known and respected in the cruising community. Here is an excerpt from the e-mail they sent me:

If your criteria for identifying a cruising boat requires its occupants to be living aboard for a good chunk of the year, then you'll probably not find a lot of differences between cruisers on trawlers and cruisers on sailboats. You might determine on average that trawler people are older and better off than sailboat people, but we'd be wary of making any broad generalizations. Many trawler owners were former sailors who made the switch to power when their health, agility, and comfort expectations demanded the transition and their pocketbooks allowed it. Other trawler owners are people who took up boating later in life and did not have the time or inclination to learn how to sail.

The average age of the cruisers in Georgetown last winter was 58. In the early '90's, according to Charlie Wing (author of "The Liveaboard Report"), the average age was 43. If

the cruising population continues to age, we expect that the proportion of cruisers on trawlers will increase (the sample of cruisers Wing surveyed did not contain any trawler owners -- virtually all cruisers 15 years ago were on sailboats). In any case, we believe that most cruisers in a popular cruising destination such as Georgetown, regardless of whether they're on sailboats or trawlers, would consider themselves to be all part of the same cruising community.

The overwhelming majority of cruisers are on sailboats. A study by one of the cruisers confirmed this finding:” *When we surveyed the cruising fleet in Georgetown, Bahamas, last winter (2006), only 12% of the boats were trawlers.*” So out of the 400 cruisers in Georgetown only about 40 were power cruisers. The figures were very similar in March 2007. In more remote locations than Georgetown, the percentage is even less. Because power cruisers rely on their engines as a sole means of getting them from point A to point B, they are tied to fuel supplies. Hence, they cannot go to the remote places a sailboat could reach. So there is a difference between power cruisers and sail cruisers in terms of the way they get from point A to point B. A sail cruiser uses the wind to his advantage and a power cruiser lets the boat drive him. He just turns the key. No wonder I had such a hard time accessing power cruisers! There just proportionally are a lot less of them, and it makes sense why. Getting anywhere on a trawler is a lot more costly than on a sailing boat, because you have to pay for the fuel. The longer the distance, the more costly it is. So there might also be a difference in how affluent power cruisers are as opposed to sail cruisers. However, this is a finding that I am very careful with, since some of the sailing vessels are priced close to what a mega yacht would cost. And just because a sail cruiser can use the wind does not mean he necessarily has to because of financial constraints.

The majority of power cruisers are former sailors. In fact, even in the sample of power cruisers in my study, all but one power cruiser just recently made the switch from a sailing vessel to a trawler. Two reasons came up for making the switch from a sailing boat to a trawler: age and comfort.

Age:

A lot of sail cruisers change to trawlers when they get older. Earl for example has a lot of cruising friends that switched over because sailing was too physically demanding for them:

We have several cruising friends who have converted from sailboats to trawlers because of health issues.

Linda and Earl were the only power cruisers I interviewed that were on a trawler from the beginning. They also agreed that most cruisers as they get older might switch to a trawler:

Linda: There is a difference. But I don't think its attitude wise or community wise. There is not really any difference. Ryan: Now that is a question you wanna ask Luke. Because he was a sailboater and now is on a powerboat. And what you find is that a lot of people as they get older you just don't have the physical ability and agility. I mean you look at some of these boats. To get into them you have to climb over the railings and stuff. You have to climb up over that. Our boat has a swim platform and a door and you just walk in. And then when you are sailing you are hauling sails...

John also agrees that as cruisers get older there is usually a progression from sailing vessels to trawlers:

But as they get older perhaps they don't want to go as far ...Guy: (jumps in) you don't have the physical ability anymore to handle all the line and rigging... it becomes much more demanding on your body and as you get older you start thinking about you know toning things down like cut the mast off and start motoring.

Comfort:

Because of the way they are built, trawlers are more spacious than sail boats. In addition, they have more conveniences and comforts than a sail boat would. So some cruisers change over to trawlers because they want that extra comfort. Nancy, for example, switched from a sailing boat to a trawler because she is now cruising with her two little kids. So a trawler offers more security and comfort for them:

Before, we had a sailboat but since we had the boys we went over to a powerboat. I think once they get older and their understanding is better and their skills are better and they can be of help, we will probably switch back to a sailboat... Well, you have much more of a living space. We can keep the boys quite contained. We have a back deck area that we can pretty much close off and we know they will be fine. We are still watching them but it is

not like they have to be life jacketed. So it adds to the security and ease of what we do. There are three bedrooms and we have a TV with a DVD player on board.

So the majority of power cruisers are former sailors who switched to a trawler because of age, or a wish for more comfort. Some long term cruisers also change the way they cruise as they get older. They motor more, because hoisting the sails up every time is very demanding. They also might not feel as comfortable anymore to go long distances. Cruisers who cruise that way oftentimes also think about the switch to a trawler.

Finding personality differences between power cruisers and sailors does not make much sense knowing that the vast majority of trawler cruisers are former sailors. This is very interesting because outside of the cruising community, differences in personality and values between power boaters and sailors are quite strong. There are definitely stereotypes for each group. In fact, when I asked some of the cruisers about the differences between power and sail cruisers, they would answer with very strong opinions about power boaters. For example, sailors are more about simplicity and living with nature. Power boaters are more about going to marinas and nice restaurants. They are loud and like to party. They dock instead of anchoring out. However, most of these characteristics are only true for recreational power boaters and do not hold the same value in the cruising community. When asked if there were differences between power cruisers and sail cruisers when it comes to community, Catherine answered as follows:

I think not really because now they have got so many power cruisers that are capable of going the same distance that sail cruisers used to only be able to go. But now we have many more all weather trawlers that can make the distance as sail boaters could only make before. And especially when you get into the cruising family there is really not much difference. I have often heard it said, it didn't matter what you did before (cruising), what I did before, it is what we are doing now. The only difference between you and me is the size of our boat. But we are still doing the same thing.

Jochen also agreed that in the cruising community, there is no difference between power cruisers and sailors:

There is a big sense of community among both power cruisers and sailors. You know and you get together and everybody is an expert in something.

So instead of dividing cruisers into the rigid power/ sailor division, I think a better concept for studying cruisers is sub-groups within the cruising community. The concept of sub groups would allow for a more in depth investigation of cruisers than just the division between power and sail cruisers. Yes, power cruisers would be one of the sub groups. But the cruising community can further be grouped into long-term and short-term cruisers, East Coast cruisers and West Coast cruisers, and there are seasonal and full time cruisers. There are social cruisers and cruisers that just want solitude. There are different interest groups. When I asked Tracy about sub groups in the cruising community, she painted a good picture of how fluid the groups in the cruising community are:

If there are a number of sail boaters and power boaters, the power boaters might be together and might still have the sail boaters come along. But it is also what we have in common. Sailors we talk about all that sailing stuff and the power boaters are bored and when the power boaters talk about their engines and stuff the sailors are bored. But there will be overlap. We all go to the weather seminar cause we all need to know that. So then there is definitely the ham radio people. And you still are gonna have the very social people and then you have the ones that are just wanting to be out islands. People who only want to go to the out islands are not even here now. I much more enjoyed the Bahamas when I was out there alone and snorkeling and looking for conch. I had a much better time out there.

Research Question 7: Specialization

The following questions investigate the concept of recreation specialization:

- Are there multiple ways of entry into the sailing subculture, as Aversa (1986) suggested? If so, do they lead to different specializations based on those experiences?
- Are there gender differences?
- Are sailors more specialized than motor boaters as suggested by Donnelly (1986)

Because these questions are very specific and straightforward I will divert from the format of themes and sub themes and instead answer them directly. When I set up this study, I

theoretically grounded it within the frame of recreation specialization. Again, recreation specialization suggests that recreationists move along a continuum from the general to the specific. The more specialized they get in one activity the less time recreationists spend on other activities. Donnelly et al (1986) applied this concept to boating suggesting that there are two main groups: power boaters and sailors. He further suggested that within each group boaters progress from day sailors to cruisers to racers. According to his model then racers should be more specialized than cruisers. Following Bryan's theory of specialization Donnelly's model would further suggest that most cruisers have progressed to cruising from various day or weekend boating experiences.

Progression:

I found partial evidence for Donnelly's model. Overall cruisers did start out on smaller weekend type of boats or even Hoby cats and over the years progressed to bigger and bigger boats. It was a desire to go further, spend longer times on the water and be more comfortable while doing so that lead these cruisers to buy bigger and bigger boats and eventually cruise full time.

Gender Differences

However, there is a major gender difference. Most women that I talked to had never sailed before they met their partners. It was their partners who introduced them to sailing. Rachel was one of these women:

My husband sailed in college. He always wanted to have a boat. So about 20 years ago we got an 18 foot sailboat. And then we went to a 23 foot and then a 30. We took little weekend trips and stuff. He taught me everything. I did not do any boating before I met him. Unfortunately I like it as much as he does!

Suzie shared a very similar story:

My husband had sailed as a teenager and when we first dated we borrowed a sunfish. That was really my first introduction pretty much to sailing. We lived on a waterfront

community, a canal community, that opened into the Laguna Madre, which is between the shore of Texas and the barrier islands. So we had lots of room to sail. And then you get a 14 foot and then a 16 foot and then a 26 foot. The 26 foot was the first one that had an engine at all, even a little outboard on it. So before we would have to sail even out of the slip and everything. And then the 26 foot had a little cabin, you could sleep on it. Not something you wanna do, but you could. Very primitive. And then we met some people that had bigger boats. So of course we wanted to go along with them, well then we got a 33 foot boat that had a bathroom and a shower and a galley and you know things that you could stay on for a weekend really more. And then Dave started talking about cruising and well you know let me think.

Suzie gave a very good account of the progression of boats some cruisers go through and how often women have very little or no experience sailing before they met their partner. In fact, a lot of the women had never sailed before they started cruising! Here are the words of Shannon, who after a lot of praying agreed that she would go cruising with her husband and daughter:

Our daughter and I went on the boat with him and left a month later and other than having a small powerboat years before and been out sailing twice with him I did not know anything. I did not know port from starboard, so it was quite the experience.

The two stories of these women highlight yet another gender difference in cruising, namely the fact that it is mostly the man who has the dream to go cruising. A lot of the women I talked to showed some hesitance at first when confronted with the idea to sell everything and go cruising full time. This is a huge issue because both partners need to enjoy the lifestyle equally as well, or it will not work. In that sense, cruising can make or break a marriage. If it works, it makes a marriage stronger. Joe told me his personal story how he started cruising with a partner:

The thing about it is the women are in it because they love their man...so they let him choose. This is a man's sport. It can be a woman's sport but it is a man's sport. I started off with a partner and seven years later she wanted to go back and do the picket fence and stuff but I didn't. I wasn't ready for that. I would be a very unhappy person sitting at home. So we split up. We are still the best of buddies but she likes her lifestyle and I like mine.

Women are hesitant to go cruising because they do not want to leave behind their social ties such as families, children and grandchildren, or friends and coworkers. Cantrell (2001) studied this issue in depth. She interviewed and surveyed 107 women. Out of these women 78%

had little or no sailing experience. This finding again supports the fact that there are definite gender differences in the way people enter into the cruising subculture. A full 80% of the women whose partners proposed the cruising life were initially resistant to the idea of living on a boat. Out of these, 100% reported experiencing an enormous increase in their overall happiness and life satisfaction because of the change they eventually made! An amazing 84% of the women who had returned to land are now cruising again. This demonstrates that the majority of women, once they chose the lifestyle, like it equally as well as their partner. Cantrell (2001) gives voice to one of the women who stated:

It would have been so easy for me to choose not to go cruising. My partner and I were not married, I had a career I loved, a circle of friends I adored, and no shortage of things to do on land. I thought to myself there is no way that lifestyle can compete. But I have to tell you, when I took the helm on our first overnight passage and the moon was full and the ocean was like a pond, I felt more in touch with a higher power than I can explain. Something happened out there that I can't explain. I am a better person for making this change and my partner and I are a healthier couple (pg.35).

Cantrell wrote up her findings in a book called: "Changing Course: A woman's guide to choosing the cruising life," hoping to help women make this lifestyle choice.

So what factors influence whether or not a woman will enjoy the cruising life? A lot of couples explained how cruising requires a special relationship with your partner. In order to live with each other day in and day out in tight quarters, couples need to be able to not only love each other but also respect their partner. They have to be able to trust each other completely. A lot of couples that might survive on land would not survive the cruising lifestyle. Here are the words of Franzi, who cruises with her husband:

One of my colleagues said to me: You are going to be on your boat for seven months. You will be on board 24 hours a day for seven days a week. How do you do it? When I am driving in a car for three hours with my husband we argue!

On land, each partner can basically live an individual life or escape to the bar or drive around. Tracy, like other women, took up cruising because of her partner's dream. However,

right before they took off cruising they split up, leaving her alone on the boat. She described to me in detail how she had this crunch feeling in her stomach and felt very uncomfortable taking the boat out by herself. It forced her to work through what it takes for a woman to feel comfortable on a boat. She studied gender differences and ended up founding and operating a sailing school for women for 17 years. In her opinion, women who do not feel comfortable cruising feel so because it is the man's dream to go cruising. So he is the one that creates the environment on the boat. From her own experience and studies she has found that men and women need different things to feel comfortable:

So I had a very successful sailing school for women for 17 years and most of my students were women who were already out there sailing with their partners. OK. Some of them had been sailing for 20 years and still did not feel comfortable. It is not about men not wanting to teach them. Men think differently. They are not aware of the needs of their partner. A man's reality is different than a woman's reality ok. The man is usually the one in charge of the reality on the boat, in charge of the environment. So he is gonna create the environment that works for him. And thinks that the woman should just fit into that environment. But the way that he figures things out is by going and doing it. And he will want to leave the sails up right up to the point where they pull into the anchorage and worry about getting the fenders out and getting the lines out once they get there at the last minute. Women want to think about it in advance and some women would tell me yeah he wants to sail right into the harbor and then he is yelling how come you don't have the fenders out yet? Well I am still doing this. And there is all this chaos happening. So the man likes to go and figure it out as he is doing it and women like to know in advance why something happens. So a guy says well you don't need to know the why just the what! But for a woman a "what" is meaningless. Well pull on that line but they don't really know what it does. The men if they tell another man what to pull they will figure out the why. But tell a woman why and she figures out the what. Right. So if a man is creating the environment he just gets on board and goes. And the woman says you know I don't really understand what is going on because I do not have the why. A woman the other day told me a story she had been sailing with her partner and decided to take a sailing course and the instructor told her but you already know what you are doing. But she did not know that she knew what she was doing because she did not understand the why. Women would very often come to me and have the skills but not have the confidence. Because they could do this and that but there was gaps in their knowledge and gaps in their understanding. And if there are gaps they don't know if the gap is this big or this big and they think they can fall into the hole of that gap. And they think all kinds of things can happen if there is a gap there.

Tracy is now a full time cruiser again and gives work shops in Georgetown on women in cruising. Women need different types of information to feel comfortable. A lot of cruising couples fail because the man is unaware of the needs of his partner to feel comfortable and knowledgeable.

Multiple Ways of Entry:

The other reason why I only found partial evidence for Donnelly's (1986) model is the fact that some cruisers did not follow that progression at all. They had never owned a boat before. Never sailed any sized vessel before. They went straight into the cruising lifestyle, without any prior knowledge or skills. Jerry is one of those cruisers. He just wanted the challenge of cruising:

I went to buy a bulldozer for the company I was working for at an auction and they had a boat there. I put a bid on it and nobody put a bid on it and next thing I know it was sold to me. I had never been on a boat in my life before. So I put the boat in the water and sailed it on Lake Ontario. Taught myself by doing it. When I took the boat out on the lake I had never sailed before in my life.

Almost everybody in the cruising community knows somebody like Jerry who is just out there living the cruising life without any previous experience. John and Jackie told me the story of a couple that was on vacation in Miami and ran into a cruiser who offered to take them over to the Bahamas. They liked it so much that they went back, sold their house and are now out there cruising.

I have to conclude that the data gathered from the 25 interviews I conducted, during the course of this study, might show more support for Aversa's (1986) model of different entries into the sailing subculture. That being said, it should be mentioned here that cruising, because it is a lifestyle, is distinctively different from weekend sailing or racing. I think cruising as a lifestyle aside, Donnelly's model might hold true for recreational boaters. However, it cannot be applied, as such, to cruising as a way of life. Because of the lifestyle and cruising state of mind, attributes cruising is in a category by itself.

Full time cruisers come from all walks of life: some have never owned a boat before and some cruisers have captain's licenses or raced every weekend. Cruising was not always the next logical step in a progression but rather a lifestyle choice these people made.

Are sailors more specialized than power boaters, as Donnelly et al predicted?

There is again a difference between recreational boaters and cruisers I believe. Generally speaking yes. A sailor has more specialized skills and equipment (i.e. sails). He or she has to be able to use the wind efficiently and handle the sails well. A power boater can just turn the key and go, no matter what the wind does. Driving a power boat does not require as many specialized skills. One cruiser said it this way: " *You have to drive a sailing boat, a power boat drives you.* "

However does that same dichotomy hold true in the cruising community? Again, I believe the answer is no. As was established in earlier paragraphs, a power cruiser is for the most part a retired sailor. So he or she still knows how to use the sails, knows how to use the wind, he has done it for several years before he switched over to a trawler. What about specialized equipment? Sails aside, all cruisers have a tremendous amount of specialized cruising equipment on board. All cruisers have radars, chart plotters, depth meters, and water makers, different ways to generate energy such as wind generators or solar panels. And so on. Because of the amount of specialized cruising equipment cruisers carry on board, no matter what type of cruising boat they are on, it would be hard to label one type as more specialized than the other.

Summary

This study aimed at investigating the meanings cruisers attach to their cruising experience. Initially, this study set out to compare cruising experiences between power cruisers and sail cruisers. In answering the initial research questions a more complex picture of the cruising experience developed. Cruising for one meant escaping the fast-paced, work-centered lifestyle of modern day life on land. Cruising in stark contrast is a simpler lifestyle, that is defined by a

slower pace, independence and self-determination. Cruisers defined themselves as travelers and shared a special relationship to the sea. The data collected throughout this study suggested that cruising adds substantially to the physical as well as emotional well being of cruisers. Cruising was described as a healthier lifestyle. It allows cruisers to spend time together as a family or couple. Cruising kids benefited from the cruising life through an increase in maturity and responsibility.

Power cruisers and sail cruisers were found to share the same cruising community. This cruising community was compared to a family. It is characterized by a strong sense of camaraderie and trust. The cruising community lives for the most part on unstructured social interactions, with one big exception: Georgetown.

Cruisers were also found not to differ as much in specialization as recreational power and sail boaters do. Finally, it was determined that the “simple” power/sailor division in recreational boating could not be applied as such to cruisers. Instead, the concept of sub-groups within the cruising community was suggested.

Table 4-1. Summary of Data Themes

| Interview Theme | Themes | Subthemes |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Motivation | 1. Freedom | 1.a Being your own Person 1.b Challenge |
| | 2. Travel | 1.c Escape 1.d Pace |
| | 3. Love of the Sea | |
| Relation with Marine Environment | 1. Mother Ocean | 1a. Respect 1b. Leave no Wake |
| | 2. Spirituality and Healing | |
| | 3. Beauty | |
| Benefits | 1. Health | 1.a Healthier Lifestyle 1.b Psychological Well Being |
| | 2. Time Together | 3.a Mastery of Challenges 3.b Maturity |
| | 3. Personal Growth | |
| Cruising Experience | 1. Freedom | 1.a Respect 1.b Independence |
| | 2. Lifestyle | 2.a Community 2.b Being on the Move |
| Cruising Community | 1. Camaraderie | 1.a Pay it Forward 1.b Shared Experiences |
| | 2. Family | 2.a Being with like People 2.b Trust |
| | 3. Georgetown | |

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Throughout the course of this study, 25 power and sail cruisers were interviewed between December of 2006 and March of 2007. Interviews were conducted at several marinas and anchorages along the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW) in Florida: Boot Key Harbor, Marathon; Vero Beach Municipal Marina and Melbourne yacht club. Georgetown, Bahamas was also visited because of the special status it has in the cruising community, as a key destination for many cruisers.

The purpose of this study was to describe the meanings cruisers attach to the cruising lifestyle, the benefits they receive from it, and the factors that motivate them to pursue this lifestyle. Informed by concepts such as Flow and recreation specialization, this study further set out to compare power cruisers and sail cruisers. In the process of analyzing the transcripts, individual stories of the different cruisers unfolded. Several themes developed as a result of coding and comparing the 25 transcripts. These themes were re-coded, re-conceptualized and re-checked several times.

Following the tradition of grounded theory, and more specifically the constant comparison method, this chapter is aimed at revisiting the literature and the initial concepts that guided this study. New literature and models will be added where suitable to support themes and concepts that emerged from the data. Integrating these new concepts with existing ones, a grounded theory model of ocean cruisers is suggested. This chapter is divided in two sections. The first section deals with recreation specialization and the second one with the cruising lifestyle.

Specialization Theory

Overall the findings of my study suggest that a leisure social world reconceptualization of recreation specialization might be more applicable to cruising than Bryan's 1977 model. Model 5.2 shows a social world reconceptualization of recreation specialization. This model is based on the work of Unruh (1979) and later Ditton, Loomis & Choi (1992). The model graphically displays a general leisure social world of boating which people can access freely. It includes recreational boaters as well as cruisers but excludes any commercial boaters. Three arrows point from that general social world of boating to smaller leisure social worlds. The social world of recreational power boaters and the social world of recreational sail boaters both split off the general social world of boaters. The third sub world that splits off is that of ocean cruisers as being examined for example in this study. The model further shows various sub worlds that diverge from the social worlds of recreational power boaters, recreational sail boaters and cruisers. The social worlds of recreational power boaters and sailors are divided into sub worlds based on the work of Donnelly in 1986 work, which is revisited below. As such, the sub worlds of day boaters, cruisers (meaning recreational cruisers as opposed to the ocean cruisers studied in this write up), and racers all split off from the sub worlds of recreational sailors and recreational power boaters. The social world of cruisers is distinctly different from the two sub worlds of recreational power boaters and sailors, since cruisers have made boating their lifestyle. The activity is not just part of their lifestyle anymore, it is their lifestyle. The sub worlds that split off from the social world of cruising are suggestions based on my observations during the course of this study. The following section revisits the concept of recreation specialization and compares findings from this study with previous literature.

Early Conceptualization

As stated earlier in chapter two, this concept was developed by Bryan in 1977. Bryan defined specialization as “a continuum of behavior from the general to the particular, reflected by equipment and skill used in the sport and activity setting preferences.” He argued that as an individual becomes more specialized in an activity, skill level, specialized equipment used, and setting preferences will increase. The more specialized the recreation participant is, the more central the activity is to his or her lifestyle. The activity is engaged in at the expense of others. I have reviewed some of the literature in more detail in chapter two. As stated in the results section in chapter four, the data only partially supported Bryan’s conceptualization of recreation specialization. For example only some cruisers followed the progression described from the general to the specific and from novice to expert. Other cruisers would buy a cruising boat because it allowed them to lead an alternative lifestyle. These cruisers learn as they go or take quick crash courses to learn. Women especially did not follow that progression. Instead they were introduced to cruising and boating by their partners. I discuss the progression in boating in more detail in a following section, as it is a major part of specialization theory.

Specialization in Boating

Donnelly et al (1986) applied Bryan’s conceptualization to boating. The researchers developed a hierarchy of boating sub-activities from day sailors (the least specialized group) to cruisers and racers (the most specialized group). Boaters were further divided into power boaters and sailors. Donnelly et al compared degree and range of specialization, degree referring to how specialized an individual is, and range referring to how many sub activities the person is involved in. They found evidence that racers in both groups were the most specialized, with sail racers being more specialized than

power racers. Day boaters were the least specialized. Range of specialization, however, was not found to decrease with higher levels of specialization, meaning racers were still involved in over night cruising and day boating. Here again it seems as if findings from my study slightly contradict this model. Cruisers did not necessarily follow that progression from day boater to cruiser to racer. As I stated above, some cruisers went directly into cruising without ever having even been on a day sail. Other cruisers were avid racers before they went into cruising as a lifestyle. They switched because they wanted to do more boating but the hassles of finding crew to race made it too stressful to compete. I would even venture to say that cruising has the highest degree of specialization and not racing. Cruisers have to have very specialized equipment and skills. The activity is not just central to their lifestyle, it is their lifestyle. Also, within the sub world of cruising, the distinction between power and sail boaters is not as important as both are equally specialized. This further contradicts Donnelly et al's model, which suggested that sailors are more specialized than motor boaters.

Progression

Kuentzel and Heberlein (2006) examined the progression over time from beginner to expert as suggested by the recreation specialization concept. Using a longitudinal research design, the researchers were the first to actually investigate boat ownership over time, as previous research was limited to cross sectional designs. Kuentzel and Heberlein studied boaters in the Apostle Island National Seashore and followed the boaters from 1975 to 1997. Results indicated that progression in boating is the exception rather than the rule. Most boat owners showed constant low levels of casual participation over time or actually decreased their boating activities! These findings challenged the notion of recreation specialization that participants in a specific activity naturally progress over

time. Most boaters in Kuentzel and Heberlein's study never progressed to big water cruising or racing. Also, their perceived knowledge and skills did not mature. My study duplicates Kuentzel and Heberlein's findings in that progression was not the norm. This also meant that there are multiple ways of entry into cruising. Some people progress from smaller to bigger boats to eventually full time cruising, others race and then cruise and still others buy a boat and go cruising without prior experience.

The finding Kuentzel and Heberlein reported, along with the pattern suggested by the data collected in this study, created the need to reevaluate how suitable Bryan's 1977 concept of recreation specialization is for boating.

In this study, cruisers, overall, did show some progression over time from smaller to bigger boats and eventually full-time cruising. However, some of them had raced before they went cruising, contradicting the progression from day sailors to cruisers to racers. They switched to cruising when racing became too stressful. Others had never owned a boat before and went straight into cruising without knowing anything about boating. Their preparation consisted of reading books and talking to people at the local marina. Still others bought a boat specifically for cruising but did take the time to learn on it before going out into blue waters. This group of cruisers usually also took classes to prepare them for cruising.

Out of the cruisers that actually followed the progression from smaller to bigger boats, most of them were males. The data coming out of the 25 cruiser interviews suggested that there is a substantial gender difference in boating participation. As stated earlier, most women were introduced to cruising and boating by their partners. It was not uncommon to hear from women that they had never sailed before cruising. Power

cruisers were also found to be equally as specialized as sail cruisers in this sample of 25 cruisers. Most power cruisers were former sailors and hence know how to sail. They used the same knowledge of navigation and reading the weather. They had equal amounts of specialized equipment on board. So what do these findings mean for the concept of recreation specialization in boating in general and cruising in particular? It seems that the traditional conceptualizations are not very suitable in boating. It was argued in chapter four, that segmentation into cruising sub-groups seems more suitable for cruising. Therefore, a conceptualization of boating specialization based on the concept of social worlds is suggested and displayed in model 5.2 It is based on the social world concepts by Unruh (1979) and Ditton, Loomis and Choi,(1992) whose work is described in the following section.

Leisure Social Worlds

The concept of leisure social worlds was briefly introduced in the literature review section in chapter two. This section will elaborate more on what has been established so far. Again, the concept of social worlds is based on the works of Unruh (1979) who defined social worlds this way, "an internally recognizable constellation of actors, organizations, events and practices, which have coalesced into a perceived sphere of interest and involvement for participants."

Strauss (1984) argued that, in order to study social worlds, we should study the activities, sites, technologies and organizations as well as communications and symbols of the particular social world. He further stated that social worlds segment into various sub-worlds based on four different conditions. Sub-worlds can develop around *spatial distinctions* (such as a geographic location), *objects* (such as different types of cruising vessels), *technology and skill* (such as certain modes of communication as, for example,

ham radio users), *ideology* (such as the belief of what it means to be a true cruiser) and *intersections* (meaning some cruisers could pick and choose from two or more different sub-worlds to create their own).

Strauss further suggested three ways sub-worlds can segment off from parent worlds: bud off, splitting off and intersecting. Using new technologies or activities, people might start to feel they are slightly different than the parent sub-world and slightly segment, or *bud off*. When the difference between the new sub-world and the old sub-world is relatively big in magnitude, as, for example, in having a whole new ideology, the new sub-world is said to *split off*. Lastly sub-worlds can *intersect* to form a new sub-world.

Unruh (1980) identified four distinct features of personal involvement in social worlds. First, entry into a social world is accessible, free and voluntary. A second feature of social worlds is partial involvement. An individual is usually only part of a sub-world and not aware of the totality of activities available in that social world. Thirdly, an individual can be involved in several social worlds. A fourth feature is mediated interaction. Most of the time social worlds lack a formal structure. The bigger the social world is the more it relies on mediated interaction such as magazines, internet sites, and the like.

Unruh (1979) categorized participants in social worlds as strangers, tourists, regulars and insiders. He measured the involvement through orientation, relationships, experiences, commitment. A stranger is identified by a complete detachment from the activity, disorientation and superficial relationships. On the other end of that spectrum, is an insider who identifies with the sub-world, creates experiences, has intimate

relationships with other insiders of that sub-world, and shows commitment to the sub-world through recruiting.

Ditton, Loomis and Choi (1992) reconceptualized Bryan's theory of recreation specialization based on the ideas of social worlds. The authors defined recreation specialization as "a process by which recreation social worlds segment and intersect into new recreation sub worlds, the subsequent ordered arrangements of these sub worlds and their members along a continuum." Based on that social world construct of recreation specialization, the authors developed a series of eight propositions of recreation specialization, summarized on page 11 in chapter two of this study.

Ditton et al (1992) found support for their social world reconceptualization of specialization. They hypothesized that more specialized sub-groups of fisher men would show more resource dependency, mediated interaction and attach more importance to non activity specific elements of the activity. The authors tested their hypotheses on salt water fishing stamp holders in Texas. The fishermen were divided into four different groups, based on frequency of participation in fishing throughout the last 12 months.

Applying the social world concept to specialization in boating (model 5.2) would mean there is a social world of boating, that people access freely and voluntarily and to the extend they wish. This world is the least specialized and is mediated through various boating related web sites, TV channels, magazines and stores such as West Marine. There are two sub worlds of recreational boaters: namely those that own sailing boats and those that own power boats. These two sub worlds further split off into the sub worlds of day boaters, overnight cruisers who pleasure cruise for a weekend, and racers. These sub worlds could intersect into new sub world such as for example the sub worlds of day

power boaters who just go out to fish. Cruising as a lifestyle choice is a distinctly different activity and as such does not “bud off”, “split off” or “intersect” with these other “recreational” sub- worlds. The sub-world of cruising is mediated by certain cruising websites such as latitudes and attitudes, the cruisers net and the like. It is mediated through organization like the Seven Seas Cruising Organization, and is made up of several sub-worlds that intersect. These sub worlds can further have their own magazines and web communities such as for example the power cruising magazine or trawler web community. One sub world consists of what I termed “snowbirds,” and refers to cruisers that migrate south in the winter time to escape the cold weather up north. They might stay in Florida or Georgetown over the winter and some of them might drop anchor and never change location until they move back up north where they cruise around in the summer months. Most of the snowbirds live aboard full time but will geographically only cruise a certain area. They migrate with the weather patterns. Within that sub group of snowbirds, there might be other groups that bud off, such as for example snowbirds that come down to Georgetown every winter, or power cruisers that come down the ICW in the fall.

Another sub group within the social world of cruisers consists of what I termed “long distance cruisers.” These people, as compared to the snowbirds, do not migrate with the seasons. They will not go up north again in the summer. They might spend years just cruising the Bahamas, or they might go further down the islands to South America and further. It should be noted here that this model is just a first attempt at a model of boating specialization based on social worlds and by no means meant to be exhaustive of the different potential sub worlds. Further research is needed to fully develop this concept and understand the different sub worlds.

A Grounded Theory Model of Cruising as a Lifestyle Process

The second part of this chapter examines the cruising lifestyle in more detail. Model 5.1 graphically displays the three parts of cruising as a lifestyle process. The first part is concerned with the pre-cruising stage and was termed “the dream.” This stage is defined by being critical to life on land, dreaming of a more satisfying lifestyle, and finally making it a goal to lead an alternative lifestyle, namely cruising. The cruising experience was termed “living the dream,” and is the most central feature of the model. The cruising experience is characterized by three different intertwining concepts, namely competence, community, and autonomy, all of which are described in later sections in more detail. More important than these three defining concepts however, is the fact that cruising was described as a vehicle, a means to achieve the different motives and goals such as freedom, travel, being with family, experiencing nature and so on. Cruising above all was further described as a simple lifestyle more in tune with the natural rhythms, which is depicted in the model by the biggest all encompassing circle termed: being on the water.” Being on the water means living in and with nature, respecting Mother Ocean and appreciating her force and power. It means living a sustainable life and being a minimalist instead of a consumer. The last part of the model is concerned with the benefits cruisers receive from this alternative lifestyle, namely physical health, psychological well being and an increased life satisfaction.

The Cruising Experience

Living the dream was the second part of model 5.1. This part is concerned with the cruising experience.

Cruising was described as a vehicle to lead a more self-determined life away from the pressures and stresses of everyday life on land. Cruising, as such, is not just an escape

in its traditional passive meaning of running away from something, but rather a means to purposefully create and seek out certain experiences in life. It is a conscious decision to actively pursue an alternative and more satisfying lifestyle. This finding replicates earlier studies. When MacBeth (1986) studied long term ocean cruisers in the Pacific in 1986, he concluded that cruising has a dual orientation. It is both critical and creative. It is critical in its orientation to modern society and creative in the sense that it is engaged in for its own sake and is intrinsically satisfying to the individual.

Iso-Ahola (1997) argued that seeking and escaping are the two fundamental dimensions of leisure. As such, cruisers escape certain dimensions of life and purposefully seek out others. It is an active process of creating optimal experiences. Cruising was seen as a vehicle to an alternative lifestyle with certain defining characteristics, such as the cruising community and its various characters. Chris Parker and Eileen Quinn were often named as two well known and respected characters in the cruising community. Chris Parker is an important figure because he is the weatherman and has a subscription service for cruisers and holds the weather seminar in Georgetown. Eileen Quinn was often identified as a cruiser who is also a songwriter and as such able to express the different aspects of the cruising experience. She is a respected entertainer in the cruising community because of her ability to authentically describe the true cruising feelings in her songs. She was a valuable source of insight into the cruising community, and exchanged several e mails with me. Excerpts from her songs will be used wherever suitable to triangulate my findings and reemphasize the points made.

The cruising community was found to be a central defining element of the cruising experience. For cruisers, the people they meet, the friends they make and the lasting

social ties they form are the most positive aspects of the cruising life. The friendships formed while cruising are lasting social ties. In a song called “Friends,” Eileen Quinn shares the feelings of many cruisers in stating that friends are what she takes away from cruising:

I am counting up what I have got to show for all these years afloat. A dog eared passport, a weathered face, a tired old boat,... and a couple of battle scars. Days of sparkling waters, nights of falling stars...I have got seashells, I got souvenirs, I got songs, I got photographs, I got memories, but mostly I've got friends. I know you by your sandals and your hair in need of a trim....And you will share a laugh or catch a line or lend me a spare part and always I will think of you when my eyes fall on this chart...

Cruising was described as a way of living in and with nature. Cruisers get the best water views available and enjoy the natural beauty of the ocean and the life it sustains. Cruising means living with the natural rhythms. Cruisers showed a deep respect and appreciation of the forces of Mother Ocean. The ocean was furthermore described as a place of healing and spirituality for women, allowing for introspection. Cruisers named passages and night sails as some of the times when contemplation was most often experienced. Eileen Quinn summarizes this relationship with the ocean and its spiritual effect best in a song called “The world and me:”

5 am. My turn at the helm. The sky above is a shimmering realm on an endless velvet sea. We glide along through the night. And I know how insignificant I am and somehow that seems just right. The wind like a lover whispers my name. The sun kisses the horizon a flame. The sun is coming up. Another day at sea. All is right with the world and me. Here and now this is just where I belong. Reaching silently into the dawn. Under a clear sky on a rolling sea where there is time and room enough for me. Smell of baking bread coffee strong and hot, there is nothing I want that I haven't got, and I can't think of any other way I would rather be greeting the day. While the sun is coming up...

Cruising was further described as a lifestyle that is defined by freedom, independence, and self reliance and offers cruisers a great sense of autonomy. MacBeth (1986), argued that “cruising is an affirmative process because it fosters a high level of

personal psycho-social development and an in depth experience of competence, independence and enjoyment.”

It was argued that cruising is a lifestyle that enables cruisers to be travelers on a limited budget and on their own schedule. Being a traveler meant to truly experience your surroundings, being able to stay in one location for extended amounts of time, getting to know the local cultures and exploring new environments. Despite being travelers and on the move, cruisers often expressed how easy it is to get comfortable in a place and as a result stay there for longer than anticipated. Georgetown, Bahamas was given as one example of a place where cruisers stay for extended periods of time. The anchorage in Georgetown is safe, and the town has all the amenities needed to live comfortably. The cruising community is organized and there are plenty of things to do each day. Eileen Quinn shares this experience of getting too comfortable in a place in a song called Tarpit Harbor:

Well the holding is good, the water is pretty clean. It is an easy dinghy ashore. And the French bread is fresh, the laundry is cheap. There is a well stocked hardware store. Feels so familiar almost like home, I can't quite remember what I left home for. Tarpit harbor sucks down my anchor and with it my will to be free. There is some that go sailing, I seem to go anchoring stuck in a muck this side of the sea. Monday there is movies, Tuesdays the potluck, Wednesdays I play volleyball. There is a luncheon on Thursdays, happy hour Fridays, Saturdays the market has got my favorite stall. Sundays I look at my list of boat projects...

To summarize, cruising was described as a vehicle to lead a more self-determined life, spend more time together as a couple or family, live in nature, travel, and create an autonomous life that is rewarding and satisfying.

Community- Social Capital Theory

As stated before, community was a major theme that developed throughout the course of this study. It is also shown in the model as one of the intertwining concepts

within the cruising community. For cruisers, meeting and being with other cruisers was one of the most positive aspects of the cruising experience. The cruising community is defined by a tremendous sense of camaraderie and strives on spontaneous get togethers. Cruisers help each other in any way they can, it is a code of conduct. They have trust in each other. The community theme is a major defining characteristic of the cruising experience. Social capital theory will shed some more light on this theme. According to Putnam (2000), the term social capital has independently been invented more than six times, the first time by L.J. Hanifan, in 1916, who was a practical reformer and state supervisor of Virginia schools. Portes (1998) shared this view by stating that “despite its current popularity, social capital does not embody and idea really new to sociologists” (p.2). Portes traced the roots of social capital back to Durkheim and Marx, or DeToqueville. Social capital theory is based on the belief that social connections are beneficial to the individual members of the community as well as non members. Humans strive better when bonded. Trust and reciprocity develop in communities where individuals get together on a regular basis and, therefore, build social capital. Communities high in social capital are characterized by less crime, higher life expectancy, higher life satisfaction, and seem to solve problems more efficiently.

MacBeth (1985) compared cruisers and ocean racers in their views on community, society and lifestyle. He found that while cruising was a lifestyle separated from mainstream society, racers were still deeply embedded in the value system of society. Racing to them was just something they do. Cruisers on the other hand, as stated earlier, have separated from society. According to Macbeth, freedom and autonomy are a main concern for them. Cruisers fear that a materialistic society will trap them. They fear being

dependent on others “in terms of both physical dependence as well as social psychological dependence on the infrastructure of society “(p.78). In stark contrast to this search for freedom and autonomy, cruisers “place high store on cooperation within the cruising community” (p.95). They value cooperation.

Through social connections, humans exchange resources and knowledge. These social connections sustain certain rules of conduct. The cruising community, as stated before, is also characterized by various codes of conduct, namely camaraderie and helping. According to Putnam (2000) “Networks of community engagement foster sturdy norms of reciprocity: I’ll do this for you now, in the expectation that you (or perhaps someone else) will return the favor” (p. 20). The cruising community is characterized by what Putnam calls “generalized reciprocity” (p.21). Generalized reciprocity is the confidence that in return for me helping you, somebody else will help me down the road. Cruisers know that, if in need, somebody will help them. This help is given without the expectation to receive a reward in return. As described earlier, it is more of a pay it forward philosophy. Cruisers have complete faith in this connection, almost to the extent of seeing it as something spiritual. They have social capital. Cruisers build social capital through various spontaneous get togethers such as dinners, sun downers, game nights, singing or beach pot lucks. For example, in Marathon, the cruising community organized a guitar raffle for a cruiser whose sailboat sunk. Marathon further has a smorgas boat, operated by people who are anchored out. The smorgas boat serves as an art taxi between the boats in the anchorage and the dock, and donated a week’s worth of salary to the cause of the sunk sailing vessel.

In Georgetown, any cruiser who is in trouble and calls for help on the cruiser's net in the morning can be sure that several cruisers will call in after the net offering their help and advice, or they will just hop in their dinghy and drive to the boat. In contrast to communities on land where social capital is built through regular interactions with the same group of people, cruisers might never see each other again. So how can they develop norms of reciprocity and trust? The cruising community is founded on the value of social ties. Cruisers realize that out there, all they have is each other. They foster a sense of community through shared beliefs and values, the exchange of boat cards, and making an effort to organize spontaneous activities and dinners. Because of this social cohesion, a cruiser will know what he or she can expect from another cruiser, even though they might have never met before. The cruising community does not place any value on what people have done in the past, their titles, wealth or achievement. It is not something that is talked about. Cruisers value and respect each other because of the shared values. Most cruisers never know each other's last names. It is all on a first name basis. Cruisers are further identified by their boat name and type of vessel. As an example, a cruiser calling into the cruiser's net in the morning in Georgetown, or calling another boat at an anchorage, would just use the boat name, such as "My Way (boat name of person called) this is Island Time" (person calling) or the like. The cruising life, by its very nature, is simplistic. It forces you to make do with few material possessions. For most cruisers, having few possessions signifies a sense of freedom.

Cruisers respect each other and the local cultures they encounter. Cruisers might volunteer their help in a local community by helping out teaching at a local school. One cruiser for example reported how she taught swimming for local kids in an island

community. In Georgetown, helping the local community is a structured event that happens every winter. The regatta committee will get together and decide what projects cruisers will work on for that year's cruising season. Cruisers have helped build benches and swing sets, fix the library and build stages in a park. As a result of the money and resources cruisers bring into the community, the local people in Georgetown are thankful and happy to "host" the cruisers each year and try to do everything to have them return. As an example, the owner of Exuma Market, the local grocery store in town, has made his store "cruiser friendly." He built a large dinghy dock right behind the market that cruisers can use for free. He also offers free water and mailboxes for cruisers. A lot of the local churches and businesses will also interact with the cruising community over the cruiser's net each morning.

Community- Communitas

As described above, cruisers experience great social equality, community and an intense feeling of togetherness. In cruising they create a space that is free from the structural roles and obligations of every day life in this post-modern society. This anti-structural sphere and the feelings of togetherness and community that evolve from it have been called communitas, which refers to an intense community spirit (Turner, 1969).

The term was first introduced by Turner to describe ritual and rites of passage. Turner described rites of passage as liminoid spaces, where individuals are "betwixt and between," they were no longer part of the society they previously belonged to, but had not yet been incorporated into the new society. In this period of transition, one's sense of identity dissolves to a degree. The liminoid space is characterized by ambiguity and openness to new self-understanding and behaviors. In recent years communitas has been

applied to certain leisure settings. Several studies have documented *communitas* in such settings as bus travel (Neumann, 1993), white water rafting trips (Arnould & Price, 1993), or raves (Trammachi, 2000). However, in contradiction to the temporary experience of *communitas* in leisure spaces described in these studies, cruisers experience *communitas* as part of the cruising way of life. The transition from land-based life to the cruising lifestyle could be described as a liminoid space opening up new possibilities of self-identification, being and becoming. Once the transition from post modern life to cruising is complete, cruisers become part of the cruising community, leaving this liminoid space and taking on the values and beliefs of the cruising community, which in turn allows them to experience *communitas*.

Physical and Psychological Well Being

This section is aimed at examining part three of the grounded theory model of cruising as a lifestyle process, namely the benefits received from it. Cruising was found to add substantially to the physical, emotional, and mental well being of cruisers. What attributes of the cruising life could explain these health benefits? In an effort to hopefully be able to gain some insight into human well being in general, some of the literature on health and well-being is addressed here.

The World Health Organization defines health in their constitution as:” a state of complete physical, mental and social well being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” According to that definition are cruisers healthy?

Cruisers, overall, are physically very healthy. For one, the pace of life is much slower than on land. Cruisers move with the natural rhythms of the environment they live in. Their lives are paced according to sunrises and sunsets, tides, and the weather instead of watches and deadlines. The cruising life is defined by a different type of stress than on

land. Cruisers furthermore have to stay physically active every day. They have to walk through town to get their laundry done, climb in and out of the dinghy, and up and down the companionway, walk the beach, snorkel and swim, walk to the grocery store, climb in and out of the V berth and so forth. They are active while being out in nature and in the sun. However, more than that, cruisers are also psychologically very healthy. The following section elaborates on the psychological well being of cruisers.

Self Determination Theory

The central premise behind self-determination theory is that human beings, when proactive, engaged and self-motivated, are psychologically well (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The more self determined and engaged a person is, the better his or her mental well being. Several studies have investigated contextual factors that either hinder or enhance self motivation and healthy psychological development. According to Ryan and Deci, these studies have shown that especially the innate psychological needs of competence, autonomy and relatedness are vital to well-being. When these three needs are met, human beings show enhanced self-motivation and well-being. By its very nature, cruising as a lifestyle process, allows for the needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness to be met, and so adds to general health and well being of cruisers.

Self Determination Theory: Autonomy

Cruising satisfies the need for autonomy in the sense that cruisers have to be self reliant. They have complete autonomy or control over their surroundings. Cruisers are in charge of their schedules, the locations they voyage to, the extent of the stay there, what provisions to buy and the like. Cruisers can be as secluded and autonomous as desired. They can choose anchorages in the out islands in complete solitude. Because of that complete autonomy and self-reliance that cruisers have by the vary nature of the cruising

lifestyle, cruisers described a sense of ingenuity as a key characteristic they all possess. Cruisers need to be able to be creative and modify or fix equipment if needed, repair the sails, repair the engine, fix the water maker and so on. For most cruisers being autonomous, which was labeled “being your own person,” and being independent was a major motivating factor and also brought a tremendous amount of satisfaction. Cruisers share a lot of values and I believe one of these is autonomy. They have all made a conscious decision to take ownership of their happiness and their lives by making a lifestyle change that would allow them to lead a more satisfying life. Going cruising was a goal for these people, and not just a dream of a better life. A lot of the cruisers explained, that a goal, as compared to a dream, is something you work toward. In fact, setting up five, ten or even 15 year plans to reach that goal was not uncommon.

Self Determination Theory: Competence

Here again, by its very nature, cruising facilitates feelings of competence. Cruisers reported an increase in self confidence based on the fact that they were confident in meeting the challenges this way of life brings with it. Cruising requires a lot of skills that can be mastered throughout the course of one’s cruising life. A cruiser needs to be able to successfully navigate a vessel from point A to point B. That requires an ability to read nautical charts, understand and know the weather, an ability to plan a course and so on. Sailors furthermore have to be able to use the wind to their advantage and be skillful in the use of sails. Cruisers need to be able to provision their boats successfully, which requires them to plan ahead and provision for extended periods of time without access to supermarkets. And even if an island has a supermarket, the provisions are usually limited to two kinds of meat and local fruits and vegetables. Furthermore, the process cruisers go through in making that lifestyle change, from dreaming of a different life, to figuring out

ways to make it work, setting the goal and working towards it to make it happen requires a certain degree of competence in taking your life in your own hands. As such, being able to successfully cruise requires a tremendous amount of competence, which in turn adds to human satisfaction and well being.

Self Determination Theory: Relatedness

As stated before, the cruising community is rich in social capital. Cruisers relate to each other because of shared, but separate histories and experiences, such as crossing the Gulf stream to go to the Bahamas, waiting for the weather, not being able to find a spare part and the like. Cruisers enjoy each others company because they share so many values. Putnam (2000), stated that, "social connectedness has also been identified as one of the most powerful determinants of our well being" (p. 326). He argues that social capital might physiologically stimulate people's immune system to fight disease and buffer stress. There is a tremendous amount of trust and camaraderie in the cruising community, which in turn helps cruisers relate to each other on a level not possible in a regular community on land. This relatedness, in turn, adds to their psychological health and well being, as suggested by self determination theory.

Other psychological resources that have been linked to psychological as well as physical well being are optimism, a sense of personal control, and the ability to find meaning in one's life (Taylor, Kemeny, Bower, Gruenewald, & Reed, 2000). Cruising, as a lifestyle choice, can foster a great sense of personal control. Cruisers, almost by nature, would have to be optimistic, given the uncertainty of this lifestyle. Especially for women, cruising has also been found to enhance the ability to find harmony and meaning in the world through spiritual experiences in nature.

Broaden-and-Build Theory

Frederickson (2001) further studied the role of positive emotions, such as optimism and a sense of personal control, but also emotions such as interest, contentment, pride, love and joy on health and optimal well being. In an effort to further enhance understanding of how emotions are linked to health and well being, Frederickson formulated a theoretical model she called the “broaden-and-build theory.” Frederickson argued that discrete positive emotions such as interest and contentment can broaden a person’s momentary thought action repertoire. Frederickson built on the idea that certain negative emotions evoke specific action tendencies such as flight or avoidance, by narrowing a person’s momentary thought action repertoire. Positive emotions, in contrast, expand the momentary thought action repertoire and hence build enduring social, intellectual and psychological resources.

According to the “broaden and build theory”, cruisers who experience the discrete positive emotions of interest might have the urge to go and explore more places and take in new information that expands the self. Similarly, joy would create the urge to play and socialize with other cruisers that in turn enhances social resources such as lasting social support, bond and attachment.

In summary, cruising adds to life satisfaction as well as physical and psychological well being. Self determination theory, as well as the broaden-and-build theory, helped to explain some of the factors within the cruising experience that affect human satisfaction and well being. Cruising has been described as a consciously chosen lifestyle that is engaged in to escape certain elements of life on land, as well as purposefully seek out certain elements that are intrinsically satisfying to the cruiser. The following section will

be an effort to summarize the factors that motivate the lifestyle choice, define the cruising lifestyle, and lastly characterize the positive outcomes of cruising.

To summarize, a grounded theory model of cruising as a lifestyle process was presented in model 5.1 . Its various parts were described and linked back to literature where suitable. The model showed that, at the most fundamental level, cruising is about forgetting and remembering. It is about seeking and escaping. It is creative and critical. Cruising is about escaping and forgetting the pressures on land, the fast paced life, the cold temperatures, the rat race, the excess, the overabundance, the consumption, and the elbow culture. It is about seeking out and remembering a better life with beautiful natural vistas, sunsets and sunrises, a slow pace, strong relationships between people, a life lived according to the natural rhythms. A life free from outside stressors, and only governed by autonomy and independence. Choosing this lifestyle means being part of the cruising community. It is a moving community that is strong in social capital, with its own codes of conduct, defined by a strong sense of camaraderie, trust, respect, and a belief in the connection between cruisers, which manifests itself in the pay it forward philosophy. Looking at the factors that most strongly define the cruising lifestyle, namely a self-dictated slower pace, living close to nature, being active, strong social ties (as manifested by the cruising community), autonomy, competence, and independence, it is easy to see why this lifestyle is so beneficial to human satisfaction, health, and well being. Cruisers are genuinely happy and satisfied with their lifestyle. They are physically active and have strong social ties. According to Putnam (2000), strong interpersonal relationships are one of the main predictors of life satisfaction, happiness and health. Cruisers further experience nature on a daily basis, and have time for self-reflection, contemplation and

following their creative urges and hobbies such as painting, shelling, spear fishing, snorkeling and swimming, reading or going for walks. For these cruisers, living that type of life was not just a dream, but rather a goal they consciously set and worked towards. The grounded theory model described the three parts of this lifestyle process. The first part, which we termed “the dream,” is concerned with being critical, forgetting and escaping the “old” life with all its defining characteristics. Cruisers leave this phase behind in an effort to find a more satisfying alternative lifestyle, namely cruising. The second part of the model, namely the cruising experience is defined by creating optimal experiences, seeking a more satisfying lifestyle, and remembering the true purpose of life, remembering beautiful natural scenes and shared experiences with friends. We called this phase “living the dream.” The last phase was concerned with the lasting benefits cruisers receive as a result of the lifestyle choice they made, and was termed “benefits.” It was defined by an increased sense of physical and psychological well-being, as well as life satisfaction.

Implications

My study showed that cruising was mainly used as a vehicle to be able to lead a more self-determined life and pursue individual goals and motivations such as travel, time together, being in nature, spirituality, and escape from the structure and obligations of life in pursuit of a more simple life. As such, my study provided some insight into human satisfaction and well being. Cruisers were shown to create a space of living that allowed for a great sense of community to be experienced. The feelings of relatedness and togetherness cruisers experience through the cruising community, along with a sense of self-determination were identified as the main contributors to the well-being and

satisfaction cruisers reported. In that sense this study supports other findings suggesting that interpersonal relations and self motivation are vital for human well-being.

Implications for practitioners are first of all an increased understanding of cruisers, a vital sub market of boaters. Furthermore, as the example of Georgetown has shown, ocean communities can attract cruisers in large numbers, and hence profit economically from their presence, by building cruiser friendly amenities such as food markets that are in walking distance, or better yet have a dinghy dock, mail facilities, internet access, reasonable water, and opportunities for informal leisure such as parks, coffee houses or the space to play volley ball or just gather.

From a theoretical point of view, my study has hopefully contributed to the understanding of cruising as a lifestyle process by the development of a grounded theory model. My study furthermore contributed to a reconceptualization of recreation specialization for boating.

Future Research

This study was able to give some insight into the cruising lifestyle and boating specialization. Some questions regarding the lifestyle, motivations and satisfactions as well as benefits were answered, and other questions were raised in the process of this study. As such some future research in relation to ocean cruisers could investigate quantitative measures of the benefits of, and motivations for, cruising that I studied. Longitudinal studies could furthermore be helpful in a direct comparison between pre and post test variables. As such a cruiser's health and well being could quantitatively be measured just before cruising (as for example when the decision to go cruising has been made) and then again one and five years into the cruising life. The concept of

community, or *communitas*, that cruisers experience also deserves future investigation, as I believe it is a major contributor to the overall well-being and satisfaction cruisers reported with their lives. Lastly, the concept of recreation specialization and leisure social worlds in boating in general, and cruising in particular, should further be investigated. My study has shown that a classification into power and sail cruisers as has been done in recreational boating cannot be applied as such to cruisers. Instead, the leisure social world of cruising consists of several sub worlds that could be distinguished by motivations for cruising (such as snowbirds or long distance cruisers), sociability of the cruisers (such as the out island cruisers who want to be left alone or the social cruisers who want to socialize with other cruisers), technology used, type of boat and so forth. Lastly, future studies could apply the grounded theory model of cruising as a lifestyle process to other alternative lifestyles, such as for example land cruisers, or other alternative lifestyle choices.

Conclusion

Cruising was described as a vehicle to lead an alternative lifestyle. It allowed cruisers to pursue individual goals such as time together, travel, adventure, being close to nature, and freedom from the structures and obligations of life on land. Cruising furthermore meant freedom, being on the move, and was described as a way of life that is characterized by a tremendous sense of community, or even *communitas*. Cruisers trust each other and show a great sense of camaraderie. This lifestyle in turn has been found to add enormously to human satisfaction and well being. Cruisers all reported an increased sense of psychological as well as physical well being. This three-phased lifestyle process led to the development of a grounded theory model of cruising as an alternative lifestyle.

Cruisers were further shown to experience flow. The concept of recreation specialization in boating was investigated and it was argued that a reconceptualization based on leisure social worlds seems more suitable. Gender differences in recreation specialization showed that women and men were introduced differently to the activity of boating. Women most often had no prior experiences in boating or cruising and were introduced to the activity by their partner.

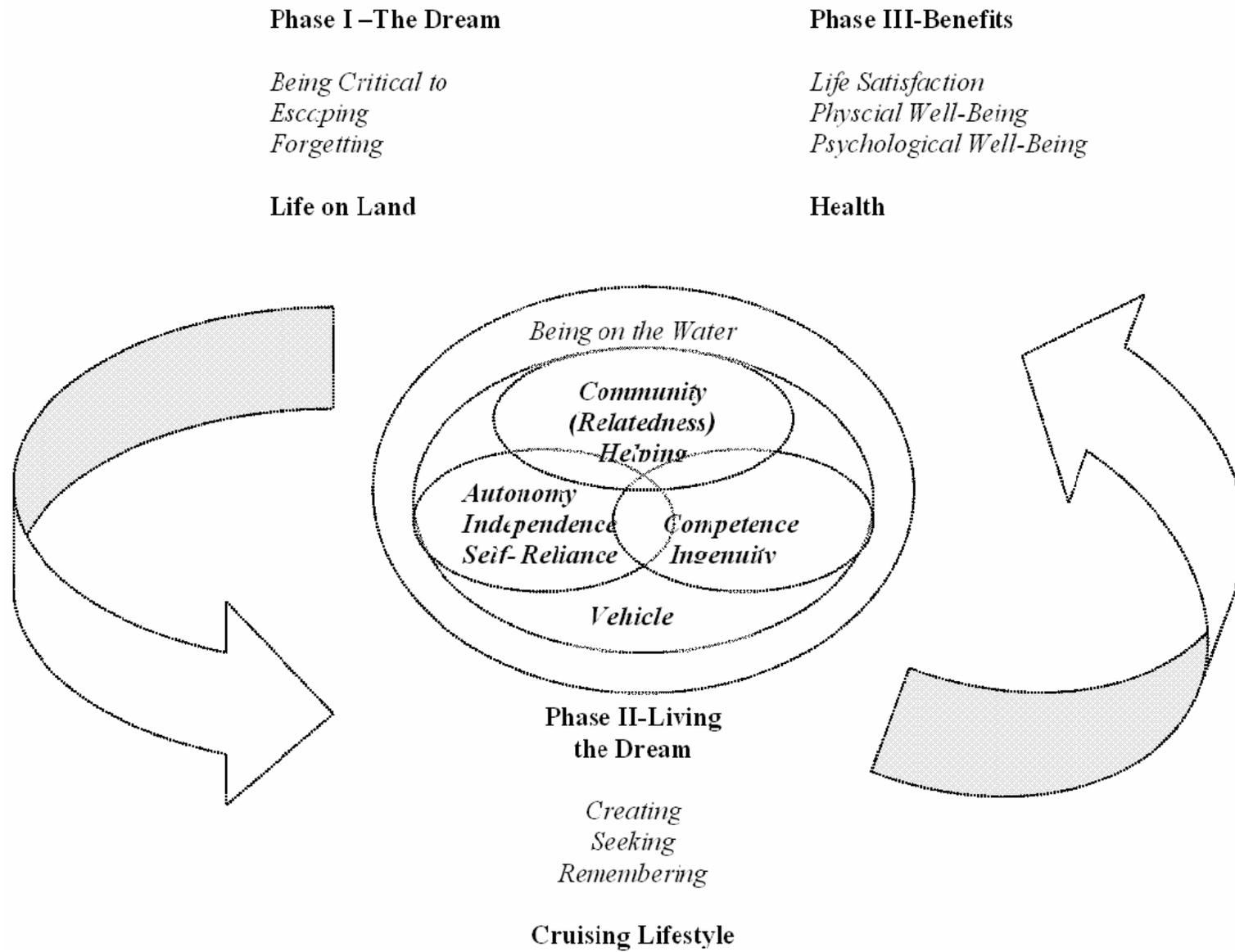


Figure 5.1. Creation of a grounded theory model of cruising as a lifestyle process

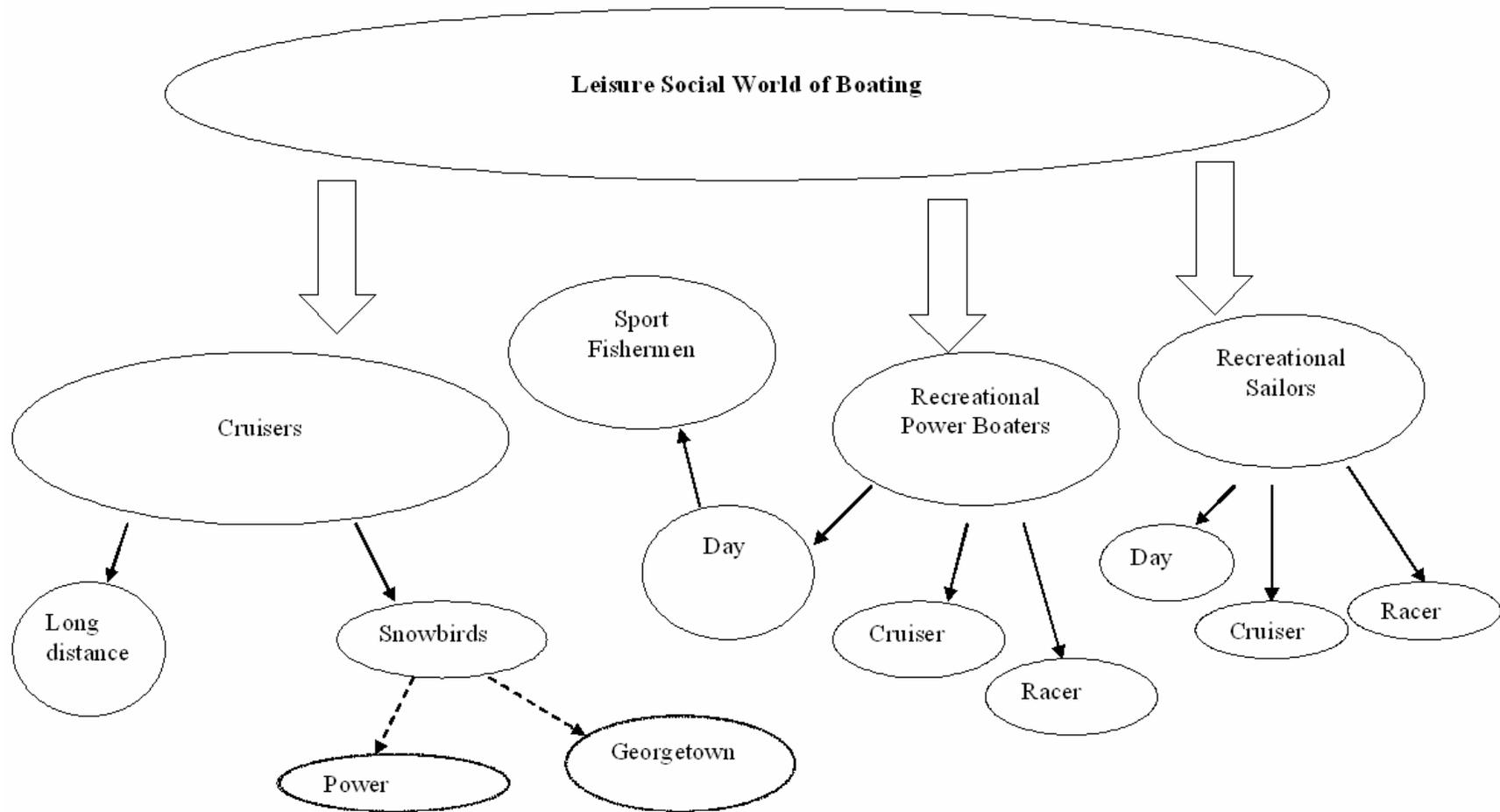


Figure 5.2: A reconceptualization of boating specialization based on leisure social worlds

APPENDIX
INSTRUMENT

Interview Guide Cruisers

Approach: Do you own a boat?
Do you live aboard?
Have you done an overnight passage?

-If YES for all, consider for interview!-

Introductory Demographics:

Where is your home port?

When did you depart from there?

What was your profession before cruising?

Concept I: Specialization

Tell me how you became involved in boating. How did you get from where you started to where you are now?

Probes:

What skills do you have now that you did not have when you started boating?

What specialized equipment do you have onboard?

Do you subscribe to any cruising magazines?

Concept II: Motivation for Cruising

Tell me how you started cruising.

Probes:

Why did you leave your job to cruise?

What attracted you to cruising?

Was there anything that you were hoping that cruising could offer you that you could not get in your "old" land-based life?

How would you define a cruiser- would you make a difference in definition between cruisers on powerboats and cruisers on sailboats?

Concept III: Cruising Experience

Earlier in this conversation you talked to me about what attracted you to cruising. Tell me a little bit about what the experience means to you now.

Probes:

What are some positive aspects of cruising? What do you like about it?

What are some negative aspects of cruising? What do you dislike about it?

Concept IV: Flow

Tell me a little bit about one of your favorite cruising memories. Tell me how you felt, what you were thinking and what you were doing.

Probes:

Did you feel like your skills were appropriately matched with the challenges at that time?

Was there ever a time when you were cruising, where you were so involved or focused on what was going on that you lost track of time, or even your surroundings? Tell me about it.

Sometimes people talk about certain human needs. What does that mean to you, and how is it related to cruising?

Does self-actualization mean anything to you? If so what?

Concept V: Community

When you started cruising you made a conscious decision to cut ties with the people that were in your life. Tell me a little bit about social ties among cruisers. Are there any?

Probes:

Do you feel there is a cruising community? If so tell me about it. Like how do you become a member? How do you communicate?

How do you define a subculture? According to that definition, do you consider cruisers as part of a subculture?

Concept VI: Personality (If it has not come up yet in conversation in various parts)

Tell me a little bit about you as a person. Do you have certain values?

Do you hold certain beliefs?

Concept VII: Marine Environment

Some cruisers say that “a firm attachment to the sea” is a criteria to be a cruiser. What is your opinion on this? What role, if any, does the ocean/marine environment play?

What does it mean to you?

Is there anything else that we have not covered that you feel is important to understand your life at sea?

Fact Sheet to accompany Interviews

The Person:

Nationality: _____

Gender: Male Female

Age: 20-35 36-44 45-55 56-67 67 or older

Education: Some High School Completed High School Higher degree
 Some college Completed college

The Yacht:

The yacht's name: _____

The yacht's port of registration: _____

Length on deck in feet: _____

Crew size on last passage: _____

Year launched: _____

Year acquired by present owner: _____

How acquired: 1) Purchased new
 2) purchased second hand
 3) Self-built
 4) Purchased hull, self completed
 5) Other: _____

Approximate cost to acquire and initially equip (excluding provisions): _____ US \$

Type of construction: 1) Steel
 2) Wood
 3) Fiberglass
 4) Ferro-cement
 5) Other: _____

Cruising Facts:

Home port: _____

Total distance you have cruised: _____

Longest passage in miles: _____
in days : _____

Date departed home port: _____

Below are five statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the 1-7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding. The 7-point scale is as follows:

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = slightly disagree

4 = neither agree nor disagree 5 = slightly agree 6 = agree 7 = strongly agree

___ 1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal.

___ 2. The conditions of my life are excellent.

___ 3. I am satisfied with my life.

___ 4. So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.

___ 5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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