

# Yale College

## Education Studies Program

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Senior Capstone Projects

Student Research

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## Students as Neighbors: Exploring Yale University Students' Feelings of Connectedness with New Haven Community Members

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### Abstract:

University students are often a transient, self-segregating population, however their relationships with local community members can, for some students, be a source of profound meaning. This project explores university students' feelings of connectedness with surrounding communities by using Yale University and New Haven, Connecticut as a case study. Through a survey of 288 Yale undergraduate students and interviews with 4 more, I investigate a number of factors potentially linked to Yale students' feelings of connectedness with New Haven residents. I conclude that two patterns of behavior – deliberate involvement with city life and approaching local communities through a lens of reciprocity – are both strongly correlated with a student's sense of connectedness with their neighbors. Ultimately, these findings broaden understandings of how students form relationships with local community members and suggest a framework for how students should respectfully approach their neighbors.

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This capstone is a work of Yale student research. The arguments and research in the project are those of the individual student. They are not endorsed by Yale, nor are they official university positions or statements.

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*I composed this project in New Haven, Connecticut, on the homelands of the Quinnipiac People, a place I have come to love so much.*

*I thank the Quinnipiac Nation and the Nations of other Algonquian-speaking peoples who cared for this place and this land for thousands of years.*

*Without your stewardship, this work would not exist and I would not be the person I am today.*

A brief note on language: throughout this paper, I repeatedly mention ‘relationships between students and local residents’ or some variation of that. Here, I am referring to the relationships between university students and local residents who are not affiliated with the university. My aim is to deconstruct notions of who is of the university and who is of the city, but for brevity and readability, I will be adopting this phrasing throughout the piece.

## *Introduction*

During one of my first days at Yale, I went to a mandatory orientation address that was entitled “Welcome to New Haven”. I remember sitting in a giant lecture hall listening to college administrators talk about what it means to live in the city where Yale is located. As a First-Year Counselor, I wound up seeing the event again as a senior just a few months ago. I listened to student representatives – including some of my friends – talk about getting involved with local communities through church volunteering groups and Dwight Hall, Yale’s umbrella organization for community service. But the entire time, I felt this weird, sort of distorted déjà vu sensation. I knew somewhere in the back of my brain I had heard similar testimonies three years ago, but the only thing I could consciously remember from my first-year orientation was this: “New Haven is a city. Like any city, there is crime here. Don’t walk alone at night.”

I spent my first three years at Yale deeply embedded inside the Yale “bubble”. I interacted almost exclusively with members of the Yale community, and when I did engage with New Haven residents, it was through volunteering which – admittedly – I only really did to build my resume. I almost always stayed inside of Yale’s campus, only traveling outside to go to local restaurants or stores. I felt that something was strange about this, but was too busy focusing on classes and activities to really think about it.

This past summer, after discovering a passion for education, I joined the teaching team for the Ulysses S. Grant Foundation, a summer enrichment program for New Haven middle school students. At US Grant, I virtually taught about 50 students for five weeks, spending countless hours with some of the most brilliant and kind kids I have ever met. It was only very recently that I realized what that experience truly meant to me. Through US Grant, I grew close to dozens of students, I met parents and families, and I started to recognize faces around the city. Now, after three years at Yale, I finally feel a real connection with New Haven. I feel invested in this community.

My experience with US Grant has pulled back the curtain to show me just how entrenched I was in the Yale bubble, how my thinking, behaviors, learning, and relationships have all been confined to an extremely narrow subset of New Haven. Looking back, most of the time I’ve lived here has felt like summer camp, where students (myself included) are so absorbed in this world enclosed by walls and gates that they often have no interest in the communities and people all around them. My experience is certainly not unique. As previous research shows,

many undergraduate students report feeling suspended inside their university bubbles.<sup>1</sup> For me, this mindset was limiting and, in many ways, unfulfilling.

My relationships with local communities and community members matter immensely to me. I have formed fulfilling friendships with New Haven residents. Some of my most important learning has come from talking with local community members. Some of the most meaningful experiences of my life have happened when I engaged deeply with New Haven – its history, spaces, and communities. Certainly, not everyone shares this experience. As we will see, many university students do not form connections with New Haven residents because of barriers (like time and transportation constraints) or simply because they are not interested. Existing literature shows that university students and their neighbors are largely ambivalent towards each other. All of this is to say that these relationships can be deeply important for some students but not others. As this paper will explain, there is no right or wrong way for students to engage with their neighbors. Some students may form deep connections and others may not. This paper does not attempt to make normative judgements about what these relationships *should* look like. Rather, I am interested in exploring relationships between community members and university students because my own relationships have meant so much to me.

This paper explores university students' connections with local residents and communities by using New Haven and Yale University as a case study. Through this project, I want to better understand what it looks like for students to be neighbors, members of urban ecosystems. Specifically, I investigate the following:

1. In what ways do Yale students' identities, backgrounds, and experiences correlate with their feelings of connectedness with New Haven?
2. In the eyes of students, what do personally-meaningful relationships between Yale students and New Haven community members look like? How do these relationships form?

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<sup>1</sup> Brizee, Pascual-Ferrá, and Caranante, "High-Impact Civic Engagement: Outcomes of Community-Based Research in Technical Writing Courses"; Fogle et al., "Served Through Service: Undergraduate Students' Experiences in Community Engaged Learning at a Catholic and Marianist University"; Karter, Robbins, and McInerney, "Student Activism in the Neoliberal University: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Analysis"; Lorenzini, "From Global Knowledge to Global Civic Engagement"; Rose, "Developing and Sequencing Community Engagement and Experiential Education: A Case Study of Urban Geography Teaching and Research."

This study takes a mixed-methods approach combining a survey of 288 Yale undergraduate students and four student interviews to quantitatively and narratively identify patterns in students' relationships with New Haven community members. I describe what kinds of factors are linked (and not linked) with students forming connections. I then share stories about real relationships and how they came to be. I end by discussing student mindsets, how students (and other members of the university) should approach local communities regardless of what their relationships look like.

While I originally hypothesized that student identities (like race and gender) and backgrounds (such as socioeconomic status) would be linked with student feelings of community connectedness, the survey data indicates essentially no significant correlation. Instead, I found two factors strongly correlated with a student's sense of connectedness: involvement with life in New Haven and approaching neighbors through a lens of reciprocity. I describe a curious pattern in which many Yale students, who were often highly involved in their home communities growing up, dramatically reduce their community involvement when they come to Yale. Portraits of individual students capture the less intangible (sometimes conflicting) feelings that students feel towards these relationships. By the end of this paper, I hope that you will walk away with a deeper sense of the relationships between university students and their neighbors and some of the significations that these relationships carry.

In this study, I focus only on Yale undergraduate students, their feelings of connectedness with New Haven, and their reflections on their relationships with local residents. This project does not feature experiences of other members of the university, including graduate students, faculty, and staff. These actors and relationships open up new areas for analysis and should be investigated in future studies. Furthermore, this study does not analyze the actual relationships between undergraduate students and New Haven community members, nor does it analyze how New Haven community members reflect on their relationships with Yale students. I made these decisions because I did not want to place the labor of my project onto local residents. Therefore, this study turns towards university students to investigate students' personal feelings of connectedness with New Haven, utilizing a reflexive lens to understand what student-community relationships (might) look like.

In order to approach these questions, I first will explore research on social connectedness, then turning to existing literature on the interactions between university students and their urban

neighbors. Finally, we will get situated within the historical context of Yale and New Haven, before detailing study methods and findings.

## *Literature Review*

What is it like to move to a town or city knowing that in four years you will almost certainly go somewhere else? How does that change your relationships with people and places? What does it mean to exist within the walls of an exclusive academic institution that is socially and economically divided from the rest of the city? The relationships between university students and the communities where they live are unique, complex, and largely unexamined. This review synthesizes research on social connectedness and the dynamics between university students and non-university-affiliated city residents (referred to subsequently as "city residents") to provide a foundation for understanding these relationships.

### **Theory of Community Connectedness**

Social connectedness (SC), formulated in the 1970s and 80s by a group of psychologists, provides a useful framework to study the relationships between university students and city residents. Haslam et al. (2015) define social connectedness as “the sense of belonging and subjective psychological bond that people feel in relation to individuals and groups of others.” Many psychologists point to the important role that SC plays in health and wellbeing; other researchers have studied how SC gives people a greater sense of meaning in life.<sup>2</sup>

Within the area of social connectedness, western scholars have characterized the phenomenon known as ‘sense of community’, which refers to an individual’s feeling of belonging with the people around them. McMillan & Chavis (1986) theorize that an individual’s sense of community emerges from four distinct elements, best summarized by Peterson et al. (2008):

needs fulfillment (a perception that members’ needs will be met by the community), group membership (a feeling of belonging or a sense of interpersonal relatedness), influence (a sense that one matters, or can make a difference, in a community and that the community matters to its members), and emotional connection (a feeling of attachment or bonding rooted in members’ shared history, place or experience).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Haslam et al., “Social Connectedness and Health,” 1–2; Stavrova and Luhmann, “Social Connectedness as a Source and Consequence of Meaning in Life,” 477.

<sup>3</sup> Peterson, Speer, and McMillan, “Validation of A Brief Sense of Community Scale,” 62.

I want to draw some observations here. First, McMillan & Chavis (1986) emphasize that each of these elements is fundamentally rooted in the individual's perceptions. Sense of community is a subjective feeling, not a characterization of reality. Second, this model critically identifies the feeling of agency in the community, suggesting that one's sense of community depends in part on their ability to meaningfully contribute to the community. Lastly, the framework separates between emotional connections and interpersonal relatedness. This distinction reflects the need for both personal relationships and the feeling of general familiarity that comes from being in a community one feels comfortable in.

From this framework described by McMillan & Chavis (1986), several scholars have developed ways to measure sense of connectedness. These include Chavis et al.'s (1986) Sense of Community Index, Peterson et al.'s (2008) Brief Sense of Community Scale, and McColl et al.'s (2001) Community Integration Measure. Scholars have applied these indices and the sense of connectedness framework to study the human experience of togetherness in a number of different settings: in neighborhoods, community organizations, workplaces, faith institutions, rehabilitation programs, youth collectives, and immigrant communities, to name a few.<sup>4</sup> Given the widespread use of these metrics, it is important to recognize their limitations. Each of these measures is subjective and most are rooted in western conceptualizations of community. Beyond that, every person experiences community in different ways. With that said, these scales and studies have provided ways to better understand social connectedness both broadly and for specific groups of people. This study utilizes ideas of social connectedness to explore the landscape of relationships between university students and their neighbors.

### **The University-City Relationship**

*"The university is a precisely urban institution" – Gina Fasoli<sup>5</sup>*

In order to understand the social connections between students and local communities, it is important to first discuss the broader relationship between the university and the city. From the founding of the first western institutions of higher education in the late 1100s, universities have relied on cities for classroom space, lodging, food, recreation, and banking services.<sup>6</sup> City

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<sup>4</sup> Peterson, Speer, and McMillan, 62.

<sup>5</sup> Hyde, "Universities and Cities in Medieval Italy," 14.

<sup>6</sup> Brockliss, "Gown and Town: The University and the City in Europe, 1200-2000," 152-53; Hyde, "Universities and Cities in Medieval Italy," 14.

dwellers immediately recognized the financial value of universities, which brought significant influxes of money into local economies. Despite this mutually-beneficial partnership, university faculty and students remained politically and socially separated from surrounding cities, with local tensions occasionally devolving into violence.<sup>7</sup> In the 19th century, these dynamics began to change. The increasingly widespread practice of urban medicine, along with partnerships between local businesses and universities, inextricably linked universities and cities.<sup>8</sup>

Throughout this history, moralist sentiments decrying the evils of cities popularized the idea of creating university campuses in rural idylls, a concept that only really took off in the United States and the British Dominions.<sup>9</sup> This theme of universities simultaneously drawing value from cities and sensationalizing fear around them continues to shape the university-city relationship.

Today, universities and cities are even more economically, physically, and socially interconnected. The economic linkage between ‘town and gown’ may represent the most consequential part of the relationship. Universities’ importance to local economies cannot be understated. As the OECD (2007) identifies, higher education institutions create jobs, patronize regional companies, and provide critical goods and services (such as healthcare) to surrounding communities. Yale University, for example, is the largest employer in New Haven and brings in billions of dollars into the local economy.<sup>10</sup> Beyond these direct contributions, universities attract investment and human capital to cities, driving urban development.<sup>11</sup> This relationship is simultaneously crucial to the economic survival and growth of the university. Local residents and businesses pay for university services like healthcare and consultancy, generating direct income for the university.<sup>12</sup> Universities like Yale also generate revenue by renting out commercial and residential real estate.<sup>13</sup> The opportunities available in cities and the reputations of cities,

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<sup>7</sup> Brockliss, “Gown and Town: The University and the City in Europe, 1200-2000,” 154–55.

<sup>8</sup> Brockliss, 159–60.

<sup>9</sup> Brockliss, 165–66.

<sup>10</sup> Charles, “For College Towns, Having a World-Famous University Is a Mixed Blessing”; Gius, “The Economic Impact of Connecticut’s Independent Colleges and Universities: FY2019,” 18.

<sup>11</sup> Drucker and Goldstein, “Assessing the Regional Economic Development Impacts of Universities: A Review of Current Approaches,” 24–27; Brennan and Cochrane, “Universities: In, of, and beyond Their Cities,” 189–90; Berger-Sweeney, “Bridging the Town-Gown Divide,” 21; OECD, *Higher Education and Regions: Globally Competitive, Locally Engaged*, 21; Ferman et al., “The Right to the City and to the University: Forging Solidarity Beyond the Town/Gown Divide,” 14.

<sup>12</sup> OECD, *Higher Education and Regions: Globally Competitive, Locally Engaged*, 30.

<sup>13</sup> Charles, “For College Towns, Having a World-Famous University Is a Mixed Blessing”; Baldwin, *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower: How Universities Are Plundering Our Cities*, 15, 181.

themselves, attract potential students and staff to universities, which supports their economic success.<sup>14</sup>

In many ways, the university-city relationship appears symbiotic. Activists and other researchers, however, point to another side of this story, revealing how universities can wield immense control over city finances through labor and housing manipulation, unaffordable healthcare, and aggressive debt policies, while not paying any property taxes (since many universities are classified as nonprofit organizations).<sup>15</sup> The property tax exemption, particularly, hurts local residents on a systemic scale. In New Haven, for example, Yale's tax-exempt property ownership causes the city to lose between 130 and 160 million dollars in revenue each year.<sup>16</sup> This places the burden of taxation onto local residents and businesses and contributes to the chronic underfunding of urban social programs like public education.<sup>17</sup> While these observations are undoubtedly true, Ferman et al. (2021) qualify them, arguing that many universities (particularly public universities) have faced massive reductions in government funding over the past few decades, just like cities.<sup>18</sup> They suggest that neoliberal politics and austerity budgets are at least partly to blame for universities' profit-driven enterprises. This is less true for schools with billion-dollar endowments.

Another body of research has investigated how higher education institutions – to varying degrees – actively reshape their urban surroundings. This guided urban development often involves a complicated mixture of gentrification and revitalization of financially struggling neighborhoods.<sup>19</sup> American universities have a particularly fraught history here. Throughout the 1900s, colleges including the University of Chicago and Columbia University enacted racist

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<sup>14</sup> Brennan and Cochrane, "Universities: In, of, and beyond Their Cities," 196, 198–99; Ehlenz, "Gown, Town, and Neighborhood Change: An Examination of Urban Neighborhoods with University Revitalization Efforts," 285–86, 289–90.

<sup>15</sup> Baldwin, *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower: How Universities Are Plundering Our Cities*, 17–18; Charles, "For College Towns, Having a World-Famous University Is a Mixed Blessing"; Klein, "New Haven Rising"; "Yale: Respect New Haven Petition."

<sup>16</sup> Baldwin, "Higher Education Has a Tax Problem and It Hurts Local Communities"; "Yale: Respect New Haven Petition."

<sup>17</sup> Baldwin, "Higher Education Has a Tax Problem and It Hurts Local Communities"; Charles, "For College Towns, Having a World-Famous University Is a Mixed Blessing."

<sup>18</sup> Ferman et al., "The Right to the City and to the University: Forging Solidarity Beyond the Town/Gown Divide," 14.

<sup>19</sup> Ehlenz, "Gown, Town, and Neighborhood Change: An Examination of Urban Neighborhoods with University Revitalization Efforts," 295; Baldwin, *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower: How Universities Are Plundering Our Cities*, 92, 171; den Heijer and Curvelo Magdaniel, "Campus–City Relations: Past, Present, and Future," 444; Marcus, "Bridging the Town and Gown Divide"; Charles, "For College Towns, Having a World-Famous University Is a Mixed Blessing."

housing covenants, demolished properties, and inflated rent in order to push out entire city blocks of Black and brown residents.<sup>20</sup> Schools like Yale University continue to inflate rent for both residential and retail properties to create a “more desirable” cityscape featuring expensive apartment complexes and trendy smoothie shops.<sup>21</sup> Little data is available on the number of residents dispossessed by university-driven urban development. Within academic writing, even less is understood about how these practices change the fabric of local neighborhoods and communities (community members, of course, know this intimately). With that understanding, this is also true: university urban renewal initiatives can uplift the quality of life in local neighborhoods. In creating parks, building bike lanes, and preserving culturally significant places, universities can measurably improve safety, public infrastructure and amenities, housing, poverty, unemployment, commercial services, and local education.<sup>22</sup> Gentrification and urban revitalization exist in a complicated relationship. The extent to which university initiatives promote either or both of them has historically depended on the involvement of community members, the deliberate implementation of policies to support local residents and businesses, and the accountability of the university.<sup>23</sup>

Other researchers have examined the university-city relationship as a sociological phenomenon postured around sentiments of safety, fear, and belongingness. Crime certainly exists on college campuses.<sup>24</sup> In order to keep their campuses safe, many universities have either formed their own police forces or paid city police forces to extensively patrol their properties; some have security staff on top of that.<sup>25</sup> Through policing, universities often spill over their campus borders, hyper-policing areas of the city immediately surrounding the campus.<sup>26</sup> For universities that have their own police forces, these geographies are often doubly surveilled by the city’s law enforcement. On top of policing, many universities have built walls, gates, and security systems to control who is allowed to enter campus spaces. All of this helps protect

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<sup>20</sup> Baldwin, *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower: How Universities Are Plundering Our Cities*, 24, 31–37, 127.

<sup>21</sup> Kim et al., *The Yale DeTour: Excavating an Elsewhere*, 8–9; Charles, “For College Towns, Having a World-Famous University Is a Mixed Blessing”; Oxman and Rubin, *On Broadway*.

<sup>22</sup> Ehlenz, “Gown, Town, and Neighborhood Change: An Examination of Urban Neighborhoods with University Revitalization Efforts,” 286; Liu, “The Tensions of University–City Relations in the Knowledge Society,” 135.

<sup>23</sup> Baldwin, *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower: How Universities Are Plundering Our Cities*, 85.

<sup>24</sup> Fisher et al., “Crime in the Ivory Tower: The Level and Sources of Student Victimization.”

<sup>25</sup> Baldwin, *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower: How Universities Are Plundering Our Cities*, 141–42; Charles, “For College Towns, Having a World-Famous University Is a Mixed Blessing.”

<sup>26</sup> Baldwin, *In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower: How Universities Are Plundering Our Cities*, 127, 136, 142–49; Charles, “For College Towns, Having a World-Famous University Is a Mixed Blessing.”

students, faculty, and staff from crime. At the same time, it sends clear messaging about belongingness, who is of the city and who is of the university, and who is allowed within the gates.

When we consider the relationships between universities and cities, we should understand that they exist in these economic, physical, and social dimensions simultaneously. These relationships are historical and have – to varying extents – shaped the population, space, and culture of both cities and their universities. While much of the current research focuses on how universities control these dynamics, there is another story here. As we will see with New Haven and Yale University, these relationships are also sites of neighborhood activism, resistance, and community togetherness.

Together, this complicated set of dynamics frames the relationships between university students and city residents. Of course, the frame can only reveal so much about the picture it holds. I now want to shift your focus towards the actual connections between students and their neighbors.

## **Relationships Between University Students and Local Community Members**

### *University Students and Local Communities*

University students comprise a small but significant group of people living in cities. Whether they realize it or not, students are embedded within this complex relational matrix between universities and cities. They carry histories and power with them wherever they go. Many students also carry with them the knowledge that they will likely move away after completing their program of study.<sup>27</sup> These unique conditions implicitly shape how students experience the city; other factors shape how they navigate it. For example, rather than dispersing around the city, university students tend to live together, either in campus dorms or in “spatial bubbles localized around the campus.”<sup>28</sup> Given this strange set of characteristics, how do university students fit into urban communities? I want to start by defining the economic roles that students play in cities before turning to modes of interaction between students and their neighbors.

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<sup>27</sup> Smith, “‘Studentification’: The Gentrification Factory?,” 75.

<sup>28</sup> He, “Consuming Urban Living in ‘Villages in the City’: Studentification in Guangzhou, China,” 2853; Smith, “‘Studentification’: The Gentrification Factory?,” 73; Smith and Holt, “Studentification and ‘Apprentice’ Gentrifiers within Britain’s Provincial Towns and Cities: Extending the Meaning of Gentrification,” 151–52, 157.

As with any population, students contribute to the local economy both directly and indirectly. Students' direct spending imports money to the region in a way that supports local businesses and creates new jobs.<sup>29</sup> For example, at Loughborough University, a medium-sized public university in England, student spending on food, recreation, and housing is estimated to support 400 local jobs.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, students contribute to 'studentification', a term coined by Smith (2005) to describe how students reshape cities in a process similar to, but distinct from, gentrification. According to Smith (2005), students' consumption of off-campus housing inflates rent and property prices which, in turn, has dangerous consequences for the local community: it changes the makeup of local neighborhoods based on who can afford to live there, perpetuates housing segregation, erodes away at neighborhood identities, and physically transforms city spaces.<sup>31</sup> Multiple studies have documented how studentification in cities around the world has displaced local residents, refashioned residential neighborhoods into trendy student spaces, and worn away at the fabric of communities.<sup>32</sup> Studentification, of course, operates at the same time as university-driven urban renewal, though the relationship between the two remains poorly understood. Clearly, university student spending patterns are massively consequential for urban environments, simultaneously supporting and harming local communities. Yet, this tells us very little about how students actually interact with local communities and community members.

Previous scholarship has primarily characterized a few notable patterns of interaction between university students and their neighbors. University student housing is often associated with partying, noise, and lack of upkeep, which affects the quality of life of those living nearby, as well as the property values.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, students often fear local crime and some worry about their safety, which can prompt negative perceptions towards surrounding

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<sup>29</sup> Hubbard, "Regulating the Social Impacts of Studentification: A Loughborough Case Study," 329, 338–39; Gius, "The Economic Impact of Connecticut's Independent Colleges and Universities: FY2019."

<sup>30</sup> Hubbard, "Regulating the Social Impacts of Studentification: A Loughborough Case Study," 329.

<sup>31</sup> Smith, "'Studentification': The Gentrification Factory?," 73–75.

<sup>32</sup> Avni and Alfasi, "UniverCity: The Vicious Cycle of Studentification in a Peripheral City," 1258, 1265; Chatterton, "University Students and City Centres – the Formation of Exclusive Geographies: The Case of Bristol, UK," 129–30, 132–33; He, "Consuming Urban Living in 'Villages in the City': Studentification in Guangzhou, China," 2860–61, 2864–65, 2868, 2870; Hubbard, "Regulating the Social Impacts of Studentification: A Loughborough Case Study," 329, 333–34, 339.

<sup>33</sup> Avni and Alfasi, "UniverCity: The Vicious Cycle of Studentification in a Peripheral City," 1260; Hubbard, "Regulating the Social Impacts of Studentification: A Loughborough Case Study," 334, 338; Smith and Holt, "Studentification and 'Apprentice' Gentrifiers within Britain's Provincial Towns and Cities: Extending the Meaning of Gentrification," 149.

communities.<sup>34</sup> Students and local residents on the whole often appear generally ambivalent towards one another, often existing in different social and spatial topographies.<sup>35</sup>

Still, the literature overwhelmingly cites one mode of interaction between students and community members that is often positive: university student community work. The value of these experiences is proclaimed everywhere, from sociological studies to university promotional materials. Through volunteering, interning, and working with local organizations, students learn directly from city community members, gain skills, and build up their resumes.<sup>36</sup> By serving as ‘boots on the ground’ for those organizations, students simultaneously can contribute to the well-being of local communities.<sup>37</sup> Many university students invest a significant amount of time engaging with community service. For example, each year at Yale University, students collectively log over 80,000 volunteer hours (though these numbers have been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic).<sup>38</sup>

The value of volunteering is hard to quantify. Depending on how it is done, volunteering has the potential to positively impact both the volunteer and the community they seek to help. However, local residents who have watched students come and go over the years know that volunteering does not fundamentally better the community simply because it is volunteering. Service work requires training. Given its high turnover rates, it can consume the time and resources of local communities without creating real value for those it claims to serve. Furthermore, volunteering does not necessarily build positive relationships between students and local residents. There is a noticeable void in the literature about what these relationships actually look like. Current research focuses extensively on the value of skills-building for students and ‘boots on the ground’ for locals, but largely overlooks the nature of these interactions. Do they have that same sense of mutual ambivalence? Are they amicable? Do they make community members feel valued and students feel more at home? One study by Goldner & Golan (2019)

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<sup>34</sup> Chatterton, “University Students and City Centres – the Formation of Exclusive Geographies: The Case of Bristol, UK,” 125; Fisher et al., “Crime in the Ivory Tower: The Level and Sources of Student Victimization,” 701; Hignite, Marshall, and Naumann, “The Ivory Tower Meets the Inner City: Student Protective and Avoidance Behaviors on an Urban University Campus,” 119.

<sup>35</sup> Avni and Alfasi, “UniverCity: The Vicious Cycle of Studentification in a Peripheral City,” 1259–60; Hubbard, “Regulating the Social Impacts of Studentification: A Loughborough Case Study,” 329.

<sup>36</sup> “New Haven, Yale ‘Are Part of Each Other’”; Liu, “The Tensions of University–City Relations in the Knowledge Society,” 139.

<sup>37</sup> “New Haven, Yale ‘Are Part of Each Other’”; Berger-Sweeney, “Bridging the Town-Gown Divide,” 22–23; Adler and Goggin, “What Do We Mean By ‘Civic Engagement’?,” 240–41.

<sup>38</sup> “2019 Year in Review,” 7; “2021 Year in Review,” 4.

found that Palestinian university students in Israel who volunteered in local Palestinian communities reported that these experiences evoked a meaningful sense of connection and solidarity with those communities.<sup>39</sup> Volunteering clearly is complex and demands a critical eye, yet it has the capacity to create positive interactions and relationships.

The current literature has almost exclusively focused on social tensions and community service as the main patterns of interaction between university students and city residents. Beyond this, little has been studied or theorized about students as members of urban communities. According to students, what is the nature of student-resident relationships? In the eyes of students, what do meaningful connections with local communities look like? This study aims to begin answering these questions in order to better understand the relationships between students and urban community members.

### *Students and Community Connectedness*

Hubbard's 2008 publication is one of the only to explore students' feelings of connectedness with the local community. Here, he considers feelings of belonging and students' attempts to form relationships with the area: "A Student's Union survey of 218 students conducted in July 2005 suggested that 63% did not feel a sense of belonging to the town of Loughborough (UK) and 47% did not feel welcomed. Remarkably, 54% said they had made no effort to integrate with the town, and as many as one in five felt they had 'nothing in common' with the town community."<sup>40</sup> Whether these results are reflective of the average university remains yet to be seen. However, I'm much more interested in the survey's line of questioning rather than the data itself. The focus on belongingness with the local community recalls McMillan & Chavis's (1986) social connectedness theory. What does belongingness look like here? And what factors lead some students to build relationships with locals but not others? This second question does have some grounding in the literature.

A study by Porterfield (2016) found several factors linked to university student community engagement: female students are more likely to engage in community service, first-year students are less likely to perform community service, and courses that promote social-

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<sup>39</sup> Goldner and Golan, "What Is Meaningful Civic Engagement for Students? Recollections of Jewish and Palestinian Graduates in Israel," 1952–53.

<sup>40</sup> Hubbard, "Regulating the Social Impacts of Studentification: A Loughborough Case Study," 334.

perspective taking (i.e. putting yourself in another person's shoes) increase students' likelihood to participate in community service. Additionally, Porterfield concludes that while low-income students and students from underrepresented minorities are less likely to engage with local communities, those same students "are also likely to increase their probability of performing community service by a substantial amount."<sup>41</sup> Egerton (2002) determined that university students from middle-class families, and particularly students whose parents work in professional occupations, show greater rates of volunteering.<sup>42</sup> Together, these findings indicate that a student's race, ethnicity, gender, class year, and socioeconomic status may influence how that student engages with local communities.

This study shifts the line of questioning towards social connectedness: what factors are linked to students feeling more or less connected with their neighbors? Since there is no existing scholarship on this subject, I turn back to Porterfield (2016) and Egerton (2002) to form hypotheses. Again, their research on a student's likelihood to volunteer is imperfectly related to a student's feeling of connectedness with local communities. Still, these two studies give us some initial insight into the kinds of factors that make relationship formation possible. In alignment with their findings, I hypothesized that female students, upperclassmen, white students, and students receiving partial financial aid would all have a relatively high sense of connectedness with local communities.

My project tests these assertions and many more using real student data. But before discussing study methodology, I want to first situate you within the site of focus for this case study: Yale University and New Haven, Connecticut.

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<sup>41</sup> Porterfield, "Civic and Community Engagement Impact on Economically Disadvantaged Students," 76–79.

<sup>42</sup> Egerton, "Higher Education and Civic Engagement," 615.

## *New Haven and Yale University: A Brief History*

New Haven is a mid-sized city in southern Connecticut that houses over 130,000 residents and countless institutions, including Yale University.<sup>43</sup> Yale's campus is geographically embedded in New Haven, as it has been for over 300 years. Because of this, New Haven – which traces its colonial origins back to 1638 – and Yale – founded in 1701 – have long, complex, closely-connected histories. Given the scope of this paper, this historical overview will only focus on the New Haven-Yale relationship from the mid-20th century forward. With that said, I would highly encourage you to read the *Yale, Slavery and Abolition* report by The Amistad Committee (2001) to understand Yale's powerful influence in New Haven since its founding.<sup>44</sup>

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, New Haven was a bustling industrial center of the United States, “home to a robust carriage industry, the largest lock producer in the country and the Winchester Repeating Arms Company.” At the time, Yale was only a “minor fixture” in the Elm City.<sup>45</sup> After WWII, with the popularization of the automobile, New Haven saw much of its middle class move out of the city, into the suburbs.<sup>46</sup> This marked the beginning of New Haven's economic decline, which only accelerated after the Vietnam War, as several manufacturing companies left the city for better prospects farther South.<sup>47</sup> While the city was struggling economically and changing socially, Yale grew rapidly; in 1968, the university boasted 8665 students and its endowment was valued at almost \$500 million.<sup>48</sup> In this historical moment, as Yale grew and other corporations went away, New Haven and Yale started to become increasingly economically interdependent.

Over the past half-century, several historical events have defined the relationship between New Haven and Yale. In the spring of 1970, tens of thousands of people from around the country poured into New Haven to protest the arrest of Black Panther leader Bobby Seale, who was placed on trial in New Haven for murder of Alex Rackley. Unlike universities around the country that had closed their campuses to avoid similar protests, Yale – persuaded by its Black student leaders to avoid outbreaks of violence – welcomed protestors into the campus, housed them, and

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<sup>43</sup> “New Haven City, Connecticut.”

<sup>44</sup> Access The Amistad Committee's *Yale, Slavery and Abolition* report here: <http://www.yaleslavery.org/>.

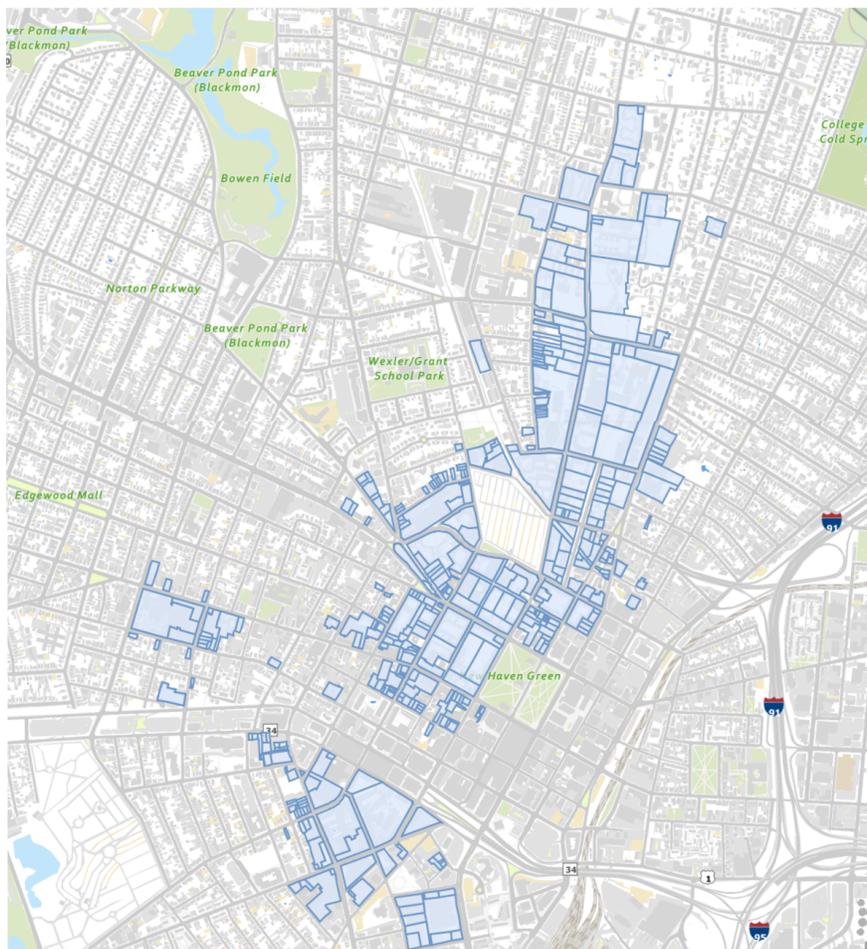
<sup>45</sup> Gootman, “New Haven and Yale: A Couple With a History.”

<sup>46</sup> “New Haven's History.”

<sup>47</sup> Gootman, “New Haven and Yale: A Couple With a History.”

<sup>48</sup> Pierson, *A Yale Book of Numbers*, 11; “Yale History Timeline.”

provided them with food and medical care.<sup>49</sup> May Day, as the event came to be called, represented a powerful moment of navigating tension between Yale and local community members in a peaceful way.



**Image 1.** Yale Property Ownership in Central New Haven as of February 2022.<sup>50</sup>

Over the past three decades, Yale has emerged as perhaps the largest driver of urban renewal in New Haven. Catalyzed by the 1991 murder of Christian Prince, a Yale undergraduate student, Yale started to aggressively expand its geographical footprint, buying up commercial and residential real estate around the city (see Image 1 and Appendix Image A1).<sup>51</sup> These properties have become nuclei of gentrification and urban renewal. The university increases rent

<sup>49</sup> Shelton, “The May Day Rally, in Words and Pictures”; Stannard, “Top 50: 300-Year Relationship Molded New Haven and Yale.”

<sup>50</sup> Data is reported by the City of New Haven and is publicly accessible here:

<https://nhgis.newhavenct.gov/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=cefea5da65fc4c5094f3b011064b9849>.

<sup>51</sup> Charles, “For College Towns, Having a World-Famous University Is a Mixed Blessing”; Stannard, “Top 50: 300-Year Relationship Molded New Haven and Yale.”

on retail and housing properties above market value, pushing local businesses and residents out and bringing national chains, Yale affiliates, and young professionals in.<sup>52</sup> Yale's revitalization efforts financially stimulate the community, *and* they upend local businesses and exacerbate housing segregation. New Haven residents have experienced firsthand how this continued expansion uproots local neighborhoods, places where some families have lived for generations.

Largely due to Yale and Yale New Haven Hospital's expansions, 54% of all property in New Haven is currently tax exempt.<sup>53</sup> Yale's tax-exempt property ownership in New Haven is valued at \$4.23 billion, which constitutes an estimated loss of between 130 and 160 million dollars in tax revenue each year.<sup>54</sup> This severely restricts New Haven's budget and places the burden of taxation on local residents. So, while residents generally recognize the importance of Yale as a local employer and jobs producer, many hold resentments towards the institution.

Community activism is an important part of New Haven's past and present. In the 2000s, local union workers and community members formed coalitions such as the Connecticut Center for a New Economy (CCNE) and the Community Organized for Responsible Development (CORD), while other activists formed civic organizations like the Community Voter Project. Through their sustained effort, these organizations forced Yale to change its hospital debt policies, create youth programming, and adopt local hiring requirements.<sup>55</sup> While Yale continues to expand its footprint, New Haven community members are coming together to resist those efforts, strengthen their communities, and fight for a sustainable future. Their demands are clear: Yale must increase its annual voluntary payments to New Haven and must "make good on its promise to hire locally," particularly from the city's less-resourced neighborhoods.<sup>56</sup> But I want to trace another history here: this past decade has seen increasing solidarity and coalition-building between New Haven residents and Yale students. In the 2017 protests calling for Yale to rename Calhoun College, the 2019 protests in response to a Yale police officer shooting at Stephanie Washington and Paul Witherspoon (who were unarmed and Black), and the 2021 "Yale: Respect New Haven" car caravan, Yale students marched alongside longtime residents of

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<sup>52</sup> Kim et al., *The Yale DeTour: Excavating an Elsewhere*, 8–9; Charles, "For College Towns, Having a World-Famous University Is a Mixed Blessing"; Oxman and Rubin, *On Broadway*, "The Diagnosis."

<sup>53</sup> Charles, "For College Towns, Having a World-Famous University Is a Mixed Blessing."

<sup>54</sup> Breen, "After Reveal, Grand List Skyrockets by 32%"; Baldwin, "Higher Education Has a Tax Problem and It Hurts Local Communities"; "Yale: Respect New Haven Petition."

<sup>55</sup> Klein, "New Haven Rising."

<sup>56</sup> Gellman, "Mural With A Message Lands On Prospect Street"; Rayala, "University Pressed for Time to Fulfill New Haven Hiring Agreement."

the city, pressuring Yale to treat New Haven citizens with dignity and respect.<sup>57</sup> These protest spaces represent powerful ways of building solidarity and community between city residents and university students, faculty, and staff.

New Haven is a beautiful and historic city home to 20 distinct neighborhoods and 134,000 residents, the majority of whom identify as a racial or ethnic minority.<sup>58</sup> It features a thriving art scene, amazing community organizations, and dozens of unique green spaces. Still, the Elm City faces looming economic challenges. One in four residents and 34% of young children live in poverty.<sup>59</sup> Unemployment of Black and Latino residents hovers around 12%, more than double the unemployment rate of white non-Hispanic residents.<sup>60</sup> New Haven's city budget is \$700 million.<sup>61</sup> Comparatively, Yale University – which houses 4,962 faculty, 10,442 staff members, and 12,021 students – operates under a yearly budget of over \$5 billion and has an endowment worth \$42 billion.<sup>62</sup> More and more, local activists have been drawing attention to these starkly contrasting numbers. Their work is bringing together stakeholders from around the city – including many Yale students – and starting a new chapter in New Haven's tradition of activism.

With this brief contextualization, I want to share with you my study about Yale students' feelings of connectedness with New Haven residents.

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<sup>57</sup> Enkhtamir and Tabin, "Four Arrested at Friday's Calhoun Protest"; Xiao and Westfall, "Hundreds Protest YPD Involvement in Shooting"; Kainz and Yu, "Unions Call for Respect from Yale at Car Caravan Rally."

<sup>58</sup> "New Haven City, Connecticut."

<sup>59</sup> Charles, "For College Towns, Having a World-Famous University Is a Mixed Blessing"; Klein, "New Haven Rising"; "Yale: Respect New Haven Petition."

<sup>60</sup> Seaberry, Davila, and Abraham, "New Haven 2021 Equity Profile," 12.

<sup>61</sup> *City of New Haven: Approved Budget, 2021-2022*, 49.

<sup>62</sup> "Data at a Glance"; "Yale Endowment Earns 40.2% Investment Return in Fiscal 2021."

## *Methodology*

This project utilizes a mixed-methods approach combining an electronic survey and a series of four semi-structured interviews. The survey identifies factors that are statistically linked with Yale students feeling more or less connected with New Haven residents. Then, through the interviews, I generate four case studies into student relationships with New Haven that illustrate, complicate, and deepen findings from the survey. For this study, IRB approval from Yale University and participant consent were obtained before any data were collected.

### **Part A: Survey**

This study administered an anonymized, one-time, 5-10-minute electronic survey to explore how students' identities, backgrounds, and experiences at Yale correlate with their self-reported feelings of connectedness with New Haven. All 953 currently-enrolled undergraduates in Trumbull and Silliman colleges, two of the fourteen residential colleges at Yale, were invited via email to participate in the survey. Residential colleges are randomized, demographically-representative microcosms of the Yale community.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, it was decided to administer the survey through these two colleges in order to capture a highly-representative sample of Yale while also maximizing the response rate. Survey participation was incentivized by offering a gift card raffle to respondents who completed the survey.

In order to quantitatively characterize Yale students' feelings of connectedness with New Haven, I developed the New Haven Connectedness Index (NHCI). This measure utilizes components from existing social connectedness metrics developed by Chavis et al. (1986), Perkins et al. (1990), and Peterson et al. (2008), and uses the structure of McColl et al.'s (2001) Community Integration Measure (CIM) as a template. The NHCI features six statements that invite participants to reflect on their connections with New Haven residents and communities. Each statement is scored on a 5-option Likert Scale, with "strongly disagree" corresponding to 1 and "strongly agree" corresponding to 5 (except for statements 2 and 5, which are negatively-worded so the scoring is inverted). By adding up values from each of the six responses, NHCI produces a score for each survey participant (ranging from 6 to 30) equal to the unweighted sum

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<sup>63</sup> "Residential Colleges."

of the response values. The NHCI questionnaire was embedded within the electronic survey (see Appendix B), alongside questions about student identities, backgrounds, and experiences.

Over the course of eight days, the electronic survey received 288 usable responses from eligible and consenting adult undergraduates, including 285 complete responses and 3 partially completed responses included in my analyses when possible. This corresponds to an overall 30.2% response rate (26.3% among Silliman students and 34.8% among Trumbull students). According to the formula supplied by Dillman et al. (2009), using a 95% confidence level, this response yield constitutes an estimated 4.8% sampling error, which falls within the generally-accepted range of 3% to 5%.<sup>64</sup> Survey respondent mean age was 20.144 (SD = 1.741). The data captures a relatively even distribution of respondents broken down by class year (see Appendix Figure C1). 64.5% ( $N = 182$ ) of respondents identified as women, 34.4% ( $N = 97$ ) identified as men, and 1.1% ( $N = 3$ ) identified in some other way.

Apart from an overrepresentation of female respondents and an underrepresentation of male respondents, the survey sample closely matches the demographics of Yale College and therefore should reflect information about the broader university (see Appendix Table C1 for systematic comparisons). A preliminary analysis of NHCI score distributions suggests that NHCI reliably measures Yale students' feelings of connectedness with New Haven residents (see Appendix D for an assessment of NHCI validity). Given these two conditions, survey response data was analyzed using IBM's SPSS software (28.0.0.0) to identify specific factors that correlate with a greater (or lesser) sense of connectedness with New Haven.

## **Part B: Interviews**

Following the conclusion of the survey, I conducted four semi-structured interviews with Yale students, identified through snowball sampling, who have strong relationships with New Haven residents and local organizations. These interviews provide a more narrative understanding of how a few students have engaged with some of New Haven's communities. They also capture students' self-reflections on their own thinking and motivations as they built (and continue to build) relationships with residents of New Haven. Selected interviewees were currently-enrolled adult Yale undergraduate students who a) have been actively involved with at least one New Haven organization for at least 2 years, b) received an NHCI score of at least 21

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<sup>64</sup> Dillman, Smyth, and Christian, *Internet, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*, 56–57.

(well above the average), and c) interact regularly with at least 5 New Haven residents not affiliated with Yale.

Flyers were emailed to potential interviewees. Interested candidates were then screened for eligibility. Each consenting interviewee participated in a one-time, 45- to 60-minute semi-structured interview which was conducted virtually via Zoom, recorded, and transcribed via Trint transcription service. The interviews focused on participants' relationships with New Haven, as well as the experiences and mindsets that led them to form those kinds of connections (see full interview script in Appendix E). Drawing on Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's portraiture methodology, the interviews were transformed into a collage of portraits – case studies of sorts – that collectively captures how each interviewee understands their relationships with New Haven.<sup>65</sup> These are placed in conversation with the results from the survey, deepening and complicating quantitative patterns through narrative storytelling.

### **Methodological Limitations:**

All results and findings of this study must be understood given the context of COVID-19. Several studies have already documented the social isolation effects of COVID-19 for university students.<sup>66</sup> Every student participating in this study (as a survey respondent and/or an interviewee) has had their college experience impacted by the pandemic. For some, the pandemic struck in the middle of their junior year; some participants enrolled at Yale this past fall and have only known New Haven during the pandemic. COVID-19 has undoubtedly changed university students' relationships with their cities in profound ways and the data here will certainly reflect that. This is all to say that these findings cannot be divorced from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

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<sup>65</sup> Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, *The Art and Science of Portraiture*; Small, "'How Many Cases Do I Need?' On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research," 24–25.

<sup>66</sup> Leal Filho et al., "Impacts of COVID-19 and Social Isolation on Academic Staff and Students at Universities: A Cross-Sectional Study," 11–12; Elmer, Mephram, and Stadtfeld, "Students under Lockdown: Comparisons of Students' Social Networks and Mental Health before and during the COVID-19 Crisis in Switzerland," 10–12.

## *Findings*

### **Deliberate Involvement in Local Communities is Highly Correlated with Connectedness**

This section synthesizes statistical findings from the survey responses. To make this section more readable, much of the numerical information is included in Appendix F. Over the next few pages, I highlight the most striking findings from these analyses, organized into four sections. First, I identify factors correlated (and not correlated) with connectedness. Next, I summarize what students cite as opportunities for and challenges in forming connections. Finally, I point to a broader pattern in community involvement as Yale students move from their local communities to New Haven.

#### *Students' Experiences in New Haven Correlated with Connectedness, Not Student Identity or Background*

Statistical analyses show that student identities such as race and LGBTQ affinity have essentially no correlation with a respondent's sense of connectedness with New Haven communities. This decisively disproves my hypothesis that white students and female students would report a higher sense of connectedness with New Haven communities. Of all tested identity factors, only age and class year showed significant correlations with NHCI score. A linear regression between age and NHCI score, for example, shows a significant, medium-sized, positive relationship between the two variables,  $R^2 = 0.16$ ,  $F(1, 282) = 4.460$ ,  $\beta = 0.125$ ,  $p = .036$ . Class year similarly has a positive relationship with NHCI score (see Appendix Table F1). Surprisingly, these data indicate that time spent living in New Haven has only a *modest* correlation with a Yale student's sense of connectedness with local community members. I suspect that this trend is at least partially inhibited by COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, which have limited student-resident interactions over the past two years. Future studies should investigate this correlation as pandemic restrictions continue to ease.

Similar to student identities, student background – including geographic origins, financial situation, and community involvement while growing up – by and large has no consistent correlation with connectedness. With that said, growing up in New Haven has a huge positive correlation with sense of connectedness with the city: Yale undergraduates who grew up in New Haven have a mean NHCI score of 22.88 ( $SD = 3.52$ ), whereas those who grew up elsewhere have a mean NHCI score of 15.88 ( $SD = 3.83$ ), a whopping 7-point difference (see Appendix

Table F13). For students not from New Haven, geographic origin does not seem to have any significant correlation with connectedness, even for international students, students from rural areas, and students from less racially diverse communities (see Appendix Tables F4, F5, F6, and F13). I wonder, again, if this is more reflective of how the COVID-19 pandemic limited avenues of social interaction between Yale students and New Haven locals. For example, in the absence of pandemic restrictions, would students from urban areas of the Northeast feel more connected – on average – than students from the rural South? More studies must be done to track these trends as pandemic restrictions fall away.

Interestingly, a student's community involvement while growing up has no correlation with NHCI score (see Appendix Table F9). Even more confoundingly, in some cases, this involvement can actually have a negative correlation with a student's sense of connectedness with New Haven communities. I found that NHCI scores of respondents who were not involved ( $M = 16.63$ ,  $SD = 3.60$ ) or slightly involved ( $M = 16.75$ ,  $SD = 4.37$ ) with local sports and social organizations growing up were significantly *greater* than the scores of respondents who were very involved with local sports and social organizations growing up ( $M = 14.68$ ,  $SD = 3.43$ ). While the differences were not found to be significant, involvement with local activism and local events seem to follow similar patterns: the respondents who were most involved with those community activities before college now have the lowest NHCI scores (see Appendix Table F9). I can think of two possible explanations for this. Perhaps this suggests that students who are used to feeling really involved in their communities now feel disconnected with their neighbors due to COVID-19 restrictions. This may also reflect a phenomenon in which students who have such a strong tie to their home communities feel, by comparison, less connected with New Haven. More research is needed to understand shifting senses of community connectedness as university students move from their hometowns to the cities where their colleges are located.

While student identities and backgrounds generally have no association with NHCI score – apart from a few particular factors – the experiences that a student has living in New Haven appear to be strongly linked to how connected that student feels with New Haven. These experiences include living off campus, being registered to vote in New Haven, community involvement (including through Yale-affiliated programs), and more (see Appendix Tables F10, F11, and F13). Of these experiences, participation in activism in New Haven showed the greatest correlation. Interestingly, a post hoc Tukey test found no significant difference in NHCI score (p

= .263) between students who are not involved with volunteering and those who reported being slightly involved with volunteering. This means that volunteering is only correlated with a greater NHCI score beyond a certain threshold of involvement. In other words, volunteering on a more casual basis is not linked with a higher NHCI score.

Table 1 summarizes factors found to have statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) correlations with NHCI score and their corresponding effect sizes. Again, this analysis only suggests information about correlations and is not able to assert claims of causation. From the data, we see that students' involvement with life in the city – outside of the university bubble – has strong correlations with their sense of connectedness. As we turn towards portraits of students and their relationships, we will see that identities and backgrounds fundamentally shape how (and why) students form connections with people and communities in New Haven. Yet, generally, the data suggest that specific backgrounds or identities are not associated with feeling more or less connected with the city.

**Table 1.** Factors Significantly Correlated with NHCI and Their Effect Sizes

Factor	Effect Size <sup>a</sup>
Age	++
Class year	++
Growing up in New Haven	++++
Involvement with local sports and social orgs growing up	--
Having lived off campus ( $\geq 1$ month)	++
Being registered to vote in New Haven	+++
Attending a religious congregation in New Haven that includes non-Yale members	+++
Volunteering in New Haven	+++
Working or interning with New Haven organizations	+++
Involvement with activism in New Haven	++++
Involvement with sports and social organizations in New Haven	++
Attending events in New Haven not affiliated with Yale	++
Involvement in a Dwight Hall organization	++
Participation in Yale-funded service initiatives (i.e., the Yale President's Public Service Fellowship)	+++

<sup>a</sup> + or - indicates a positive or negative correlation with NHCI. The number of symbols represents the magnitude of the size (• = small, •• = medium, ••• = large, and •••• = huge). Effect sizes were determined using ranges outlined by Cohen (1977), Olejnik & Algina (2000), and McFadden (1977).<sup>67</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Cohen, *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*, 413–14, 24–27; Olejnik and Algina, “Measures of Effect Size for Comparative Studies,” 263; McFadden, “Quantitative Methods for Analyzing Travel Behaviour of Individuals: Some Recent Developments,” 35.

*Students Actively Involved in New Haven Start Building Relationships Early and Deliberately*

One survey question asked respondents to reflect on their involvement with New Haven. 44 respondents out of 287 (15%) selected that they consider themselves actively involved with the city. Of this group, 70.5% report becoming actively involved with New Haven during their first year, 20.5% in their sophomore year, and 9% in their junior year. They cite volunteering in New Haven (77%;  $N = 34$ ) and working with local organizations (59%;  $N = 26$ ) as the main experiences that helped them become involved with the city. 73% ( $N = 32$ ) also indicated knowing that they wanted to be actively involved with New Haven before they came to Yale. The trend, then, is that these students begin interacting with local communities deliberately and early on.

*Time, Lack of Interest, and COVID-19 Among the Biggest Barriers to Relationship Formation*

Of the 243 respondents who reported not feeling actively involved with the city, 89% identified not having enough time as a barrier to meaningfully engaging with New Haven. Additionally, 19% ( $N = 46$ ) cited feeling unsafe in the city and 28% ( $N = 68$ ) cited not having much interest in getting involved with the city. Other respondents identified the following as limiting their engagement with New Haven: COVID-19, disabilities and the inaccessibility of the city, uncertainty about “what’s going on outside Yale” or how to get started, transportation, and more. One respondent wrote, “I’m just not from here.”

*Students Dramatically Reduce Community Involvement as They Transitioned from Home to Yale*

Table 2 captures a strange phenomenon in the data: survey respondents on the whole were highly involved with volunteering while growing up, but many stopped completely (or considerably reduced their involvement) when they started college. An ordinal regression found that students’ volunteering while growing up can only explain 3.3% of the variance in volunteering participation while at Yale (here we are looking at the McFadden pseudo- $R^2$  values). This is to say that the correlation is extremely weak, that the vast majority of respondents dramatically changed their patterns of volunteer involvement when they started at Yale. Involvement with local activism follows a similar, albeit less drastic, trend, with involvement growing up explaining 7.9% of the variance of involvement while at Yale. To my knowledge, this is the first time that these numbers have been reported. The question, of course,

is *why*? Why have so many students reduced their community involvement when they arrived in New Haven? The COVID-19 pandemic certainly limited (and in some settings continues to limit) volunteer opportunities in and around New Haven. With that said, the massive shifts seen in Table 2 suggest that there may be another factor at play. I suspect that, independent of the pandemic, Yale students generally reduce their volunteering and activist involvement when they begin college, though more studies (including studies at other universities) are needed to confirm this.

**Table 2.** Regressions Comparing Community Involvement While Growing Up and at Yale<sup>a</sup>

Characteristic	While growing up	Since at Yale	<i>df</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>	McFadden $R^2$
	<i>N</i>	<i>N</i>				
<b>Involvement with local volunteering</b>						
Not involved	21	122	3	<b>23.594*</b>	<.001	.033
Slightly involved	60	87				
Relatively involved	105	55				
Very involved	100	24				
<b>Involvement with local activism</b>						
Not involved	101	178	3	<b>42.234*</b>	<.001	.079
Slightly involved	85	80				
Relatively involved	60	26				
Very involved	39	4				

<sup>a</sup> The left side of the table shows that while many Yale students were involved with local volunteering and activism in their home communities while growing up, many stop (or reduce) their involvement with this kind of work when they transition to Yale. The right side shows data from ordinal regressions (using a logit function), utilized to estimate the correlation strength, pseudo- $R^2$ , between student community work in their local communities while growing up and their work in New Haven since attending Yale. Odds ratios were excluded from the table to simplify viewing.

\* $p < .05$

## Portraits of People and Relationships

Over two weeks, I interviewed Yonatan Greenberg, Nellie Conover-Crockett, José Garcia, and Josie Steuer Ingall, each having unique connections with various communities situated in New Haven. These are their real names, which they gave me permission to use. As with the survey, this methodology is only able to explore students' perceptions of their relationships – not the quality of the relationships themselves or the perspectives of New Haven residents. By nature of their position, my interviewees see their individual relationships with New Haven like how we see a photograph – a bit flattened and only from one point of view, but still meaningful. All of us can relate to this kind of perspective because it is our lived reality. My goal in the next few pages is to create a collage out of these photographs, putting pixels together to find a more nuanced understanding of these relationships.

### *Yonatan Greenberg*

When I meet Yonatan, a white senior from Rockville, MD, I am immediately struck by his disarming honesty. He is warm and funny, yet at the same time exudes a kind of principled clarity, which I find both impressive and a little intimidating. I start off by asking Yonatan about when he first came to live in New Haven. “Yeah, I'll share a funny story that sort of came to mind immediately,” he smiles. Yonatan pulls me into a memory from his first-year orientation in August of 2017. He sits in Woolsey Hall, a massive 2650-seat auditorium where welcome addresses usually take place. A speaker for the ‘Yale and New Haven’ event asks a question: “How many of you think that your relationship to New Haven...is equally important [as] your [experience] being [a] Yale student?” Yonatan, partially off-put by the sanctimonious nature of the prompt, partially unsure of his response, chooses not to raise his hand. “I remember just—my memory was that every single other hand in the auditorium went up other than my own.”

A few weeks into Yonatan's first semester attending Yale, he started to feel increasingly aimless and out of place. He was searching for a medium through which he could create something. “The only place I found that I could, like, actually work with my hands and actually do something productive with my body was at the Bradley Street Bike Co-op, where I started volunteering my freshman fall,” he tells me. Yonatan had always had an interest in bicycles, but the more experienced volunteers at the co-op taught him how to actually work on and fix a bike. Since then, Yonatan has worked with the other volunteers to repair donated bicycles so that they

can be sold to New Haven residents at affordable prices. The volunteers also help teach local residents how to fix their bikes. For Yonatan, his three years working with the Bradley Street Bike Co-op has been an important source of meaning because it has given him the space, resources, and training to tangibly improve the lives of people living in New Haven.

But Yonatan's relationship with the bike co-op seems in many ways to go beyond a standard volunteering commitment. Bradley Street has given Yonatan a unique sense of community and belonging ("Quite literally," he tells me. "I got the keys to the place."). Of course, Yonatan gets to regularly interact with local community members who come into the co-op either to purchase a bike or fix theirs. However, for Yonatan, the most important connections he has made there have been with the other volunteers. He tells me that this past year, he decided to make the bike co-op the center of his social life, as opposed to Yale. Together, the Bradley Street volunteers share a unique bond formed through working together, learning from one another, and trying to help others.

Yonatan's three-year relationship with the Bradley Street Bike Co-op has brought him close to a community of people and has helped him feel connected with residents of New Haven. He cites it as being his main point of connection with New Haven community members. But his relationships with local residents are intertwined with his connection to the city itself. While Yonatan grew up in the suburbs of Baltimore, he never felt a deep connection to suburban spaces: "Even though I grew up going to private school and I grew up in the wealthy suburbs, we were never—it was always clear to me from my mom that was not—that we didn't identify...with the lifestyle." Throughout Yonatan's upbringing, his family ingrained in him a deep respect for public institutions such as schools, local organizations, and public transportation. "So, it [was] exciting to me – getting to New Haven – that I...could be a resident and contributing member of a city," he explains. This sense of civic duty, emerging from both his family values and excitement about urban life, has made Yonatan feel more engaged with New Haven. It also led him to live off campus for the past two years, an experience that has helped Yonatan feel more connected with the communities, institutions, and businesses around him. So, while the survey found that geographic background is not correlated with one's sense of connectedness, it clearly plays an important role in Yonatan's relationships in and around New Haven.

For Yonatan, this process of building relationships in New Haven was both meaningful and, at times, lonely. He vented frustrations about the Yale bubble: “I had a very hard time finding anybody who was willing to take time out of their schedule to do something not related to Yale and not within the Yale world.” Yonatan still thinks about that orientation talk from five years ago: “Where are all these people who said that it was so important to them to contribute to New Haven, who raised their hand at that freshman year assembly?” To my understanding, he is not calling for every Yale student to run to the nearest hospital and start volunteering. But he is asking for honesty. He is calling on Yale students to stop writing New Haven into the margins, to start recognizing the people, places, and institutions of the city that sustain life for all of us here.

### *Nellie Conover-Crockett*

I met Nellie on my first day in New Haven when we bumped into each other in the bathroom. We lived across the hall from each other during that first year and have lived together ever since.

Nellie is white and is from Beloit, Wisconsin. One fun fact about Nellie is that she spent many years growing up on a goat farm. She makes amazing cakes and chocolate croissants and genuinely gets happiness from baking for others. She is bubbly, earnest, and deeply sincere. Nellie has this insane ritual of baking larger and larger gingerbread houses each year – the last one was about four feet wide and a foot-and-a-half tall. She cares deeply about New Haven. Over the past two years, Nellie has worked extensively with two local soup kitchens, in addition to the New Haven Homelessness Commission. She is an avid park-goer, seeks out community events, and follows local politics. She is also registered to vote in the city, which – as the survey found – has a strong correlation with perceived connectedness. Nellie is the kind of person who is excited to volunteer at local election polls because it means she will be able to civically engage with her community.

“To be totally candid,” she tells me, “I think that for most of my first year, I was so focused on being on campus...which was such a new and different experience for me that I wasn't thinking that much about the city.” I ask her about how she started to become involved with non-profit work in New Haven. Nellie remembers feeling like she wasn't doing enough, in comparison to her peers but also for herself. She explains, “This...had a little bit to do with wanting to get involved with the broader community outside of the university, but also just

generally wanting to use my time and direct it towards doing some kind of good in the world and helping other people.” She was frustrated with Yale student groups, which often require applications just to participate (even some volunteer organizations). “But anybody can go work at the soup kitchen.” So she did.

Nellie started volunteering at the Yale Community Kitchen once or twice each week during the fall of 2019, serving food and chatting with the patrons. She quickly formed connections with the Yale Hunger and Homelessness Action Project (YHHAP), the Yale student group that runs the Yale Community Kitchen. Through YHHAP, she began working on projects where she would talk with service providers and consumers to identify gaps in the New Haven homelessness support network. “I started forming some institutional connections,” Nellie adds, with stakeholders like Velma George (New Haven’s Homelessness Services Coordinator) and members of the New Haven Homelessness Advisory Committee, as well as some individuals from local pantries and food banks. Over the summer of 2020, Nellie – funded by the Yale President’s Public Service Fellowship – started working with the Community Soup Kitchen. While her internship was almost entirely virtual due to COVID-19, she was still able to build a meaningful relationship with Karen Comstock, the Assistant Director of the kitchen.

Nellie’s experience working in New Haven’s homelessness support network has helped her form deep ties to the Elm City. Some of it, she notes, comes from having built professional relationships with organizational leaders like Velma George and Karen Comstock. Some of it comes from the very nature of her work: being able to form interpersonal connections with local service providers and consumers on a regular basis. But most importantly, Nellie’s work in and around New Haven has helped her feel like a real stakeholder in the community.

Over the past year and a half, Nellie’s relationship with New Haven has become increasingly personal. For Nellie, living off campus in the Winchester neighborhood – which is mainly single-family and duplex homes – has been a formative experience. She explains, “I think just going to the grocery store weekly and, you know, seeing people there and just, like, going through some normal rhythm of life [that] doesn’t feel tied to the university really changed and...impacted the way that I feel.” Nellie has also formed new friendships and connections around the city by becoming close with her boyfriend’s family, who have lived in New Haven for nearly two decades and know the city well. She leaves me with this: “I think that me feeling at home in the city has to do with me feeling very at home with a lot of people who are from

here.” I think this sense of home might be different from how many Yale students think about New Haven.

*José Garcia*

It’s a warm Friday afternoon in February when I virtually meet with José, a mixed-race Latine from the Dominican Republic, to discuss how he reflects on his relationships with New Haven residents. The windows to my dorm room in Welch Hall are wide open, letting the breeze fill the room as I ask José about his first introduction to the city. He thinks for a moment and then responds:

So, once I was admitted, [the admissions office] sent me this packet. I remember it was, like, this little brochure called, ‘A Yalie’s Guide to New Haven’...In the little brochure it was like, you know, your classic pictures [of] Harkness [Tower], like all these really big towers. And then you flip the page and, like, once it's not Yale buildings that are on the guide to New Haven, they just list pizza places that are nearby.

José’s memory is startlingly accurate: the 2018 version of “A Yalie’s Guide to New Haven” has a giant picture of Harkness Tower on the front and mentions some version of “the restaurant scene” 3 times and explicitly mentions pizza once. It describes New Haven as “our beloved backyard”, the implication being that New Haven is primarily *for* Yale and Yale students, that the only reason to go off-campus is for food and occasional entertainment.<sup>68</sup> José noticed this sentiment before ever stepping foot in New Haven.

Around the same time, José remembers having conversations with an acquaintance about how higher education institutions like the University of Pennsylvania expand their geographical footprint and reshape cities. When he arrived in New Haven in August of 2018, José immediately recognized the same pattern unfolding all around him: “Yale was in the process of kind of going through similar growth, which I think definitely influenced [me] when I came here... There's literally that blue construction [tarp] everywhere I look, like every corner of the city.”

I ask José about how he first started to build relationships with New Haven community members. He explains, “Before coming to Yale, I was really involved in my own community.” José describes getting involved with activist organizations including his parents’ union while

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<sup>68</sup> “A Yalie’s Guide to New Haven.”

growing up in Orlando. “Their labor organizing as part of their positions in Walmart influenced a lot of my relationships with my own community back home,” he adds. In New Haven, José wanted to pursue a similar kind of community activism work oriented around relationships:

Some upperclassmen at La Casa (Yale’s Latino cultural center) were involved with different [organizations] around the city like Unidad Latina en Acción. And around this time when we had moved in was when there was a lot of direct action and demonstrations for Nelson Pinos, who was undocumented and taking shelter at the church right next to Hopper (one of the dorms). So that was a really big introduction to my understanding of the city. A lot of it was through that lens of partnership and direct action that...my peers have been involved in.

José started to show up to Unidad Latina en Acción’s meetings and gradually began to take more responsibilities in the group.

Through those meetings, José met Bruni Pizarro, the Executive Director of Junta for Progressive Action (which members just call ‘Junta’). With Bruni’s help José started working on projects situated in Fair Haven, including mutual aid collection for local undocumented folks. José started taking public transportation to the Junta office and started developing relationships with his coworkers there, many of whom are long-time residents of the Elm City. José clearly cares a lot about both the relationships he has formed through Junta and the work he has been able to do there: “I think a lot of the activities I have been involved with in Junta kind of relate to the queer Latine diaspora here in Greater New Haven...In my hometown, that's not something that's accessible for me to do for safety reasons.” But here in New Haven, over a thousand miles away, this work has been a huge source of meaning and direction for José.

José also brings up the role of the COVID-19 pandemic as he formed relationships with people in the city: “I feel like that changed a lot...I wasn’t physically in New Haven from March 2020 until January 2021...but a lot of my work had already been put in place...so I continued that.” During this time, José worked remotely for Junta and LEAP, a non-profit youth mentorship organization in New Haven. While the experiences were more limited, José was still able to build relationships because of the connections he already had and the work he was already doing.

José’s work in New Haven blurs the lines between activism, volunteering, and nonprofit work, and it is primarily through this work that he has formed personally-meaningful connections in and around the city. I ask José about what has helped him get to that point. He

immediately points to his supervisor. “Bruni has been a big part of me forming those relationships with different people in the city,” he explains. Beyond that, he also highlights the importance of Yale financial support. In his time at Yale, José has been awarded the Yale President’s Public Service Fellowship and has worked as a Dwight Hall Urban Fellow, two ways in which Yale finances student nonprofit work in New Haven. José reflects, “I think access [to] Yale funds has been huge, particularly for me, being a low-income student.” While he started this work and began building relationships with local communities on his own, Yale’s financial resources helped José sustain and deepen his involvement, and – in José’s mind – his relationships.

Last year, as a junior, José lived off campus in New Haven. He tells me,

I lived off campus last year, but still pretty close to Yale, you know. I lived downtown. So, I was thinking a lot about...how my relationship living here kind of differs when I'm on and off campus, and I don't think the difference is that big to be honest. I think some people, like, dramatize it, but like, it really depends on where you live. I was pretty close to campus and if I walked like a block, I would see a Yale building type of thing. The experience really had not been that different from me, like, walking into a dorm.

So, while the experience of living off campus was formative for Nellie, it was not as impactful for José.

After graduation, José plans to live in Wooster Square, a neighborhood in New Haven with a lot of young adults that is known for its Saturday farmer’s market and (ironically) its pizzerias. José is excited to experience living in New Haven in a different phase of life and farther away from Yale’s campus.

### *Josie Steuer Ingall*

As Josie’s face appears on my screen, I immediately recognize a familiar sight: her giant collection of vintage posters and flyers taped up in a collage on the wall behind her. A white Yale student originally from New York, Josie now lives in – from what I’ve seen – an impeccably decorated apartment in the Dwight neighborhood of New Haven. Basically three out of four times that I run into her on the street, she gushes to me about living off campus. She strikes me as someone who is deeply connected to place, and particularly New Haven. Josie and I met about a year ago – she served as one of the co-directors for the Ulysses S. Grant Foundation, the summer enrichment program I mentioned in the introduction. We’ve spent a lot

of time working together, but I've never had the chance to ask her about her feelings of connection with some of New Haven's communities.

Like José, Josie tells me that she was thinking critically about the power that universities wield over urban communities before she even left home. Her voice, a rich alto, carries a metallic quality: "I was always aware of sort of the way my mom said NYU like it was a dirty word as like a three-decade resident of the East Village, feeling so incredibly disdainful of the sort of rich person playground that our neighborhood was rapidly being turned into." When Josie arrived in New Haven in August of 2019, those conversations quickly became about Yale. Josie participated in FOCUS, Yale's optional, volunteering-based orientation program.<sup>69</sup> While survey analyses found no significant correlation between NHCI score and participation in FOCUS, Josie found it to be formative for building relationships in New Haven. Her group started engaging in deeply relevant conversations: "Everybody coming in had heard and wanted to unpack a lot of [themes of] 'New Haven is grimy, New Haven is skanky, New Haven is an economically depressed, post-industrial city inhabited primarily by Black and brown people and you should be afraid.'" Josie remembers,

[We talked about] being consumers of a product here and what that means in terms of the fact that Yale was reshaping the city in ways that hurt people, to cater to us and to project an image of a sort of very middle-class stability that [has] excised real culture and real communities from places in which they had been rooted for a long time.

Josie continued having these kinds of dialogues with members of the Yale Endowment Justice Coalition (EJC), a group of New Haven community members (including Yale affiliates and non-Yale affiliates) demanding that Yale divest from unethical revenue sources like the fossil fuel industry. The EJC identifies the fundamental incongruities in the property tax system, like Yale receiving a "157 million-dollar tax break in fiscal 2021, [while] New Haven's budget deficit was 54 million dollars." Josie remembers discussing this with a number of older New Haven community members, as well as high school activists from the New Haven Climate Movement, all long-time residents who have a lived understanding of how this policy hurts local communities. Through the EJC, Josie has continued to work in partnership with New Haven

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<sup>69</sup> "Orientation Programs."

community members, this past February submitting a complaint to the Connecticut state attorney general arguing that Yale's fossil fuel investments violate state law.<sup>70</sup>

In August of 2020, as COVID-19 was reshaping life in the US, Josie moved to a house in East Rock, a more affluent, primarily white neighborhood of the city with lots of green space. "Everybody was outside," she tells me. "Despite the pandemic, it was surprisingly easy to get to know some of the people around us." Now, Josie lives in an apartment in the Dwight Neighborhood, "a historically black neighborhood of need, that has one very dense area...of undergraduates living here." In both of these places, Josie feels that she has formed personal connections with her neighbors, many of whom are older adults who either grew up in New Haven or have spent much of their lives here. She recalls a series of friendly exchanges with a current neighbor, Jerry, who welcomed Josie to the neighborhood.

Suddenly, Josie's tone shifts towards frustrated: "Like anybody can fucking talk to their neighbors and yeah anybody *can* talk to the neighbors, but people [at Yale] don't. Like Yale students don't – who live off campus – do not talk to the non-Yale people." At the same time, Josie struggles with her own position as someone transiently living in New Haven. She explains, "I worry about being, like, a sort of obnoxiously performative pretender to localism. I don't want to do that."

I ask Josie about what things have been important to her as she built relationships with New Haven communities. She tells me about the role of local media in her life:

Part of the reason I knew I was, like, very interested in the local media stuff early [on] was because of this blog EV Grieve – East Village Grieve – that my mom is super engaged with. And it [is] so specific and so niche and so, like, what is going on in our community...And I think knowing to look for that immediately, and my mom being a journalist, I think really helped me...I cannot overstate how useful the Indie (New Haven Independent) and the [Daily] Nutmeg were to me [in] like finding stuff to do and ways to get situated [in New Haven].

For Josie, these local media sources help her find communities and events she is excited to engage with. This includes organizations like Never Ending Books and a vinyl sale that comes to the local Italian community center every few months.

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<sup>70</sup> Svrluga, "Student Climate Activists from Yale, Stanford, Princeton, MIT and Vanderbilt File Legal Complaints to Compel Divestment."

Josie's urban upbringing has indelibly shaped how she interacts with New Haven. "I think New York taught me how to be comfortable with strangers, like, [in] my neighborhood," she explains. She then adds, "Knowing I was really comfortable walking, biking and taking the bus places – things that I did all the time in New York – I think that's formative." Josie's ability to confidently navigate the city helps her form social connections at local events and at the bus stop. At the same time, Josie hints at this romanticized connection to place: "I wish people spent more time soaking in the goodness and the beauty and the sense of human scale that I think makes New Haven special." Josie's connections with people and spaces seem intertwined with one another.

### **Authentic Connectedness Linked with Mindsets of Reciprocity**

One important trend that emerged across all four interviews was not necessarily a shared pattern of identities, backgrounds, or experiences, but a shared mentality on what it means to be in community with New Haven residents. Josie describes what she perceives the fundamental problem to be: “I think there are many [Yale undergraduates] now who are at least nominally interested or know they are supposed to express interest in building a relationship with New Haven. But I still think, what I have seen, is that so much of that is so deficit-oriented.” Each of the interview participants expressed a similar sentiment around community service and volunteering around the city. José clarifies, “That’s not to, like, discount all forms of [volunteering] because I think that people are involved in ways that are valuable and are intentional about forming relationships and making them real, not just transactional. But it is just a general caution of like, what do people want when they say they want to engage?” What are the motivations? Who is it for? Are students merely trying to build their resumes or gain experience by practicing skills in/on local communities?

Part of the issue, I believe, is how community involvement is framed to students both before college and during college as something that is fundamentally for them. It’s no secret that volunteering in the US is pitched to many high school students as a way to bolster their college and scholarship applications.<sup>71</sup> Findings from this survey about students’ shifting community involvement raise questions about the number of students who participated in service during high school primarily to strengthen their college resumes. Even in college, some community service messaging reinforces this idea that volunteering is about the experience of the student. At Yale, for example, Dwight Hall’s “2019 Year in Review” publication features a huge picture of a Yale student holding a bumper sticker that reads “I serve, therefore I am,” a nod to René Descartes’s “I think, therefore I am.”<sup>72</sup> The focus here, of course, is on the student, their subjectivity, and their position as the one who can know themselves and others. This is not to nit-pick every little word, but this rhetoric is reflective of a broader pathology that elevates the student and highlights their impact, promoting the idea that the experience is *about* and *for* them. There is no space in this messaging about the subjectivities of local residents or the responsibility of the volunteer to the community. The interview participants all suggested that this student-focused perspective on

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<sup>71</sup> Beatty, “Volunteering Because You Must”; Puri, “Does Volunteer Work Matter For College Admissions?”

<sup>72</sup> “2019 Year in Review,” 6–7.

engagement reinforces superficiality and transactionality and does not sustain authentic, personally-meaningful connections with the people and communities of New Haven.

Instead, all four interview participants suggested building relationships around ideals of reciprocity. Josie, for example, tells me about how she strives for a “more holistic embrace” of everything that New Haven has to offer: “You don't just have to be giving. Like, it's okay to some extent to take, too, and to, like, consume what the city has to offer... There are a ton of gorgeous parks here. There's a really cool DIY arts and music scene. I just think many of the streets are really beautiful.” This reciprocity, of course, extends to personal relationships as well. As each interviewee noted, some Yale students are afraid to engage in this kind of relationship, feeling that they have no right to insert themselves as members of an obscenely wealthy institution and as transient residents of New Haven. I ask Nellie about this and she explains, “I actually...had a conversation with Velma [George] about this, where she basically said...I don't really care [that you are a Yale student]. I don't want you to tiptoe around me because you think that I'm more of a New Haven resident than you, and therefore I can say more about these things.” Of course, showing up and listening is crucial. José, for example, spent his first few months with *Unidad Latina en Acción* mainly listening before he felt prepared to take on a larger role. But when each interviewee started to feel like a stakeholder in New Haven, they felt their sense of connection with the people and communities around them start to deepen.

While these four students had different identities, backgrounds, and experiences, they shared a particular mindset about engaging with the people of New Haven. To them, the most meaningful relationships with local communities are born out of genuine interest and care, developing through regular and reciprocal interactions. Perhaps this is the most important factor correlated with how connected university students feel with the communities where they live.

## *Discussion*

Through analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, this study has identified a number of factors that are linked (and not linked) to Yale students' feelings of connectedness with New Haven community members. While I initially hypothesized that race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and class year would each be correlated to a student's feeling of social connectedness with local residents, my survey of 288 current Yale undergraduate students showed that – of these – only class year has a significant correlation. Rather, by using the New Haven Connectedness Index, I found that students' experiences in the city (including things like volunteering and attending local events) are strongly correlated with their feelings of connectedness with the communities and people here. While specific identities and backgrounds are *not* linked to a student feeling more or less connected with New Haven, as we saw in the portraits, these factors can play important roles in shaping how and why students form relationships with their neighbors.

Survey results then demonstrated that highly-involved students often come to Yale knowing they want a strong connection with the city. These students tend to begin engaging with local communities early on, usually during their first year. Together, all of these survey findings suggest that a student's sense of connectedness is tied to their deliberate involvement with local communities. Again, these interactions are not necessarily positive simply because the student is there. But without these interactions, it seems difficult to build relationships with city residents.

The portraits of Yonatan, Nellie, José, and Josie offer deep insights into how relationships between university students and local community members form. Their stories demonstrated that similar experiences can impact students in very different ways. For example, living off campus was transformative for Nellie, and much less consequential for José. Similarly, Josie found FOCUS to be highly formative in developing relationships with New Haven residents, though the survey found no correlation between NHCI score and participation in FOCUS. These portraits also illuminated the role of institutional funding as students formed connections with local residents. As we saw with Nellie and José, university funding was critical in allowing them to deepen relationships that they had already started building on their own. Additionally, I was particularly struck by Josie's discussion of local media and how sources like the Daily Nutmeg and the New Haven Independent oriented her in the city. For students who are

unsure about what is going on in the city around them or uncertain about how to engage with local communities, local media sources could be a valuable resource.

Finally, and most importantly, across each of their narratives, interviewees captured the importance of approaching their neighbors through a framework of reciprocity. Their stories suggest that authentic, personally-meaningful connections with local residents and communities emerge out of reciprocal relationships, a willingness to simultaneously give and receive. So, ultimately, between survey and interview data, I have identified two patterns of student behavior strongly correlated with connectedness: deliberate involvement with city life and approaching local communities through a lens of reciprocity.

This study is one of the first to explore students' feelings of connectedness with local communities. While the findings are in many ways common sense, they remind us that 1) community is a deliberate exercise in togetherness, and 2) authentic relationships come from reciprocal interactions. I hope that the data from this project causes students and universities to think differently about their relationships with local communities. Of course, these results have been fundamentally shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic, which greatly restricted (and to varying degrees continues to restrict) interactions between university students and their neighbors. While the pandemic has certainly changed the data, I suspect that in some ways, it may have magnified pre-existing trends, clearly showing us the kinds of factors associated with feelings of connectedness and the kinds of people who develop those feelings. Future studies should review these findings as COVID-19 restrictions continue to ease.

I want to end on this point: I do not believe that there is a particular way that university students *should* interact or relate with other community members. As my interview participants repeatedly mentioned, the nature of their relationships with local residents and New Haven writ large is an extension of themselves. Josie shares, "I think people do not feel the same compulsion to explore and to find places that are joyful. I feel lucky. I think that is part of my nature." Yonatan adds, "The way that I interact with city [residents]...is much more an expression of just, sort of like, how I tend to exist in the world and...what my typical inclinations and attitudes and desires and preferences are." This is to say that relationships with local communities can be profoundly important for some students but not others. Every student wants a different kind of relationship with their neighbors because every student is different. I think about the survey respondent who, when asked what has limited their relationship with New Haven communities,

wrote “I’m just not from here.” Some students aren’t interested in developing deeply involved relationships with their neighbors, some would rather spend that time on athletics or their art. So, I’m not suggesting that all university students should join a city social organization or attend all of the local parades. Rather, I believe that students should be *deliberate* about determining *what they want their relationships with local communities to look like*.

With that being said, I – like Yonatan – believe that university students do have an imperative to be honest with themselves about their relationships with local communities. The idea that volunteering intrinsically makes a community better is misguided. The thought that New Haven is Yale’s backyard – that’s wrong. The assertion that New Haven residents welcome Yale students “with open arms” is self-aggrandizing and false.<sup>73</sup> I believe that university students *should* recognize that most local residents largely feel ambivalent towards them.<sup>74</sup> The city does not exist exclusively for students, it exists for all citizens of the community. From this place of honesty, I believe that students should embrace a framework of reciprocity when interacting with the city and its residents. Regardless of how involved students decide to be around the city, they should view themselves as new citizens of New Haven, as stakeholders in the community.

Of course, much of this has to do with universities describing local communities as less than, viewing them through a deficit lens. Yale, in asserting the volunteer slogan “I serve, therefore I am” and in suggesting that New Haven welcomes Yalies “with open arms,” promotes a kind of main character complex amongst its students that renders New Haven locals, industry, art and culture secondary. I call on universities like Yale to reframe how they discuss their cities – in their tours, orientations, talks, and publications – to a way that respects local organizations, people, and institutions and doesn’t count them second to the university or to university students. Additionally, I call on Yale to build materials about its relationship with New Haven (such as The Amistad Committee’s *Yale, Slavery and Abolition* report and American Beat’s *On Broadway: A New Haven Streetscape*) into all of its orientation programs for new students, faculty, and staff so they can better understand the relationship between the university and the city. I believe that this is not only the right thing to do, but a good thing to do, helping to connect new members of the Yale community with New Haven. And it feels particularly appropriate

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<sup>73</sup> “A Yalie’s Guide to New Haven.”

<sup>74</sup> Hubbard, “Regulating the Social Impacts of Studentification: A Loughborough Case Study,” 329; Avni and Alfasi, “UniverCity: The Vicious Cycle of Studentification in a Peripheral City,” 1260.

now, as Yale redesigns its undergraduate orientation process. I strongly encourage other universities to do the same.

## *Conclusion*

I took up this project based on my experience teaching at the US Grant Foundation – I was curious about what made Yale students feel like stakeholders in New Haven. The answer is, obviously, complicated. But for me, the most important thing I've realized going through this project is just how little I knew about the amazing city I lived in for four years. I think about the people, communities, and institutions of this city and am incredibly grateful. I am grateful for the public schools here where I have been fortunate enough to teach students about singing. I am grateful for the students at US Grant and their families for trusting me to create a safe space for learning and being. I am grateful for the local businesses that bring so much character to our city even as Yale and neoliberal economics push them out. I am grateful for my friends at No Closed Doors who trust me with their hopes and stories. My biggest regret from my time at Yale is that I spent so much time on campus, that for over two years I treated New Haven as an afterthought.

If this project was smarter, it would have focused entirely on New Haven – its history, communities, and institutions. This is a truly special place in a way that no paper or conversation or documentary can capture. It is so much more than Yale's backyard. Writing this has been a privilege and an important learning experience for me. And I hope in reading it, you can feel it – the totalizing humanness of our city, these feelings that overwhelm and sustain every fiber of our being.

## *Acknowledgements*

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To Yonatan, Nellie, José, and Josie, thank you for sharing your stories with me. I trust that readers will find them as striking and as meaningful as I do. Similarly, I thank the 288 survey respondents for taking time out of their days to support this project.

The Education Studies program at Yale has been an incredible source of meaning and community during my final two years at Yale. To the instructors and students in the department, thank you for creating such a wonderful space. I will truly miss it.

I am infinitely grateful for my friends who always know how to make me laugh. You have helped me this year in ways I cannot explain. Now, more than ever, I am thankful for my former teachers – in every sense of the word – who got me to this point. You have shaped me in ways I will never know, but I think that's the wonderful part about education.

To Adrian, thank you for supporting me, for making me incredibly happy, and for laughing at my jokes. Sorry they're bad.

Gerard and Claire, I admire both of you so much. You have each changed my life in so many good ways (probably some bad ways, too, but that's what keeps things interesting). To my mom and dad: everything I am is because of you. I will never be able to fully thank you for all that you have done for me and all that you continue to do for me.

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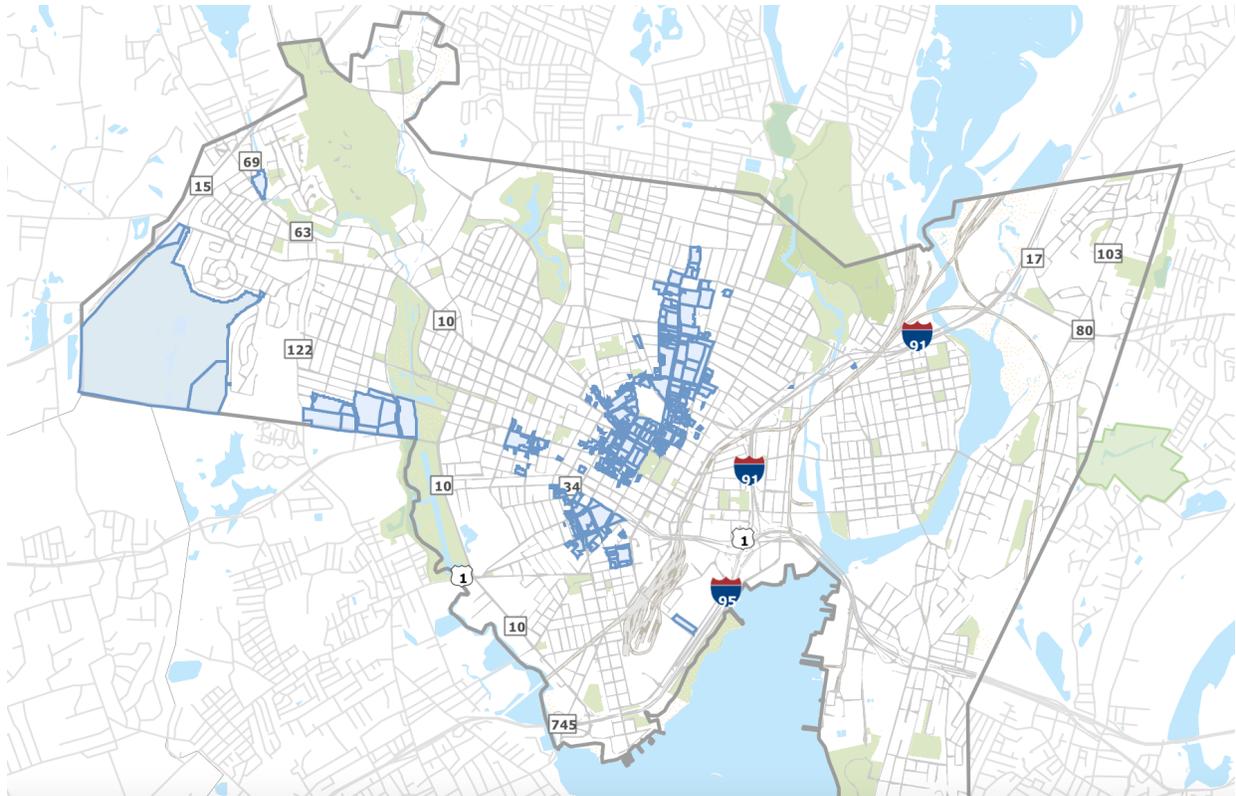
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## *Appendices*

### *Appendix A: Map of Yale Property Ownership in New Haven*



**Image A1.** Yale Property Ownership in New Haven as of February 2022<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Data is reported by the City of New Haven and is publicly accessible here:  
<https://nhgis.newhavenct.gov/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=cefea5da65fc4c5094f3b011064b9849>.

**Appendix B: Survey Questions**

## Informed consent:

1. Would you like to participate? Selecting "Yes" below indicates that you read and understand this consent form and the information presented, that you are 18 years of age or older, and that you agree to be in this study.

## Eligibility criteria:

1. Are you 18 years of age or older?
2. Are you a currently-enrolled undergraduate at Yale?
3. What residential college are you in?

Student experiences: (*randomized order*)

1. Since you've been at Yale, how involved have you been with...
  - a. volunteering in New Haven?
  - b. working/interning with New Haven organizations?
  - c. activism in New Haven?
  - d. sports and social organizations in New Haven?

[Matrix options: not involved, slightly involved, relatively involved, very involved]

2. Do you attend a religious congregation in New Haven that includes local residents not affiliated with Yale?
3. Are you registered to vote in New Haven?
4. How often do you attend local events such as gatherings, movie screenings, trivia competitions, shows, parades, festivals, and concerts in New Haven that are not affiliated with Yale?

[Options: at least twice a month, about once a month, once every few months, once a year, rarely, never]

5. Have you ever lived off-campus in New Haven for longer than 1 month?
6. Did you participate in the FOCUS pre-orientation program as an incoming first-year?
7. Have you participated in any Yale-funded service initiatives such as the President's Public Service Fellowship or Dwight Hall Urban Fellows Program?
8. Are you actively involved with any organizations run by Dwight Hall?
9. Do you consider yourself actively involved with the New Haven community?
  - a. If YES: When did you become actively involved in the New Haven community?

- b. If YES: Did you know you wanted to become actively involved in the New Haven community before you came to Yale?
- c. If YES: What experience(s) got you so involved in the New Haven community?  
[Options (*participants may select multiple*): volunteering, working/interning with New Haven organizations, local activism, religious practice in New Haven, sports/social organizations, other (write-in)]
- d. If NO: Which factors, if any, have limited your involvement with New Haven?  
[Options (*participants may select multiple*): not enough time, feeling unsafe in the city, not much interest, other (write-in)]

New Haven Connectedness Index (NHCI): (*each statement has 5 Likert-style options, from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'*)

1. I feel like a part of the New Haven community.
2. I often feel like a tourist in this city.
3. There are members of the New Haven community (not affiliated with Yale) who know me and care about me.
4. It is important to me to live in this particular city.
5. I feel disconnected from the experiences of New Haven community members.
6. I actively work to further New Haven's wellbeing.

Student identities + backgrounds: (*randomized order*)

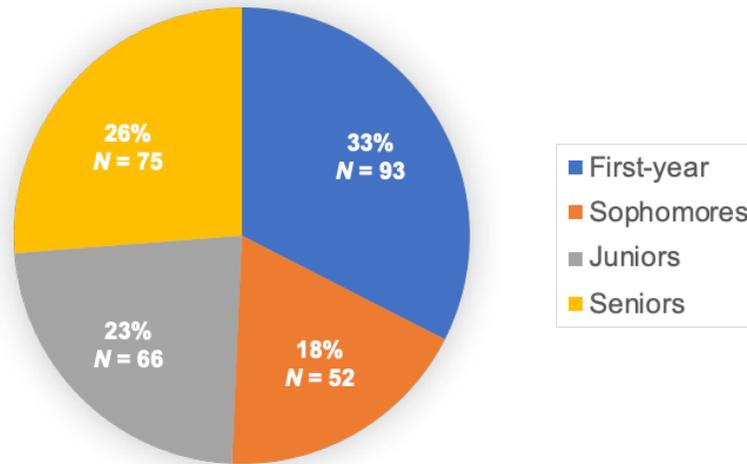
1. Did you grow up in New Haven? (i.e. Did you spend the majority of your pre-college life in New Haven?)
  - a. If NO: Where did you primarily grow up?  
[Options (*randomized*): Northeastern USA, Southeastern USA, Midwestern USA, Southwestern USA, Western USA, Hawaii, Alaska, US territories, Outside of the US]
  - b. If NO: What kind of community did you primarily grow up in?  
[Options (*randomized*): urban, suburban, rural]
  - c. If NO: Have you ever lived in New Haven before attending Yale?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your class year at Yale?
4. Do you identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish?

5. How would you describe yourself? (*participants may select multiple options*)  
[Options (*participants may select multiple*): American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Middle Eastern or North African, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Other, Prefer not to say]
6. Do you describe yourself as a man, a woman, or in some other way?
7. Are you a student athlete?
8. Do you identify as part of the LGBTQ community?
9. What is your financial aid status at Yale?  
[Options: full financial aid, partial financial aid, no financial aid, prefer not to say]
10. Do you identify as First-Generation Low-Income (FGLI)?
11. Have you ever taken a gap year?
12. Do you identify as an international student?
13. Are you an Eli Whitney student?
14. What type of high school did you primarily attend?  
[Options: traditional public, traditional private, boarding, charter, homeschool, magnet, religiously-affiliated private]
15. How racially diverse would you characterize your home community?  
[Options: more racially diverse than the Yale student body, about as diverse as Yale's student body, less racially diverse than the Yale student body]
16. When you were growing up in your home community, how involved were you with...
  - a. local volunteering?
  - b. working/interning with local organizations?
  - c. local activism?
  - d. local religious congregation/worship?
  - e. local sports and social organizations?
  - f. local community events such as gatherings and movie screenings?[Matrix options: not involved, slightly involved, relatively involved, very involved]
17. What is your major?  
[Options listed directly from Yale's website]

Lottery:

1. If you would like to enter the gift card lottery, please submit your Yale email address here.

*Appendix C: Demographic Breakdown of Survey Responses*



**Figure C1.** Survey Respondents by Class Year

**Table C1.** Demographic Comparisons Between Survey Respondents and Yale College Students

Demographic <sup>a</sup>		Survey Respondent Profile (N = 287)	Yale College Profile <sup>76</sup> (N = 6,536)
Gender	Female	63.4% (N = 182)	50.9%
	Male	33.8% (N = 97)	48.3%
	Other ways of identifying	1.0% identify in some other way (N = 3) 1.7% prefer not to say (N = 5)	0.8% other or unknown
Racial and Ethnic Identification <sup>b</sup>	American Indian or Alaska Native	0.3% (N = 1)	0.4%
	Asian	19.1% (N = 55)	21.4%
	Black or African American	5.6% (N = 16)	8.0%
	Hispanic of Any Race	19.1% (N = 55)	14.9%
	Middle Eastern or North African	0.7% (N = 2)	-- <sup>c</sup>
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.0% (N = 0)	0.1%
	Two or More Races	9.0% (N = 26)	6.7%
	White	34.7% (N = 100)	37.2%

<sup>76</sup> “Student Data”; “Yale College Class of 2025 First-Year Class Profile.”

	Unknown	1.0% ( <i>N</i> = 3)	1.0%
	International	10.4% ( <i>N</i> = 30)	10.3%
Geographic Origins <sup>d</sup>	From New Haven (i.e., grew up in New Haven)	2.8% ( <i>N</i> = 8)	1.3%
	From Northeastern US (incl. New Haven)	34.8%	29%
	From Middle Atlantic	--	9%
	From Southern US	--	12%
	From Southeastern US	15.7% ( <i>N</i> = 45)	--
	From Midwestern US	11.8% ( <i>N</i> = 34)	10%
	From Southwestern US	6.6% ( <i>N</i> = 19)	7%
	From Western US (incl. Hawaii and Alaska)	20.6% ( <i>N</i> = 59)	17%
	Other (incl. International)	10.5% ( <i>N</i> = 30)	14%
Financial Aid Status	Receiving Financial Aid	57.8% ( <i>N</i> = 166)	54%
	Not Receiving Financial Aid	34.1% ( <i>N</i> = 98)	46%
	Prefer Not to Say	8.0% ( <i>N</i> = 23)	--
High School Attended	Attended Public Schools	65.5% ( <i>N</i> = 188)	58.3%
	Attended Non-Public Schools	33.8% ( <i>N</i> = 97)	41.7%
	Other/Unknown	0.7% ( <i>N</i> = 2)	--

<sup>a</sup> Only valid percentages are listed here (i.e., percentages are calculated based on the number of valid responses received for a given question; missing responses were excluded from the calculations).

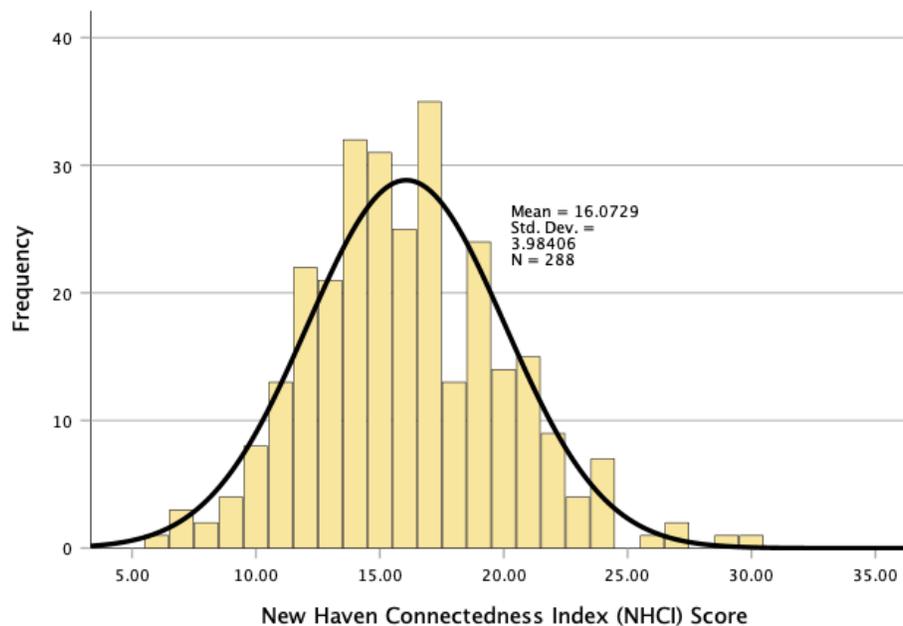
<sup>b</sup> Here, I chose to display racial and ethnic data in order to most easily compare with the demographics of Yale College, which uses a reporting methodology defined by the U.S. Department of Education.

<sup>c</sup> Yale does not report Middle Eastern or North African (MENA) in their racial categorizations.

<sup>d</sup> While Yale uses Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and South regional classifications, my survey used Northeast and Southeast classifications which effectively divides the Mid-Atlantic region between the Northeast and the Southeast. Despite this difference in reporting, the data suggest that the survey captures a highly geographically-representative sample of students.

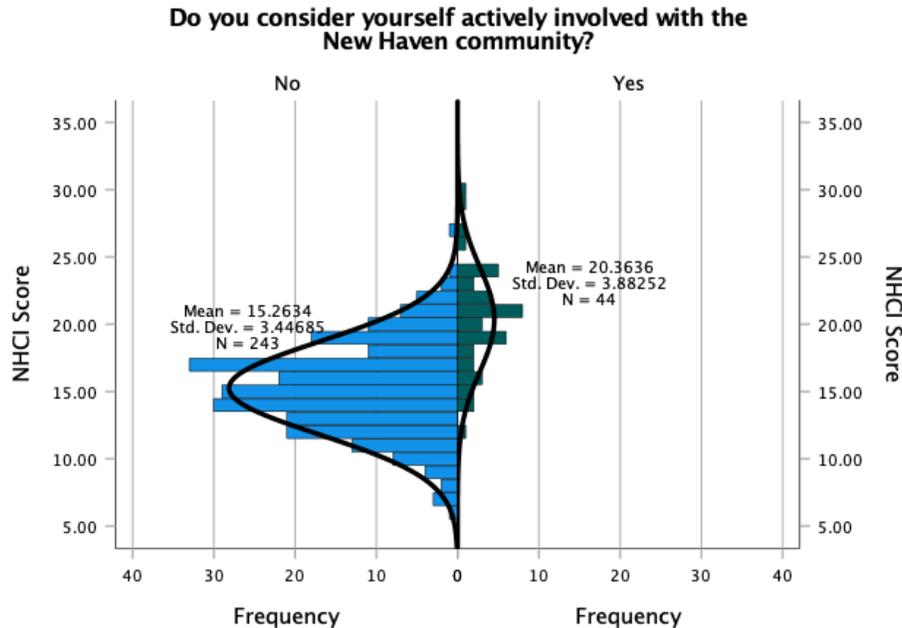
**Appendix D: Assessing the Validity of the New Haven Connectedness Index (NHCI)**

This project utilizes a unique measurement tool, the New Haven Connectedness Index (NHCI), in order to draw correlations between Yale students' perceived senses of connectedness with New Haven and their identities, backgrounds, and experiences. Since this is a new metric, here I evaluate its efficacy. Appendix Figure D1 shows a relatively normal distribution of NHCI scores with a mean score of 16.07 and a standard deviation of 3.98 ( $N = 288$ ). This suggests that the NHCI succeeded in quantifying a range of feelings of connectedness, centered around an average. We know from Keyes (1998) that individuals who have been active in their communities report feelings of higher social integration.<sup>77</sup> A t-test of NHCI score distributions shows matching results: respondents who identify as being actively involved in New Haven score, on average, 5.10 points higher (equal to 1.28 standard deviations) than respondents who do not identify as being actively involved in New Haven,  $t(285) = 8.854$ ,  $p < .001$  (see Appendix Figure D2). This indicates that the NHCI likely captures meaningful information about social connectedness.



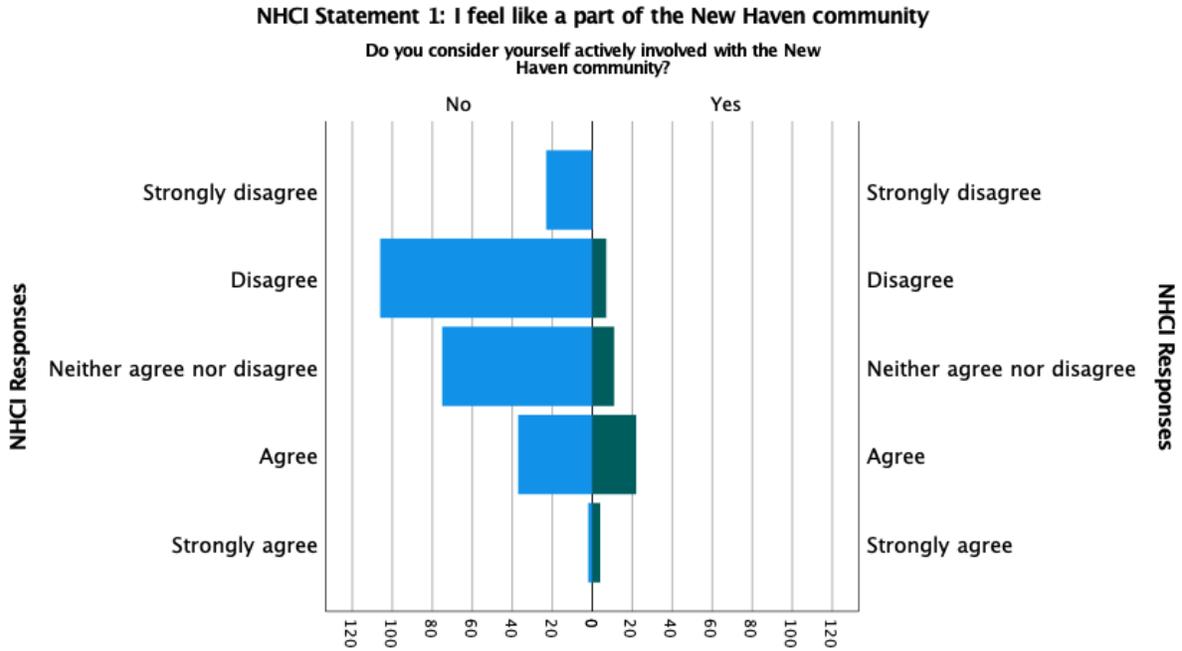
**Figure D1.** Histogram Distribution of NHCI Scores

<sup>77</sup> Keyes, "Social Well-Being," 130, 133.

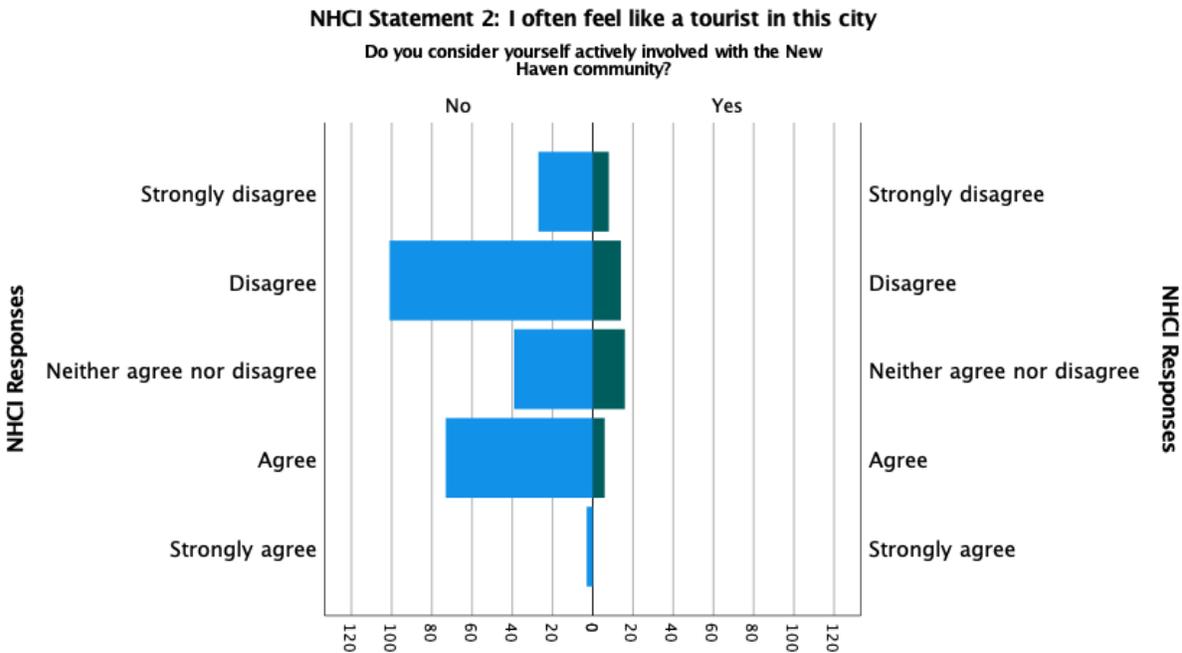


**Figure D2.** NHCI Scores Are Significantly Greater Among Students Who Identify as Actively Involved in New Haven

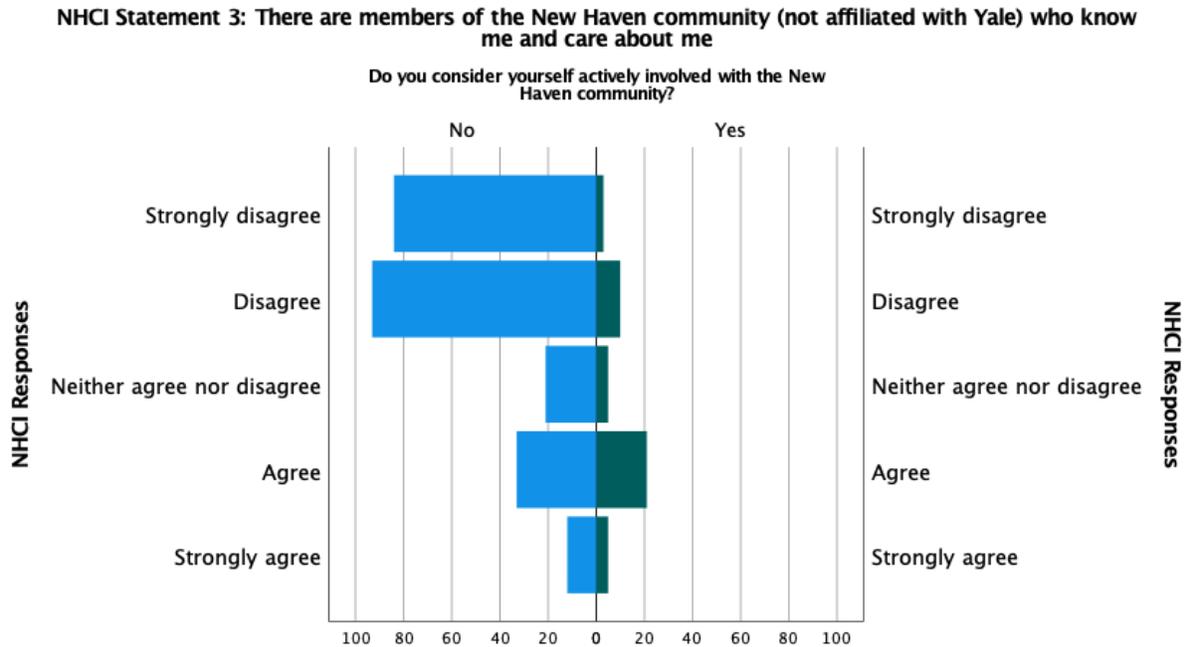
Histograms for each NHCI statement primarily show normal distributions in which the self-identified ‘actively involved’ students receive higher average scores (see Appendix Figures D3-1 through D3-6). This reinforces the consistency and robustness of the metric. With that said, statements 2 (“I often feel like a tourist in this city”) and 5 (“I feel disconnected from the experiences of New Haven community members”) show broader and less normal distributions. Going forward, the questionnaire will require modifications, particularly to statements 2 and 5, and would benefit from a more advanced multi-factor scoring model. Still, these preliminary analyses indicate that the NHCI is telling us something quantitative. While the scale may not be very objective (i.e., *what does a score increase of 1 mean?*) it can convey differences in student perceptions and patterns of interaction.



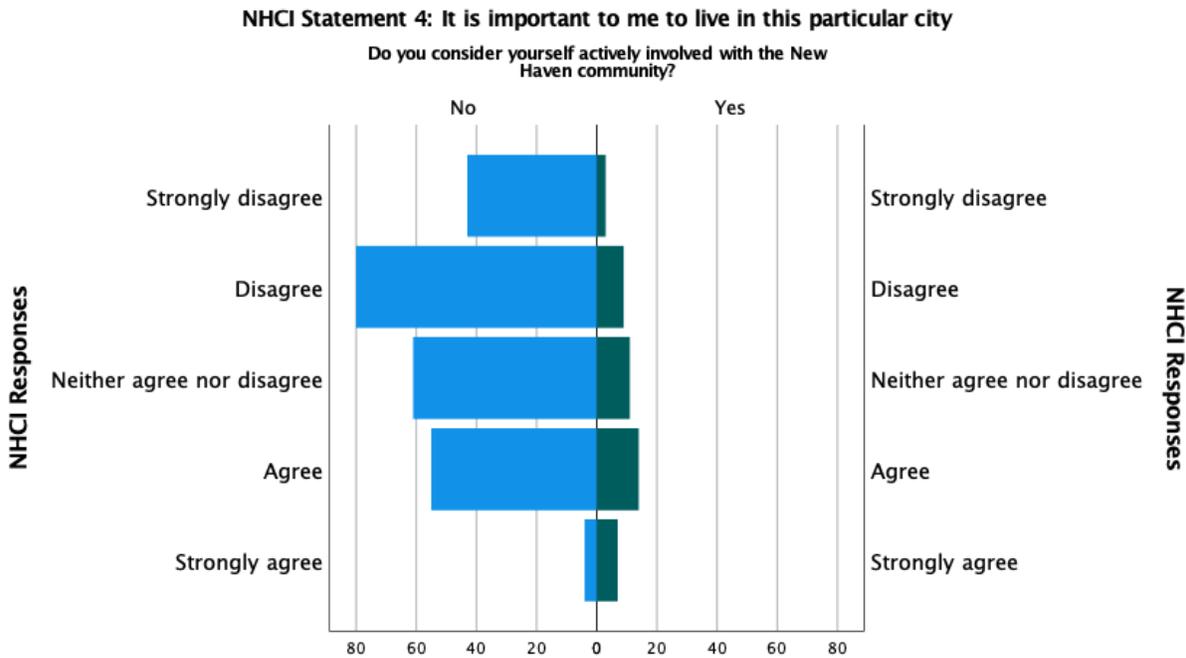
**Figure D3-1.** NHCI Statement 1 – Comparing score distributions between respondents who identify as actively involved in New Haven (green) and those who do not (blue)



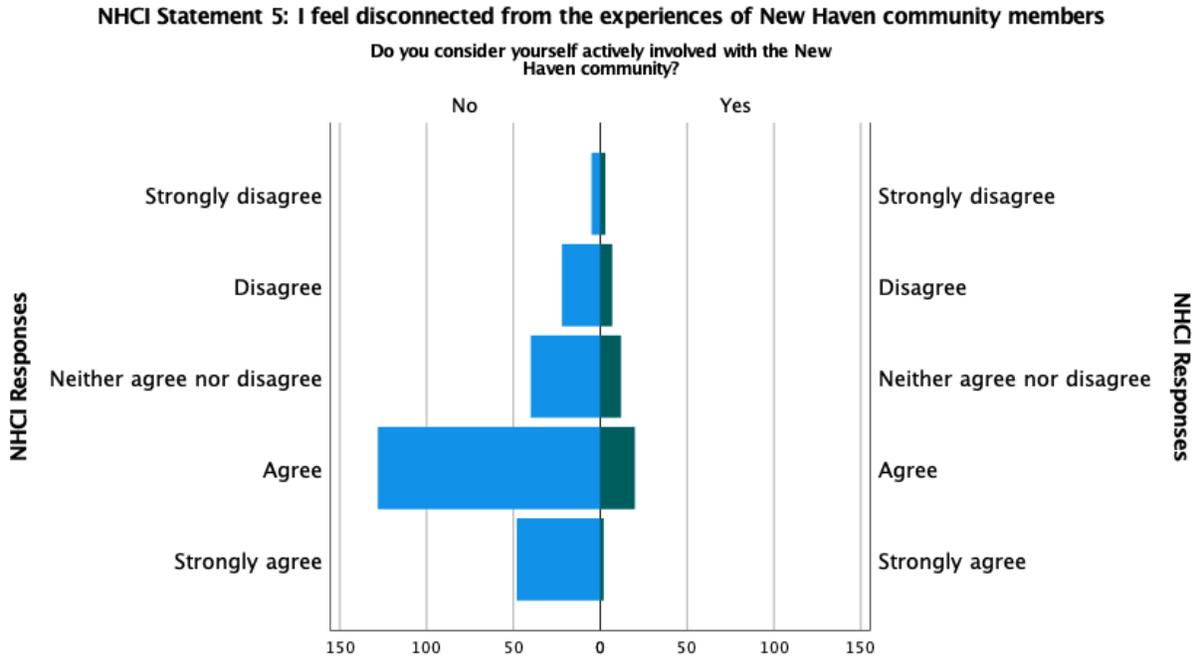
**Figure D3-2.** NHCI Statement 2 – Comparing score distributions between respondents who identify as actively involved in New Haven (green) and those who do not (blue)



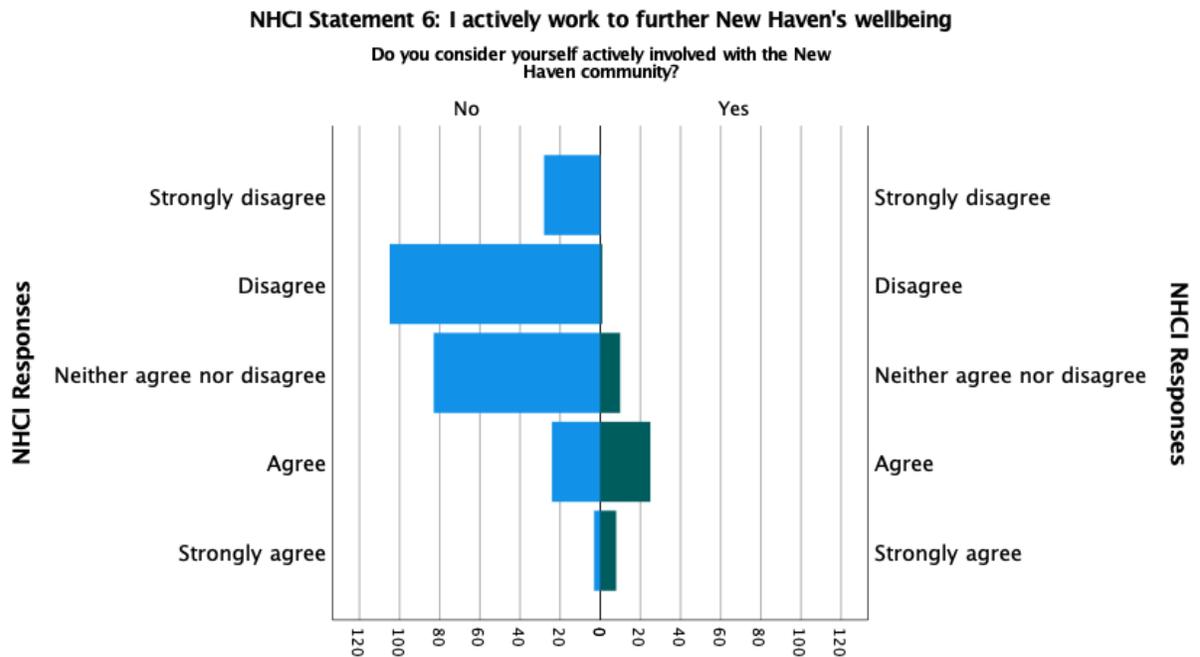
**Figure D3-3.** NHCI Statement 3 – Comparing score distributions between respondents who identify as actively involved in New Haven (green) and those who do not (blue)



**Figure D3-4.** NHCI Statement 4 – Comparing score distributions between respondents who identify as actively involved in New Haven (green) and those who do not (blue)



**Figure D3-5.** NHCI Statement 5 – Comparing score distributions between respondents who identify as actively involved in New Haven (green) and those who do not (blue)



**Figure D3-6.** NHCI Statement 6 – Comparing score distributions between respondents who identify as actively involved in New Haven (green) and those who do not (blue)

*Appendix E: Interview Script*

## Narrative:

1. Can you tell me about when you came to live in New Haven?
  - a. When? Why?
  - b. (If they didn't grow up in New Haven): Had you been to New Haven before? What did you hear or know about New Haven before you came here?
  - c. What were your early experiences with the city like?
    - i. What did you do? Why were you there? FOCUS?
    - ii. What did some of your early interactions with New Haven community members look like?
2. How did you start becoming involved with the New Haven community?
  - a. When? Volunteering? (Dwight Hall?) Activism? Worship? Social?
  - b. Who connected you?
  - c. What motivated you to build that relationship?
3. How has your involvement with New Haven changed over your time at Yale?
  - a. What did this look like? Major events/milestones?
    - i. Volunteering, activism, religion, local events?
    - ii. Living off-campus?
    - iii. Specific relationships?
  - b. What made you want to deepen your relationships with NH community members and/or NH organizations?
  - c. What challenges did you face?
    - i. How did you overcome them?
  - d. Who or what helped you form strong relationships?
  - e. What does your relationship with New Haven look like now?
    - i. What organizations/activist groups/congregations are you involved with?
    - ii. Who do you interact with from New Haven, how frequently, and in what contexts?
4. How does your involvement with New Haven compare to your involvement with your home community growing up?
  - a. Diversity? Involvement? Geography/place?
  - b. How do you think that your relationship with your home community has influenced the way you have approached New Haven?

## Reflections:

1. How has being a Yale student influenced your relationships with NH community members and organizations?
  - a. What are the considerations that you put into those relationships? Do you inhabit space differently?
2. There are a lot of students here who live here for 4 years without creating a deep relationship with New Haven. Why do you think that you were able to form a strong connection with New Haven?
3. What does your relationship with New Haven mean to you?

## Demographic information:

1. Pronouns? Age? Class year? Where are you from?

**Appendix F: Results of Statistical Analyses**

Note: For all statistical tests, \* $p < .05$ . In ANOVA reporting,  $df1$  refers to the degrees of freedom between groups and  $df2$  refers to the degrees of freedom within groups.

**Table F1.** ANOVA Data Comparing Mean NHCI Scores Grouped by Class Year

Characteristic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
<b>Class year</b>								
First-year	93	15.1290	3.41743	3	282	<b>5.538*</b>	.001	.056
Sophomore	52	15.8462	4.31316					
Junior	66	15.9697	4.07986					
Senior	75	17.5600	3.98049					

**Table F2.** ANOVA Comparing Mean NHCI Scores Grouped by Gender Identity

Characteristic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
<b>Gender Identification</b>								
Man	97	15.8351	3.62193	2	279	2.492	.085	.018
Woman	182	16.1429	4.17589					
In some other way	3	21.0000	4.00568					
Prefer not to say <sup>a</sup>	5	-	-					

<sup>a</sup> Data was excluded from calculations since respondents chose to omit it.

**Table F3.** ANOVA Data Comparing Mean NHCI Scores Grouped by Racial and Ethnic Identity

Characteristic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
<b>Racial and Ethnic Identities<sup>a</sup></b>								
American Indian or Alaska Native	1 <sup>b</sup>	15.0000	-					
Asian	68	15.9853	3.30306					
Black or African American	19	16.3684	4.48715					
Middle Eastern or North African	2	22.5000	0.70711					
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0 <sup>b</sup>	-	-					
White	105	15.7048	3.93193					
American Indian or Alaska Native and White	1 <sup>b</sup>	8.0000	-					
American Indian or Alaska Native and Hispanic and White	2	16.0000	5.65685					
Asian and Black or African American	1 <sup>b</sup>	15.0000	-					
Asian and Hispanic	1 <sup>b</sup>	7.0000	-					
Asian and Hispanic and Middle Eastern or North African	1 <sup>b</sup>	21.0000	-	18	247	1.479	.098	.097
Asian and Hispanic and White	3	16.3333	5.03322					
Asian and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1 <sup>b</sup>	14.0000	-					
Asian and White	14	17.7143	5.73020					
Black or African American and Hispanic	6	16.8333	3.86868					
Black or African American and Hispanic and White	1 <sup>b</sup>	17.0000	-					
Black or African American and White	7	14.8571	3.97612					
Middle Eastern or North African and White	4	12.2500	4.27200					
Middle Eastern or North African and Hispanic	1 <sup>b</sup>	20.0000	-					
White and Hispanic	28	16.3214	3.35607					
Prefer not to say or Omitted <sup>c</sup>	22	-	-					

<sup>a</sup> The same ANOVA was repeated using different racial and ethnic grouping methods, yielding the same non-significant result.

<sup>b</sup> Since <2 people gave this response, this group could not be included in the ANOVA calculations.

<sup>c</sup> Data was excluded from calculations since respondents chose to omit it.

**Table F4.** ANOVA Comparing Mean NHCI Scores Grouped by Geographic Origin

Characteristic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
<b>Geographic Region of Origin</b>								
Northeastern US <sup>a</sup>	92	16.5217	3.64791					
Southeastern US	45	15.6889	3.12484					
Midwestern US	34	16.2647	4.80094					
Southwestern US	19	15.1053	4.17525					
Western US	56	15.2500	4.05978	7	271	0.936	.479	.024
Hawaii	2	15.5000	2.12132					
Alaska	1 <sup>b</sup>	12.0000	-					
Outside of the US	30	15.5667	3.54949					

<sup>a</sup> This excludes students from New Haven to avoid collinearity.

<sup>b</sup> Since <2 people gave this response, this group could not be included in the ANOVA calculations.

**Table F5.** ANOVA Data Comparing Mean NHCI Scores Grouped by Community Type

Characteristic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
<b>Community Type</b>								
Urban <sup>a</sup>	86	16.3256	3.69241	2	275	1.184	.308	.009
Suburban	165	15.5758	4.00937					
Rural	27	16.1852	3.08890					

<sup>a</sup> This excludes students from New Haven to avoid collinearity.

**Table F6.** ANOVA Comparing Mean NHCI Scores Grouped by Perceived Racial Diversity of Hometown

Characteristic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
<b>Perceived Racial Diversity of Hometown</b>								
More diverse than Yale	72	16.8889	4.61643	2	283	2.153	.118	.015
About as diverse as Yale	57	15.9649	3.62514					
Less diverse than Yale	157	15.7197	3.78058					

**Table F7.** ANOVAs Comparing Mean NHCI Scores Grouped by Type of High School Attended

Characteristic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
<b>High School Classification</b>								
Public	188	15.9894	4.01600	2	284	0.216	.806	.002
Private	97	16.2577	3.98507					
Other	2	15.0000	2.82843					
<b>Type of High School Attended</b>								
Boarding	22	16.5000	3.64822	7	279	0.756	.624	.019
Charter	13	15.8462	3.26206					
Homeschool	2	17.5000	2.12132					
Magnet	25	16.6800	3.83753					
Religiously-affiliated private	15	17.9333	4.23365					
Traditional public	148	15.8649	4.13324					
Traditional private	60	15.7500	3.98142					
Other	2	15.0000	2.82843					

**Table F8.** ANOVA Comparing Mean NHCI Scores Grouped by Financial Aid Status

Characteristic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
<b>Financial Aid Status</b>								
On full financial aid	68	16.3824	4.09233	2	261	0.452	.637	.003
On partial financial aid	98	15.7959	3.95584					
Not receiving financial aid	98	16.0000	3.75266					
Prefer not to say <sup>a</sup>	23	-	-					

<sup>a</sup> Data was excluded from calculations since respondents chose to omit it.

**Table F9.** ANOVA Data Comparing Mean NHCI Scores Between Groups with Varying Involvement in Community Organizations While Growing Up

Characteristic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
<b>Local volunteering while growing up</b>								
Not involved	21	16.6190	4.54397	3	80.184 <sup>a</sup>	2.551 <sup>a</sup>	.061 <sup>a</sup>	.029
Slightly involved	60	15.9333	3.15620					
Relatively involved	105	15.2857	3.69697					
Very involved	100	16.8400	4.48729					
<b>Working/Interning with local orgs growing up</b>								
Not involved	52	15.5769	4.25347	3	281	0.927	.428	.010
Slightly involved	71	15.9296	3.50234					
Relatively involved	96	16.5938	3.82947					
Very involved	66	15.8182	4.51973					
<b>Local activism while growing up</b>								
Not involved	101	15.6832	3.86764	3	281	2.510	.059	.026
Slightly involved	85	16.6941	4.14046					
Relatively involved	60	16.6500	3.93948					
Very involved	39	14.9487	3.72720					
<b>Involvement in local sports/social orgs while growing up</b>								
Not involved	82	16.6341	3.59874	3	282	<b>3.724*</b>	.012	.038
Slightly involved	56	16.7500	4.36619					
Relatively involved	85	16.0824	4.28789					
Very involved	63	14.6825	3.43523					
<b>Involvement in local religious congregations growing up</b>								
Not involved	146	15.8151	3.79656	3	282	0.651	.583	.007
Slightly involved	50	16.7200	4.10097					
Relatively involved	43	16.1860	4.05472					
Very involved	47	16.0213	4.45016					
<b>Local community events growing up</b>								
Not involved	70	15.8857	3.95094	3	282	2.155	.094	.022
Slightly involved	103	16.0777	3.67474					
Relatively involved	79	16.7722	4.14156					
Very involved	34	14.7353	4.44705					

<sup>a</sup>  $F_{\text{Welch}}$  reported here because the Levene Statistic significance was  $< .05$ ; equal variances not assumed.

**Table F10.** ANOVA Data Comparing Mean NHCI Scores Between Groups of Varying Involvement in New Haven Community Organizations

Characteristic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
<b>Volunteering in NH since at Yale</b>								
Not involved	122	14.8852	3.58877	3	284	<b>17.570*</b>	<.001	.157
Slightly involved	87	15.8276	3.64151					
Relatively involved	55	17.1636	3.71565					
Very involved	24	20.5000	4.15985					
<b>Working/Interning with NH orgs since at Yale</b>								
Not involved	216	15.1481	3.60314	3	284	<b>22.333*</b>	<.001	.191
Slightly involved	29	17.2069	3.32071					
Relatively involved	25	19.9600	3.80219					
Very involved	18	19.9444	3.74907					
<b>NH activism since enrolling at Yale</b>								
Not involved	178	14.8258	3.31543	3	284	<b>32.998*</b>	<.001	.258
Slightly involved	80	17.0750	3.75441					
Relatively involved	26	19.9231	3.28540					
Very involved	4	26.5000	4.04145					
<b>Involvement in NH sports/ social orgs while at Yale</b>								
Not involved	220	15.4455	3.60767	2	284	<b>13.004*</b>	<.001	.084
Slightly involved	47	18.0175	4.58449					
Relatively involved	10	18.9000	4.01248					
Very involved	1 <sup>a</sup>	-	-					

<sup>a</sup> Since <2 people gave this response, this group could not be included in the ANOVA calculations.

**Table F11.** ANOVA Comparing Mean NHCI Scores By Frequency of Attending Local Events

Characteristic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
<b>Frequency of attending events in New Haven not affiliated with Yale</b>								
At least twice a month	13	19.0769	5.28302	5	71.285 <sup>a</sup>	<b>4.904**</b>	<.001 <sup>a</sup>	.086
About once a month	45	17.0667	4.84017					
Once every few months	92	16.4130	3.49301					
Once a year	23	16.3913	4.08700					
Rarely	60	15.8500	3.45344					
Never	55	14.0909	3.37350					

<sup>a</sup>  $F_{\text{Welch}}$  reported here because the Levene Statistic significance was < .05; equal variances not assumed.

**Table F12.** ANOVA Comparing Mean NHCI Scores Grouped by Academic Discipline

Characteristic	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
<b>Student Academic Discipline<sup>a</sup></b>								
Engineering and Applied Science	23	16.6522	3.84482	5	279	1.036 <sup>b</sup>	.397	.018
Humanities	42	15.5476	3.43016					
Social Science	50	16.9200	4.31343					
Science	46	16.1739	3.98500					
Cross-Divisional	97	15.8763	3.98763					
Undecided	27	15.1481	4.28507					

<sup>a</sup> Survey respondents reported their major(s), which were then classified into broader disciplines according to the Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences definitions.

<sup>b</sup> Another one-way ANOVA tested the relationship between specific majors and NHCI scores with similar non-significant results. Since it was so long, that data was excluded from this appendix.

**Table F13.** Results of T-Tests Comparing NHCI scores between binary groups

Characteristic	Yes			No			<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				
Identifies as LGBTQ <sup>a</sup>	87	16.1034	3.98846	188	16.1011	4.08537	0.005	273	.996	0.001
Student athlete	33	15.7273	3.56434	254	16.1181	4.04738	-0.529	285	.598	-0.098
Eli Whitney student <sup>b</sup>	4	17.2500	2.21736	282	16.0638	4.01547	0.589	284	.556	0.296
Grew up in NH <sup>c</sup>	8	22.8750	3.52288	279	15.8781	3.83465	<b>5.098*</b>	285	<.001	1.828
International student	29	15.5172	3.61169	255	16.1294	4.04051	-0.781	282	.435	-0.153
Identifies as FGLI <sup>d</sup>	87	16.3218	4.09621	191	16.0733	3.93699	0.482	276	.630	0.062
Lived Off Campus	110	17.0909	4.14982	177	15.4576	3.75978	<b>3.437*</b>	285	<.001	0.417
Registered to vote in NH <sup>e</sup>	35	18.5714	4.62274	253	15.7273	3.76923	<b>4.064*</b>	286	<.001	0.733
Attend a religious congregation in NH <sup>e</sup>	40	18.6000	4.47099	248	15.6653	3.75312	<b>4.463*</b>	286	<.001	0.760
Involved with any Dwight Hall orgs	73	17.3288	3.93720	213	15.6479	3.92175	<b>3.157*</b>	284	.002	0.428
Do Yale-funded service initiatives	27	18.4815	4.21873	261	15.8238	3.88285	<b>3.358*</b>	286	<.001	0.679
Participated in FOCUS <sup>e</sup>	31	16.6452	4.24695	257	16.0039	3.95433	.846	286	.398	0.161
Has taken a Gap Year	88	16.1818	4.27112	199	16.0251	3.87094	0.306	285	.760	0.039

<sup>a</sup> LGBTQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning.

<sup>b</sup> The Eli Whitney Students Program is an undergraduate pathway at Yale for non-traditional students.

<sup>c</sup> "NH" stands for New Haven.

<sup>d</sup> FGLI refers to first generation and low-income college students.

<sup>e</sup> FOCUS is an optional six-day orientation program Yale hosts for new students to engage with volunteering work and social justice in New Haven.