A Bygone Year: The Social Reintegration of the Junior Class to Harvard College Post Pandemic

By: Vera Petrović, Class of 2023

BA Candidate in English, Education Studies Secondary

SOCIOL 1104: Sociology of Higher Education

Harvard College

Dr. Manja Klemenčič

15 December 2021

Affirmation to Honor Code:

I affirm my awareness of the standards of the Harvard College Honor Code.

Vera Petrović

**Abstract**

Beginning in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted and complicated the operations of universities across the country. For the first time in history, the majority of American college students took classes online. As the pandemic carried over to a new academic year, however, many institutions began to reincorporate in-person learning and allow students back on campus. Harvard College was not one of them. In a particularly conservative move, Harvard conducted all classes online and permitted only 40% of undergraduate students to live on campus. While freshmen, juniors, and seniors were all invited back as full or partial cohorts, most sophomores spent the entire year remote. Now that all students have returned for in-person instruction, my research seeks to investigate how Harvard’s junior class is reintegrating into the social campus community. In this paper, I provide analysis of six qualitative interviews to explore what role formal and informal social structures played in reintegration, as well as whether losing a year of in-person college influenced how respondents organized their social lives when they returned to campus. Although I refrain from drawing conclusive statements, my findings tentatively reveal that a sense of “lost time” encouraged most respondents to prioritize their social lives above or equal to their academic work. Interestingly, formal social structures such as clubs and extracurriculars did not appear to promote new friendships or integration, with respondents more likely to rely on informal connections or their residential houses, and while the pandemic made several more open to socialization, it did not directly impact where and with whom they felt they most belonged.

**Introduction**

 In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic thrust institutions of higher education into chaos. Administrators evacuated campuses, sent students and faculty home for the spring, and began a massive transition to online learning. By April, most students were attending classes asynchronously or through video communication interfaces. Colleges canceled graduation ceremonies, discontinued summer programs, and encouraged students and staff to practice social distancing throughout the summer. But as a new fall term crept closer, universities began to differ in their approaches toward pandemic-time learning. Some institutions, such as Duke and Michigan, opted to combine in-person and online classes, while others (including Harvard, Yale, and Stanford) kept coursework remote (Hadden, 2020). Many colleges allowed students back to campus at full capacity, but some were unable or unwilling to house entire class cohorts at a time. As a result, students across the country, and often, those attending the same institution, experienced vastly different living and educational arrangements during the 2020-2021 academic year.

On July 6th, 2020, Harvard College announced that it would allow only 40% of its undergraduate population to return to campus in the fall. This figure would include all first-year students, as well as upperclassmen who petitioned for campus housing on grounds that their home learning environments were inadequate. The remaining 60% of undergraduates were to take classes remotely and secure their own housing. In December, the College invited its senior class back for the spring, along with juniors who had completed the fall semester and students with learning environment needs. The sophomore class, however, was not allowed back as a full or partial cohort. In an email addressed to families, President Lawrence Bacow, Dean Claudine Gay, and Dean Rekesh Khurana acknowledged the decision as “particularly difficult for sophomores and their families as they confront the reality of a full academic year away from campus” (L. Bacow et. al, personal communication, December 1, 2020). Left to their own devices, many sophomores took classes from home, lived with friends off-campus, or elected to take leaves of absence.

 In August 2021, Harvard welcomed back its entire student body for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic. After spending more than a year apart, many undergraduates now face the task of readjusting to their social lives at college. Thus, my research seeks to answer the question: how are members of the junior class reintegrating into the campus community post pandemic? In particular, what formal or informal structures helped or harmed their integration, and how did these structures inform the personal choices they made about their socialization?Ultimately, I investigate whether or not time away from campus influenced how students organized their social lives when they returned, either through extracurriculars, group membership, or informal encounters.

**Literature Review**

 Few areas in the study of higher education have received more attention than college impact research. Since the 1970s, scholars have theorized about the ways in which students socialize and integrate into campus communities. For the purposes of this literature review and study, “socialization” refers to the processes through which students gain knowledge, attitudes, and values, whereas “integration” concerns if and how they are able to assimilate into the university culture and internalize these values (Klemenčič, 2021). Tinto (1975) proposed the *retention model*, which predicted that whether or not a student dropped out of college was determined by their integration into an institution’s academic and social structures. Tinto hypothesizes that students enter college with their own experiences and goals, but that the extent to which they engage with different structures (faculty and peers, for example) influences their preexisting opinions, and ultimately their retention rates. While Tinto’s model does not often pertain to highly selective institutions, his focus on integration serves as a cornerstone for any study of student social belonging. In 1989, Weidman introduced the more comprehensive *undergraduate socialization model*. He argues that both formal and informal structures influence student socialization. “Formal” academic structures include departments and explicit academic norms and policies, whereas “informal” academic structures refer to implicit rules, such as attending office hours or speaking in class. Similarly, “formal” social contexts include institutional size, residences, and organizations, while personal peer groups and friendships are considered “informal.” Hurtado (2007) expands upon Weidman’s model and argues that institutional size, peer selectivity, and racial composition all significantly impact student integration. She concludes that any study of student engagement must “take account of the opportunity structure or elements of the college environment that shape student interaction” (Hurtado, 2007, p. 99). In my own research, I utilized Weidman’s same classifications of formal and informal social structures, as well as echoed Hurtado’s emphasis on structural influences by centering my interview questions around how clubs, organizations, and peer relationships informed social behaviors post-pandemic.

 In a field rife with conceptual frameworks, Iloh and Tierney (2014) argue that ethnographic studies are key to understanding the intricacies of college life. In particular, ethnography enables researchers to discover new relationships and perspectives that may not be apparent in grand theories. I did not have the resources to conduct a full ethnography, but I conducted interviews, wrote narratives, and prioritized my subjects’ perceptions above sociological frameworks. While most ethnographic studies on student socialization have been conducted at large, public institutions, several provide insights that informed my research at a smaller, private one. Grigsby (2009), who interviewed students at a Midwestern state school, posits that most friendships in college arise between those who belong to the same organizations, residence halls, or fraternities. She specifically singles out the Greek system; students in fraternities and sororities report that their social lives are structured around Greek events, and they tend to exclusively befriend and date one another. Armstrong and Hamilton (2013) draw similar conclusions in their study of a comparable university, albeit through the lens of socioeconomic differences. They argue that social class determines what families expect from colleges, and that students usually form groups and socialize with those who come from the same backgrounds. Among wealthier (typically white) students, this often manifests in club memberships, expensive vacations, and Greek life. While Harvard has a smaller and more economically homogenous population than most public institutions (Koller and Yan, 2021), its students face similar choices about how to organize their free time. Although extremely important to acknowledge, I did not investigate the socioeconomic factors that informed students’ social behaviors, or make judgements about clubs, organizations, and fraternities. Rather, I explored whether the COVID-19 pandemic, a uniformly experienced event, influenced how students chose to engage with these social structures when they returned to campus.

 Since the beginning of the pandemic, researchers in various fields have investigated the impact of COVID-19 on college students. The majority of these studies concern student mental health. In May 2020, Wang et. al (2020) compiled survey data from more than 2,000 undergraduates, and revealed that 71.26% of participants indicated that the pandemic had increased their stress and anxiety levels. 48.14% showed moderate-to-severe signs of depression, 38.48% showed moderate-to-severe levels of anxiety, and 18.04% had experienced suicidal ideation. During the same timeframe, Filho et. al (2021) explored the struggles of lockdown mandates and social isolation. The authors gathered data from 711 faculty members and students; 72% reported that they struggled with a lack of colleague and staff interaction, 57% suffered from a lack of motivation, and around 30% experienced increased boredom, loneliness, and anxiety. Despite these staggering statistics, many gaps remain in the new literature base of COVID-19’s impact on students. Most notably, nearly all existing studies include data from Spring 2020, when universities first shut down and students were sent home. Wang et. al and Filho et. al share important findings about the immediate mental health effects of the pandemic, but their studies exclude the months of crisis, isolation, and subpar online schooling that followed. Furthermore, no studies appear to address COVID-19’s impact on student socialization, either during Spring 2020 or the 2020-21 academic year. To the best of my knowledge, my research is the first of its kind to investigate social reintegration post-pandemic, as well as whether or not time spent away from campus informed the decisions students made about their social lives when they returned.

**Methods**

 Through my research, I aimed to investigate if and how Harvard’s junior class reintegrated into the campus community post-pandemic. In particular, I was curious as to how formal and informal contexts influenced their integration, as well as whether a sense of “time lost” during the pandemic impacted how they organized their social lives when they came back to school. I conducted my research through a series of six qualitative interviews with members of the junior class. Because many students took leaves of absence during the 2020-2021 academic year, I defined “junior” as any student who began college in the fall of 2019. Therefore, my data incorporated both “true” juniors (those who will graduate in 2023) and “social” juniors (those who will graduate in 2024). I did not treat true and social juniors as distinct data sets, but I did note instances in which respondents indicated that their academic timelines influenced their social behaviors. I used a convenience sampling scheme in which I recruited friends and acquaintances to speak with me.

 I conducted fairly structured interviews that lasted between 15 and 30 minutes. I interviewed respondents in person, either in dining halls or in their dorm rooms. For a list of interview questions, please see Appendix A. As I indicated in my literature review, student testimonial is particularly important to college impact research. The field is full of theoretical frameworks; new insights are most likely to occur through real-world accounts of how students navigate their own personal college experiences. I based some of my questions on established theories (namely, Weidman’s formal and informal structures), but I used these as starting points rather than answers. After I conducted each interview, I wrote a short, handwritten reflection that detailed the participant’s main points and insights. Next, I transcribed key takeaways and quotes onto a word document. I paid special attention to the phrases I included in my research questions, such as “social integration,” “group membership,” and “relationships,” but I refrained from placing subjects into restrictive categories or making generalizing statements. My primary focus was to craft narratives that authentically portrayed my subjects’ social experiences, but I did sort common themes and terms into an inductive code book. After analyzing my notes and transcripts, I developed six codes: *expectations pre-pandemic*, *mindset and priorities post-pandemic*, *friendships in fall semester*, *influence of formal and informal structures*, *personal changes and realizations*, and *belonging*. In a chart, I attributed various quotes to different codes, and marked similarities and differences between responses. Lastly, using my codes and remaining mindful of common themes, I divided my subjects’ testimonials into four subgroups of findings.

Above all else, I attempted to operationalize my research questions to build a story rather than prove a point. I believed my research lent itself to an inductive approach (I wanted to draw conclusions after I gathered data rather than prescribe preconceived notions onto my respondents), so I avoided proposing any concrete hypotheses. I did, however, tentatively predict that some subjects would throw themselves into formal group membership (Final Clubs, registered social organizations, identity-based clubs), while others would attempt to cultivate more informal one-on-one relationships. I also expected that such a focus on socialization may cause subjects to feel anxious about how they “fit in” to certain groups or balance their time. Finally, I anticipated that some subjects would grow apart from their freshman year social circles, and dedicate time and energy to forming completely new groups and friendships during the fall semester. As I express in my findings section, most of my predictions were proven wrong.

*Limitations*

 Several limitations existed in my research methods that inhibited my ability to make conclusive statements. My sample size (six participants) was too small to draw conclusions or make any general claims; it also skewed male 5:1. I do not address gender in my research questions, but such a male-dominated sample may have inadvertently influenced my findings. Still, the findings I reported were not intended to be representative of all Harvard students, but rather reflect the personal experiences and opinions of a select few.

Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, I exclusively interviewed people I consider to be my friends. I do not believe this detracted anything from my findings, but it likely prevented me from conducting completely detached, objective research. It is possible that some participants knew, through prior informal conversations, how I felt about the topic, or altered their responses because they felt more scrutinized speaking to a friend. In order to mitigate these effects, I reminded participants to speak freely and honestly, refrained from sharing personal information during interviews, and attempted to shield whether or not I agreed or identified with their answers. Ultimately, I tried to remain as objective as possible and create an environment in which participants felt comfortable sharing whatever they felt was true.

*Positionality and Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research with Human Subjects*

 As I conducted research on the social reintegration of the junior class, it was vital for me to acknowledge my positionality to the topic. I am a junior myself, and one who experienced firsthand the psychological and social challenges of a year spent remotely. I lived in my hometown, first with my parents and then with friends from Harvard, but it was incredibly difficult to watch most of my high school friends travel to their respective campuses and enjoy semi-normal semesters. My personal feelings dramatically influenced my interest in this topic, and although I attempted to remain impartial in my interviews, I felt passionately about telling my subjects’ stories. I incorporated elements of creative nonfiction (imagery, characterization) into my findings section, but I made an effort not to sensationalize or dramatize any responses.

 I also remained mindful that I was experiencing the fall semester at the same time as my subjects. I underwent my own process of social reintegration, and I had to ensure that my perceptions and experiences did not influence how I presented my findings. Furthermore, some of the people I interviewed lived in my same residential house or were part of the same clubs and social organizations. I do not believe this had any impact on my research process, but I was aware that I asked questions and wrote about structures I interacted with myself.

 Finally, due to the interview focus of my research, it is important to provide a brief statement on ethical conduct in research with human subjects. When I contacted potential interviewees, I clearly explained my research goals, as well as the fact that the study would be published on the HUSRHE website. All participants in my study received and signed consent forms, and I made myself available to answer any questions and concerns. I communicated that participants could leave the study at any time, or skip any questions they did not wish to answer. I asked permission to record in-person interviews, and I took all necessary measures to preserve my participants’ privacy. Lastly, apart from one respondent (Nick Young), who asked to be interviewed on-the-record, I assigned my subjects pseudonyms in order to maintain their anonymity in the paper.

**Findings**

*Expectations and Anxieties Prior to the School Year*

 While most respondents indicate that they felt excited to return to campus and resume in-person learning, a few note that they experienced feelings of anxiety about reconnecting with peers and making new friends *prior to the start of the semester*.

 During the 2020-21 school year, Ben lived off-campus with a small group of friends he met during his freshman year. Several of these former roommates are now his current suitemates. He explains,

“I’m not great at keeping in contact with people when I’m not actually with them.

So, [I was] just nervous that like, okay, I know I have my core group of people who I’m living with and I like a lot, but reconnecting with people, I guess, was something else I worried about, because how do you come back from a year and a half plus?”

 Jack, who took a gap year, echoes similar sentiments of having felt disjointed from many of his Harvard peers. He lived at home, worked a construction job and an internship, and primarily socialized with his coworkers and his friends from high school. He reflects,

 “I just kind of hung out [with my high school friends], but I think it kind of fucked me

over in the end, because going back into Harvard, I hadn’t kept in touch with anyone. [...] So I’ve kind of been having to make new friends this year. But it’s okay, because I also really didn’t like my freshman year friends.”

 Although Ben and Jack had vastly different social and academic arrangements during the pandemic, they both indicate that losing contact with Harvard peers outside of their immediate friend groups led to more apprehension about reintegrating back into the larger student population.

*Residual Influence of Pandemic on Student Mindset and Priorities*

 With one outlier, respondents overwhelmingly report that losing a year of in-person college made them more open to social interactions and opportunities when they returned.

 Emmett, a member of the fencing team, has nothing but positive remarks about his post-pandemic transition back to Harvard. Between bites of breakfast in a crowded dining hall, he shares that the pandemic dramatically improved his and his teammates’ outlooks on their sport and sense of community.

“Everyone had just gone through this whole year. Everyone was realizing how insignificant, you know, losing to Jeff in a fencing bout is compared to people dying in the world, right? I don’t know, people just came together after this thing, and we were able to just compete with each other.”

 Emmett believes that these realizations brought him closer together with his fencing teammates, but he also claims that the pandemic pushed him to branch out socially and forge new connections. As an athlete who can easily rely on his team for a built-in social group, Emmett acknowledges the significance of this shift:

“I think it’s maybe like, more wanting to go out of my way to bond with people, just because I think we all missed that past year. [...] Let’s say we had a normal year the past year, I think I would have tried the same, but it could have also been much more likely where I’d kind of fall back on the fencing team or something, and not be as, you know, outgoing.”

 Most respondents strongly echo Emmett’s openness to making new friends and socializing after the pandemic; in fact, three explicitly state that during the fall semester, they prioritized their social lives above their academic work.

 As Alan, a computer science major, reclines on the sofa in his common room, he reflects that time felt more pressing after he came back to campus. He realized he had only two years left before he graduated, and decided to alter his priorities. Now, he says he focuses less on his schoolwork and more on “just enjoying college.”

 Alicia has a similar take, with a twist. She was overjoyed to return to campus, but admits that she felt considerable pressure to make up for lost time. This sense of urgency often manifested in her social life. In the past semester, Alicia attended more parties and outings than ever before, and while she usually had fun, she recalls several instances where she would have preferred to stay in, but forced herself to socialize simply because she couldn’t during the pandemic. She also grew to miss some of the freedoms and upsides, such as driving a car, skiing, and practicing better self-care, that she experienced while studying remotely at home:

“It’s hard because I am having fun, but at the same time, I’m almost experiencing some guilt for missing the way that things were during Covid, which is unfortunate because Covid was very isolating and I don’t enjoy that, but [...] I missed the freedom that I had. It’s sort of like having to reconcile my expectations about how I would be feeling on campus with how I actually feel when I’m on campus.”

Alicia enjoyed her semester immensely and does not regret pushing herself to socialize more, but in the future, she hopes to better recognize and accept that she doesn’t “always want to be going out.”

Ben, on the other hand, was the only respondent to indicate that the pandemic made him less social. During the fall semester, he primarily socialized with his roommates or spent time relaxing on his own. Already an introvert before lockdown, he believes the time he spent away from college made him even more comfortable being alone. He muses:

“I kind of liked to be on my own sometimes, but I maybe just realized that more during the pandemic, [when I] was just living with a small group of people. I think it’s definitely contributed to me, now, just wanting to hang out with that same group of people because that’s what I’m comfortable with.”

Ben grew into his introverted tendencies during the pandemic, and ultimately narrowed his social circle at school. He guesses that most of his peers experienced the opposite effect and became more social, but he felt happiest alone or with a small group of friends.

In a notable contrast to my expectations, respondents did not appear to feel anxious about “fitting in” to groups or acting more extroverted. Some, such as Alicia, acknowledge the pressure they put on themselves to socialize, but these feelings did not hinder their overall sense of reintegration. In the wake of their remote or postponed year, most respondents simply came across as more intent to spend time with friends, enjoy themselves, and focus less on academics.

Still, not all respondents believe that “time lost” during the pandemic directly affected their social choices in Fall 2021. Jack, a bit hungover during his interview, lays in his bed and gazes at the ceiling as he reflects:

“I don’t really feel like I missed a year. [...] I just took a year off, and partially why I took the year off was so that I would have more time in college, you know? So I don’t think it [influenced how I spend my time], and maybe that’s a bad thing, because I could probably use an edge to get me more focused on the shit I want to do. But like, I don’t feel particularly passionate about anything.

I’m kind of still spending my time the way I did freshman year, which is just hanging out a lot and procrastinating and then being really hungover on the weekends and then, fucking, drowning myself in work for the week because I can’t do anything. Maybe that’s just what’s on my mind right now.”

 This study lacks the numbers to make conclusive statements, but Jack’s comments tentatively suggest that students who took gap years during the pandemic may feel less urgency to change the structure or “make the most” of their remaining time at school.

*Role of Formal vs. Informal Structures in Student Social Reintegration*

 Prior to conducting my interviews, I anticipated that students would prioritize formal group membership (i.e., joining new clubs, “punching” social organizations) in order to meet new people and integrate back into the campus community. Interestingly, my respondents appeared to gravitate towards *informal* social environments. They primarily spent time with their roommates, blockmates, and random, individual friends. Most mention, however, that their Houses (a formal social context) enabled and enriched many of their informal friendships. After forming “blocking groups” of up to eight people during the spring of their first year, Harvard undergraduates are randomly sorted into twelve residential houses. For the duration of their time at the college, they live, eat, study, and socialize in these spaces. Alan, Nick, Jack, and Emmett all discuss meeting new friends and feeling a greater sense of community in their Houses, while Alicia speculates that she feels closest with her blockmates because they live together. These comments suggest that respondents appreciate Houses as a casual environment in which they can form new friendships, as well as consistently see familiar, self-selected friends.

Some respondents joined new organizations, but most returned to groups they had been part of before the pandemic, or did not engage in extracurriculars at all. Nick, a film and visual arts major, explains, “it’s always just been way nicer not joining a club. I’m more free and open and I can have my own friend groups and just kind of expand.”

 Nick notes one exception. In early fall, he was “punched” by a Final Club, invited to attend events and schmooze with members in the hopes that he would eventually become one. Notoriously exclusive and known for parties, Final Clubs often incite feelings of competition and insecurity. When I ask Nick if he thinks the pandemic influenced his decision to undergo the punch process, he responds:

“I’d say it heightened my necessity of joining one, because sophomore year is when you punch, but sophomore year was online, so I was like, oh shit, now I gotta punch junior year especially, I can’t miss out.”

Unfortunately, Nick was cut from his prospective Club after three rounds. He is “super pissed” about this outcome, but still prefers spending time with his roommates and gym friends.

 Alicia, who participates in ROTC (Reserve Officers Training Core), indicates that “doubling down” on organizations she joined before the pandemic was intentional:

“When I was at home, it made me realize what relationships I missed having. I think that’s where ROTC comes into it, because I loved hanging out with those people freshman year, and I just really missed that in person connection. So, I definitely hang out more with them. I’ll make more of an effort, like even if I’m busy and I don’t really have time to hang out, I’ll go grab dinner with somebody.”

Although most respondents interacted in some capacity with extracurriculars or organizations (and, in Alicia’s case, pursued stronger connections), these activities did not form the bedrock of their social circle, or significantly promote new friendships in the fall semester.

*Student Sense of Belonging Post-Pandemic*

 For many respondents, time spent alone during the pandemic increased their receptiveness to social interactions and genuine friendships in the fall. However, the pandemic did not appear to directly influence the spaces where and people with whom respondents felt the greatest sense of belonging. All six claim that they felt most comfortable and integrated among their close friends/roommates or in their House communities, but these relationships and places were not exclusive or attributable to impacts of the previous year. Namely, respondents maintained connections with blocking groups and friends they made prior to March 2020, and those drawn to House life would have been placed in (and likely enjoyed) residential communities regardless of whether or not the pandemic occurred. Therefore, while a sense of lost time impacted many respondents’ mindsets and priorities, it did not ultimately drive where they felt most integrated in Fall 2021.

**Further Thoughts and Conclusion**

In the beginning of my research process, I set out to investigate if and how members of Harvard’s junior class were reintegrating into the campus community post-pandemic. I was curious, not only about how formal and informal structures impacted juniors’ integration, but also whether a sense of “missing out” on a year of in-person college influenced how they organized their social lives upon returning to school. I interviewed six social juniors and compiled and analyzed qualitative data. Although I intended for my paper to reflect individual narratives and experiences, my research was able to offer insights into four tentative findings. These findings are not meant to be read as conclusive, but rather as baselines for discussion and further research. First, several respondents indicated that losing contact with most of their Harvard peers during the pandemic caused them anxiety about reintegrating back into the campus community. Once respondents arrived at school, however, most attempted to reintegrate socially and make up for missed opportunities by spending more time with friends, going to parties, and simply trying to “enjoy college.” With the exception of one student that took a gap year, most respondents believed (my second finding) that losing or postponing a year of in-person college made them more open to socialization, and in some cases, inclined to prioritize their social lives above their academic work. Third, while many respondents participated in extracurricular activities or clubs, they mainly gravitated toward informal friendships (roommates) or their residential house community. Apart from Houses, formal social contexts did not appear to significantly promote new friendships or a heightened sense of integration. Lastly, although a sense of losing a year to the pandemic shifted some respondents’ mindsets and priorities, it did not directly impact the spaces where and people with whom they felt most comfortable and integrated. Although they strove to meet new friends, many respondents still maintained and nurtured relationships they had developed before the pandemic struck.

 While my research offers interesting insights into the lives and perspectives of several students, it also exposes the need for more comprehensive, largescale studies on the repercussions and implications of the 2020-21 school year. In particular, I believe it could be useful to conduct a similar qualitative study at a large, public institution where students are more likely to live off-campus or join social organizations such as fraternities and sororities. As I note above, my respondents did not heavily utilize groups or clubs to reintegrate socially. Harvard is a smaller, predominantly residential college, and many students were able to rely on the campus social scene, Houses, or “run-ins” to cultivate and maintain relationships. I suspect this is not the case at larger, more disjointed universities, and I would argue that a study on the relationship between, for instance, Greek life and post-pandemic reintegration could significantly add to (and perhaps complicate) the findings I present in my paper.

References

Armstrong, E. A. & Hamilton, L. T. (2013) *Paying for the party: How college maintains*

*inequality.* Harvard University Press.

Filho, W. L., Wall, T., Rayman-Bacchus, L., Mifsud, M., Pritchard, D. J., Orlovic Lovren, V.,

Farinha, C., Petrovic, D. S., & Balogun, A. (2021). Impacts of COVID-19 and social isolation on academic staff and students at universities: a cross-sectional study. *BMC Public Health*, 21(1213). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11040-z

Grigsby, M. (2009). *College life through the eyes of students*. SUNY Press.

Hadden, J. (2020). What the top 25 colleges and universities in the US have said about their

plans to reopen in fall 2020, from postponing the semester to offering more remote coursework. *Business Insider*. <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-major-us-colleges-plan-reopen-for-fall-2020-semester-2020-5>

Hurtado, S. (2007) The study of college impact. In P. J. Gumport (Ed.), *Sociology of higher*

*education* (pp. 94-110).

Iloh, C. & Tierney, W. (2014). Using ethnography to understand twenty-first century college

life. *Human Affairs*, 24(1), pp. 20-39. <https://doi.org/10.2478/s13374-014-0203-3>

Klemenčič, M. (2021). Sociology 1104 student handbook. N.p.

Koller, A. & Yan, E. (2021, September 7). *Survey finds class of 2025 disproportionately*

*wealthy.*The Harvard Crimson.  https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2021/9/7/class-of-2025-makeup/

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research.

*Review of Educational Research*, *45*(1), 89–125. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543045001089>

Wang, X., Hegde, S., Son, C., Keller, B., Smith, A., & Sasangohar, F. (2020). Investigating

mental health of US college students during the COVID-19 pandemic: Cross-sectional survey study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 22(9). doi: [10.2196/22817](https://doi.org/10.2196/22817)

Wiedman, J. (1989). Undergraduate socialization: a conceptual approach. J.C. Smart (Ed.),

*Higher Education: Handbook theory and research*, Vol. V. New York: Agathon Press.

Appendix A:

Interview Questions:

What were your academic and social arrangements during the 2020-2021 academic school year?

Prior to arriving on campus in the fall, what expectations, aspirations, or anxieties did you have about your social life? What (if any) role did the pandemic play in these feelings?

As the semester progressed, *where* did you find yourself drawn socially? Did you join any new clubs, organizations, or extracurriculars? If so, what was their appeal? What (if any) role did the pandemic play in your decision to join?

As the semester progressed, *to whom* did you find yourself drawn socially? How and with whom did you cultivate friendships? Were these the same people you were close with freshman year?

Do you believe that the time you spent away from campus in any way influences how you now choose to organize your time and/or social? What about the groups you are apart of and the people around you?

During this semester, where did you feel you most belonged, or felt most integrated, at Harvard? Was this space the same or different as during your freshman year? Where have you felt most out of place?

**CONSENT FORM for INTERVIEW**

My name is Vera Petrovic, and I am asking you to take part in my course research project on *the social reintegration of Harvard’s junior class post-pandemic* in the course SOCIOL1104 Sociology of Higher Education offered at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University.

I would like to conduct a short interview with you as part of my research project. The interview will last about 30 minutes. Your participation is voluntary. You can skip questions that you do not want to answer or stop the interview at any time.

**Consent for confidential or on-record interview**

I am asking you to consent to a confidential interview or an on-record interview.

If you consent to a *confidential interview*, then I will keep the information I gather from this interview confidential and will not share your personal information or any information that could identify you with anyone. If I use any quotes from the interview, I will not disclose your name or position or any other information that could identify you. I will refer to the source of the quote in generic terms for the position and organization or group you are involved in (for example, “a Harvard administrator” or “a member of a student group” or “a leader of a student group”).

If you consent to an *on-record interview*, I ask for your permission to mention your name and position with any direct quotes I use from the interview. The information may be included in my paper that may be featured at HUSRHE website (<https://husrhe.fas.harvard.edu/>) which is openly accessible and viewable via worldwide web to anyone who gets a link.

Please inform me which interview you consent to:

*I consent to a confidential interview.        OR                    I consent to an on-record interview.*

**Recording the interview for confidential use or for public access on HUSRHE**

I am asking you to consent to video/audio recording of the interview for confidential use or for public access on HUSRHE.

If you consent to *recording of the interview for confidential use*, I will audio/video record this interview to enable me to focus on the questions and keep a record of your statements for further analysis. I will treat this recording as a part of a confidential interview. I will keep the information I gather from this interview confidential and will not share your personal information or any information that could identify you with anyone. If I use any quotes from the interview, I will not disclose your name or position or any other information that could identify you. I will refer to the source of the quote in generic terms for the position and organization or group you are involved in (for example, “a Harvard administrator” or “a member of a student group” or “a leader of a student group”). Only my course instructor will have access to the transcript.

If you consent to video/audio recording for public access on HUSRHE, I ask for your permission to audio or video record the interview and publish the information so gathered in paper which may be featured on HUSRHE. You can consent to either using images or parts of the video recording or all of the video recording or none in my paper. HUSRHE (<https://husrhe.fas.harvard.edu/>) is openly accessible and viewable via worldwide web to anyone who gets a link.  If I use any image or parts or entire recording, I will also include your name, position, school, image to my paper.

Please inform what form recording if any you consent to:

*Do you consent to audio/video-recording the interview for confidential use?                   YES NO*

*Do you consent to recording images of you?                                                       YES    NO*

*Do you consent to include the video, audio and image recordings with your full name, position and school in my paper which may be accessible online via HUSRHE to anyone with the link?                                                                                                                                                     YES      NO*

Participant name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Participant signature required only in case of granting permission for use of recordings in Scalar book [or email message explicitly granting permission for use of images/recordings on Scalar]:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Questions? Please contact the SOCIOL 1104 course instructor Dr. Manja Klemencic at manjaklemencic@g.harvard.edu .

**Student Recruitment Email Template**

Dear […] ,

This semester, I am taking a course on sociology of higher education (SOCIOL1104). As part of this course, I am researching the social reintegration of Harvard’s junior class post-pandemic. I would like to conduct one short, maximum 30-minute with you to understand your perceptions of being back on campus, as well as your social experience this semester.

Your answers will be kept confidential and your name will not appear in any data records (transcripts), any information that could possibly identify you will be removed, and no names or other identifiable information will be used in the final paper nor on the HUSRHE platform ([https://husrhe.fas.harvard.edu/)](https://husrhe.fas.harvard.edu/%29) where my paper may be showcased. Immediately after the interview is conducted, a special code will be generated for the record and the label will include following terms “student-date of interview”.

If you are willing to speak on-record, in which case I may use your name and quotations in my paper, please let me know. I will send you the paragraphs for a final check before the paper will appear on HUSRHE.

The project is exempt from CUHS approval since it qualifies as course-related research.

I hope you can support my research by agreeing to be interviewed. Please let me know if you would be willing to be interviewed and when you would be available.

Thank you so much,

Vera