



SAILING INTO THE FUTURE

Final Report on ARC Linkage Research Project 2002-2005
between *Young Endeavour Youth Scheme*
&
the University of Sydney

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Abstract

In a recently completed collaborative research effort, the Young Endeavour Youth Scheme (YEYS) and the University of Sydney investigated the effectiveness of the YEYS and its significance in building the nation's future through its young people. From this research, it is apparent that the YEYS does contribute to the building of a social connectedness derived from mutual cooperative action and achievement that could not have been realised by the individual participants alone.

Sail Training Ship (STS) Young Endeavour was a gift presented to Australia on the 26 January 1988 by the British Government to commemorate the Bicentenary of Australia. STS Young Endeavour, managed through the YEYS provides young Australians aged between 16 and 24 opportunities for personal development through 'adventure under sail'.

Young Endeavour has provided a personal development program at sea in the context of sail training for over 17 years and during this time the ship has been operated and maintained by the Royal Australian Navy.

Youth development programs are often deliberately placed in difficult challenging environments-the sail training environment is the most difficult and challenging of all. In line with the many principles underpinning outdoor adventure education, the Young Endeavour program offers to transport 24 young people away from their familiar environments and immerse them in an intense round-the-clock 11-day experience of self-discovery.

Acknowledgement is due to the former Executive Director of the *Young Endeavour Youth Scheme (YEYS)*, Margaret Powell, who instigated the research project and foresaw its benefit to the organization.

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Executive Summary & Recommendations

- The YEYS is capable of producing social capital in its participants. It succeeds in fostering networks and alliances, and these are the basis for the development of social capital.
- YEYS achieves the goal of building social capital in a shorter and more concentrated program than similar youth schemes such as scouts / guides, SES, and surf lifesaving squads.
- YEYS is successful in cultivating new forms of leadership as demonstrated in the higher achievements and more efficient workings of teams and cooperative groups in preference to a model of leader-follower. Such leadership favours females over males.
- The selection process into the YEYS ensures that each youth crew is made up of individuals from a diversity of backgrounds. These backgrounds are commonly more varied than the individual would normally encounter in everyday life. In this sense, the voyage requires individuals to move beyond their taken-for-granted world, beyond their 'comfort zone'.
- The diversity in every youth crew however limits the opportunities for the youth crew to build local cohorts, and this mitigates the potential of the YEYS to act as a foundation for other activities. Each member of the youth crew remains a 'single candle in the darkness' rather than a member of an organized group with greater visibility.

1. Background

The *Young Endeavour*, Australia's national sail training ship, has been in operation since 1988 and is one of a few sail training programs in Australia. A unique feature of the program is its link to the Royal Australian Navy. *Young Endeavour Youth Scheme* offers an 'adventure at sea' which involves the participation of 24 males and females aged 16-24 years in an intense 24 hour, 11-day sailing adventure on a tall ship staffed by a crew of Navy personnel. The YEYS works from the premise that outdoor adventure education promotes 'learning by experience', which includes the psychological, emotional and physical development of the individual.

Sail-training and outdoor education programs are receiving increased attention as their popularity increases. Various stakeholders in these programs are interested in evaluating their outcomes. Much of the research on these programs has to date concentrated on measuring psychological dimensions such as individual self-confidence, greater openness and increased self-knowledge. Our study differs from these approaches in two significant ways. First it draws on historical data collected over a decade from participants in a single outdoor education program and secondly, data was collected from the shipboard experience by placing a researcher on board and immersing her in the field. A primary aim of the study was to examine the interconnections between the voyage experience and the long-term construction of social capital in those who participated.

The research was funded through an Australia Research Council Grant and the University of Sydney in partnership with the Royal Australian Navy and YEYS. The project was conducted over a three year period with data collected through a number of different methods including telephone interviews with past participants, field immersion and on voyage interviews, observations and interviews with YE employees and related personnel.

The voyage itself can be thought of as a natural experiment insofar as it brought together a range of individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences who were joined together in an environment that structured all their activities. From a sociological point of view the voyage approximates a *total institution* insofar as it is an environment in which individuals are constrained by explicit rules and regulations designed to control behaviour. *Total institutions* are conventionally thought of as environments such as prisons, psychiatric hospitals, recovery and total care facilities. The *Young Endeavour* sail-training experience differs from such total institutions in that it is for a prescribed short term and it is voluntary. Yet it resembles a total institution in its attention to the detailed management of daily activities and the physical removal of its participants from a familiar environment. The *Young Endeavour Youth Scheme* literally launches its participants out to sea without any means of their easy return.

For the duration of the voyage the pursuit of common goals and ultimately a shared experience must of necessity overwrite the diversity of the participants' individual lives. The youth crew must submerge much of their taken for granted individualistic behaviour and conform immediately to the structure of ship life. Personal habits and practiced routines must be set aside as the shared experience of life on board overwrites these diverse individuals. This is the background against which a number of key themes emerge and which ultimately define the individuals' experiences. These key themes are not always made explicit, they are not addressed as part of the enunciated goals of the voyage, and they are not articulated at voyage end, as being the expected achievements. Rather these key themes describe aspects of the fundamental principles that shape the voyage experience and contribute to the formulation of social capital. They include the need to:

- manage diversity and homogeneity on a daily basis,
- develop greater levels of trust and tolerance amongst strangers,
- recognise the value of instrumental interpersonal relations,
- appreciate the social value of rules, regulations and authority, and
- develop a greater awareness of the civic society at large.

1.2 Introduction

A major impetus for the growth of adventure education in recent decades has been the assumption that young people face an array of challenges and difficulties in an increasingly complex modern world. Each generation is influenced by a specific set of historical circumstances, and for youth in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century, those determining conditions are seen as rapid urbanization, globalization and the emergence of new communication technologies. These powerful social forces have produced a variety of radical shifts in the skills and knowledge required to equip young people for adulthood. Experiential learning programs such as the YEYS are designed to provide young people with readily transferable skills and knowledge that are hoped will directly contribute to their participation in the community at large.

The research project focused on the direct experiences of young people aboard a sail training program in order to investigate the links between the program, the development of the social self and interpersonal skills, as well as alterations in the individual's sense of social membership.

Sail-training programs and outdoor adventure education have conventionally been evaluated through psychological measures rather than the individual's overall reactions and experiences of the event (Neill and Richards, 1994). The psychological measures frequently included concepts such as cooperation, assertiveness, well-being, self-understanding, confidence and motivation. Fewer studies take a sociological approach such as that employed in this

study, which explores the interactive dimensions of outdoor education programs and considers the longer-term social changes for both the participants and the communities in which they live.

The *Young Endeavour* sail-training program is an experience with very specific features, through which identifiable elements of the social self are produced. The ship acts as a site for the production of social capital, addressing themes of gender, the management of interpersonal diversity and homogeneity, and the building of civic awareness that steers the individuals' attention toward society as whole, away from the self-absorption often associated with adolescence.

For the youth crew the voyage on the ship also involves a challenging physical environment; they must adapt to life on board, which means dealing with possible adverse weather conditions, disrupted sleep patterns, and the debilitation of sea-sickness. The assumption at work here is that learning to manage physically and socially demanding conditions will lead to the enhancement of a variety of individual and interpersonal competencies. The program involves the youth crew learning how to sail a square-rigged ship and to understand the various responsibilities attached. The Navy crew delivers the education program with a focus on the culmination of the voyage in a 24 hour period when the youth crew has total command of the vessel. Command Day, as it is known, is promoted as the final achievement for the youth crew and it offers a chance to apply newly acquired knowledge of sail handling, cooperative goal achievement and instrumental relationships.

1.3 Social capital

Defining social capital is contingent on its application. It is a highly flexible concept. Social capital refers to patterns of interaction and access to, or potential for, gains that reside within specific social arrangements. Woolcock and Narayan suggest a practical definition: 'It's not what you know, it's *who* you know' (2002: 225). This captures the essential features or functions of social capital, namely, it is about networks and connections that enable personal and collective gains. Social capital research is distinctive in its focus on community values and civic participation. It has been described as both a 'lubricant' and a 'glue' for civic foundation, even a restorative of civic society. More recently it has been popularised as something to be harnessed by both civic groups and the State as a counterbalance to the unfavourable effects of urbanization, globalisation, the breakdown of traditional institutions and the fragmentation of communities.

Larson (2002:49) has summed up the importance of social capital in the contemporary environment:

In a heterogeneous global society, individuals need more social capital of a kind that provides bridges to diverse social, cultural, and institutional worlds.

In exploring the relationship between the *Young Endeavour* sail-training program and social capital production, the focus has been on the inscription of civic identities as engendered by the voyage experience. The production of 'civic-mindedness' includes:

- the development of a sense of agency, that one can make a difference or effect change;
- social responsibility, which pertains to having a concern for other individuals or general societal well-being; and
- political-moral awareness, which refers to having a capacity to identify problems within the existing social and political order and to then question or challenge that order (Youniss and Yates 1997).

The concept of social capital captures and makes sense of the outcomes of the shipboard experience by highlighting the importance placed on developing social and interactional skills that extend beyond the life of the program to influence the immediate and future daily lives of young Australians. It brings focus to the finely textured experiences engendered by the voyage as the means by which new social knowledge and social positioning is acquired and cultivated.

2. The study

2.1 Data Collection and Analysis

Part of the data gathering process included a telephone survey as a technique for getting a broader commentary on the range and intensity of the effects and outcomes of the experience. The *Young Endeavour* program has been operating for the past 15 years. The telephone survey drew on 160 past participants, drawn from the schemes participant database. There were equal numbers of respondents from four voyage cohorts drawn from 1988, 1993, 1997 and 2001. The sampling frame was designed to achieve an even representation of gender and ages. Those interviewed included participants who had undertaken the voyage before and after the commencement of the current voyage plan. Participants in voyages during the years 1988 and 1993 did not have the same on-board program as those in years 1997 and 2001. Nonetheless the interview questions were devised to elicit both personal narratives and broader patterns of attitudes and change, particularly focusing on how young people made sense of their experiences on board. It was anticipated that this kind of sampling would reveal how memories are cemented over time and what perceptions and articulations of the experience endured.

The interview schedule comprised closed and open-ended questions and was divided into three main sections. The first sought basic demographic details as well as ‘how’ and ‘why’ the respondent came to participate on a voyage. The second section aimed to elicit an overview of respondents’ community activities and worldviews with the aim of understanding their attitudes to others, their levels of general trust and tolerance, and willingness to be engaged. The third section was directed at determining the individual’s self-evaluation and their social skills and networks. Respondents were also invited at the end of the interview to describe whether and how they comprehended any relationship between the voyage experience and their interview responses.

The questionnaire was designed to gather information about social capital and how participants in the *Young Endeavour Youth Scheme* engage with the broader community over a long period of time and through activities such as organised sport, volunteer and community work and membership of formal organisations.

A selection of interview results is presented tables 1, 2 and 3.

2.2 Data analysis of the interviews: outcomes of the voyage experience

The material gathered through the interviews explored the voyage experience and attempted to link its legacies with defining measures of social capital. The participants reported a number of benefits including:

- an enhanced level of self-confidence and self-belief,
- the opportunity to meet people from different backgrounds,
- friendships cultivated with a range of different individuals,
- the opportunity to overcome social and physical challenges and fears, and
- new perspectives on institutional authority.

At first glance, these conclusions are not surprising, but when a closer analysis of the data is conducted, a discernible difference in responses becomes apparent between the males and females. In table 1 below, these differences are made clear.

Such particularised articulations of the experience highlight the need to pay closer attention to gender as highly influential on the accumulation, display and exchange of social capital.

2.2.1 TABLE 1
Gender Differences in Perceived Benefits

<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Males</i> %	<i>Females</i> %
Increased confidence	19	28
Friendships	30	19
Overcoming fears/challenges	3	24
Teamwork	22	7
Agency/sense of possibility	0	18
Self- understanding/development	11	10
	N = 63	N = 97

Commentary on table 1

There are clear differences between the experiences of the males and females with regard to gaining confidence, developing friendships, overcoming fears and rising to new challenges, enjoying teamwork and displaying a sense of agency. The data reflects an enhanced sense of self-understanding and development as the only dimension on which the experiences of males and female youth crew seem closely aligned. In all other areas they are markedly different. For instance, in relation to the question about perceived effects of the voyage it was only females who mentioned an

enhanced sense of agency or belief in possibilities. Existing research in education and sport suggests that girls, in comparison with boys, tend to underrate their abilities across a broad range of activities but particularly those traditionally perceived as physical (Davies, 1984). Furthermore, girls also consider themselves less able to cope with potentially risky or dangerous situations (Humberstone, 1990). This offers a possible explanation for the discrepancy between the way in which males and females articulated their experiences of overcoming fears and challenges when on board the YE. It is also possible that the lower expectations of females, leading up to the voyage, are displaced by the actual achievements that take place during the voyage. This marked sense of achievement during the voyage may also be a factor in strengthening the memories of the voyage for the female participants.

From this data, it was clear that the experiences of the male and female youth crew while participating in the same on board program were vastly different. It is a point made several times over in the ethnographic data collected from on board the ship.

2.2.2 TABLE 2 Social Capital Indicators

<i>Three measures of social capital</i>	<i>(% agreed)</i>
(i) Trust	
Most people can be trusted	71
Most people try to be helpful	72
(ii) Cooperation	
Teamwork is important for goal achievement	58
Satisfaction achieving goals as part of a group	76
(iii) Tolerance	
Friendships with people from different backgrounds/lifestyles	94

Commentary on table 2

Trust: When asked about perceptions towards strangers and distant individuals or ‘generalised others’, 71% of the respondents held the view that most people can be trusted. A similar amount (72%) considered that the people they came into contact with were more likely to be helpful rather than to be looking out for themselves.

These are valuable findings insofar as they are different from comparisons with those of individuals who have not participated in the YEYS. The research by MORI (2003) and Pusey (2003) found that trust in others was not particularly high in the population at large, and especially so with young

people. When much the same questions on trust were asked of a sample in Micheal Pusey's (2003) study of middle Australia, he found only 53% believed they could trust others. The British study by Market and Opinion Research International (MORI, 2003) revealed that when it comes to trust, young people were far more cautious in trusting others - only 12% claimed they would - as opposed to 53% of the adult sample stated they would be trusting of others. Such findings indicate that a significant feature of the *YE* experience produces a positive resistance to a trend in the general youth population to be increasingly distrustful.

Some respondents also commented on trust in staff, and by extension, those in positions of authority such as members of Australia's Defence Force personnel. Relying on others in uncertain environments (such as those encountered on board the *YE*) also had an impact on values around trust. The data from the interview research significantly demonstrated that the voyage experience led to an increase in generalised trust (both during and beyond the immediate experience).

Trust is a significant indicator of a healthy civic society. If this result from the data is reliable then a significant achievement of the voyage experience is the cultivation and expression of a fundamental feature of a civilised society, namely, the ability to trust strangers who share an immediate environment, and develop relations with them not characterised by fear or suspicion.

Teamwork and cooperation: When the individual acts towards others in a way that s/he expects to be treated in return, such a position demonstrates an acceptance of instrumental and goal-directed behaviour. It also indicates an acceptance of common goals as more important than individualistic gains. A fundamental attribute of cooperation is good teamwork and this was considered by the participants to be more important than good leadership. When asked about achieving personal goals, many of the respondents claimed to gain satisfaction in achieving goals as part of a group rather than as an individual.

Importantly, a significant number (85%) reported that their views on cooperation were enhanced as a result of the *YE* ten days at sea. Half of these respondents cited teamwork and the pursuit or achievement of a common goal as being central to ways in which they understood the voyage to have been personally transformative.

Teamwork and cooperation indicate an individual's willingness to act in rationalised, often goal-directed activities on the basis that such exchanges are governed by norms of reciprocity. This idea of shared experience is of critical importance in the development of trust and tolerance and it resonates throughout much of the data collected in this study.

Tolerance: The data showed that nearly all the respondents (94%) claimed the voyage assisted them to cultivate friendships with people from different backgrounds. They reported they felt more successful in social situations, that they made friends more easily and communicated well with others.

2.2.3 TABLE 3

Relationship between Voyage and Social Capital

<i>Outcome Features</i>	<i>(% agreed)</i>
Voyage had a positive influence on social skills	76
Voyage experience directly influenced perceptions of trust (with strangers and the generalised other)	74
Views on cooperation were enhanced by voyage experience	85
Voyage experience shaped views on tolerance	73
Voyage experience had a positive influence on social skills	76
Voyage experience made it easier to:	
Travel	67
Join groups	72
Make friends	79

Commentary on table 3

A significant proportion of respondents (76% above) referred to the positive influence of the *Young Endeavour* in making them more adaptable to circumstances and more confident in dealing with different and unknown people and environments. From the respondents' comments, it was clear that a direct correlation existed between the voyage experience and their ability to travel and join social groups. This finding indicates that the *YE* voyage experience can be utilised by others, such as members of the private and corporate sector, to build better workplace relations and teams.

People management: Most of the respondents claimed that during the voyage they developed friendships with people from backgrounds or lifestyles different to their own. The capacity to tolerate those who have different or even opposing views was improved, as was the ability not to be bothered by 'difficult' people. To acquire these social skills empowers individuals to engage in various new situations, and encourages a less problematic exchange when dealing with authority. This is particularly pertinent for those individuals who are themselves identified as 'difficult' and 'resistive'.

Cosmopolitanism: These findings are important measures of the success of the *YE* program in meeting its goals of improving social skills and cultivating long-term understandings of sociability. The world at large is made up of strangers and individuals who frequently seem 'difficult' or resist one's own point of view. Learning to expect to encounter such differences and acquiring the skills for their improved management prepares the individual for life in a

cosmopolitan environment. These social capacities to form and manage diverse social ties are fundamental to active participation in a complex, multicultural society such as Australia's.

The interview data supports the idea of the ship as a site for the production of improved social skills that enable individuals to develop networks and social connections across a broad spectrum of difference. The data also suggests that the shipboard experience demonstrates how these capabilities for better social relations can translate to other areas of social life beyond the voyage experience.

Gender: The different experiences of the females and males in the youth crew were markedly different. Females appeared to take greater advantage of the learning opportunities especially in relation to the understanding of the value of instrumental relations. They found it easier to build relations with a view to achieving specific goals. They tended not to stand out on Command Day in terms of occupying the lead positions of XO and Captain, and instead achieved goals through teamwork and cooperation. This trend - not to assume prominent leadership positions - should not be interpreted as lack of self-confidence. Instead it reflected a view point that achieving goals was better pursued in a group or team rather than by assuming an individual directorial or leadership role. This finding however could be used to reinforce conventional opinions that females are not 'natural' leaders. However, this would be a misapplication of the conclusion as the data from this study suggests a more subtle interpretation - namely, that a new form of leadership can be seen in the higher achievements and more efficient workings of teams and cooperative groups in preference to a leadership-follower model. On the negative, it can be argued that males in the youth crew found it harder to learn in teams and become group players.

Such findings require comparisons with other settings; for instance are men and women in industry and commerce still divided into traditional roles, with men striving to stand out and women functioning behind the scenes to provide social cohesion. Do women stand back and allow others to reach out? Are new business environments effective in valuing both genders equally? Corporate environments can be mirrored through the *YE* experience, which in turn suggests opportunities for the *YE* to provide services to the business sector.

2.3 Ethnographic data from the voyage experience

A unique feature of the *YE* program is that participants are selected through a national ballot system designed to ensure a random distribution of ages and life-stages across the 12 male and 12 female participants that constitute a youth crew. The selection process also ensures that each youth crew selected for a voyage is made up of individuals from a diversity of backgrounds. These backgrounds can be more varied than the individual would normally encounter

in everyday life. In this sense, the voyage requires individuals to move beyond their taken-for-granted world, beyond their 'comfort zone' in social terms, as well as in terms of the physical demands the sail-training education places upon them.

In order to examine 'how' social skills are developed in the unusual environment of the voyage experience, we considered it important to participate directly in the voyage itself. This research technique of 'going native', of living as those being studied live, is a traditional form of data collection for ethnographers in anthropology and sociology. The ethnographic component of the study explored the specific nature of the individual's experience as well as the kinds of sociality that build the interpersonal culture on board the ship. Overseeing the complete voyage provides a rich source of data on the personal, individual and social transformations that take place during the period of the voyage. Valuable insights were gained into the structure of the program, the various interpersonal and cultural exchanges on board, and the patterns of behaviour, relationship formation and individual change that typically occur during a voyage.

The period of immersion in the field yielded extensive material, and this was analysed and sorted into a number of key themes:

- social skills and instrumental relationships,
- obedience to rules and social conventions,
- identity, self-image and presentation of self,
- physical risk and skill acquisition,
- adaptability to new social and physical environments, and
- sense of community.

Social skills and instrumental relationships: In addition to the official program of the 11-day voyage, outlined in the *YE Handbook*, there are other features operating at a meta-level that contribute to the individual's experience and especially the formation of new social skills. These include the temporal and spatial constraints that accompany living in a small communal space. These restrictions such as sharing resources (notably showers limited to 90 seconds, four sheets of toilet paper, conservation of water and food) are not generally encountered in the normal lives of the participants. Equally there is the profound physical experience of sea-sickness and sleep deprivation. Both call for unusual individual responses of adaptation and self-management as youth crew are fully expected to participate in all activities regardless of whether they are tired, sick, unhappy or resistant. There are also the interpersonal demands of negotiating personality differences, the excitement of proximity to other bodies, as well as the lack of privacy. This is all punctuated by a sense of remoteness and isolation characteristic of life at sea.

Rules and conventions: Although the participants come from diverse social backgrounds the ship ostensibly acts as an equaliser. The pursuit of common goals during the voyage, such as the challenge of climbing the 30 metre mast, act as points of cohesion. Overarching these challenges are the explicit rules and conventions which govern on board conduct. Thus the ship offers a site for personal challenge within an environment that is closely monitored. In this instance, the ship acts as a proxy institutional space - it is neither a school nor workplace, yet there are notable similarities between these spheres, especially with regard to the display and exercise of a hierarchical order.

The visibility and institutionalised social relations defined by the staff / youth crew hierarchy can fluctuate at times but, ultimately, they remain as clear boundaries. Members of the youth crew must, of necessity, learn to understand and manage the norms and values attached to the hierarchical order of the ship. In part, this process of learning and adaptation is cultivated through the language and the games employed on board. The Navy crew is consciously aware of using such techniques as a means for subordinating individualism in order to amplify the benefits of the collective. Importantly, aspects of the ritual of shipboard life play with the exercise of authority. Some recreational activities appear to subvert the conventions and rules, others reinforce them. For example, when the Australian national anthem is sung by members of the Navy crew in a parodic and irreverent manner, some members of the youth crew are surprised. They did not expect that Navy personnel could act in this fashion. The effect of breaking these expectations was to enhance the respect the youth crew had for the Navy crew.

Such instances of unanticipated and unconventional behaviour formed part of the larger and more submerged ambitions of the YEYS, namely, to increase the civic or social capital of the youth crew. These social understandings can form the basis of new understandings of sociability that the youth crew can apply to social life in the future. In this way, the playfulness of the interpersonal relations between the Navy and youth crews is integral to the cultivation of social skills around managing diversity and homogeneity that find wider application in the later production of social capital.

Identity, self-presentation and seasickness: The ship provides a novel space in which members of the youth crew can experiment with the presentation of themselves. Often individuals will introduce themselves, on the first day, using a 'nickname' or will invent a new name for the occasion. The voyage provides an opportunity to play with aspects of identity and 'try on' character attributes. As the voyage progresses and interpersonal relations become more complex, the viability of the presented self-image is tested. When the individual needs others, to achieve the completion of a task, or for assistance when feeling unwell, the significance of the invented or 'performed' identity becomes visible. Calling oneself 'Spic', 'Bomber', 'Fruit', can have an impact when asking others for assistance when, for instance, the individual is seasick.

Seasickness plays a crucial role in the developmental outcomes of the program. Seasickness also defines the context in which strong bonds are forged between individual members of the youth crew. There is a considerable degree of empathy shared between the youth crew members that impacts on the relationships formed, and provides a context for the early development of values of reciprocity and community building. While it may seem a trivial and sometimes amusing feature of the sailing experience, it is precisely the ubiquity of seasickness that makes it so significant. Almost everybody gets seasick and how individual's conduct themselves when sick, how they behave towards others who are sick, and how intrusive the seasickness is into their overall conduct, provide highly reliable insights into the long-term significance of the voyage experience.

On board, the management of seasickness impacts on how the individual struggles with image-management. Compounding the effects of being debilitated by seasickness and feeling helpless, needy and more vulnerable, the individual has very little privacy on board and no place to hide. Thus the sick individual must conduct him or herself in a responsible fashion while feeling physically and psychologically distressed. This is a confronting yet valuable lesson in self-discovery. Being sick in public, among strangers, has a direct influence on the individual's self-knowledge about the impact they have on others. As seasickness is generally unavoidable and everyone experiences it, the management of this phase of the voyage is a significant tool in the acquisition of new skills. Some Navy crew remarked that on those smooth and less eventual voyages, where seasickness was not as prevalent, the cohesion of the youth crew and the intensity of their experiences on board appeared to be reduced.

Seasickness pushes the youth crew to their physical and psychological limits and produces a level of self-understanding and self-resilience that may not be readily achieved in normal social life. Ironically this most conspicuous feature of the *YE* experience, and the one which elicits a great deal of commentary during the voyage, does not emerge from the data collected through the telephone interviews. Yet it functions during the voyage as a measure of the intensity of the individual's learning experience and the likelihood that they will carry away from the voyage a set of new social skills that will be employed in their future lives.

Risk and skill acquisition: The management of risk is another feature of the voyage that can lead to a self-assessment of personal strengths and weaknesses. During the voyage, the youth crew are presented with a number of physically and psychologically challenging tasks, such as climbing to the top of the 30-metre mast, maintaining two four-hour watches during a 24 hour period, and living with sleep deprivation. These conditions present unprecedented challenges for most members of the youth crews who are required to perform tasks largely beyond their established skills. The confidence that derives from the successful completion of various new challenges and requests is expressed in largely idiosyncratic ways. For some

youth crew the legacy of the voyage is seen in their greater independence. Now they can undertake adventures alone such as travelling alone around Australia and overseas. For others it might have led to cultivating better social relationships and accepting the inevitability of challenges in new situations.

Adaptability and community: Shared identity and experience are foundational qualities that contribute to the community building on board the ship. This comes in the form of the pursuit and achievement of common goals. This is an important social insight as it provides individuals with the motivation to participate fully in the circumstances of their later social life beyond the voyage experience. It is in this role of fostering the creation of networks and alliances that can occur across difference, as well as reinforcing norms of reciprocity and social participation, that the ship makes an important contribution to the development of social capital.

3. Conclusions

Young people are increasingly required to navigate a multiplicity of social worlds in articulating a sense of identity and maintain a complex range of social ties both hierarchically and within their own peer groups. The shipboard encounter provides a diversity of social experiences and interactions. Increasing social trends that impact on the lives of young people suggest the possession of social resources required by these new understandings and expectations is highly desirable. However this is not about endowing young people with new social competencies, (which much youth development rhetoric points to), but rather recognising the new social relationships that are shaping contemporary global life (Larson et al 2002). The ship serves as an effective conduit for the transmission of these and other cultural values. Listed below are important observations and comments that emerge clearly from the data collected in this study:

- The data suggests that the experience of sail training does have a positive impact on civic identity formation: it produced young people with enhanced social skills, a greater developed sense of agency, increased levels of trust in others, who valued teamwork and cooperation and knew how to *bridge* social differences although there were contradictions and consistencies in relation to each of these.
- Few other adventure programs provide the effect of a *total institution* and in this sense the YE has a remarkable advantage of other programs.
- The core findings pivot around levels of trust, reciprocity, tolerance and social competency. In many cases these had been transferred to other areas of the youth crews' lives. The themes of gender and identity performance played a central role in the articulations of the individual's experience.

- The interview data indicated the importance of cultivating networks and friendships that go beyond the immediate experience and reinforced norms around community building.
- The ethnographic data provided a common observation from the voyages that immediate challenges such as climbing the mast on the first night, managing sleep deprivation and seasickness, do not necessarily linger as the legacy of the voyage. These physical demands are translated, over time, into more enduring social skills such as self-control, goal achievement, self-confidence, and an enhanced knowledge of self management.
- The on-board experience provided a unique environment in which individuals learned about normative constraints, practical skills, and gained subjective insights into personal attributes (their own and other peoples).
- The cramped physical conditions, the proximity of strangers, the unquestioned routines and rules of shipboard life, all functioned as important factors in enhancing the learning experience.
- Using ethnographic data however was crucial as it provided the foundation against which all other data could be related. Finally, the ethnographic data functioned as a basis for development confidence in the interpretations derived from all the data.
- Social capital was a useful concept to employ for understanding the variety of skills and understandings acquired by participations from the voyage experience. It is a flexible concept that can be usefully applied to a variety of visible skills and competencies.
- Employing a triangulated methodology, which involves using several data gathering tools focused on the same issue, also proved an excellent approach to understanding how the subjectivities of the youth crew and the rapid skill acquisition were influenced. Collecting data through a number of research methods is crucial when exploring a multi-dimensional social experience such as the YE voyage. Singular methods can overlook complex social relations.
- Ethnographic data from the voyage emphasized the physical challenges of the voyage while data from the interviews emphasized the interpersonal struggles with tolerating difference and dealing with conflict. These different insights into the same experience are connected effectively through the concept of social capital.
- The homogeneity created on board provided the youth crew with an example of commonality being produced from difference. It provided an

occasion where subtle understandings of the need to bridge social worlds were recognized and where individuals could be included into a community on their basis.

- Similarly Command Day received a reasonable level of criticism in that it was perceived as largely beneficial for those elected to key positions but did not provide those in lesser positions with much that was noteworthy. The interview findings suggested that a marked gender bias existed in the way the program is conducted. While it is clear that female crew benefited a great deal from the program through increased confidence, overcoming fears and challenges, the ability to manage risk and an enhanced sense of agency, it might also be argued that they underestimated their abilities at the outset and so the benefits of the program were inflated.
- Male youth crew seemed to benefit less from social integration through teamwork and stated that most benefit came from achieving key positions such as XO and Captain. These reports contradict the overall findings that social skills are acquired through instances of cooperation during the voyage experience. It may be that the members of the male youth crews are less willing to acknowledge this, or are less interested having accepted more traditional views of masculinity that support winning and ambition.
- Promotion of gender equity could be achieved by ensuring that sufficient female Navy crew are assigned to the ship for each voyage to act as mentors and role models, that female crew are routinely appointed to key positions such as watch leaders and that teamwork exercises be revised in order to integrate female youth crew more effectively.
- On a few rare occasions, some members of the youth crew remain totally resistant to the on board experience. They refuse to participate, and remain unresponsive to the coercions of the environment. Of those interviewed in this study, only 2 of the 160 respondents declared they did not enjoy the shipboard encounter. The flexibility around personal boundaries was identified as important in this observation.
- The present study is not strictly longitudinal, even though it does include a broad cross-section of participants.

4. Background addendum to adventure education research

Historically there has been a shift in the underpinnings of adventure education research, from one of pure descriptive analysis (1960s) to the incorporation of a more therapeutic slant (1970s and beyond), focusing on the notion of enhanced self-esteem, self-concept, and the expected benefits of these programs. A review of the research and literature in the area has revealed a number of trends the most important of which has been a paradigm bias towards psychological models of youth and subjective change.

Many of these ‘outcome’ studies employ psychometric instruments of measurement which focus on changes in individuals, as though they were atomised rather than part of a social body. In doing so, they fail to capture the processes through which social relations are produced and social identities constituted.

Similar limitations apply to the earlier study of the YEYS undertaken by Richards, Barrett, Neill and Seidel (1992). In 1989 they conducted an analysis of participants taken from five voyages on the *Young Endeavour*, to examine the developmental outcomes of these voyages. The study involved one hundred and thirty participants aged between 18 and 24. The research method comprised a Life Effectiveness Questionnaire (LEQ-F) administered in four stages (two months prior to the voyage, at the voyage beginning, at the voyage end and two months following). The questionnaire measured levels of ‘life skills’ such as ‘time management’, ‘social competence’, ‘achievement motivation’, ‘intellectual flexibility’, ‘organisational self-discipline’, ‘productive teamwork’, ‘task leadership’, and ‘emotional control’, in all four stages. Overall the inquiry concluded the experience aboard the *Young Endeavour* provided positive developmental effects in five out of the eight life effectiveness categories; namely; time management, social competence, organisational self-discipline, task leadership, and emotional control, which were also sustained over the two month period following the voyage.

Research into adventure education has consistently pursued the same questions, highlighting the participant’s perceptions of their experiences and levels of success. In contrast, this current research project has taken a different approach in an attempt to shift the emphasis away from psychological models. Instead it draws on sociological approaches to subjective experience and the subsequent changes that take place in the individual’s sense of their engagement with other social and community activities. Our approach has emphasized the unique experience of the ship board experience as a form of *total institution*, which in turn influences the development of interpersonal networks, and a sense of confidence in the norms of reciprocity which underpin the experience of trust.

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