International House Impact Report 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview
International House (I-House) has a great deal of anecdotal evidence that the experiences their residents have while living there are life-changing and exert positive effects on the values they hold, the perspectives they adopt, and the way they live their lives. In this project, we conducted a large-scale survey of I-House alumni to quantitatively assess associations between the experiences people have as residents at I-House and various positive outcomes in their lives. The findings of this survey validate the anecdotal evidence: Alumni report in overwhelming numbers that their experiences at I-House have a transformative effect on their lives. Further, alumni exhibit high levels of the types of positive traits and attributes that I-House aspires to cultivate in their residents, including global citizenship, empathy, intellectual humility, prosociality, and emotional intelligence.

Study Design
This study of I-House was designed to provide an in-depth analysis of the organization's culture and impact through the eyes of its alumni. An approximately 20-minute survey was designed by our research team in close collaboration with representatives from I-House: Sebastian Fries (President & CEO) and Kate Gorman (Vice President of Development, Alumni Relations, and Communications) and administered to a large sample of alumni. We examined quantitative metrics from the survey data and drew qualitative insights from respondents' open-ended comments to offer a holistic view of the I-House experience.

Sample Size and Demographics
The survey was fully completed by 1,153 alumni and partially completed by 447. This resulted in data from 1,600 alumni, ensuring a diverse representation of experiences and perspectives. We were impressed by the response rate for such a voluntary and lengthy survey, which reflects the strong alumni base that I-House has cultivated and former residents' ongoing sense of connection to I-House. Respondents were a mix of women (52%) and men (47%) who currently lived in 94 different countries, had a mean age of 52 years, and had lived for just under a year and a half on average at I-House between the years 1952 and 2023. The size of this sample allowed us to draw several conclusions about the experiences and attributes of I-House alumni as a whole.

Key Descriptives
The study revealed a vibrant community characterized by frequent and high-quality interactions between members of different backgrounds (known as intergroup contact) and robust social norms valuing inclusion and belonging. These elements collectively contribute to a unique, enriching environment that, we believe, distinguishes I-House from other organizations.

I-House vs. Benchmarks

We compared I-House alumni to available benchmarks on positive traits and attributes[1]. In every case, I-House alumni scored better than benchmark samples. For example, alumni reported higher scores for giving and volunteering, empathy, intellectual humility, emotional intelligence, and global citizenship, and lower levels of affective polarization than other groups of adults. Not only did I-House alumni score better across the board, but they even ranked 2nd in the world on giving and volunteering compared to rates of giving and volunteering across 119 countries, and were 15% less affectively polarized than the typical US population. The figure below illustrates this impressive pattern, underscoring the positive traits and attributes of I-House alumni. This pattern was observed for both male and female alumni, suggesting similar experiences.

I-House Alums Outperform Benchmarks Across All Measures
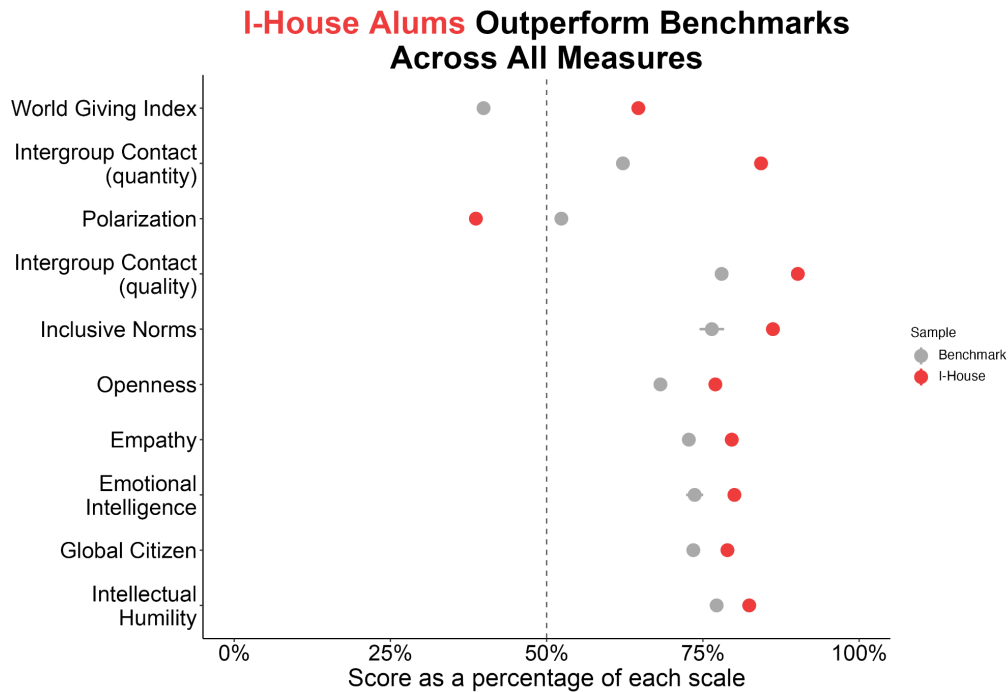
Correlations and Path Model

A series of correlational analyses indicated that engagement with positive aspects of the I-House culture was associated with greater positive traits and attributes in the present. For example, residents who attended more I-House events, who reported having more frequent and higher quality interactions with members of different groups, and who perceived I-House as a place with strong norms of inclusion and belonging scored higher on variables like empathy, prosociality, global citizenship, etc.

The path model below depicts the overall pattern. Residents who reported being more identified with I-House when they lived there engaged more with the I-House culture as residents and exhibit more positive traits and attributes today (e.g., greater intellectual humility, higher global citizenship, more empathy, greater emotional intelligence, higher openness to experience, and more prosocial behavior).

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[1] The benchmark data comes from various sources, in many cases from the original scientific studies validating the scales used in the survey. In the case of the World Giving Index, the benchmark is based on Gallup polling data from 119 countries.

Identification With I-House → **Engagement with I-House Culture**
- Attended more events
- Perceived more inclusive norms
- Had more intergroup contact
- Had better intergroup contact

→ **Present-Day Positive Traits and Attributes**
- Greater intellectual humility
- Higher global citizenship
- More empathy
- Higher EQ
- Higher openness to experience
- More prosocial
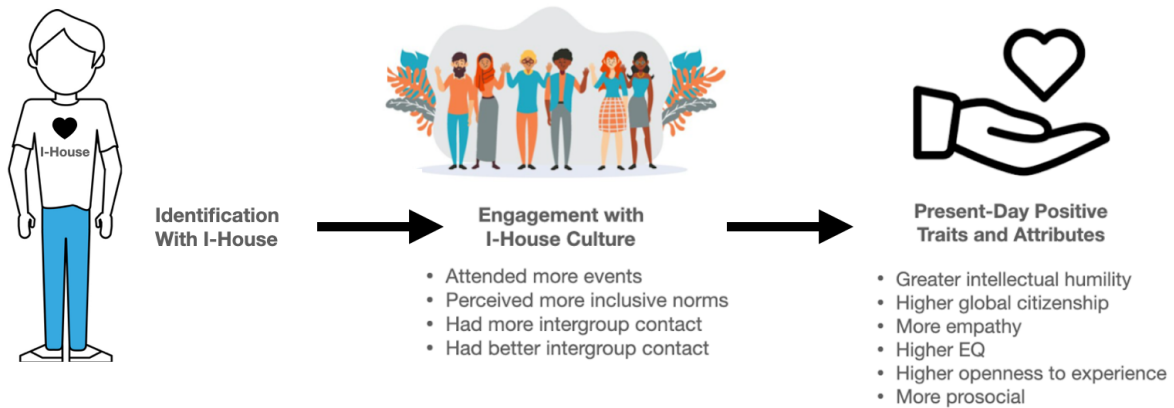
Identification with I-House is an important factor because research finds when people feel that being part of a group is an important part of who they are, the way they think, the beliefs and values they adopt, and the actions they undertake tend to align with "how things are done" in the group. As such, we observe that identification with I-House, as well as engagement with aspects of the I-House culture (e.g., attending events, intergroup contact) are associated with outcomes like intellectual humility, empathy, etc. This is consistent with the hypothesis that I-House is exerting a positive influence on these attributes.

Qualitative Data

Rich qualitative data, gathered through open-ended questions, paint a vivid picture of a community where members felt valued, supported, and inspired. Hundreds of alumni noted that the nurturing environment of I-House was effective in fostering personal and professional development. Comments about the I-House experience were overwhelmingly positive, far more glowing than we, as researchers, expect to see in most organizations.

Representative Quotes from Alumni

"I-House excels in the standard of inclusivity and open dialogue it has achieved so far."

"My two years at I-house were some of the best years in my life. It felt like living in a Utopia and it was easy to find meaning in everything."

"In many contexts over the last 20 years I have had to draw on skills learned at the House: especially the skill of listening, understanding that different isn't bad, just different, and being empathetic to different points of view while maintaining my own moral compass."

"I believe my time at I-House was hugely impactful on my life. I definitely view myself as a global citizen and approach my work that way."

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on this study, a key to promoting positive traits and attributes among residents appears to be fostering a strong sense of identification with I-House and encouraging engagement with important aspects of the I-House culture, including events and interactions across groups.

We conclude that residing at I-House is clearly associated with various positive traits and attributes. Examining patterns of relationships (or correlations) between measures provides significant evidence *consistent* with the hypothesis that I-House has a positive influence on outcomes like intellectual humility, empathy, and global citizenship.

The correlational design of this study, in which alumni reported retrospectively on their experiences at I-House, does not allow for strong causal inferences about the impact that I-House had on residents. We recommend further research with a different methodology to determine if there is a clear causal connection between living at I-House and the key outcomes.

It is also difficult with the current data to infer precisely which events and activities contribute to positive outcomes, so future research could be conducted both to further identify the most effective aspects of the I-House experience and provide stronger causal evidence.

The overarching sentiment and responses of I-House alumni reflect a community that is not just a residence but a catalyst for personal and professional transformation. I-House alumni outperform benchmarks on all measures of positive traits and attributes, a testament to the organization's efficacy in fostering an environment conducive to developing caring and engaged global citizens. Our perspective as social psychologists is that I-House could provide a valuable model for other organizations seeking to create cultures with healthy norms and develop conscientious global citizens.

INTRODUCTION

International House (I-House) is a nearly 100-year-old residency program for an interdisciplinary group of international graduate students and young professionals. The I-House emerged from the desire to "*bring together students from around the world to share experiences and life lessons in peace building and understanding*" and has become "*a place where outstanding postgraduates from all over the world live together and learn about the similarities that bind them regardless of race, religion, or country of origin*" (ihouse-nyc, 2023).

The I-House mission has been to foster cross-cultural understanding and equip residents with the skills necessary to overcome the division, isolation, and polarization that exists in societies worldwide, and solve the biggest problems of our time. Guided by its three core values–respect, empathy, and moral courage– the International House designs programs and a residential life that embraces "*diversity of thought and experience*" (ihouse-nyc, 2023), thereby fostering cross-cultural understanding and depolarizing communities.

Over the course of their history, I-House has collected broad anecdotal evidence that living at I-House changed people's lives, made residents more open-minded, better leaders, more self-aware and empathetic, and more. This suggests that living there has been life-changing and exerts positive effects on the values they hold, the perspectives they adopt, and the way they live their lives. However, it remains unclear if these stories are exceptions or part of a broader trend.

Through this project, we collected and analyzed data from I-House alumni to measure, quantify, and summarize the impact that living at I-House and participating in activities and programs has on residents who live there. Currently, I-House lacks such empirical information, which limits their ability to (a) communicate effectively with new residents, supporters, and donors, (b) attract new cohorts of residents to the organization, and (c) advance the mission of cross-cultural understanding and cultural and social intelligence to like-minded organizations.

In this project, we conducted a large-scale survey of I-House alumni to more quantitatively assess associations between experiences people had as residents at I-House and various positive outcomes in their lives.

We consulted closely with I-House leadership to determine what traits and values they expect to be positively impacted by residents' experiences at I-House. We then conducted a review of relevant scientific literature to identify valid and reliable measures of these attributes, collating commonly used scientific scales assessing Intellectual Humility, Global Citizenship, Openness to Experience, Empathy, Emotional Intelligence, Prosociality, and Affective Polarization. More detailed information about each of these measures and the science behind them is presented in the Results section.

In addition to these measures of positive traits and attributes, the survey included questions and scales assessing the experiences alumni had while living at I-House. We asked about their attendance at events, their perceptions of inclusive norms at I-House, the frequency and quality of the interactions they had with people from different backgrounds, as well as how much they felt identified with I-House.

Finally, we asked alumni to respond to several open-ended questions in which they could tell us about the experiences they found particularly meaningful, how I-House had affected their lives and work, and what they hoped the future of I-House would look like.

Our approach to examining associations between the experiences residents had at I-House and various positive traits and attributes was two-fold:

- First, we compared how I-House alumni scored on measures of Intellectual Humility, Global Citizenship, Prosociality, etc. to available samples of alternative populations. This benchmarking exercise allowed us to determine whether I-House alumni had systematically higher levels of these positive traits and attributes than would be expected based on prior research with other samples. These analyses are presented in the results below.

- Second, we examined how respondents' levels of identification with I-House, as well as their engagement with key aspects of the I-House culture (intergroup contact, inclusive norms, attendance at events) were correlated with positive traits and attributes. To the degree that people reporting higher levels of identification and engagement with aspects of I-House culture exhibit higher levels of characteristics like Intellectual Humility, Global Citizenship, Empathy, Pro-sociality, and so on, it provides evidence consistent with the hypothesis that I-House has a positive influence on these outcomes. Further description of this logic and these analyses are presented in the results below.

It is important to note a caveat that because these were not experimental data (where people were randomly assigned to live in I-House) we cannot make direct causal claims about the impact of I-House. However, the predicted correlations suggest there are relationships that may be causal.

We also qualitatively analyzed respondents' written answers to the open-ended questions. These analyses revealed a set of themes which emphasize the positive experiences and impact I-House bestows on its residents.

As we analyzed respondents' written answers, we identified a small number of reports that describe incidents of sexism. This led us to conduct an analysis comparing outcomes is for self-identified women and men. If anything, women scored slightly higher than men on most positive indices. Importantly, women did not perceive I-House norms as less inclusive than men, suggesting that overall women do not experience I-House as having a more hostile or unsafe environment than do men (despite these serious reports).

METHODS

Data Collection

We sent invitations to complete the survey to 28,498 email addresses belonging to 23,010 unique I-House alumni via a survey distribution platform called SurveyMonkey. After a series of reminder emails from July to August 2023, we had 1,153 alumni complete the survey and an additional 447 alumni partially complete the survey, meaning we had at least some data from 1,600 alumni (see supplement for details).[2] This is considered a large sample by the traditional standards of social psychology research and allows for a well-powered analysis of the associations between different measures we collected.

We have plotted the cumulative number of survey responses in **Figure 1** below. It took most people 15-20 minutes to complete the full survey (see supplement for additional details).

Cumulative # of Survey Responses by Day
(Counts as of Aug. 18, 11:59pm EST)

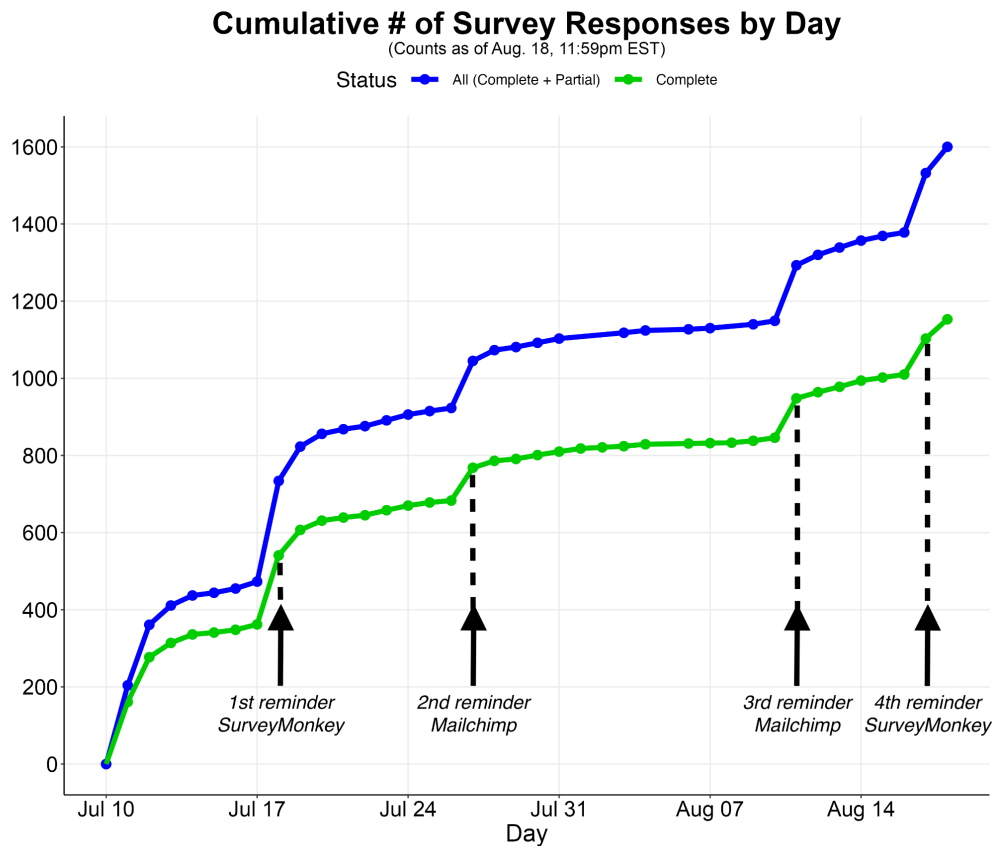**Figure 1.** *The cumulative number of survey responses from survey launch (July 11, 2023) to survey conclusion (August 18, 2023). Each data point reflects the cumulative number of survey responses received by the end of each day.*

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[2] We excluded all pilot responses that came in before our official July 11, 2023 launch date (except two actual alumni who partook in a soft launch) and any duplicate responses.

Respondent Demographics

Alumni participants were an average age of 52 years old (with a range from 18-96, SD = 16 years). Alumni had resided for an average of 17 months at I-House (SD = 12 months) between 1952 and 2023 (with a median residency in 2004; see supplement for additional details). Women comprised 52% of the sample, men were 47% of the sample, and non-binary individuals were less than 1% of the sample.

The sample was highly educated, with the vast majority of respondents holding a postgraduate degree: doctorate degree or equivalent (30%), MA degree or equivalent (60%), bachelor's degree or equivalent (6%). The average alumni respondent was moderately left-leaning politically (M = 4.01, SD = 1.77, where *1= extremely left, 5 = neither, 10 = extremely right*; see supplement for a figure).

The alumni were extremely culturally diverse, with citizenship in 104 countries around the world (see **Figure 2**). Respondents reported currently living in 94 countries (see supplement for details).

Countries where I-House Alumni have citizenship (N=104 countries)
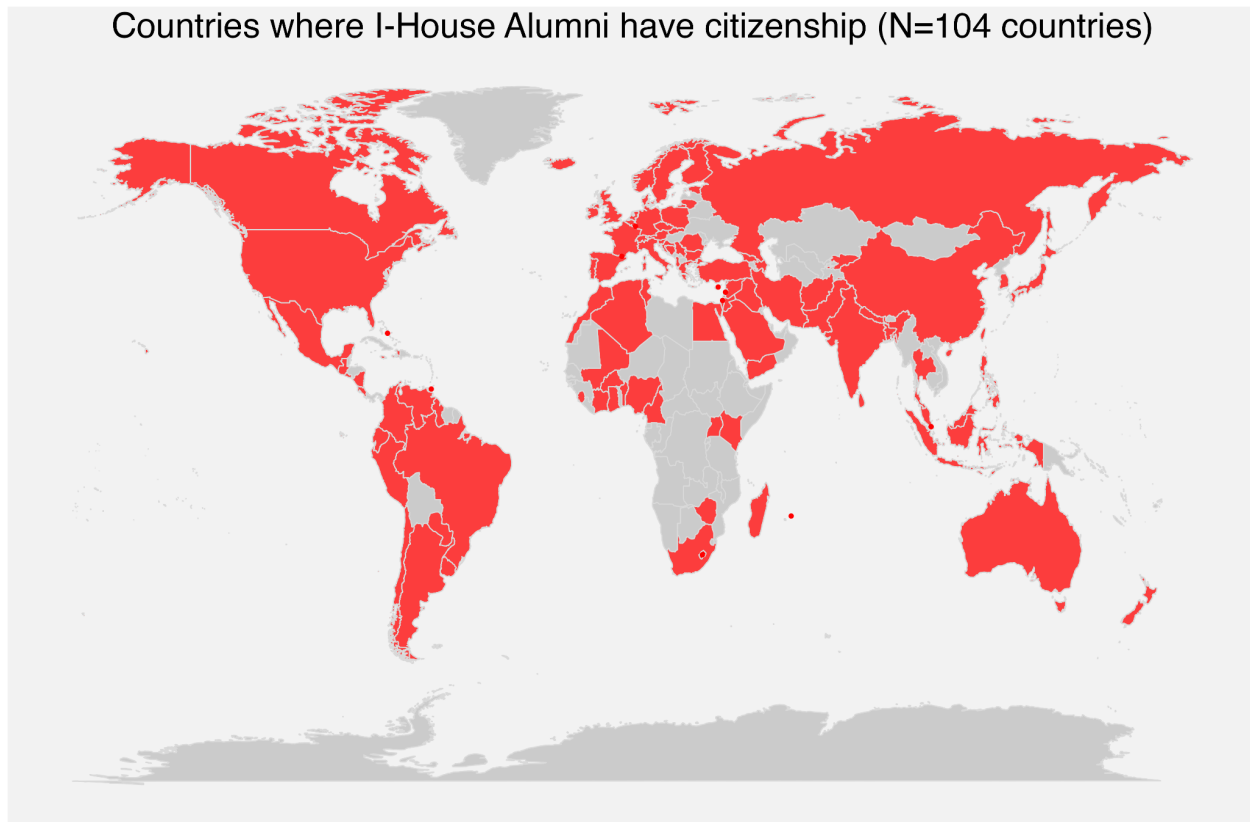
Figure 2. *Alumni's country of citizenship highlighted in red (alumni were from 104 different countries).*

Measures

The survey included a collection of measures. One set of measures assessed alumni respondents' identification with I-House (while at I-House and in the present), as well as their engagement with aspects of the I-House culture while they were residents. This included measures of the frequency and quality of the intergroup contact they had with members of different groups and people from different backgrounds, how often they attended I-House events,

as well as perceptions of how inclusive the norms for behavior were at I-House. (Details regarding each measure are provided in the Results section below).

Another set of measures assessed levels of positive traits and attributes among I-House alumni in the present. It included indices of Intellectual Humility, Global Citizenship, Openness to Experience, Empathy, Emotional Intelligence, Prosociality, and Affective Polarization. We also requested demographic information, including their age, gender, nationality, and level of education.

Finally, we invited alumni to write responses to the following four open-ended questions:
1. What activities or experiences, if any, were you involved in at I-House that you found particularly meaningful or that you felt opened your mind?
2. What knowledge or skills, if any, did you gain from living at I-House?
3. How has that knowledge, or how have those skills, affected your work and your life?
4. What is your hope for the future direction of I-House?

RESULTS

Attendance at I-House Events

We asked respondents to report approximately how many events they attended per month while living at I-House. Overall, alumni reported attending 4.51 events per month (SD = 4.49; see **Figure 3**). As you can see from the figure, some alumni were extremely engaged, attending over 20 events per month. But most alumni attended a few events per month.

We also assessed which, among a few types of events, were the most popular. Respondents were asked how often they attended events such as Night of Nations, Sunday Suppers, etc. The scale for these questions was: *1 = Never, 2 = Once, 3 = A few times, 4 = Most of the time, 5 = All of the time.*

As seen in **Figure 4**, alumni reported attending Sunday, Suppers *(M = 3.25, SD = 1.32)*, Night of Nations (M = 3.24, SD = 1.47), Cultural Hours (M = 3.05, SD = 1.19), and Salon Nights (M = 2.91, SD = 1.23), and Cultural Hours (M = 3.05, SD = 1.19) a few times on average. They also reported attending other social events fairly frequently (M = 3.78, SD = 0.83).
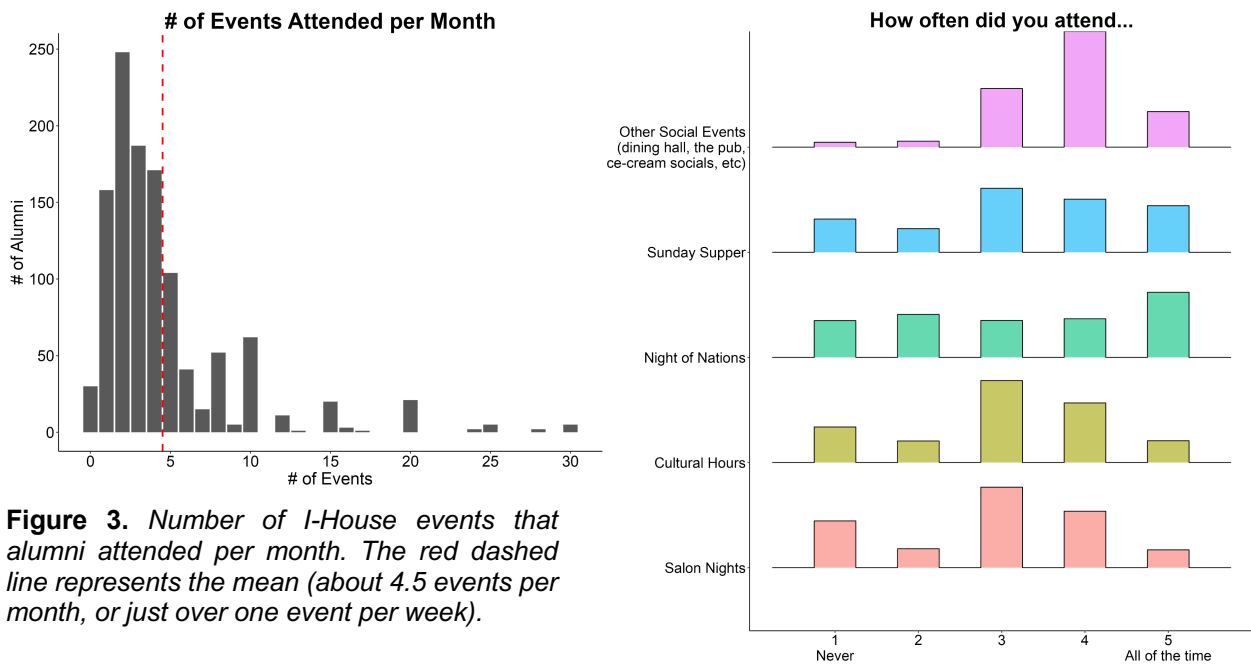
Figure 3. *Number of I-House events that alumni attended per month. The red dashed line represents the mean (about 4.5 events per month, or just over one event per week).*

during their stay on average. The graph is sorted by the event with the highest average attendance on top ("Other social events", M = 3.77) to lowest average attendance on the bottom ("Salon Nights", M = 2.91)

Figure 4. *Alumni's attendance of various I-House events. Alumni attended each event a few times*

Identification with I-House

People belong to different groups and communities (e.g., nation, religion, social class, race, political party). Importantly, people who strongly identify with a group tend to be more loyal to that group, show higher commitment to its values, and are more likely to adhere to its norms (e.g. Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Terry & Hogg, 1996; Van Bavel & Packer, 2021).

Strongly identified group members conform more strongly to social norms, which, if they are inclusive rather than divisive, can create greater intergroup tolerance and cooperation (Packer & Van Bavel, 2022). Thus, we wanted to measure identification and social norms at I-House.

We measured the extent to which people identified with I-House during their residency, as well as at the time we conducted the survey (which was often many years later for most alumni). The scale assessed the degree to which respondents saw their individual self overlapping with the I-House identity (self-group overlap; see supplement), where the answers ranged from *1 = not at all identified with I-House to 7 = very identified with I-House.*

Alumni positively identified with I-House during their original residency (M = 4.84, SD = 1.57) and were slightly less identified, though still somewhat identified with I-House, in the present (M = 3.27, SD = 1.90; see **Figure 5**). These measures were highly correlated (r = .58) indicating that alumni who were the most identified during their original residence remained identified (often many) years later.
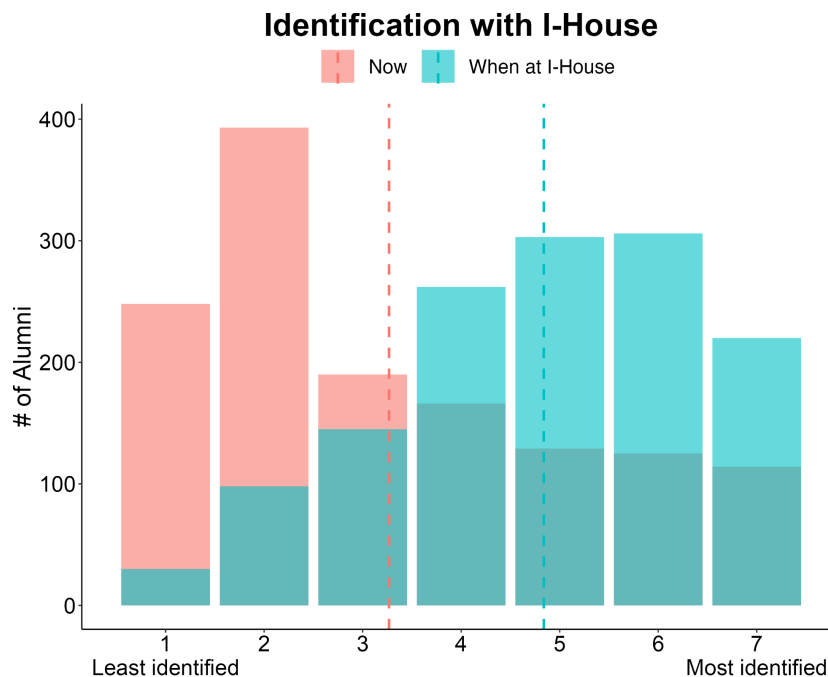

Figure 5. *Alumni's identification with I-House during their original residency (seagreen colored bars) was slightly higher on average than at the time of the survey (salmon colored bars). The dashed lines represent the averages (one line for the mean of "When at I-House" and one for the mean of "Now").*

Inclusive Social Norms

Social norms are the common patterns of thought and behavior in particular contexts. More simply, norms are a combination of "the way we do things around here" and "the way we think things ought to be done" (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004; Sherif, 1936). As noted above, people who strongly identify with their group are more likely to internalize and adhere to their group's social norms (Terry & Hogg, 1996; Van Bavel & Packer, 2021). It is important to measure perceptions of social norms, for it is those perceptions that have a powerful influence on their own thoughts and behaviors.

People who identify with the I-House identify with a community where the stated social norm is to celebrate and seek out "diversity of thought and experience" (ihouse-nyc, 2023). We assessed whether alumni agreed that this was, in fact, their perception of the norm.

Research suggests that the exposure to such pro-diversity norms fosters an inclusive social climate that may reduce prejudice and polarization. For instance, one recent study found that perception of strong pro-diversity norms at universities was associated with more positive attitudes toward minorities and outgroup members, less intergroup anxiety, engagement in inclusive behaviors, and support for policies that promote diversity (Murrar, Campbell & Brauer, 2020). Moreover, underrepresented minority students were more likely to feel a sense of belonging and succeed at university when they are aware of this norm.

We measured whether people perceived that I-House had inclusive social norms. Sample questions were *"The overwhelming majority of I-House members did their best to behave inclusively"* and *"At I-House, it was expected to be welcoming to members from all backgrounds"*. The scale ranged from *1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.*

Alumni strongly believed that I-House had inclusive norms (M = 6.03, SD = 0.78, alpha = .71), with many people giving close to the highest possible rating (see **Figure 6**).

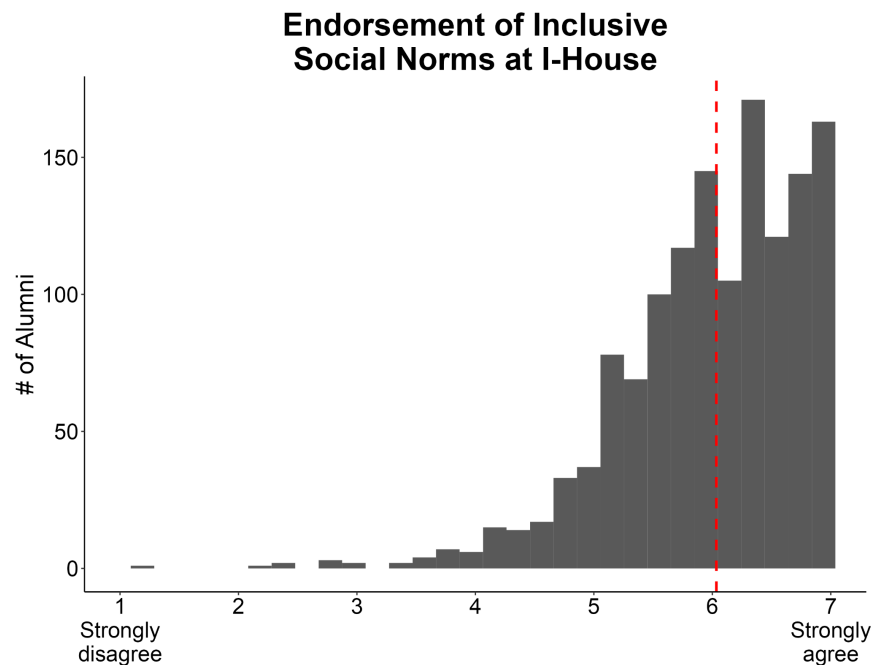**Endorsement of Inclusive Social Norms at I-House**

Figure 6. *Alumni's perception of social norms at I-House. Stronger agreement indicates stronger perceived norms of inclusivity. The red dashed line represents the mean.*

Intergroup Contact: When at I-House

I-House brings together people from different backgrounds and aims to nourish a culture of respectful discourse and exchange. It creates an opportunity for frequent, positive intergroup contact, which is widely considered one of the most promising strategies to improve intergroup relations (Allport, 1954; Paluck, Green, & Green, 2018). An extensive body of research suggests that intergroup contact reduces outgroup prejudice (Pettigrew et al., 2011; 2006), intergroup anxiety (Pettigrew et al., 2011), and hostility towards outgroup members (Wojcieszak & Warner, 2020). Further, studies indicate that positive intergroup contact can increase empathy, perspective taking, and intergroup trust (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011). As such, the experience of positive intergroup contact at I-House might be one of the most important sources of long-term social change.

We measured the frequency and quality of intergroup contact that alumni experienced with people from different backgrounds and beliefs during their stay at I-House. A sample item for the frequency of contact was "*During your time at I-House, how much contact did you have with residents with different religious beliefs*" on a scale from *1 = no contact to 5 = a lot of contact*. Other groups included "residents from different countries", "residents using different cultural practices", and "residents from other disciplines/fields of study".

Alumni reported a great deal of contact with people of different backgrounds (M = 4.22, SD = 0.75, alpha = 0.89; see **Figure 7**).

A sample question measuring quality of intergroup contact was *"Please rate the nature of the relationship you typically had with members of [group] during your time at I-House:"* on a scale from *1 = hostile to 5 = friendly.*

Alumni reported that contact was very friendly (M = 4.51, SD = 0.58, alpha = 0.88: see **Figure 7**).
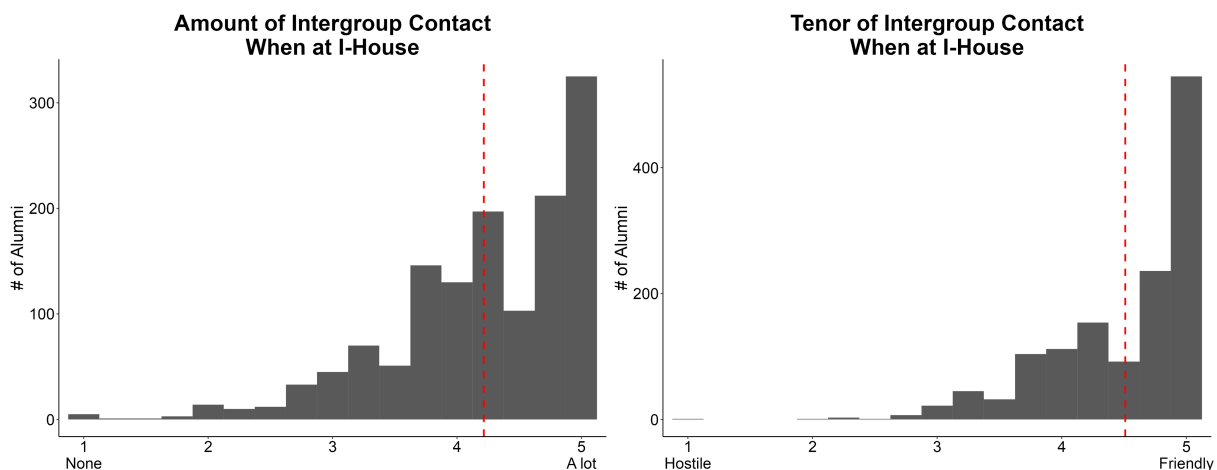
Figure 7. *Alumni's amount of contact (left) and quality of contact (right) with people from different backgrounds during their I-House residence. The red dashed line represents the mean.*

Intergroup Contact: In the Present

We also measured the frequency of intergroup contact that alumni experiences with people from different backgrounds and beliefs in the present. A sample example question for the frequency of contact was *"How much contact do you currently have with residents of different religious beliefs"* on a scale from *1 = no contact, 5 = a lot of contact.* As above, other groups included "residents from different countries", "residents using different cultural practices", and "residents from other disciplines/fields of study".

Alumni continued to report a good deal of intergroup contact in their present lives *(*M = 3.76, SD = 0.84, alpha = 0.87; see **Figure 8**).

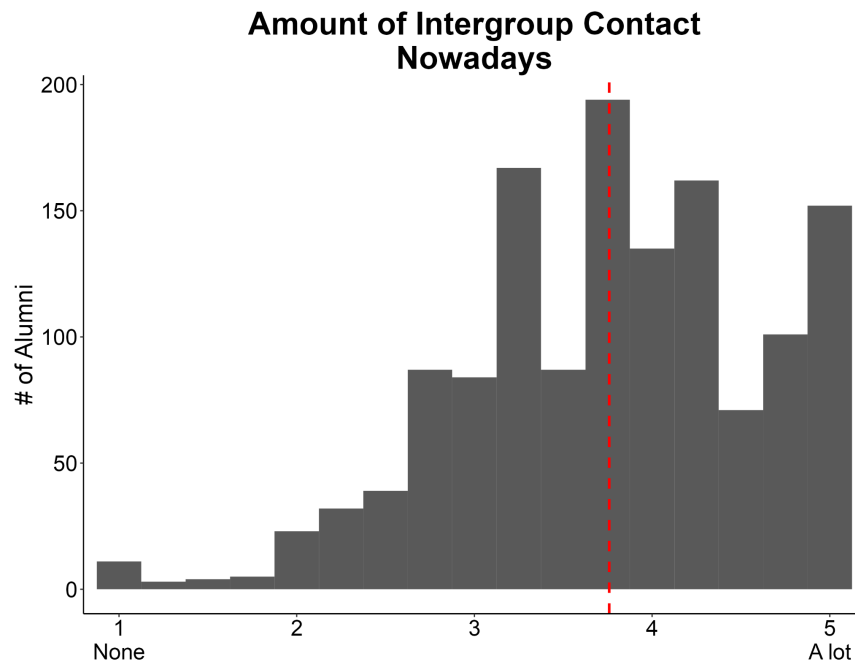**Figure 8.** *Alumni's amount of contact with people from different backgrounds today. The red dashed line represents the mean.*

Global Citizenship

Meeting and connecting with people from other groups and parts of the world is central to being a global citizen. In doing so, one can learn how people from different backgrounds with different cultures, religions, and customs, share a common bond. Being a global citizen can be thought of within three interrelated pillars: (1) *having a sense of social responsibility*, including addressing global injustices, being altruistic and empathic, and seeing people all over the world as interconnected and interdependent; (2) *having global competence*, including having self-awareness about one's own limitations in intercultural contexts, having good intercultural communication, and having knowledge of world issues and events; and (3) *being civically engaged on a global scale*, including involving oneself in volunteering or civic organizations, caring about politics and actively contributing to the public discourse, engaging in local civic activism to advance global agendas (Morais & Ogden, 2011).

In prior research, global citizenship predicts prosocial values of intergroup empathy, valuing diversity, social justice, environmental sustainability, intergroup helping, and a felt responsibility to act for the betterment of the world (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013).

We measured the degree to which alumni saw themselves as global citizens. Sample questions for the global citizenship measure were *"I am able to communicate in different ways with people from different cultures"* and *"I know of several ways I can make a difference on some of the world's most worrisome problems"* on a scale from *1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.*

Alumni reported a strong sense of global citizenship *(*M = 3.95, SD = 0.47, alpha = 0.68; see **Figure 9**).
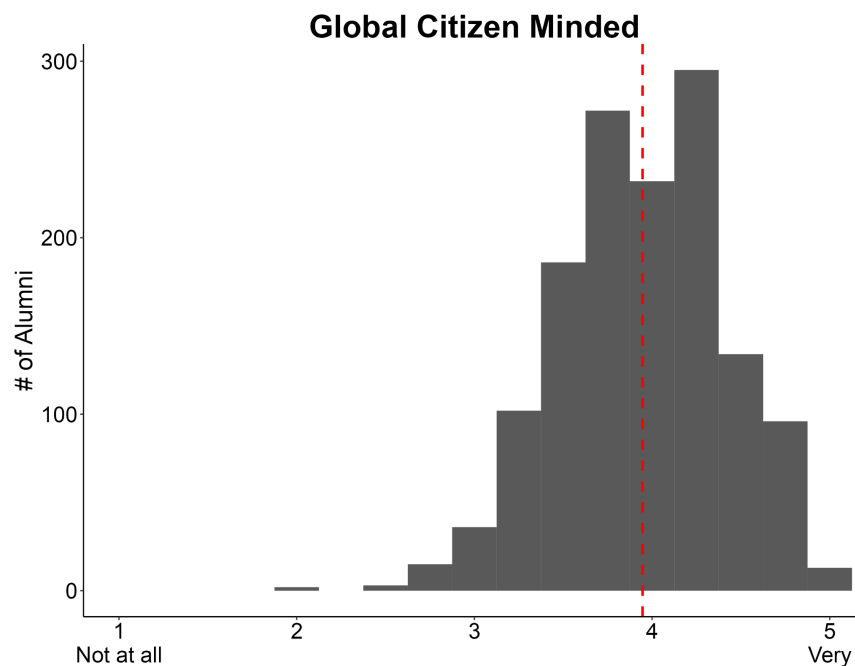
Figure 9. *Alumni's global citizenship mindset. The red dashed line represents the mean.*

Openness to Experience

Openness to experience is one of the five major personality traits ("Big Five"). It captures people's preference for novelty and variety over the familiar and conventional (Matz, 2021; McCrae, 1996). People high in openness feel less threatened by people who are different to them (Duckitt & Sibley, 2010) and are more welcoming to people from different backgrounds (Danckert et al., 2017). They are also more likely to engage with people that are different to them such as immigrants (Danckert et al., 2017) or people from the opposite side of the political aisle. Openness to experience also predicts creativity (McCrae, 1987).

Although openness is a relatively stable trait, it is malleable to some extent. Contextual factors such as social norms (Wojcieszak et al., 2020) or multicultural experience (Sparkman et al., 2017) can increase openness and subsequently decrease prejudice and polarization.

We measured the degree to which alumni saw themselves as open to experience. A sample item for the openness measure was *"I see myself as someone who has an active imagination"* on a scale from *1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.*

Alumni reported a strong sense of openness to experience *(*M = 3.85, SD = 0.88, alpha = 0.12; see **Figure 10**).
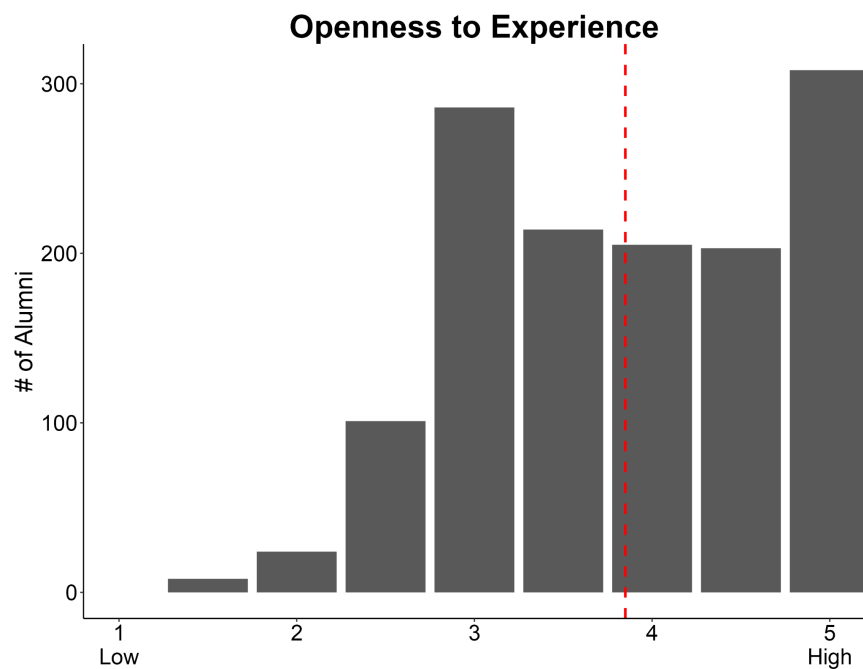
Figure 10. *Alumni's reported openness to experiences. The red dashed line represents the mean.*

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EQ) captures a set of skills involved perceiving and understanding one's own and other people's emotions, and the ability to regulate those emotions in oneself and in others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Salovey & Grewal, 2005). People with higher emotional intelligence have better social relationships, as well as family and intimate partner relationships. They are also more positively regarded by others and have higher psychological well-being (see Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008).

Although emotional intelligence is typically treated as a personality trait (i.e., as relatively stable), various interventions have been designed to increase it (Hodzic, Scharfen, Ripoll, Holling & Zenasni, 2018). As a result, people with higher EQ should become more savvy about navigating social situations, especially when managing emotions is important to success. It is possible that a setting like I-House may tend to attract people with higher EQ, but also possible that the experiences there may increase these abilities..

We measured the degree to which alumni were emotionally intelligent. A sample item for the emotional intelligence measure was *"I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice"* on a scale from *1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree.*

Alumni scored highly on emotional intelligence as measured by this self-report scale *(M = 4.00, SD = 0.47, alpha = 0.73; see* **Figure 11**).
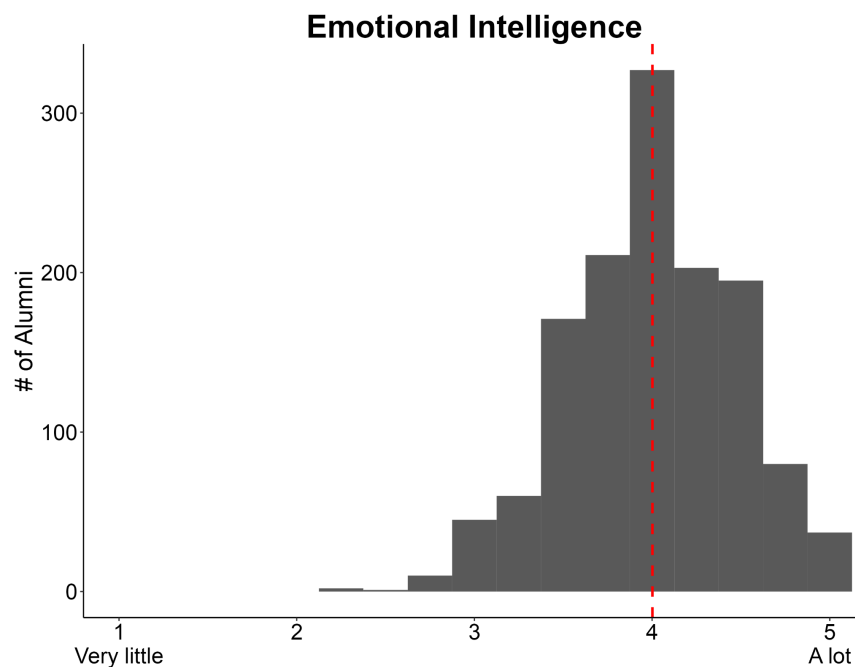
Figure 11. *Alumni's reported degree of emotional intelligence. The red dashed line represents the mean.*

Intellectual Humility

Intellectual humility captures the degree to which people recognize that their own knowledge is limited and that their beliefs might be wrong (Alfono et al., 2017). Research suggests that people high in intellectual humility are more open to opposing views (Porter & Schumann, 2018), less dogmatic (Leary et al., 2017), and less prejudiced (Leary et al., 2017). They are also more motivated to read about opposing political perspectives (Porter & Schumann, 2018), evaluate the quality of arguments more thoroughly and impartially (Leary et al., 2017; Bowes et al., 2022), and are more willing to befriend political opponents (Stanley et al., 2020).

Research suggests that people's intellectual humility and its benefits can be influenced. For instance, one study found that fostering a person's growth mindset of intelligence may simultaneously increase their intellectual humility (Porter & Schumann, 2018). Another study found that simply encouraging people to be intellectually humble increased their efforts to master a new task (Porter et al., 2020). I-House's activities may build an ideal foundation to increase intellectual humility.

We measured the degree to which alumni possessed intellectual humility. Sample questions for the intellectual humility measure were *"I reconsider my opinions when presented with new evidence"* and *"I recognize the value in opinions that are different from my own"* on a scale from *1 = not at all like me* to *5 = very much like me.*

Alumni reported a strong sense of intellectual humility (M = 4.12, SD = 0.58, alpha = .75; see **Figure 12**).
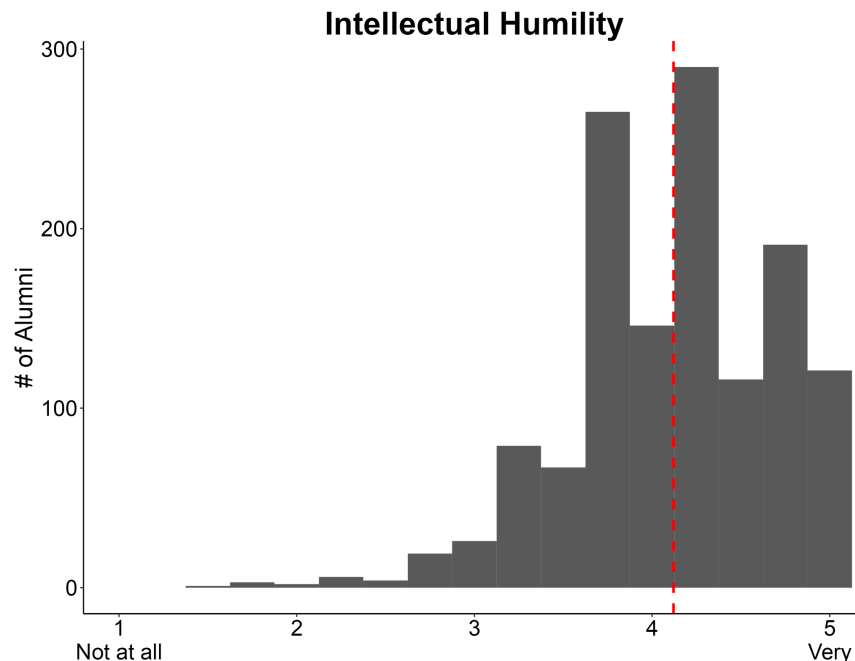
Figure 12. *Levels of alumni's intellectual humility. The red dashed line represents the mean.*

Empathy

Empathy reflects the capacity to share and understand the internal inner states of others. Importantly, empathy is associated with various downstream outcomes including individual well-being (Davis, 1983; Wei et al., 2011) and prosocial behavior (Batson & Shaw, 1991; Nook et al., 2016). A study in college dormitories observed that more empathic individuals were sought out by others for trust and support (Morelli et al., 2017).

Empathy is often thought of as a stable personality trait that some people have and others do not. However, modern theories suggest that it is better thought of as a rubber band that people can expand or contract depending on circumstances and that is often driven by our own motivations to engage empathically with others (Zaki, 2014). Dozens of empathy-building interventions have been proposed over the decades of research on the topic (Weisz & Zaki, 2017).

We measured the degree to which alumni possessed empathy. Sample questions for the empathy measure were *"When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to 'put myself in their shoes'"* and *"I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me"* on a scale from *1 = does not describe me at all, 5 = describes me very well.*

Alumni reported a strong sense of empathy (M = 3.98, SD = 0.54, alpha = 0.75 ; see **Figure 13**).
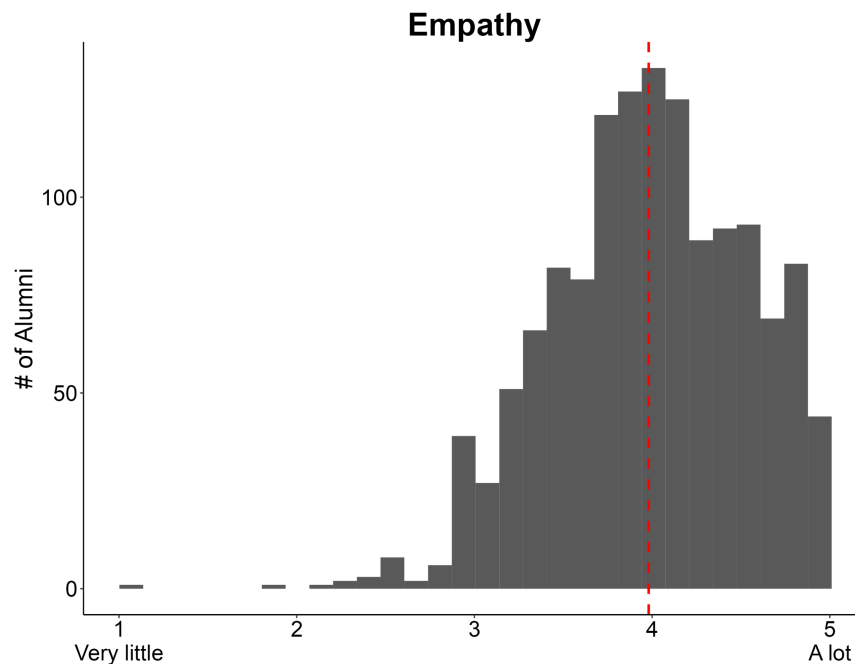
Figure 13. *Alumni's level of empathy towards others. The red dashed line represents the mean.*

World Giving Index

The World Giving Index is a measure reported in the Charity Aid Foundation's World Giving Index report and is based on Gallup's World View World Poll that assesses rates of prosocial behavior around the world. It is administered every year to people in more than 115 countries around the world. A very simple measure, it asks people whether they have helped a stranger, donated to charity or volunteered time within the last month. The global nature of his index provides an excellent benchmark for assessing prosocial behavior among I-House alumni.

We asked people which of the following three charitable acts they had undertaken in the past month: *helped a stranger or someone they did not know who needed help, donated money to a charity, and volunteered their time to an organization* (*0 = no, 1 = yes). 79% of* alumni reported helping a stranger, 63% donated money to a charity, and 52% volunteered their time to an organization *(*see **Figure 14**).

In the past month, have you…

Helped a stranger	Donated money	Volunteered time
79%	**63%**	**52%**
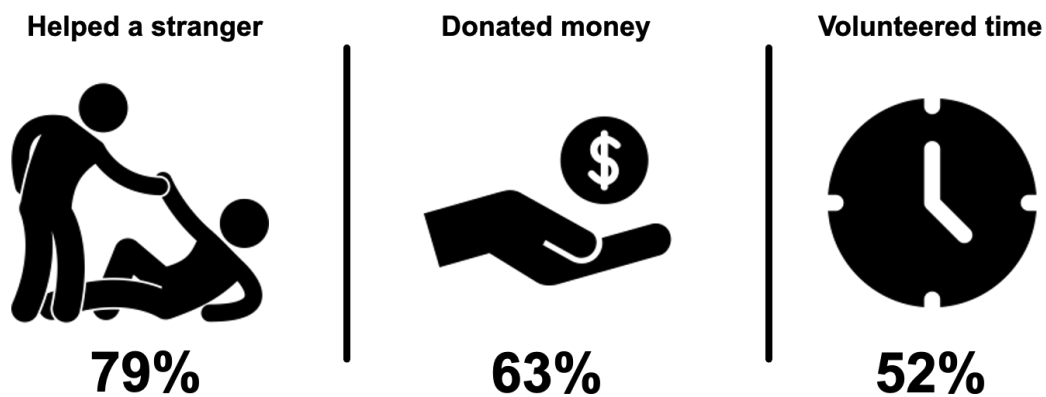
Figure 14. *Percentage of alumni who participated in prosocial behaviors in the past month.*

Affective Polarization

Affective polarization—the tendency of people to dislike and distrust one another based on political differences—has become an important phenomenon in American and other national politics. Over the past few decades in the US, affective polarization has increased: specifically, people's warmth toward their own political ingroup has held constant, but their warmth toward their political outgroup has dropped year-after-year (Finkel et al., 2020). In other words, outgroup dislike is increasingly the dominant emotion in American politics. This same trend is occuring in some other, but not all countries (Boxell et al., 2022).

We assessed affective polarization to people on the left wing and right wing of their country of residence (rather than focusing on attitudes towards Republicans and Democrats, which is American-centric). We suspect that identification with I-House and perceived social norms will be associated with lower affective polarization (see **Figure 15**).

We measured affective polarization on a 100 point scale, where *0 = cold, 100 = warm. We told participants: "For the next two questions, you'll indicate how you feel about people with different political leanings on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 indicates the most unfavorable/cold feelings and 100 the most favorable/warm feelings. How would you rate your feelings toward people on the political left [political right] in the country where you live?"*

Alumni reported feeling warmer towards the political left (M = 66.2, SD = 24.5) than the political right (M = 36.5, SD = 24.9). This left-leaning favoritism might simply reflect that the overall sample had many more liberal respondents. As seen in **FIgure 15**, liberals felt warmer towards liberals and conservatives felt warmer towards conservatives. The absolute difference is an index of affective polarization (M = 38.7, SD = 29.6).
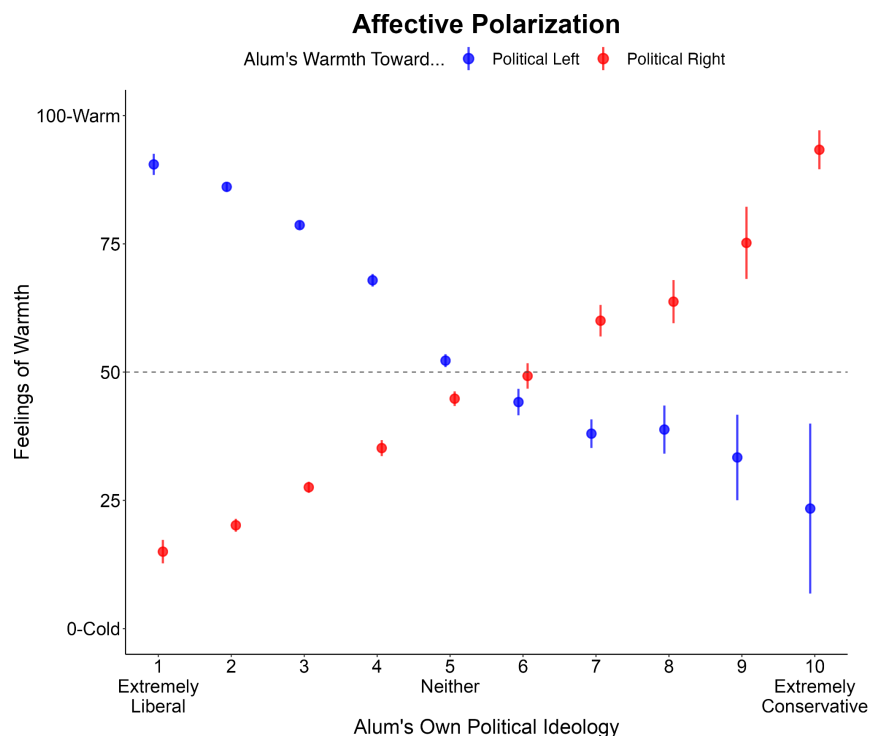
Figure 15. *Alumni's political ideology and their feelings towards people on the political left and political right, respectively. Feelings towards people on the political left are plotted in blue. Feelings towards people on the political right are plotted in red. Higher feelings of warmth indicate more positive feelings toward the respective group.*

In addition to Openness to Experience reported above, we also measured four additional personality traits using the "Big-5" personality measure.

Alumni scored above the midpoint on **extroversion (**M = 3.45, SD = 0.95, alpha = 0.59; *Sample item: "I see myself as someone who is outgoing, sociable."),* **agreeableness (**M = 3.81, SD = 0.82, alpha = 0.31; *Sample item: "I see myself as someone who is generally trusting"), and* **conscientiousness (**M = 4.21, SD = 0.77, alpha = 0.40; *Sample item: "I see myself as someone who does a thorough job." Alumni sored below the midpoint on* **neuroticism** *(M = 2.54, SD = 1.02, alpha = 0.65; Sample item: "I see myself as someone who gets nervous easily.").* See **Figure 16** for full results.
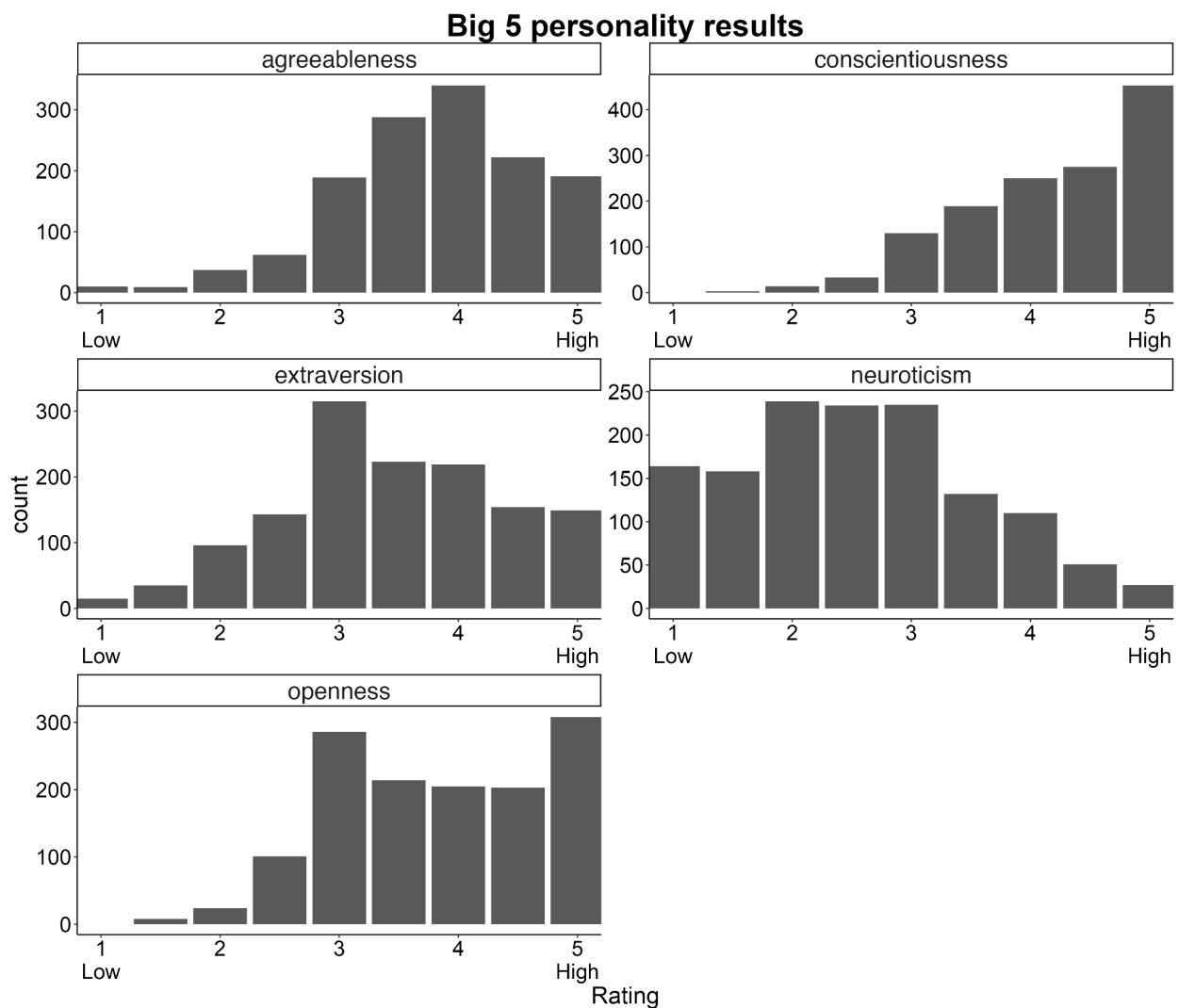
Figure 16. *Alumni's scores for each of the Big Five personality traits***.**

I-House vs. Benchmarks

We compared the scores of I-House alumni to other published samples that have completed the same measures of positive traits and attributes. The benchmark data comes from different sources, in many cases from the original studies creating or validating the scales used in the survey[3]. In the case of the World Giving Index, the benchmark is based on 2021 Gallup polling data from 119 countries. In the case of affective polarization, the benchmark is from the 2020 American National Elections survey.

Remarkably, I-House alumni significantly outperformed benchmarks across all measures (see **Figure 17**).
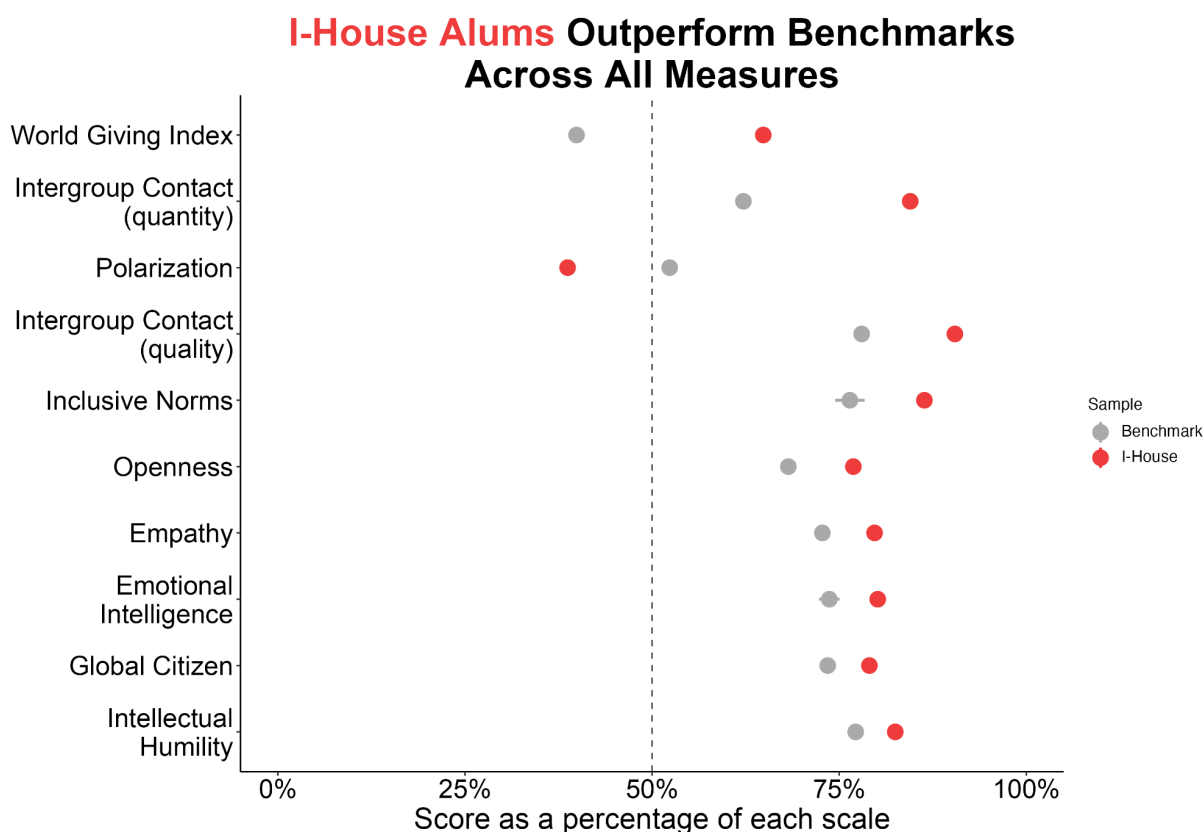
Figure 17. *Alumni's scores (red) on all measures compared to scores of similar demographic groups (grey). The strike-through lines represent the standard errors.*

More specifically:

- I-House alumni were far **more prosocial** (M = 64.7%, SD = 31%) than the world average across 119 countries (M = 39.8%, SD = 8.2%), $t(1,367)$ = 29.54, $p < .001$.
  - I-House alumni ranked 2nd in the world overall at 65% with only Indonesia ahead at 68%, 6th in helping strangers (79%), 8th in donating money (63%), and 2nd in volunteering time (52%).

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[3] Additional information about benchmark data is available on request.

- I-House alumni had much **more intergroup contact** with people from different backgrounds and beliefs during their time at I-House (*M* = 4.22, *SD* = 0.75) than a benchmark of Italian high school students interacting with immigrants (*M* = 3.11, *SD* = 0.86), *t*(1,357) = 54.45, *p* < .001.
- I-House alumni were **less polarized** (*M* = 38.7, *SD* = 29.6) than the US national average (ANES) in 2020 (*M* = 52.35), *t*(1,302) = -16.69, *p* < .001.
- I-House alumni had **better quality intergroup contact** with people from different backgrounds and beliefs during their time at I-House (*M* = 4.51, *SD* = 0.58) than a benchmark of Italian high school students interacting with immigrants (*M* = 3.90, *SD* = 0.76), *t*(1,354) = 38.55, *p* < .001.
- I-House alumni felt that there were **stronger social norms of inclusivity** at I-House (*M* = 6.03, *SD* = 0.78) than a benchmark of how American college students felt about their own university (*M* = 5.35, *SD* = 1.17), *t*(1,356) = 32.21, *p* < .001.
- I-House alumni were **more open to new experiences** (*M* = 3.85, *SD* = 0.88) than a benchmark of German adults (*M* = 3.41, *SD* = 0.88), *t*(1,348) = 18.37, *p* < .001.
- I-House alumni were **more empathic** (*M* = 3.98, *SD* = 0.54) than a benchmark of Italian high school and college students (*M* = 3.63, *SD* = 0.66), *t*(1,343) = 23.45, *p* < .001.
- I-House alumni had **more emotional intelligence** (*M* = 4.00, *SD* = 0.47) than a benchmark of British undergraduate student-athletes (*M* = 3.68, *SD* = 0.72), *t*(1,341) = 24.88, *p* < .001.
- I-House alumni were **more global citizen minded** (*M* = 3.95, *SD* = 0.47) than a benchmark of Italian high school and college students (*M* = 3.67, *SD* = 0.42), *t*(1,385) = 21.81, *p* < .001.
- I-House alumni were **more intellectually humble** (*M* = 4.12, *SD* = 0.58) than a benchmark of online MTurk workers (*M* = 3.86, *SD* = 0.64), *t*(1,335) = 16.54, *p* < .001.

It should be noted that no specific benchmark here is perfect, in part because they do not come from samples directly comparable to I-House (e.g., from samples of postgraduate students living in other contexts). That said, the overall pattern indicating that I-House alumni score **more highly on every measure** is striking and powerful. All told, this pattern is strongly suggestive that I-House alumni exhibit more positive traits and attributes than the norm.

Patterns of Influence: Relationships Among Measures

The design of this study, in which alumni reported retrospectively on their experiences at I-House, does not allow for strong causal inferences about the impact that I-House had on residents. We can conclude that residing at I-House is associated with various positive traits and attributes, although demonstrating a causal connection would require further research with a different methodology. Correlation does not always equal causation. However, examining patterns of relationships (or correlations) between measures does provide evidence *consistent* with the hypothesis that I-House has a positive influence on outcomes like intellectual humility, empathy, and global citizenship.

A large body of research in social psychology has demonstrated that the more people identify with a group, the more they are influenced by the norms of the group (see Van Bavel & Packer, 2021). When people feel that being part of a group is an important part of who they are, the way they think, the beliefs and values they adopt, and the actions they undertake tend to align with "how things are done" in the group.

This survey included measures of identification with I-House, as well as the degree to which alumni perceived I-House as having strong norms of inclusion. Based on prior research, if these measures are positively associated (correlated) with outcomes like intellectual humility, empathy, etc., it would be consistent with the hypothesis that I-House is exerting a positive influence on these attributes. In other words, if we find that alumni who reported being more identified with I-House and who perceived I-House norms as more inclusive are also more intellectually humble (to take just one example), it would suggest that possessing a strong I-House identity is a potential contributor to intellectual humility[4].

We conducted a series of correlational analyses to examine relationships among measures in the survey. The overall pattern of relationships is consistent with the model illustrated in **Figure 18**. *Identification with I-House* was positively associated with *Engagement with I-House Culture*, which was positively associated with individuals' *Present-Day Positive Traits and Attributes*.

Identification With I-House → **Engagement with I-House Culture**
- Attended more events
- Perceived more inclusive norms
- Had more intergroup contact
- Had better intergroup contact

→ **Present-Day Positive Traits and Attributes**
- Greater intellectual humility
- Higher global citizenship
- More empathy
- Higher EQ
- Higher openness to experience
- More prosocial

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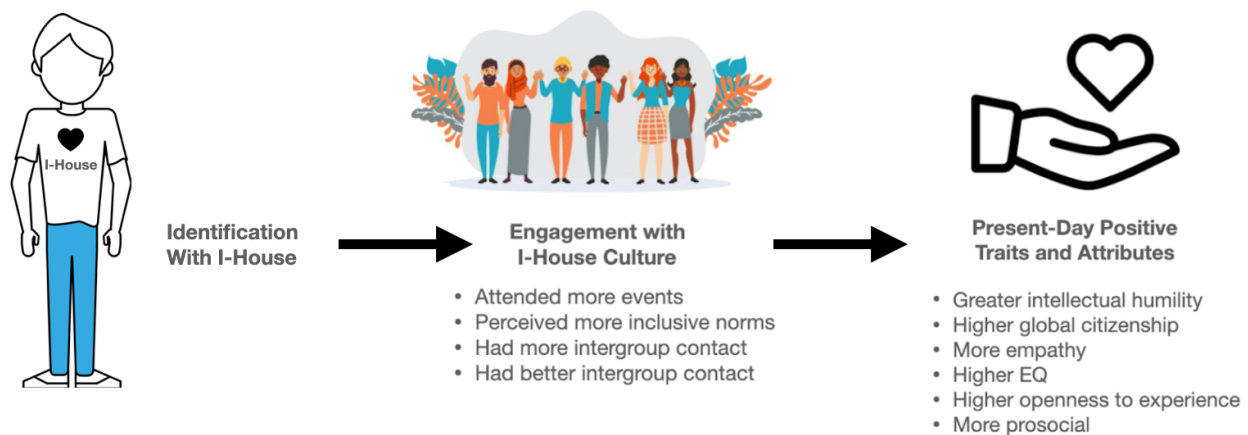
[4] The reason it would not be possible to draw a strong causal conclusion is that this relationship could also go the other way around, such that people who are more intellectually humble might be particularly drawn to identify with I-House.

Figure 18. *Alumni who reported being more identified with I-House when they lived there engaged more with elements of the I-House culture by attending more events, perceiving the norms as more inclusive, and having more frequent and higher quality contact with people from different backgrounds. These forms of engagement were, in turn, positively associated with a suite of positive traits and attributes in the present.*

- Alumni who reported that they were more identified with I-House when they lived there also reported having been more engaged with I-House culture.
  - They perceived I-House norms as more inclusive (r = .25, p < .01)
  - They reported attending more events (r = .31, p < .01)
  - They reported having had more contact with members of different groups (r = .36, p < .01)
  - And they reported that their intergroup contact was of higher quality (r = .21, p < .01)

- Further, alumni who reported being more engaged with I-House culture when they lived there scored higher on various positive traits and attributes in the present (see correlations in **Figure 19** below). For example:
  - People who attended more events scored higher on intellectual humility, global citizenship, empathy, and prosociality.
  - People who perceived I-House norms as more inclusive scored higher on intellectual humility, global citizenship, empathy, and openness to experience.
  - People who reported having had more contact with members of different groups scored higher on intellectual humility, global citizenship, empathy, openness, and prosociality.
  - People who reported having had higher quality intergroup contact scored higher on all of these variables as well.

The strongest correlates of positive traits and attributes were the measures of perceived inclusive norms and intergroup contact. It is also worth noting that people who had more and higher quality contact with members of different groups at I-House also perceived I-House norms as more inclusive. Further, alumni who had greater intergroup contact while they were residents also reported having more contact with members of different groups in their present-day lives (r = .37, p < .01).

These findings suggest that the opportunities I-House provides for frequent high-quality contact between members of different groups may be a particularly important component of the I-House "recipe".
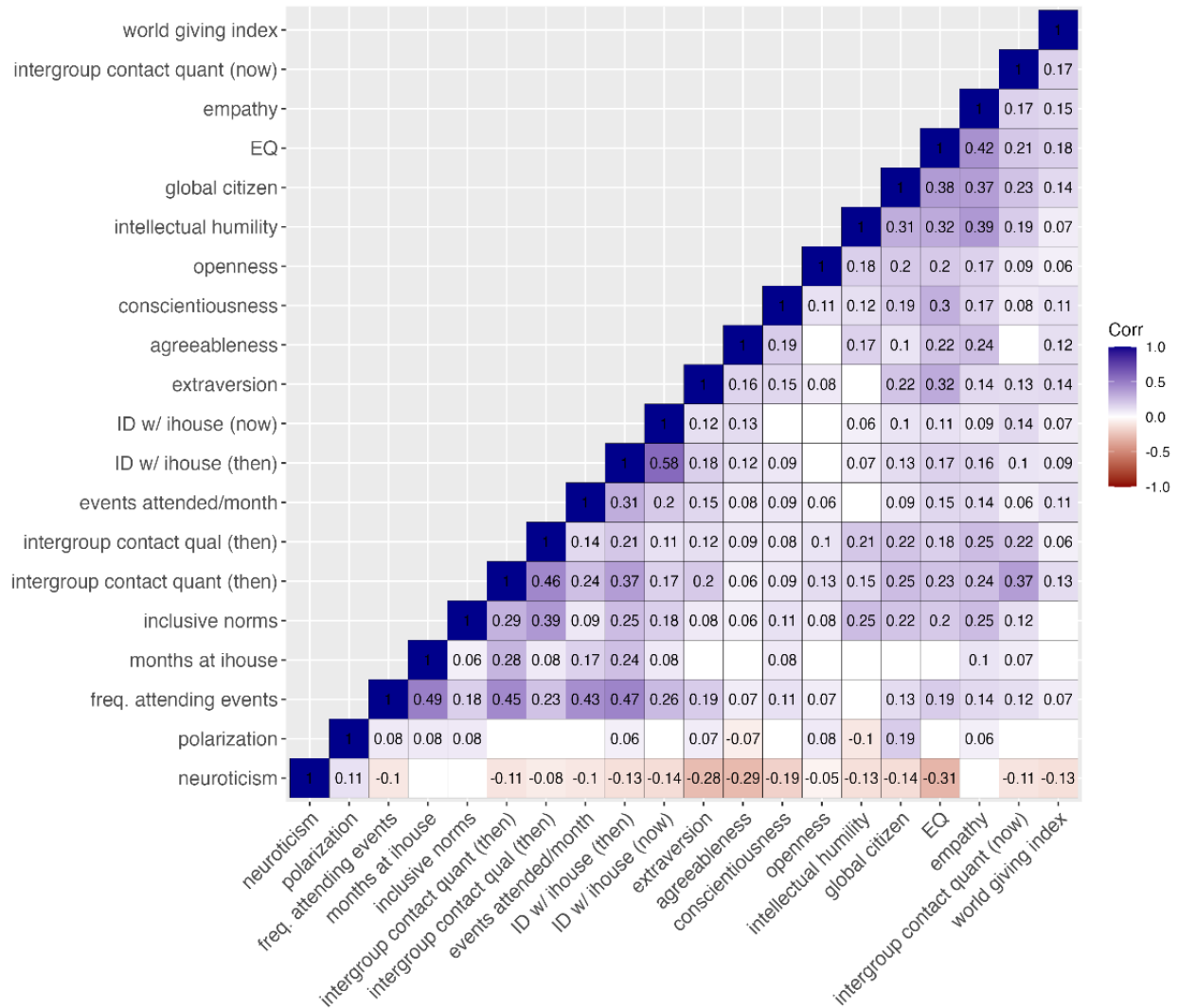
Figure 19. *Correlations between measures. Blue indicates positive correlations (as one variable increases, so does the other); red indicates negative correlations (as one variable increases, the other decreases).*

Social scientists have studied the effects of intergroup contact for more than 70 years. Overall, contact between members of different groups has positive consequences, resulting in, for example, lower levels of prejudice, more tolerance. However, intergroup contact does not always or inevitably have positive effects, and its impact depends on the conditions under which it occurs. Indeed, the scientist who initiated research on intergroup contact, Gordon Allport (1954), famously stated that four conditions must be met for contact between groups to have positive impact:

- Interactions must occur between people who feel themselves to be of relatively equal status
- People must believe they have goals in common
- People must have opportunities to cooperate with each other
- And they must feel a sense of institutional support (e.g., a sense that positive intergroup relations are valued by important authorities)

We believe that the environment at I-House goes a long way toward providing exactly these conditions. As graduate students in programs across New York City, residents are generally peers

at similar life stages. The events and initiatives that I-House runs provide opportunities for people to pursue common goals and cooperate with each other. And the very mission of I-House (building "life-long qualities of leadership, respect, empathy, and moral courage among individuals of all nations and backgrounds") provides the backbone of institutional support for quality intergroup interactions.

The correlational findings reported here and many of the comments provided in response to open-ended questions are consistent with the hypothesis that intergroup contact is an essential ingredient of the I-House experience.

Examining Possible Gender Differences

In order to examine whether the overall environment at I-House was experienced differently for men and women, we conducted the benchmarking analysis again separately for self-reported male and female respondents.

I-House alumni women actually scored slightly higher than I-House alum men across the board (except they are somewhat more polarized than men). Importantly, men and women rated the social norms at I-House as being equally inclusive, suggesting that female residents overall do not experience the I-House environment as being more hostile than men (see **Figure 20**).

I-House Alums Outperform Benchmarks Across All Measures
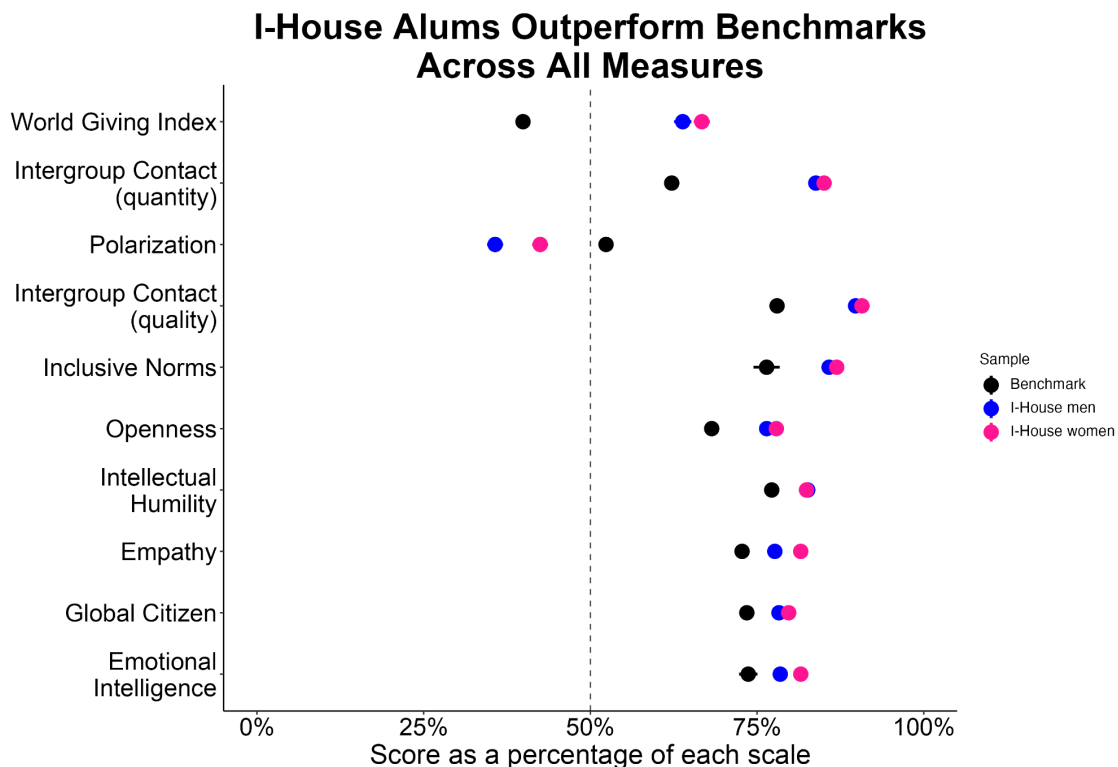
Figure 20. *Gender differences in psychological traits and the I-House experience. Male alumni's scores are represented in blue. Female alumni's scores are represented in pink. Scores of demographic groups similar to the I-House population are represented in black. The strike-through lines represent the standard errors.*

Women also attended more events per month at I-House (*M* = 4.93, *SD* = 4.82) than men (*M* = 4.09, *SD* = 4.11) and stayed at I-House for more months (*M* = 17.5, *SD* = 12.5) than men (16.1, *SD* = 12.3).

Open-Ended Responses

At the end of the survey, alumni were invited to respond to a series of open-ended questions. To provide a general sense of their responses, we present word clouds with the most commonly used language in the responses for each question. We also identified several key themes and provided illustrative quotes.

QUESTION 1: Activities & Experiences

"What activities or experiences, if any, were you involved in at I-House that you found particularly meaningful or that you felt opened your mind?"

Word Cloud Q1. *Words alumni commonly used to describe their I-House activities and experiences. The larger the word in the visual, the more frequently it was used.*

Comments in response to this question reflected the multifaceted and transformative nature of the experiences residents had at I-House, highlighting the significance of interpersonal connections, cultural exchange, personal growth, and global awareness. While many aspects of the I-House experience were highlighted as meaningful and impactful, responses were also highly idiosyncratic, and it was not easy to point to any single type of activity as impactful. It seems to us that it is, in part, the range of opportunities available to I-House alumni, with something for everyone, that is part of the recipe for success.

1. Informal Interactions & Diverse Environment
Among the most significant elements to alumni was that I-House creates opportunities to engage with people from all over the world and facilitates a culture of openness and inclusivity. The importance of informal conversations,spaces like the dining hall and lounge, and shared activities was emphasized for fostering meaningful interactions.

Illustrative Quotes:

- "Some of the best memories and most fruitful moments of growth for me happened in the dining hall and on the resident floor lounge with my hallmates.

These were spaces where conversations naturally sprouted, about the mundane and major issues of the day and world, and where I got to know my fellow residents in casual settings yet deep ways.”

- "The day-to-day intimacy of multicultural neighbors opened my mind the most and was the most special to me."

- “More than anything it was the proximity and possibility to make close friends to those who were so different from me.”

- “IHouse excels in the standard of inclusivity and open dialogue it has achieved so far.”

-“The I-House was the best place that I have ever called home. Being surrounded by such remarkable individuals in an environment that is uniquely of the I-House, it has left an incredible, everlasting impact on me. I am very grateful for the opportunity to have called I-House my home.”

-“I think the simple act of being around and interacting with people from so many cultural backgrounds was extremely enlightening. The emphasis that iHouse places on exchange encourages more exchange so I guess it's more the whole is greater than the sum of individual events.”

“I really enjoyed meals at the dining hall. You could go up to any table, sit down and are immediately welcomed by the others. Never experienced that after Ihouse. I made friends with people from Pakistan, India and the continent of Africa. It was all so effortless. It is not like that in the “real” world and I haven't had that experience after I left Ihouse.”

2. Meaningful Events and Activities

Residents found value in various organized events and activities such as Salon Nights, Cultural Hours, and All Nations celebrations. These events provided opportunities for dialogue and cultural exchange.Engaging in workshops, discussions, leadership programs, and exposure to global perspectives through guest speakers contributed to residents' personal growth and broadened their understanding of the world.

Illustrative Quotes:

- “My two years at I-house were some of the best years in my life. It felt like living in a Utopia and it was easy to find meaning in everything. But my favorite were Cultural Hours, All Nations Celebration and Sunday Suppers."

-”Ballroom Dancing (it was usually a new activity for most people, that allowed people to bond in a natural way, and then continue with conversations and other activities later.) Night of Nations, Visiting Speakers, Meeting Board Members, Cultural Nights, Sunday Suppers, and simple things like, shopping in the Bazaar or eating in the cafeteria.”

"The impressive plethora of book talks, documentary screenings, panel discussions... opened my eyes to new perspectives and often to issues I had known little to nothing about previously."

QUESTIONS 2 & 3: Knowledge and Skills

What knowledge or skills, if any, did you gain from living at I-House?
How has that knowledge, or how have those skills, affected your work and your life?

Word Cloud 2. *Left: words alumni commonly used to describe the skills and knowledge they gained from living at I-House. Right: words alumni commonly used to describe how the skills and knowledge they gained during their I-House stay impacted their work and life. The larger the word in the visual, the more more frequently it was used.*

Overall, respondents' comments reflected a sense of personal growth, acquiring interpersonal skills, open-mindedness, and the formation of strong connections with people from various cultural backgrounds, resulting in a transformative and positive impact on individuals' lives.

1. Cultural Diversity and Awareness: Many comments emphasized that exposure to different cultures, languages, and perspectives fostered increased cultural awareness and appreciation.

Illustrative Quotes:

- *"To be open minded, the respect towards multi cultural backgrounds which became key to my career"*
- *"Continuous expanding of my horizons"*
- *"Growing my appreciation for other cultures and points of view"*
- *"I learned so much about other cultures such as African, Eastern Europeans , and Asians. Cooking together & tasting their food; listening to the different languages been spoken in the cafeteria helped me to understand their cultural backgrounds and to learn better English.   Above all, I became aware that there are more similarities than those we usually recognize. I realized that friendship and understanding is respecting each other's values and cultural backgrounds. I learned that we are all humans."*

2. Communication and Interpersonal Skills: The I-House experience led to the development of strong communication skills, both in understanding and expressing ideas

to people from various backgrounds. Many respondents also mentioned improved listening skills, empathy, and effective dialogue with others.

Illustrative Quotes:

-" I also feel comfortable being or conversing with people who have opposing political views, which many of my "left" friends don't feel."
-" In many contexts over the last 20 years I have had to draw on skills learned at the House- especially the skill of listening, understanding that different isn't bad, just different, and being empathetic to different points of view while maintaining my own moral compass."
-"Furthermore, the iHouse experience honed my aptitude for conflict resolution, an attribute of paramount significance. Naturally, sharing close quarters with fellow residents inevitably engendered sporadic instances of misunderstandings. However, through the conscientious practice of open and honest communication, active listening, and genuine empathy, I mastered the art of deftly navigating and resolving conflicts. These conflict resolution skills have proven invaluable not only in the iHouse setting but also in various aspects of my life."

3. Global Citizenship: Alumni described how their time living with people from around the world made them feel like global citizens, broadening their horizons and understanding of the interconnectedness of the world.

Illustrative Quotes:

- "I believe my time at I-House was hugely impactful on my life. I definitely view myself as a global citizen and approach my work that way."
-"No matter where I travel, I always try to find the local dancing and the local music! I feel very comfortable with international people, and hearing their perspectives, both here and abroad."

4. Friendships and Relationships: Several comments highlighted the formation of lasting friendships with people from diverse backgrounds, often mentioning the bonds that were formed through shared experiences and open-minded interactions.

Illustrative Quotes:

-"I House friends stay in touch after living I House and I House alum feel connected even never meet before at I House"

5. Personal Growth and Confidence: Many individuals mentioned personal growth, increased self-confidence, and a greater sense of independence, stemming from the challenges and experiences of living with and understanding others.

Illustrative Quotes:

-"moral courage"
-"Professionally, the skills I developed at IH were directly applicable in my work life and helped accelerate my career. Personally, after years of being a "misfit", I finally found "my tribe" and that gave me a sense of belonging and self-

confidence. In short, I've had a richer and more satisfying professional and personal life thanks to what I experienced and learned at IH."

6. Tolerance, Open-Mindedness, and Empathy: Living in a diverse environment helped foster tolerance and open-mindedness toward different opinions, cultures, and beliefs. The I-House experience challenged preconceived notions and stereotypes, leading to a greater understanding of the complexity of human experiences.

Illustrative Quotes:

-" In many contexts over the last 20 years I have had to draw on skills learned at the House- especially the skill of listening, understanding that different isn't bad, just different, and being empathetic to different points of view while maintaining my own moral compass."
-"It taught me how to be more understanding and empathic to others, to approach people openly, wherever they are from, whoever they are."
-"Learned to be even more open-minded, learned to listen more, learned to be more compassionate with people in the building who were going through stuff that I'd never encountered before. Made me a more well-rounded and caring person. Empathy really shot up in my 1 year here."

7. Leadership and Organizational Skills: Several comments referenced the development of leadership skills through organizing events, managing programs, and interacting with a variety of people.

Illustrative Quotes:

-"I use the skills I've gained in better understanding one's culture and one's world to do my job better. I appreciate music in ways that I didn't before. I also had a lot of jobs as a program assistant and all those skills in event planning helped with my profession.   In particular, it wasn't just event planning but it was event planning with different people from different cultures who work in different ways than I work. That experience made me more fully appreciate and value different approaches"
-"Invaluable skills for cultural navigation and communication. Organizational skills for managing events and groups of people. Expanded my heart and mind!"
-"By being active in IH events, I developed skills in leadership, public speaking, running meetings, project management, managing volunteers, inspiring/motivating others, navigating diversity & difference of opinions, and self-confidence."

8. Global Issues and Awareness: The experience led to a heightened awareness of global issues, politics, and current events, as conversations often revolved around international affairs.

Illustrative Quotes:

-"Awareness of issues and regions I was previously less familiar with"
-"Living at I House reinforced my belief that the United States should learn about solutions to humanitarian and global problems from other countries because we don't have all the answers."

-"I gain confidence sharing experiences with amazing people from all around the world. It also helped me to feel closer to and more concerned with what is happening in other countries."

10. Career: The experience influenced some respondents' academic and career choices, guiding them toward international work or studies and helping them navigate multicultural professional environments.

Illustrative Quotes:

- "it shapes my career preference working in global team""
-"It's everything - informs my work in international journalism and at the UN, informs where I travel, how I explore New York. I have connected with people and made friends with the I-house spirit in mind. Always."

QUESTION 4: Future of I-House

What is your hope for the future direction of I-House?

Word Cloud 3. *Words alumni commonly used to express their hopes for the future of I-House. The larger the word in the visual, the more more frequently it was used.*

By far the most common response to this question was a wish that I-House continue what it has been doing and "stay the same" with respect to providing an environment so strongly conducive to forming strong social connections among people from different backgrounds.

Illustrative Quotes:

-"Remain a place to build wonderful friendships for life"
-"That it continues to be a vibrant tolerant international community providing a safe environment for students to make global friends, learn and experience NY"
-"I think it would be amazing if I-house tried to really encourage people to have difficult and open conversations about everyone's various backgrounds. I think dialogue sessions, combined with ice cream socials :-)"
-"My hope is that I-House does not lose sight of what makes it unique. It is not simply a networking hub; if that is the mission, it will place I-House in direct competition with various specialty schools, and it will always come second. What makes I-House unlike any other institution are the various structures that breathe life and community into residents' experiences. I know many people who have lived in and loved New York City, but I don't know many who have had as rich an experience as I have while living there.
-"My hope is that I-House becomes a light to understand and find cooperative solutions to global issues. I House should be keeping its mission but update its education and social programs in response to new needs and global concerns. I love I house. I wish there was a chance for alumni to participate more and give back to the house sharing our experience and knowledge. Global issues are a multigenerational matter as well."

While the vast majority of comments described positive and enriching experiences at I-House, some alumni shared negative experiences and/or offered constructive criticism.

1. Facilitate DEI and Awareness

A number of comments suggesting that norms of inclusivity should be reinforced in some domains.   Multiple people suggested reinstating the Women's International Leadership Program, and expanding equity related programs.

Illustrative Quotes:

-*"For example, I had to aggressively push my right to play volleyball among Asian and African males who felt that women shouldn't be allowed to play "their" sports or be on coed teams. "*
-*"I tried multiple times to advocate for overdose prevention education and resources (especially considering the neighborhood has some of the highest overdose deaths in the country) yet was repeatedly denied or told it would "enable drug use" despite providing evidence to the contrary and telling multiple"*

2. More activities during the summer:

Illustrative Quote:
"I stayed at I-House over summer, so there were fewer activities. Nevertheless, I met many nice and interesting people, so friendships and meeting other cultures were very valuable."

3. Improvements to facilities:

Illustrative Quotes:
- *"The resident kitchen was not such as would allow real, regular use. The dining hall was mediocre."*
- *"I found myself in a room right next to the bathroom of the other sex."*

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Main Findings

We had a very strong response from alumni with over 1600 current and former residents from I-House completing our survey. This is considered a large sample by the traditional standards of social psychology research and allows for a well-powered analysis of the associations between different measures we collected. We are able to generate strong inferences about the composition and beliefs of alumni.

Based on these data, a key to promoting positive traits and attributes among residents appears to be fostering a strong sense of identification with I-House and encouraging engagement with important aspects of the I-House culture including events and interactions across groups. Residents repeatedly noted that this had a long term impact on all aspects of their lives. In the words of one resident: "*Personally, after years of being a "misfit", I finally found "my tribe" and that gave me a sense of belonging and self-confidence. In short, I've had a richer and more satisfying professional and personal life thanks to what I experienced and learned at IH.*"

It was not easy to point to any single type of activity as impactful. It seems to us that the range of opportunities available to I-House alumni, with something for everyone, is part of the recipe for success. However, our findings suggest that the opportunities I-House provides for frequent high-quality contact between members of different groups may be a particularly important component of the I-House "recipe".

As one resident noted: "I think the simple act of being around and interacting with people from so many cultural backgrounds was extremely enlightening. The emphasis that iHouse places on exchange encourages more exchange so I guess it's more the whole is greater than the sum of individual events."

We conclude that residing at I-House is clearly associated with various positive traits and attributes. Examining patterns of relationships (or correlations) between measures provides significant evidence *consistent* with the hypothesis that I-House has a positive influence on outcomes like intellectual humility, empathy, and global citizenship.

Limitations & Recommendations

The correlational design of this study, in which alumni reported retrospectively on their experiences at I-House, does not allow for strong causal inferences about the impact that I-House had on residents. A related limitation is that the sample of alumni who completed our survey might not be fully representative of all alumni. For instance, they might be the most enthusiastic or prosocial from the population, which would bias our conclusions. Given the large size of our sample and the repeated reminders encouraging alumni to complete our survey, we believe our sample is fairly representative of I-House alumni as a whole, although they may be among the more engaged.

Nevertheless, we recommend further research with a different methodology to determine if there is a clear causal connection between living at I-House and the key outcomes. For instance, tracking incoming residents from the admission stage for the duration of the stay at I-House or randomly selecting applicants for admission would allow for a more precise test of the impact of living in I-House on the measures we collected. For now, we can only conclude that the pattern of results is highly consistent with a positive impact of I-House residency on beliefs and attitudes.

It is also difficult with the current data to infer precisely which events and activities contribute to positive outcomes, so future research could be conducted both to further identify the most effective aspects of the I-House experience and provide stronger causal evidence. It would be ideal to assess the relative impact of exposure to different activities on the key outcomes we measured here. However, we did note that many alumni cited multiple activities as critical to their experience and outcomes from I-House. Therefore, we suspect that the wide variety of events and activities might be critical to the success of I-House rather than one or two events.

Conclusion

The overarching sentiment and responses of I-House alumni reflect a community that is not just a residence but a catalyst for personal and professional transformation. I-House alumni outperform benchmarks on all measures of positive traits and attributes, a testament to the organization's efficacy in fostering an environment conducive to developing caring and engaged global citizens. Our perspective as social psychologists is that I-House could provide a valuable model for other organizations seeking to create cultures with healthy norms and develop conscientious global citizens.

BIOGRAPHIES OF RESEARCH TEAM

Dr. Jay Van Bavel is a Professor of Psychology and Neural Science at New York University, Affiliate of the Stern School of Management, and the Director of the NYU Center for Conflict and Cooperation. Jay is a social psychologist who has published over 100 academic papers on collective behavior as well as articles in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, BBC, The Atlantic, The Guardian, and Scientific American. He is the co-author of the "The Power of Us: Harnessing Our Shared Identities to Improve Performance, Increase Cooperation, and Promote Social Harmony" (winner of the 2022 APA William James Book Award). Jay completed his PhD at the University of Toronto.

Dr. Dominic Packer is a Professor of Psychology and the Associate Vice Provost for Research at Lehigh University. Dominic studies group psychology, social identity and norms and is the co-author of "The Power of Us: Harnessing Our Shared Identities to Improve Performance, Increase Cooperation, and Promote Social Harmony" (winner of the 2022 APA William James Book Award). Dominic completed his PhD at the University of Toronto.

Dr. Anni Sternisko is a social scientist and consultant working at the intersection of psychology and public policy. Her expertise lies in conspiracy theories, group dynamics, and statistics. She is also part of the SPSSI UN Team which holds permanent consultative status at the United Nations. Her award-winning research has been published in numerous top-tier journals. Anni obtained her PhD in social psychology from New York University in 2022.

Dr. Diego Reinero is a MindCORE Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. Diego is a social psychologist who studies how people share a reality with others and the role of social influence in the domains of morality, cooperation, and politics. Diego has consulted with other non-profit organizations including ideas42 and the Environmental Defense Fund and written for popular audiences in Scientific American. Diego received his Ph.D. in social psychology from New York University, and a B.S. in both psychology and business from Skidmore College.

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SUPPLEMENT

Data Collection

This is an analysis of how many people opened and responded to our survey request over email:
- 13,213 (46.4%) alum opened the SurveyMonkey email
- 9,346 (32.8%) did not open the SurveyMonkey email
- 4,895 (17.2%) email addresses bounced
- 1,515 (5.3%) clicked through to the survey via SurveyMonkey email
- 1,044 (3.7%) opted out of receiving more SurveyMonkey emails from us

Our email reminders worked well too:
- Initial launch (SurveyMonkey) yielded 275 complete responses within 48hrs
- 1st reminder (SurveyMonkey) yielded 244 more complete responses within 48hrs
- 2nd reminder (Mailchimp) yielded 107 more complete responses within 48hrs
- 3rd reminder (Mailchimp) yielded 121 more complete responses within 48hrs
- 4th reminder (SurveyMonkey) yielded 147 more complete responses within 48hrs

Demographics
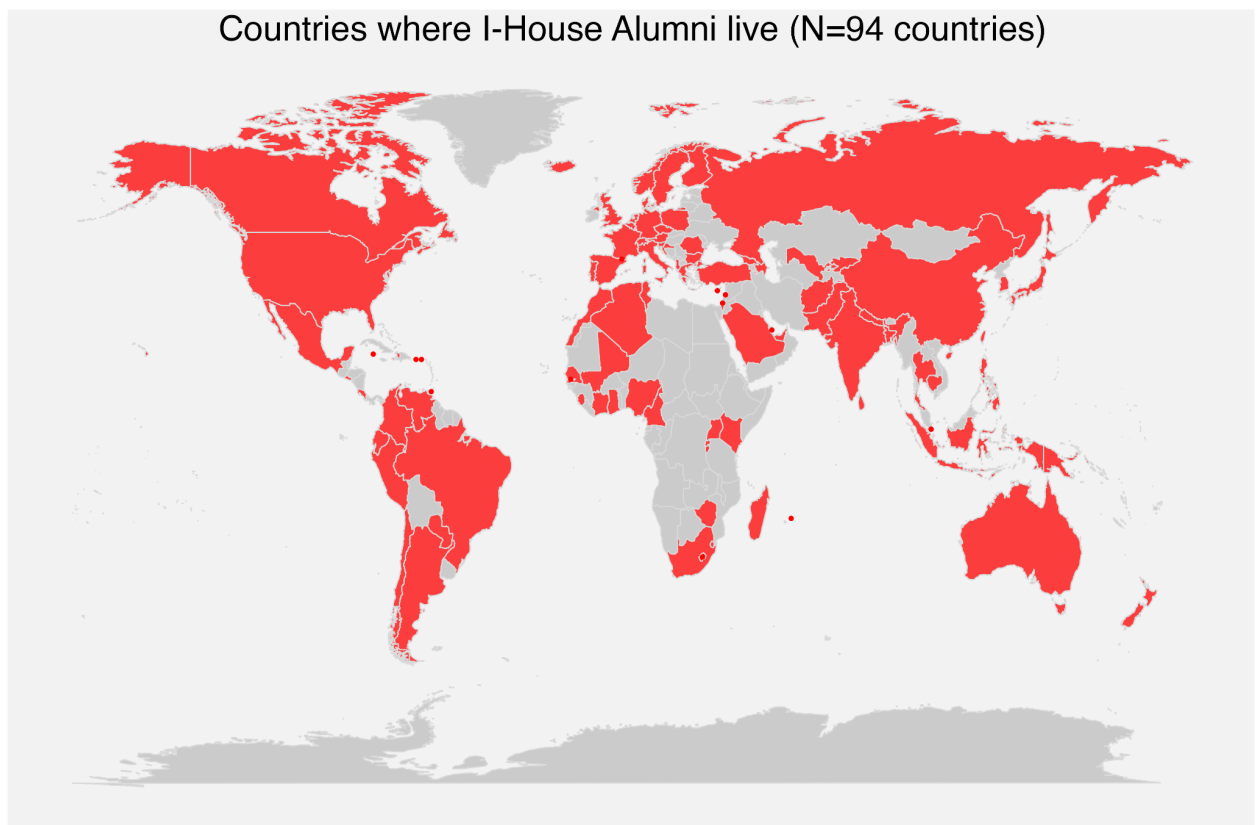
Figure S1. *Alumni's country of residence highlighted in red. The sample includes residents from 94 countries.*

- **Field of Study at I-House**
  Alumni were from 28 broad fields of study, including Business and Management (15.7%), Social Sciences (15.4%), Humanities (12.5%), Arts (8.9%), Law, (8.5%), Engineering and Technology (6.3%), and International Affairs (6.1%). Many reported unique fields that were difficult to easily categorize.

- **School at I-House**
  Alumni were from dozens of different schools and employers, with Columbia University (59%) and NYU (7.4%) as the most common universities. Not everyone listed a school or university and many instead listed the place they worked at during I-House.

- **Sakura Sweethearts:**
  Yes: (13.4%)
  No: (69.8%)
  Not Applicable: (16.8%)
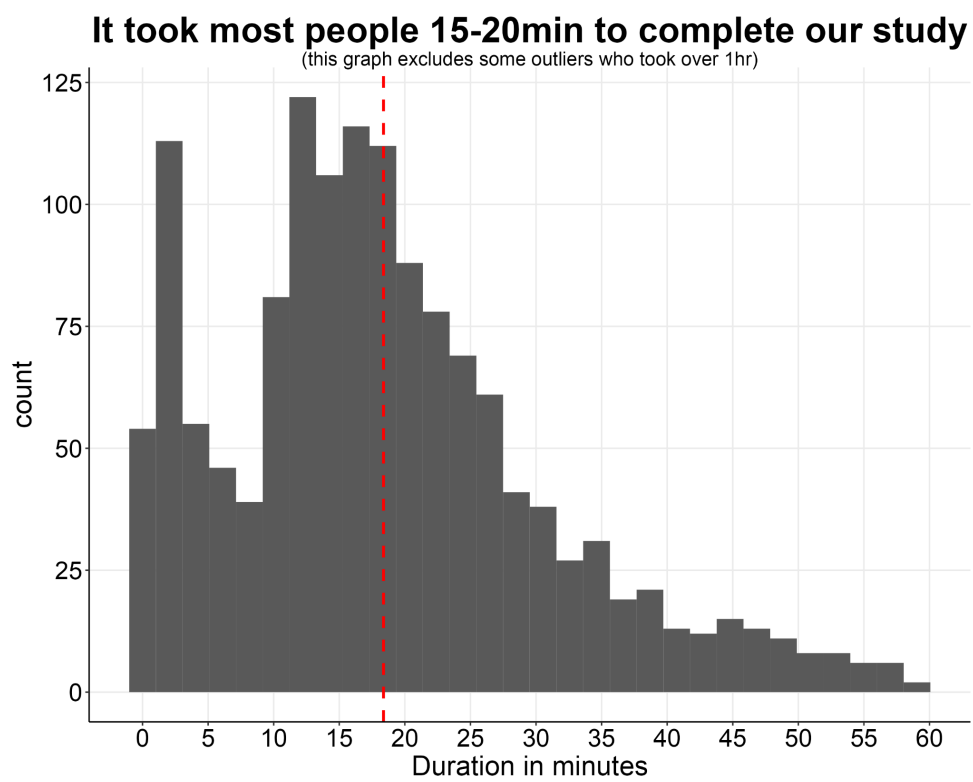
Figure S2. *Time spent completing the survey. The red dashed line represents the mean.*
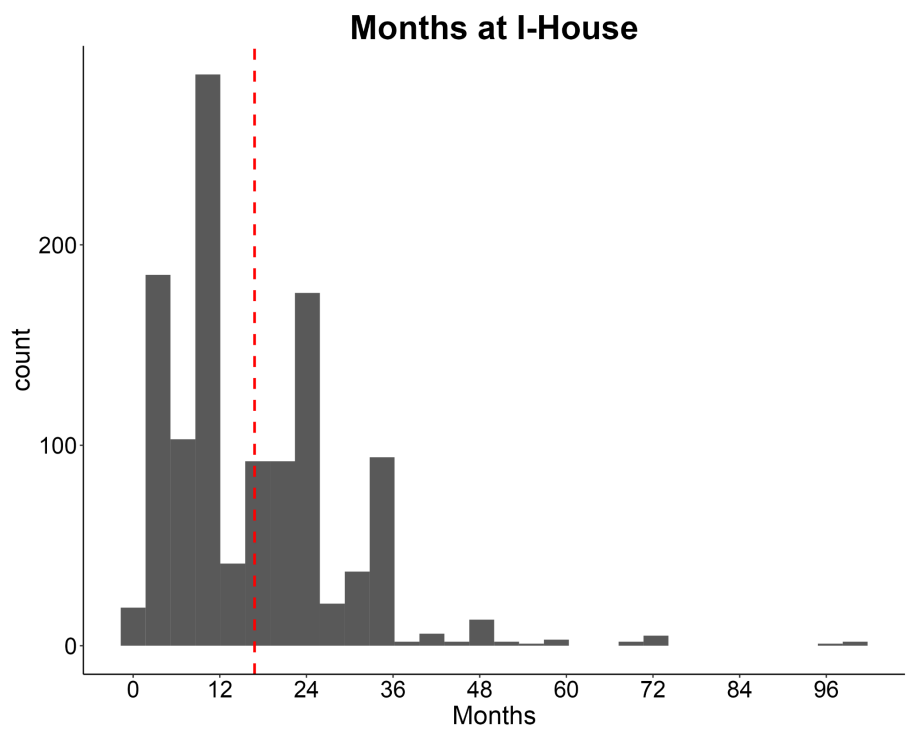
Figure S3. *Length of alumni's stay at I-House (in months). The red dashed line represents the mean.*
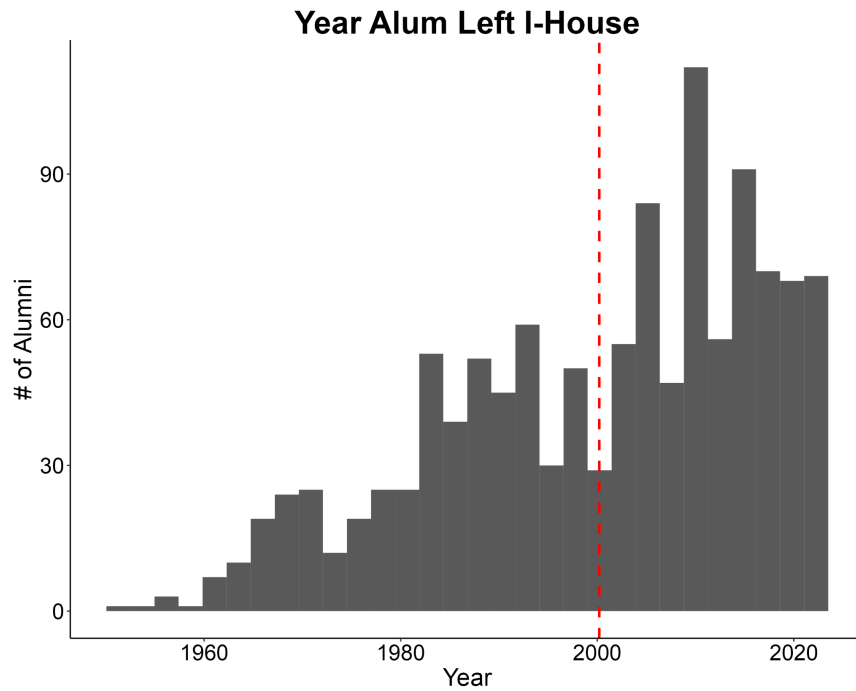
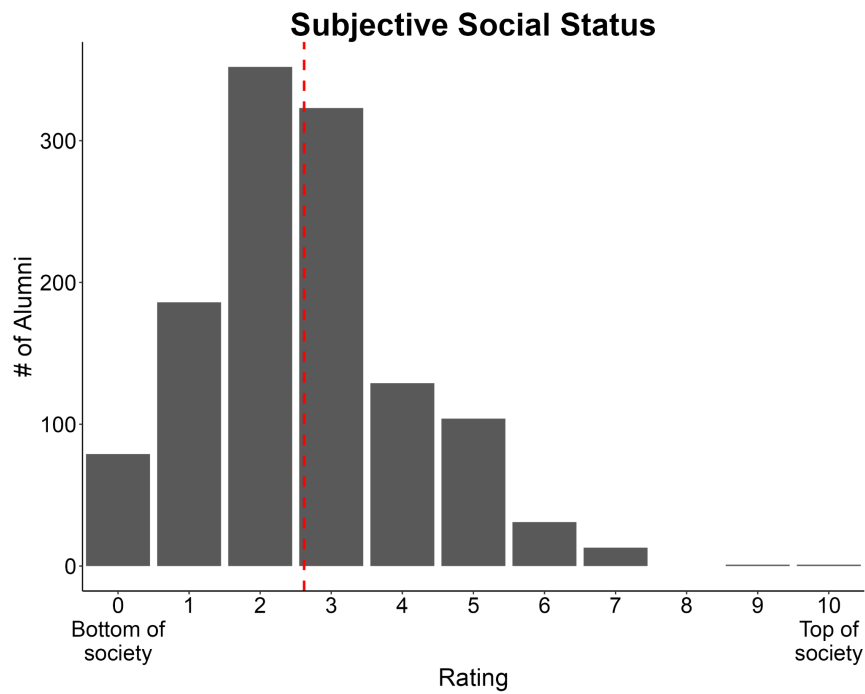**Figure S4.** *Alumni's year of departure from I-House. The red dashed line represents the mean.*

Figure S5. *Self-reported socio-economic status of alumni. The red dashed line represents the mean.*
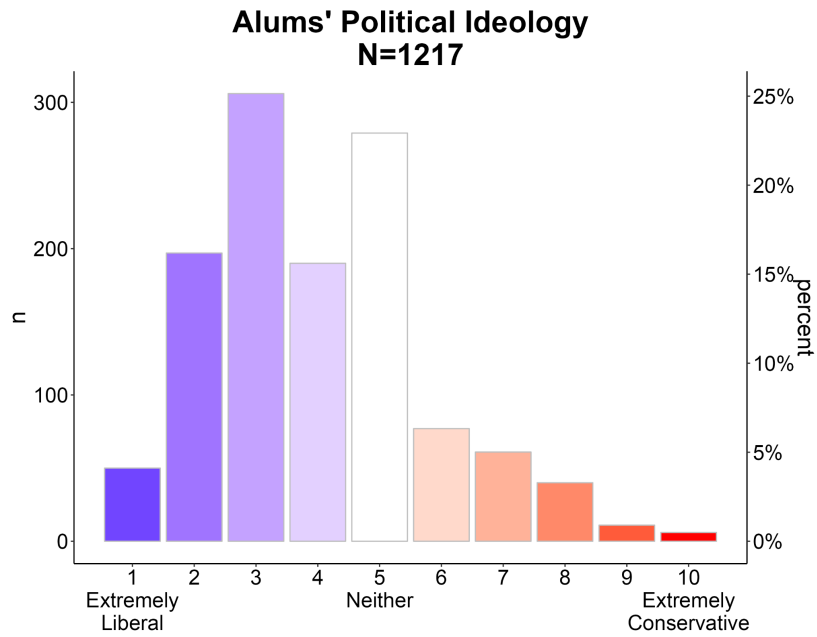
Figure S6. *Political ideology of alumni ranging from extremely liberal to extremely conservative.*
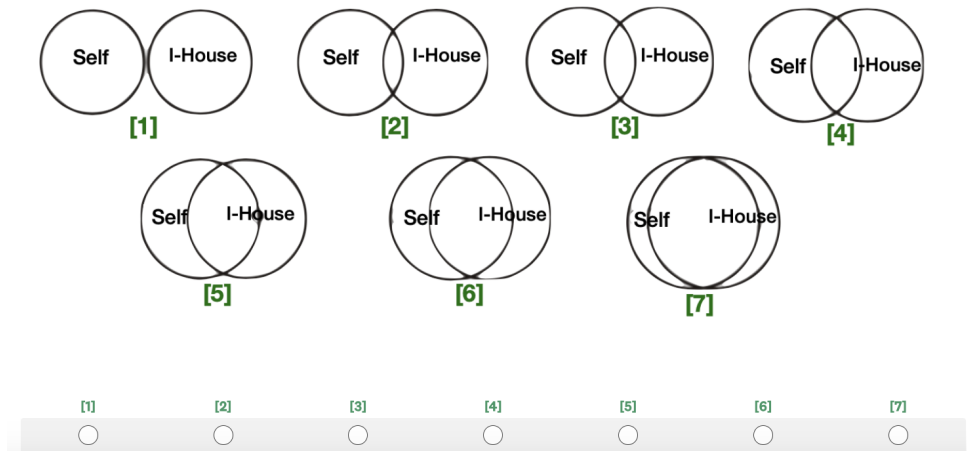

Image S7. *Example of visual measurement of identification with I-House.*