

UNDERSTANDING CLASS STRATIFICATION AND INEQUALITY  
THROUGH THE GREEK SOCIAL SYSTEM AT DUKE  
UNIVERSITY

By

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to show that the Greek social system at an elite university is based upon a social class hierarchy and attempt to explain how this class-based system is enforced and perpetuated by students across social classes to maintain class stratification on campus. Through surveys of students in historically white sororities and low-incomes students at Duke University, this thesis finds that the interplay of Greek membership and social class influence the formation of economically homogenous friend groups. Selective inclusion processes, mainly through dirty rush, by high-status, historically white sororities are used to differentially place middle- and high-income students within the Greek social system while self-exclusion by low-incomes students, due to their negative feelings towards Greek life, places them out of the system before they could potentially be excluded from or given a lower place in it by higher-income groups. These two processes prevent the integration of social classes, resulting in the formation of economically homogenous friend groups among both high-income and low-income students, maintaining class stratification and inequality on campus.

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## Introduction

Social class inequality is amplified at elite, private universities. A history of selective admission processes favors educational and economic elites, replicating longstanding social class inequalities. I utilize Bourdieu's (1998) conceptualization of social class as a combination of social, economic, and cultural capital. Per this definition, class inequality manifests in differential admissions to "elite" universities, which are defined by their low acceptance rates and large endowments. Beyond acceptance rates and endowments, there also remains a general dearth of insight into how and why class inequality is reinforced on these prestigious campuses. This thesis examines the role of social class dynamics on student relationships within and outside of the Greek social system<sup>1</sup> at Duke University. By doing so, I explore how the actions of both higher- and lower-income students serve to maintain a class hierarchy and social class stratification on campus.

Of course we want to be with people who look like us... went to the same schools as us... are from the same cities as us... and thus [have] the same socioeconomic status as us.

- Former Executive Board member, Duke University Panhellenic Association

Find "poorer" friends (at the gym, library, [dining hall] ), stop trying to buy into groups, and, most importantly, spend more time alone, improving yourself.

- A low-income student at Duke, responding to another low-income student in a comment on *The Chronicle* website

The quotes represent classism manifesting as social domination through the Greek social system at Duke University. The first is a response from a past executive member of the governing body of the historically white sororities to a question about the lack of racial and class inclusivity in Greek life. Her answer represents the selective and exclusionary practices in

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis I use the phrase Greek social system to refer to the combination of historically white (Panhellenic Association and Interfraternity Council), historically Black (National Panhellenic Council) and Latinx (Multicultural Greek Council) sororities and fraternities at Duke University. The focus of this thesis is primarily on historically white sororities, but Latinx sororities will also be discussed.

Panhellenic, or historically white, sorority recruitment and provides insight into why these groups are disproportionately white and wealthy. The second, a low-income student's comment criticizing another student's *Chronicle* article about the struggles of being low-income on social life on campus and in a selective living group, reinforces the idea that these students do not belong in social groups with wealthier peers and should remain isolated with other low-income students.

These two personal accounts suggest that the class hierarchy in the Greek social system on campus is maintained by elite, majority exclusion, but also by minority efforts to avoid stigmatization. These combined phenomena prevent the integration of social classes. This thesis explores the dual, simultaneous and mutually reinforcing phenomena of *selective inclusion* by high-income groups and *self-exclusion* by low-income students to answer the question of how class stratification and inequality are perpetuated through the Greek social system at Duke University. Selective inclusion is represented through the process of "dirty rush." In this process, high-status Greek organizations carefully identify and select new members to join their organizations prior to the start of formal recruitment. This preferential, but prohibited, process ensures that these "top" organizations have members of the highest social class. Concurrently, low-income students' self-exclusion from the Greek social system effectively prevents their subjection to inferior placement or exclusion by these higher-income groups. Ultimately, this thesis aims to show how the interaction of these two processes promotes, maintains and perpetuates class stratification and inequality on campus.

## Research Question and Hypotheses

This study examines how social class determines students' placements within and outside of the Greek social system and thus influences class stratification on campus. Through an analysis of primary survey data of undergraduate students attending Duke University, this study addresses three main research questions:

1. *To what extent do Greek membership and social class influence the formation of economically homogenous friend groups?*

I hypothesize that the historically white (HW), Greek social system at Duke University consists of a class hierarchy. I suggest that two processes maintain this hierarchy and social class segregation on campus: 1) selective inclusion by high-income groups and 2) self-exclusion by low-income students. I predict that the privileging practices of selective group inclusion differentiate middle- and high-income students' placement within the HW Greek social system. Simultaneously, I predict that the social-protective phenomena of self-exclusion is utilized by low-income students to place themselves outside of this system.

I suggest that the effects these two simultaneous and mutually reinforcing phenomena will be supported by the existence of economically homogenous friend groups among students of the highest and lowest social classes. I predict that low-income students not involved in Greek life will report having more close friends with similar economic backgrounds to themselves and that high-income students in HW Greek organizations will also have economically similar close friend groups. Moreover, I hypothesize that low-income students who do participate in Greek life will have fewer friends with similar economic backgrounds. This would suggest entrenched class stratification on campus, where students are socially segregated by both their economic backgrounds and involvement with Greek life.

2. *Why do low-income students rarely engage with the Greek social system?*

I hypothesize that low-income students individually self-select to exclude themselves from the Greek social system to avoid group-level exclusion by Greek organizations. I suggest that this occurs at the inception of their college experience and is mostly attributed to their heightened awareness of social class at an elite university.<sup>2</sup> If this is the case, these students should report lack of belonging and financial barriers as main reasons for not joining Greek organizations and that they decided not to participate in this system prior to the start of formal recruitment. I further predict that their lack of belonging on campus has resulted in the formation of strong negative feelings toward their higher-income peers in Greek life. These feelings may better explain low-income students' lack of involvement in the Greek social system. If these feelings are reported, they can provide insight into how and why these students marginalize themselves from this system and thus influence class stratification on campus.

3. *What determines one's position, or ranking, within the historically white Greek social system?*

I hypothesize that HW Greek organizations considered to be at the "top" of the stratified social hierarchy, or with the highest social status, are those with more members of higher social class. In contrast, those considered to be at the "bottom" of the hierarchy are those with more members of lower social class.<sup>3</sup> One's position in this hierarchy is a function of prestige and status, where their economic capital, such as family incomes, and cultural

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<sup>2</sup> Much literature supports the intensification of the prominence of students' class backgrounds at elite universities when students of different social classes are exposed to each other (e.g., Bourdieu 1998; Jones 2003; Kingston and Lewis 1990).

<sup>3</sup> I have standardized a ranking of the 10 historically white sororities at Duke University through an analysis of anonymous Greek Rank website postings by students at the university. Sample posts can be found in Appendix A.

capital, such as secondary schooling or designer clothing, are determinants of their position in the system. I predict that the selective inclusion process of “dirty rush” is used by high-status, HW Greek organizations to promote and maintain this social class hierarchy.

If selective inclusion matters for maintaining a class hierarchy in the HW Greek social system, members of top organizations should have 1) the highest perceived socioeconomic position and annual family incomes, 2) known more members of their organizations prior to recruitment and/or coming to the university, and 3) attended more prestigious, private high schools. This pattern would support the use of the selective inclusion process of *dirty rush*. In this process, top-ranked Greek organizations make explicit and intentional efforts to identify and select individuals most like them, and thus of the highest social class, to join their organizations. This process occurs prior to formal recruitment and is prohibited by the governing bodies of Greek organizations. However, dirty rush has existed at colleges across the US for decades, intensifying the reproduction of class stratification and inequality on these campuses. Thus, I predict that dirty rush is used to grant students of the highest social class superior placement in the HW Greek social system while middle-class students receive inferior placement. Finally, students of the lowest social class effectively exclude themselves from this system before potentially receiving such lower placement.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### *Class Inequality at Elite Universities*

Classism is a form of discrimination based on social class; those in a lower social class, such as working class or low-income people, are excluded, devalued, discounted, and separated by those of higher social classes (Lott, 2002). French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu defines social



class as a combination of social, economic, and cultural capital. Social capital refers to access to social networks; economic capital is the money an individual has; cultural capital includes the knowledge and understanding of the dominant culture. Bourdieu argues that institutions of higher education often serve to maintain social class inequalities by rewarding the cultural capital connected to certain class backgrounds (Bourdieu, 1986). The consideration of cultural capital is important for understanding the social structure at Duke University and within the HW Greek social system. Cultural capital emphasizes how the connections students have, for example, from attending similar private schools as others or being a legacy student at Duke, influence their social status on campus, along with the effects of their annual family incomes.

Class inequality is more pronounced at elite, private institutions. At highly-ranked, elite universities in the United States, only 3% of college students come from the bottom income quartile, compared to 75% from the top quartile (Carnevale & Rose, 2013). At Duke University, there are roughly the same number of students from the top 0.1% of the income scale as from the bottom 20% (3.8% vs. 3.9% of students), with nearly 70% of students coming from the top 20%, or with family incomes of \$110,000 or more (“Economic Diversity,” 2017). Elite universities can intensify the prominence of students’ class background as social class is more salient when students of different class backgrounds are around each other (Bourdieu, 1998; Jones, 2003).

Class disparities are also more distinct in Greek life at institutions of higher education. At Duke University, roughly 30% of students are in a Greek organization (U.S. News, n.d.). Greek membership represents a dominant class advantage that reproduces the historical policies of class and racial exclusion at elite institutions (Karabel, 2006; Martin, 2012; Stuber, 2009). The history of Greek organizations is most pronounced at elite institutions and the recruitment processes of fraternities and sororities is “perhaps the most formalized and explicit version of social

evaluation and exclusion on campuses” (Stevens et al., 2008, p. 133). The intensification of class inequality at elite institutions and through Greek life is important to understanding low-income students’ lack of participation in the Greek social system and the prevalence of economically homogenous friend groups among both low and high-income students.

### *Greek Members vs. Non-Members*

The current literature emphasizes differences between Greek members and non-members on college campuses. These studies look at aggregate differences between students in sororities or fraternities and students not in Greek organizations without accounting for the different Greek systems, such as historically white, historically Black, Latinx or multicultural organizations. Members of Greek organizations tend to come from more socially and economically privileged backgrounds, benefitting from advantage-boasting resources that disadvantaged students are generally unaware of or have not been able to access, such as alumni and job connections. Compared to non-Greek students, Greek members are more likely to be white and from upper-middle to upper-class families (Martin, 2012; Stuber, Klugman, & Daniel, 2011; Walker, Martin, & Hussey, 2015). Greek members are less likely to be accepting of diversity (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) or interact with students of different races (Antonio, 2001).

The extant research on Greek membership has been important for identifying issues surrounding racial and class inclusivity and exclusivity on campus. However, no research exists on differences between Greek organizations that extenuate social hierarchies on college campuses. Stuber, Klugman and Daniel examined gendered differences in social class exclusion in Greek life, identifying differences between fraternities and sororities. Although this study found that both sororities and fraternities at a private, liberal arts college in the Midwest

participated in social class exclusion, it did not identify differences within the sorority and fraternity systems that produce and maintain social class hierarchies. Moreover, this study used first-generation (“working class”) and second-generation (“upper-middle class”) statuses of students to determine social class without considering income or other indicators socioeconomic position (2011). Only using two categories of social classes fails to account for greater differences between Greek organizations and selective inclusion and self-exclusion processes that differentiate students’ placements within or outside of the Greek social system.

Furthermore, there is significant literature differentiating Greek members from non-members, but no research into differences in Greek membership specifically among low-income students. For instance, there is no consideration of what makes some low-income students more likely than others to participate in Greek life and which Greek organizations (historically white, Latinx or historically Black) they join. Likewise, the current literature’s failure to consider these different Greek organizations may miss trends in low-income students’ involvement in Greek life. For example, are low-income students more likely to join historically Black, Latinx or multicultural fraternities and sororities? Research into these areas may provide additional insight into how class determines one’s place within or outside of the Greek social system and influences the economic makeup of one’s friend groups.

### *Selective Inclusion by High-Income Groups*

Scholars have yet to fully examine the processes that lead to differences not only between Greeks and non-Greeks, but between members of different Greek organizations. Selective inclusion by wealthy groups, which is accomplished through dirty rush, is examined in this paper to understand differences between HW Greek organizations Whether sorority and fraternity

recruitments occur in the beginning of the first semester (fall) or in the beginning of the second semester (spring) may provide insight into the selection processes and presence of dirty rush practices that result in differences between Greek organizations and between members and non-members. At elite institutions, it is more common for HW Greek recruitment to occur in the spring (5/6 Ivy League schools that have Greek life have formal recruitment in the spring)<sup>4</sup>, giving students an opportunity to adjust to campus before joining a selective organization. However, when recruitment occurs in the spring, HW Greek members have more time to identify and contact the students they want in their organizations, which is a dirty rush practice.

Nelson et al (2006) examined the effects of fall versus spring recruitment on academic performance of first-year students, recognizing potential differing effects of recruitment timing on grades (Nelson, Halperin, Wasserman, Smith, & Graham, 2006), but there has been no further research into any other possible effects of recruitment timing or the existence of dirty rush. Although there is no literature on processes of selective inclusion in Greek life, the term “dirty rush” has been referred to on college campuses as far back as the 1930s. In 1937, a column in Iowa State University’s student newspaper defined dirty rush as, “the breaking of rules governing rushing at Iowa State.” The most common forms of dirty rush were identified as unauthorized contact with “rushees” before or during recruitment and making derogatory comments about other organizations (Starrak & Grant, 1937). In this thesis, I focus on the former to understand how economic and cultural capital are used to determine one’s position within or outside of the Greek social system.

At Duke University, dirty rush has been documented as far back as 1941, in a *Chronicle* student newspaper article that explains a disagreement among Men’s Panhel (now Interfraternity

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<sup>4</sup> Yale, UPenn, Cornell, Columbia, and Brown have formal recruitment in the spring; Dartmouth has formal recruitment in the fall; Princeton and Harvard do not have Greek life.

Council, or IFC) officers over the extent of “dirty rushing” on campus. The president claimed he had not heard of or seen any instances of “organized dirty rush” whereas the vice president claimed he had seen, with his own eyes, five of the “principle,” or top, fraternities conducting “dirty rushing activities” (Duke University, 1941). In 1949, a *Chronicle* article claimed that freshmen believe the rush system is “unworkable and inefficient,” further arguing that the present rules around rush “make dirty rushing an almost necessary evil” (Duke University (A), 1949). Another 1949 *Chronicle* article offered a warning from the IFC Vice President and Chairman of the Rush Committee that fraternity men were not allowed in freshmen dormitories, and that this would constitute “dirty rushing” (Duke University (B), 1949).

In 2019, several female students at Duke University wrote an article urging students to reconsider participating in rush. One student shared her experience with dirty rush:

I saw that the freshmen girls with whom I was being dirty rushed had a few things in common: conventionally pretty, rich, and from privileged neighborhoods... I realized that my experiences first semester were not simply organic friendships; they were strategic interactions to compose the perfect pledge class.

The quote above shows how the practice of dirty rush has continued for decades and is used as a process of selective inclusion by HW Greek organizations to ensure that they have members of the highest social class (Wong, 2019). Through these archives of college newspapers and websites, there is strong evidence that the practice of dirty rush has existed and been maintained on college campuses for close to a century, however, dirty rush has failed to be considered or referenced at all in the current literature and there has been no examination of how this discriminatory practice is used to perpetuate class inequality and stratification on campus, along with homogeneity within HW Greek organizations.

### *Self-Exclusion by Low-Income Students*

Exclusion is defined by Lamont and Lareau (1998) as “an interactional process wherein elites restrict access to valued social positions and non-elites opt out of situations where they feel culturally or socially ill-equipped” (Stuber, 2011). The restriction of access by elites is understood in this thesis through the process of selective inclusion and dirty rush. The opting-out by non-elites is examined through low-income students’ self-exclusion from the Greek social system. In studying differences in social class exclusion between fraternities and sororities, Stuber notes that by only looking at the underrepresentation of working class students within the Greek system, it is not possible to determine who is rejecting whom, as it was unclear if working class students were excluded by the elite groups or if they excluded themselves from these groups (Stuber, 2020). This thesis aims to fill this research gap by looking at rates of Greek membership specifically among low-income students and identifying why they do or do not participate in the Greek social system and when they make these decisions, which will provide insight into who excludes whom.

Much literature has explored the experiences of low-income students in higher education. Low-income students lack feelings of belonging on campus, tend to be more isolated and have lower satisfaction with their college experience than students of higher-income backgrounds (Astin, 1993; Langhout, Drake, & Rosselli, 2009; Martin, 2012; Warnock & Hurst, 2016). There is evidence that students are more likely to succeed in college when they are socially and academically integrated on campus (Robbins et al., 2004). However, low-income students are less involved in extracurriculars on campus and spend greater time working part-time jobs (Martin, 2012; Walpole, 2003). These experiences are often intensified at elite colleges and universities, as these spaces are dominated by the upper-class (Kingston & Lewis, 1990). Low-

income students report more experiences of classism, greater feelings of alienation and higher intentions of dropping out at elite, private institutions (Langhout et al., 2009). The marginalization of low-income students at elite universities ultimately results in more compromised academic performance and social experiences.

Using survey data of undergraduates at Duke University, one study found that students of lower social classes were less involved in extracurriculars on campus, including Greek life, and, as a result, had lower satisfaction with their college experiences than students of higher social classes. Reasons for low-income students' lower levels of participation in extracurriculars were largely attributed to their having to work and thus having less time and financial resources for these activities (Martin, 2012; Walpole, 2003). The current literature emphasizes work, cost and time constraints as reasons behind low-income students' lack of involvement in extracurriculars overall. However, there has been no examination of these students' specific feelings towards and perceptions of Greek life that may lead to greater self-exclusion and isolation from these wealthier groups.

In studying group affiliation patterns, Baumeister and Leary suggest that because of individuals' strong desires for belonging, it is unsurprising that people are often prejudiced against groups that they have little or no opportunity to belong to (1995). The process of self-exclusion can be understood as a result of low-income students' prejudices towards Greek life to explain their lack of participation in it, rather than solely considering material constraints. This thesis aims to address gaps in the literature by exploring how low-income students' self-exclusion from the Greek social system interplays with wealthy Greek organizations' selective inclusion processes to maintain a social system where associations among both low- and high-income students are largely determined by their social class backgrounds.

## **Data and Methods**

### *Study Design*

This study uses primary data collected from two surveys of undergraduate students at Duke University. The first survey was of students in historically white sororities and the second was of low-income and first-generation college students. The surveys were designed and administered with Qualtrics technology. Completion of the surveys was incentivized by entering respondents into a drawing for a gift card. Survey data were then coded and analyzed in RStudio using logistic and linear regression models.

### *Greek Life Survey: Data and Analyses*

The Greek Life (GL) Survey was shared with the presidents of the ten Panhellenic, or historically white (HW), sororities at Duke University. Eight of the ten sororities agreed to participate in the study. One of the sororities that did not participate referenced policies against sending out surveys to their chapter. The other sorority's national advisor referred to "trends in higher education that are targeting Greeks" and "Greeks being in the media recently" as their reasons for not participating. The eight participating sororities shared a link to the survey via a pre-written email sent to all current members of their organizations. The response rate to the GL survey was roughly 23% (N = 170).

I focus specifically on HW sororities because of their formal, large-scale recruitment process that consists of a series of short, superficial conversations between prospective recruits and members of each organization. In contrast, HW fraternity recruitment entails spending time with members over dinners, parties, and other events that are representative of activities members will do with each other post-recruitment. In studying differences between HW sororities and fraternities, Stuber described sorority recruitment as being more formal and



structured, “with teams of young women interviewing rushees, rather than engaging in the free flow of interaction that typified fraternity rush.” Sororities were also required not to speak about “beer, boys, fraternities, or partying” during recruitment, while fraternities had no restrictions. Finally, sororities required formal attire whereas fraternities did not have a dress code (2011). These gendered differences are also reflected in HW recruitment processes at Duke University.

HW sorority recruitment also requires potential new members (PNMs) to visit all ten organizations, whereas fraternity recruitment gives PNMs the liberty to only visit the organizations which interest them. Because sororities are required to consider all students who register for recruitment, PNMs’ preferences are weighted less than sororities’ preferences as there are fewer spaces available in each organization than there are students going through recruitment. Thus, because everyone is guaranteed a place in the HW sorority system, the selective processes that result in differences in students’ placements within the system can more easily be identified and studied to understand the presence of a class hierarchy in the HW Greek social system. Historically Black and multicultural Greek organizations were not included in this survey because of the small number of organizations on campus and members in each organization, along with their informal recruitment processes that cannot easily be examined.<sup>5</sup>

The GL Survey was framed as broadly being about Greek life but included a variety of demographic questions. Respondents were not asked to identify which sorority they are in to promote honest answers without fear of repercussions. Instead, they were asked to rank their sorority on a social hierarchy in relation to the ten Panhellenic sororities (bottom, lower-middle,

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<sup>5</sup> There are four historically Black sororities, four historically Black fraternities, one Latina sorority and one Latino fraternity at Duke University. The recruitment processes of these organizations are informal, and students are discouraged from sharing that they are going through recruitment. Full recruitment practices are kept secret.

middle, upper-middle, top).<sup>6</sup> GL survey data were then used to empirically model perceived sorority ranking. Variables in this analysis include how often members attend social events or participate in community service with their sorority, how many members they knew in their sorority pre-recruitment, legacy status in their sorority and at Duke, race/ethnicity, high school type, perceived socioeconomic statuses and estimated annual family incomes, and proportions of closest friends and sorority members with similar economic backgrounds to themselves.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Low-Income Survey: Data and Analyses*

The Low-Income (LI) Survey was shared with low-income, undergraduate students at Duke University through a listserv created by the financial aid office that consists of low-income and first-generation college students (N = 1620). Students on this listserv are either first-generation college students, defined as neither parent having a Bachelor's degree, and/or are considered low-income students by Duke University's definition of low-income, which is any student with a calculated family income less than \$60,000 year and who has no calculated parent contribution in their financial aid package (A. Rabil, personal communication, December 4, 2019). Although I recognize that not all first-generation students are low-income, many have similar experiences. For the purpose of this study, the first-generation/low-income listserv allowed the survey to reach the greatest number of low-income students. The LI Survey was shared with all second, third and fourth-year students. The response rate to the LI Survey was roughly 13% (N = 205).

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<sup>6</sup> To account for potential inaccuracies in sorority ranking, I sent the survey out in intervals to organizations that fall into similar positions (i.e. "top") on the social hierarchy and monitored responses. Overall, self-rankings were accurate, however, two members of "top" organizations appeared to report their sororities' rankings as "bottom." Also, through speaking with students in differently ranked sororities, students seem to be overwhelmingly aware of their position in the HW sorority system.

<sup>7</sup> A full list of survey questions can be found in Appendix B.

The LI Survey measures students' levels of involvement in and feelings toward Greek life. Students were asked if they went through any form of recruitment, if they are a member of a Greek organization, and, if yes, which one and why they joined. The survey included all HW, historically Black, and multicultural sororities and fraternities on campus. Because the HW organizations students join may be telling of the class differences within the system, students were asked to identify their specific organization so that I could determine their ranking based on a standardized social hierarchy. Students were not asked to self-rank their organizations.

Students who did not go through recruitment or join a Greek organization were asked to explain why they made these decisions. This question was open-ended, and answers were coded for four common themes: (1) negative perception of/feelings toward Greek life, (2) lack of interest in Greek life, (3) cost, and (4) time. Students who did not go through any form of recruitment were also asked when they made the decision not to, as this may support the idea of self-exclusion, rather than group-exclusion during recruitment, if decisions were made in the fall or prior to recruitment.

In the LI Survey, students were further asked about their interactions with and feelings toward students in Greek life. Questions included estimating the proportion of their closest friends with economic backgrounds similar to themselves, to what extent they have friends who are involved in Greek life, how they classify the annual family incomes of students in Greek life (average, above average, ...) and how they would describe their feelings toward students in Greek life (positive, negative, ...). Students were asked demographic questions including their gender<sup>8</sup>, race/ethnicity, year at Duke, amount of financial aid they receive (full, partial or none),

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<sup>8</sup> Although the GL Survey was entirely of female students, I did not control for gender in the LI Survey. The focus of the LI survey is on low-income students' involvement with and feelings towards Greek life, and I did not find any theoretical framework to suggest differences in these areas associated with gender.

and if they identify as first-generation and/or low-income. LI survey data were then used to logistically model Greek membership and linearly model the proportion of closest friends with economic backgrounds and feelings toward students in Greek life.<sup>9</sup>

## **Results**

### *Greek Life and Low-Income Survey Comparisons*

#### Demographics

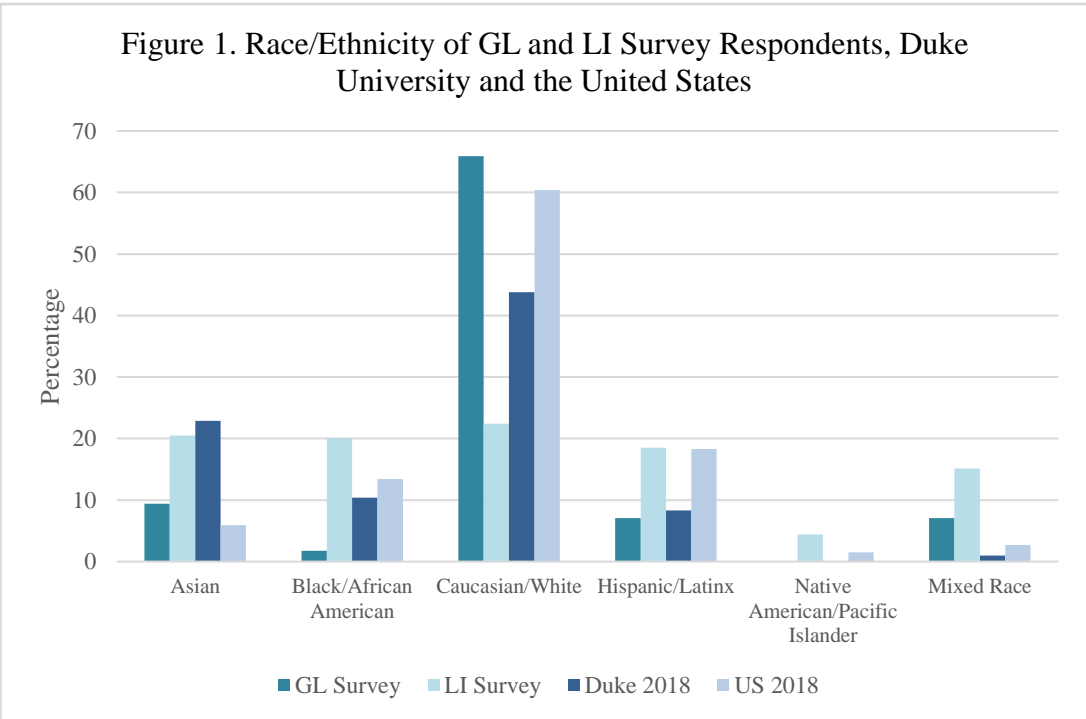
Figure 1 shows the demographic breakdown of the GL and LI survey respondents by race/ethnicity, compared to the racial/ethnic demographics of Duke University and the US in 2018. Respondents to the GL Survey were disproportionately white compared to respondents of the LI Survey, students at Duke University and the US population. In contrast, respondents to the LI survey were over-representative of minority racial and ethnic groups. In the GL survey, 65.9% of respondents were white, 9.4% were Asian, 1.8% were Black/African American, 7.1% were Hispanic/Latinx and 7.1% were mixed race<sup>10</sup>. In the LI Survey, 22.4% of respondents were white, 18.5% were Asian, 20% were Black/African American, 18.5% were Hispanic/Latinx and 15.1% were mixed race<sup>11</sup>. The racial and ethnic differences between GL and LI survey respondents are telling of differences between members of HW Greek organizations and non-members.

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<sup>9</sup> A full list of survey questions can be found in Appendix C.

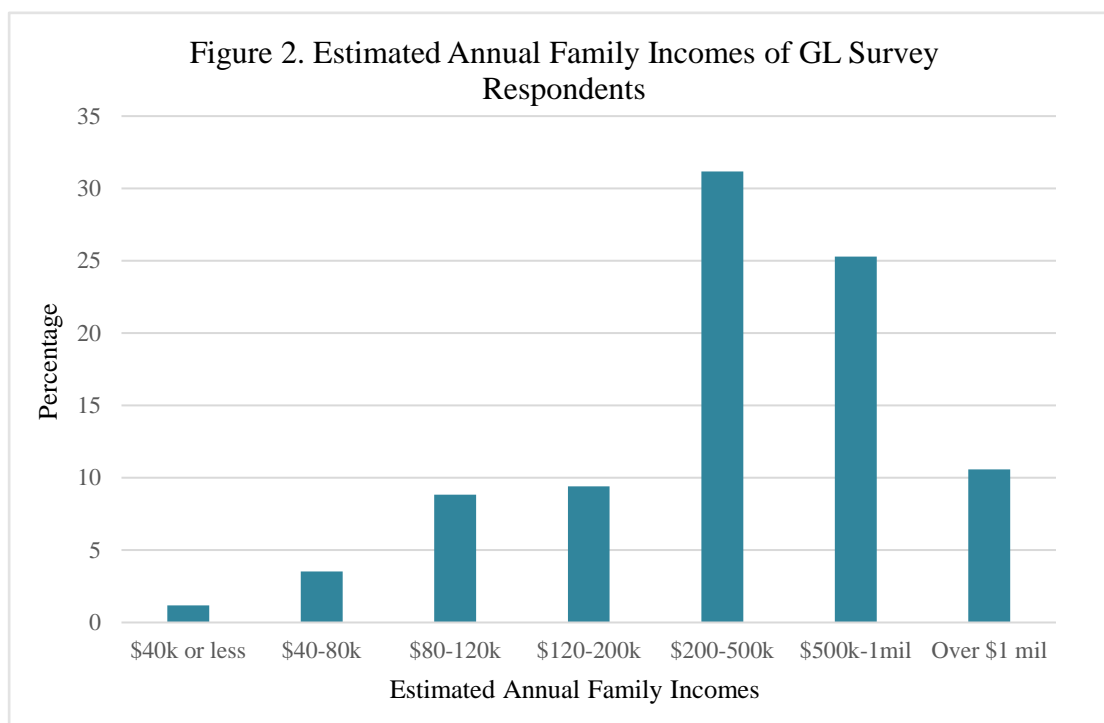
<sup>10</sup> Of the respondents to the GL Survey who reported one or more race/ethnicity, 2.3% were white/Asian, 2.9% were white/Hispanic/Latinx, 0.6% were white/Black and 1.2% were white/Pacific Islander.

<sup>11</sup> Of the respondents to the LI Survey who reported one or more race/ethnicity, 1% were white/Asian, 8.9% were white/Hispanic/Latinx, 2.9% were white/Black, 1.5% were Black/Hispanic/Latinx and 1% reported three or more races/ethnicities.



Source: 2019 Greek Life Survey and Low-Income Survey, Duke University, and US Census Bureau

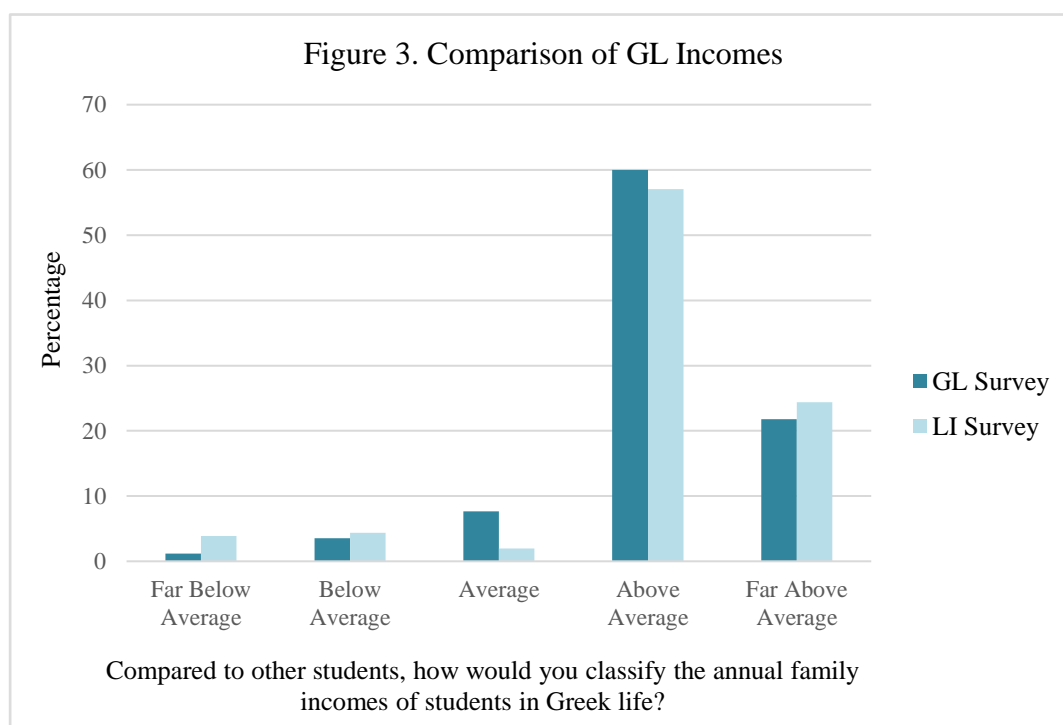
Figure 2 presents reported annual family incomes of respondents to the Greek life Survey. Of the respondents to the GL Survey, 1.2% reported incomes of \$40,000 or less, 3.5% reported incomes between \$40,000 and \$80,000, 8.8% reported incomes between \$80,000 and \$120,000, 9.4% reported incomes between \$120,000 and \$200,000, 31.2% reported incomes between \$200,000 and \$500,000, 25.3% reported incomes between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000, and 10.6% reported incomes over \$1,000,000. At Duke University, roughly 70% of students fall in the top 10% of the income distribution and 76.4% of respondents to the GL Survey were in the top 10% of the distribution. However, at Duke, around 3.8% of students fall in the top 0.1% and 19% of students fall in the top 1% of the income scale compared to roughly 10.6% of GL Survey respondents falling in the top 0.1% and nearly 36% falling in the top 1%. These data support those in HW Greek life having incomes higher than their non-Greek counterparts, even at a very wealthy, elite university (“Economic Diversity,” 2017). Moreover, 29% of respondents were legacies at Duke University, 9.4% were legacies in their sororities, 43% attended private high schools and 50% attended public high schools.



*Source:* 2019 Greek Life Survey and Low-Income Survey

For the LI Survey, 69% of respondents were female, 69% received full financial aid, and 64% were first-generation college students. Of these students, 31% went through some form of Greek recruitment, however, only 18.5% joined a Greek organization, with 9.8% joining HW Greek organizations, 3.4% Latinx Greek organizations, and 0.5% historically Black Greek organizations. For the low-income students in HW Greek organizations, 80% of females were in “bottom” or “lower-middle” ranked sororities and 100% of males were in “lower-middle” or “middle” ranked fraternities; none of the respondents were in “top” ranked organizations. These findings suggest that low-income students who do participate in the HW Greek social system are given lower positions in it, supporting the presence of a social class hierarchy. Of the 69% of respondents who did not go through any form of Greek recruitment, 54% decided not to before coming to Duke, 27% decided in the fall of their first year, and 9% decided in the spring of their first year before any recruitment beginning, suggesting the process of self-exclusion.

Figure 3 presents the results GL Survey and LI Survey respondents' perceptions of the economic backgrounds of students in Greek life at Duke University. These data show that most respondents for both surveys view the annual family incomes of students in Greek life as above or far above average compared to other students at Duke. For the GL Survey, 60% of respondents viewed the economic backgrounds of students in Greek life as "above average" and 21.8% viewed them as "far above average;" for the LI Survey, 57.1% of respondents viewed them as "above average" and 24.4% viewed them as "far above average." These findings suggest that both groups are aware of the lack of economic diversity and inclusivity in Greek life.



*Source:* 2019 Greek Life Survey and Low-Income Survey

### Economically Homogenous Friend Groups

To address the question of how Greek membership and social class influence the formation of economically homogenous friend groups, the reported proportions of friends with similar economic backgrounds to oneself among respondents to both surveys were analyzed. GL

Survey respondents with estimated annual family incomes over \$200k had roughly the same mean proportion of friends with similar economic backgrounds as LI Survey respondents in historically Black and Latinx Greek organizations (3.39 vs. 3.31). This means that, on average, 50-75% of both groups' closest friends have similar economic backgrounds. A similar comparison can be made between middle-income (incomes from \$80-\$200K)<sup>12</sup> GL Survey respondents and LI Survey respondents who are not in a Greek organization (3.06 vs. 2.74). These findings suggest that Greek membership and social class both influence the proportion of close friends with similar economic backgrounds to oneself. Empirical analysis was then conducted to further analyze the formation of economically homogenous friend groups.

Table 1 presents the results of a linear regression model predicting the proportion of low-income students' and HW sorority members' close friends with similar economic backgrounds to themselves with data from the GL Survey and LI Survey. Two separate models were created for the two different surveys. For the HW sorority members who responded to the GL Survey, estimated annual family income had a statistically significant, positive relationship with both the proportions of friends ( $P = 0.003$ ) and sorority members ( $P < 0.000$ )<sup>13</sup> with similar economic backgrounds. As annual family incomes increase, students are more likely to have close friends and sorority members with similar economic backgrounds to themselves. Thus, the higher the incomes of members, the more economically homogenous their sororities are.

For low-income students who responded to the LI Survey, being a first-generation college student had a positive correlation with the proportion of close friends with similar

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<sup>12</sup> I recognize that annual family incomes of \$50-80k are not considered low-income in the US, but because of the disproportionate number of students from the upper class at Duke, this range is better suited for comparing family incomes of these students. Additionally, only two respondents to the GL survey reported annual family incomes of \$40k or less, thus, expanding the cutoff for lower-income students to \$80k or less allows for more accurate analysis.

<sup>13</sup> A regression table predicting the proportion of sorority members with similar economic backgrounds to respondents can be found in Appendix D.



economic backgrounds ( $P < 0.000$ ). At Duke University, there is a scholarship program, Rubenstein Scholars, that is specifically for first-generation college students where they spend several weeks on campus with other first-generation students before starting their first year. This program may explain the formation of economically homogenous friend groups, as most scholars are also low-income. Female students ( $P = 0.063$ ) and Black students ( $P = 0.008$ ) are also more likely to have higher proportions of friends with similar economic backgrounds to themselves. Being a member of a HW Greek organization had a statistically significant, negative relationship with the proportion of friends with similar economic backgrounds ( $P = 0.020$ ) whereas being a member of a Latinx Greek organization has a statistically significant, positive relationship ( $P = 0.052$ ).<sup>14</sup>

At Duke, there is one Latina sorority and one Latino sorority, and these results show that, in contrast to HW Greek organizations' disproportionately wealthy members, Latinx Greek organizations appear to have disproportionately lower-income members, allowing for these students to form economically homogenous friend groups. In the current literature, explanations are given as to why low-income students aren't involved in Greek life, however, distinguishing between multicultural Greek organizations and HW Greek organizations may offer greater insight into the experiences of low-income students on college campuses and the formation of economically homogenous friend groups among these students. Overall, these data show that the interaction between Greek membership and economic backgrounds influences the formation of economically homogenous friend groups among high and low-income students, and thus class stratification on campus.

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<sup>14</sup> Being a member of a historically Black Greek organization was not used as a variable in this model because only one student reported being in a historically Black Greek organization in the LI survey.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	Proportion of Close Friends with Similar Economic Backgrounds	
	HW Sorority Members (1)	Low-Income Students (2)
Estimated Annual Family Income	0.160 <sup>***</sup> (0.053)	
First-Generation College Student		0.466 <sup>***</sup> (0.140)
Female		0.274 <sup>*</sup> (0.147)
Black		0.426 <sup>***</sup> (0.159)
White Greek Org		-0.495 <sup>**</sup> (0.214)
Latinx Greek Org		0.646 <sup>*</sup> (0.331)
Observations	153	185
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.051	0.152
<i>Note:</i>		<sup>*</sup> p<0.1; <sup>**</sup> p<0.05; <sup>***</sup> p<0.01

*Source:* 2019 Greek Life Survey and Low-Income Survey

### Qualitative Data: Why I Joined a Sorority and Why I Did Not Go Through Recruitment

All respondents to the GL Survey were asked to explain why they joined a sorority, and these responses were coded for common themes. Meeting new people/making more friends was the main reason for joining a sorority (81.2%), followed by access to social events (29.7%), peer pressure from friends or family (11.5%), alumni and resource connections (5.4%), better housing (1.8%) and philanthropy (1.8%). Table 4 includes selected responses explaining why students joined a sorority. Although meeting people, or the desire for sisterhood, and access to social events were expected to be main reasons for joining a HW sorority, peer pressure was not a reason I predicted. Students' responses also showed an interesting tendency to refer to both diversity and inclusivity in Greek life and their organizations. Based on existing research and results of the GL Survey, HW sororities are not economically or racially diverse, thus, diversity

is likely used to refer to something else, such as majors at Duke, extracurricular involvements, or geographic origin of sorority members.

Table 2. GL Survey Responses: Why Did You Join a Sorority?
“I wanted to meet more people (especially upperclassmen), <b>diversify</b> my friend group, and have a greater sense of community on campus.”
“To meet a <b>diverse</b> group of new people.”
“To form close relationships with girls with <b>similar morals</b> in all grades at Duke.”
“To meet new people and join an <b>inclusive</b> community.”
“All my friends were, and I wanted to remain <b>socially relevant</b> .”
“To <b>make friends</b> and expand my net of opportunities!”
“ <b>Social Life</b> , new friends.”

Source: 2019 Greek Life Survey and Low-Income Survey

Respondents to the LI Survey who did not go through recruitment (N = 137) were asked to explain why they decided not to, and responses were coded for common themes. Roughly 70% of respondents to the LI survey reported that they did not go through any form of sorority or fraternity recruitment. While monetary and time restraints are frequently used to explain low-income students' lack of involvement in Greek life, this study finds that nearly 75% of respondents reported negative feelings toward Greek life and lack of interest as reasons for not participating in the system. Negative feelings toward Greek life were reported the most (43.1%), followed by lack of interest (31.4%), cost (21.2%) and time (6.6%). Also, 4.4% of respondents reported being in a non-Greek organization (sports team or Duke-specific selective living group). Table 3 presents selected responses from low-income students explaining why they did not go through recruitment and shows their negative views of Greek life and its issues with diversity

and inclusivity.<sup>15</sup> It is important to note that these responses are from low-income students who did not go through any form of Greek recruitment, yet most (86%) developed these strong, negative feelings toward Greek life before coming to Duke or in their first semester at Duke. Of LI Survey respondents who did not go through recruitment, 54% of these students decided not to participate before coming to Duke, 27% decided in the fall of their first semester and 9% decided in the spring of their first year, prior to the start of recruitment.

The tendency not to participate in recruitment and development of negative feelings toward Greek life is especially interesting when considering the recruitment process for HW sororities, as female students who go through recruitment are guaranteed a place in a sorority. However, the sorority they end up in may not be their preferred choice, as one student notes that she did not go through recruitment because she feared she would not get into a “top tier” sorority. Moreover, another student’s emphasis on the importance of family connections, alumni networks and high school type as reasons for not going through recruitment are characteristics frequently associated with recruitment practices of top sororities, which will be shown in the following section; however, in this case, they appear to be applied to the entire Greek social system. In future research, it would be useful to examine exactly where students’ perceptions of Greek life stem from, such as the media, other low-income students, or their families, to better understand why they do not participate in Greek life. Finally, there appears to be a disconnect between HW sorority members and low-income students, as the former believe Greek life and its members to be diverse and inclusive, and the latter recognize serious issues surrounding the lack of diversity and inclusion in the Greek social system. It would be insightful to compare what both groups of students define as being “diverse” or “inclusive” to better understand these

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<sup>15</sup> A table of low-income students’ responses to why they joined a sorority or fraternity can be found in Appendix E.

differences.

Table 3. LI Survey Responses: Why Didn't You Go Through Recruitment?
"I didn't feel like sororities were <b>inclusive</b> of my community, nor were the people"
"I do not think that Greek life offers a <b>diverse</b> or <b>inclusive</b> community."
"Greek Life seems to be for the <b>higher socioeconomic classes</b> and is associated with a negative social cultural."
"I was worried that because <b>I'm not white</b> , it would hinder my chances of being even considered for a ' <b>top tier</b> ' sorority."
"I <b>dislike</b> Greek Life to say the least."
"B/c Greek life is <b>inherently oppressive</b> ."
"The process was too <b>selective, exclusive, and elitist</b> ."

Source: 2019 Greek Life Survey and Low-Income Survey

### *Greek Life Survey Results*

To answer the question of what determines one's position, or ranking, within the HW Greek social system, a linear regression model was used to predict determinants of sorority ranking.<sup>16</sup> Respondents to the GL Survey reported their perceived sorority ranking on a 5-point scale (1 = bottom, 5 = top). The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4, showing the estimates, standard errors, and p-values. The proportion of members with similar economic backgrounds to a respondent (P = 0.090), attending a private school (P = 0.025), knowing more members of their sorority pre-recruitment (P = 0.079), and attending more social events weekly (P < 0.000) were all statistically significant predictors of perceived sorority ranking. Respondents who reported their race as Black/African American were also statistically more likely to be in sororities perceived as higher-ranking (P = 0.006). *All* the respondents to the GL Survey who

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix F for the number of observations, mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values of descriptive variables in the GL Survey.

reported their race as Black/African American reported being in a top-ranked sorority. Although the current literature and this study show that Greek members are disproportionately white, within the HW Greek social system, being Black has a positive relationship with perceived sorority ranking, suggesting an acceptance of or higher status given to racial diversity by top organizations that does not occur for economic diversity.

Estimated annual family incomes did not have a significant effect on predicting sorority ranking. This is likely because most respondents to the GL Survey reported very high annual family incomes (67% reported annual family incomes over \$200k and 35.9% reported incomes over \$500k), showing that students in HW Greek life are disproportionately wealthy, regardless of which sorority they are in. However, these results suggest that social class is a strong factor in determining one's position in the Greek social system, as other indicators of high social class, such as attending a private school and knowing more sorority members before recruitment have a positive effect on one's perceived sorority ranking. Knowing more members of one's sorority pre-recruitment is also indicative of dirty rush, showing the potential role of selective inclusion processes in maintaining a social class hierarchy within the HW Greek social system.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i> Sorority Ranking
Members with Similar Economic Backgrounds	0.176* (0.103)
Black	1.246*** (0.443)
Private School	0.399** (0.176)
Number of Members Known Pre-Recruitment	0.100* (0.057)
Number of Social Events Attended Weekly	0.539*** (0.101)
Observations	154
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.268
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

*Source:* 2019 Greek Life Survey and Low-Income Survey

### *Low-Income Survey Results*

LI Survey data were analyzed to better understand low-income students' involvement with Greek life. Table 5 presents the results of logistic regression models predicting overall Greek membership, HW Greek membership and Latinx Greek membership.<sup>17</sup> Table 6 reports the estimates, standard errors, and p-values for each model. Positive feelings toward students in Greek life had statistically significant, positive relationships with Greek membership overall ( $P < 0.000$ ), HW Greek membership ( $P = 0.0003$ ) and a positive, but not statistically significant, relationship with Latinx Greek membership ( $P = 0.107$ ). Thus, students with positive feelings toward students in Greek life are more likely to be in a Greek organization and students with negative feelings are less likely. Academic year (sophomore, junior or senior) had a statistically significant, positive correlation with Greek membership overall ( $P = 0.059$ ), and a positive, but not significant correlation with membership in HW ( $P = 0.345$ ) and Latinx ( $P = 0.124$ ) Greek organizations. Academic year may be a significant factor because it accounts for students who join Greek organizations later in their undergraduate years.

Comparisons of Greek life students' annual family incomes to other students at Duke had a statistically significant, negative relationship with Greek membership overall ( $P = 0.034$ ) and HW Greek membership ( $P = 0.024$ ) and a negative, but not statistically significant relationship with Latinx Greek membership ( $P = 0.738$ ). This means that students who did not classify the annual family incomes of students in Greek life as above average were more likely to be in Greek organizations. Being Black had a statistically significant, negative correlation with Greek membership overall ( $P = 0.017$ ), HW Greek membership ( $P = 0.049$ ) and a negative, but not significant correlation with Latinx Greek membership ( $P = 0.267$ ).

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<sup>17</sup> See Appendix F for the number of observations, mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values for descriptive variables from the LI Survey.

The proportion of friends with similar economic backgrounds had a statistically significant, negative relationship with HW Greek membership ( $P = 0.020$ ), a statistically significant positive relationship with Latinx Greek membership ( $P = 0.012$ ), and a negative, but not statistically significant relationship with Greek membership overall ( $P = 0.510$ ). This means that students with fewer close friends with similar economic backgrounds are more likely to be in HW Greek organizations and students with more close friends with similar economic backgrounds are more likely to be in Latinx Greek organizations, however, these results may be a result of their membership. These findings emphasize differences between HW and Latinx Greek organizations as the former appears to consist of high-income students, isolating low-income students, and the latter appears to consist of mostly low-income students, promoting economically homogenous friend groups within these organizations.

**Table 5. Determinants of Greek Membership Among Low-Income Students**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>		
	Greek Org. (1)	HW Greek Org. (2)	Latinx Greek Org. (3)
Feelings Towards Students in Greek Life	1.125 <sup>***</sup> (0.283)	1.142 <sup>***</sup> (0.312)	0.754 (0.468)
Year	0.574 <sup>*</sup> (0.305)	0.341 (0.361)	0.870 (0.566)
Comparison of Greek Life Incomes	-0.473 <sup>**</sup> (0.222)	-0.584 <sup>**</sup> (0.258)	-0.155 (0.463)
Black	-1.916 <sup>**</sup> (0.805)	-2.253 <sup>**</sup> (1.144)	-1.299 (1.170)
Proportion of Friends with Similar Economic Backgrounds	-0.157 (0.238)	-0.734 <sup>**</sup> (0.316)	1.184 <sup>**</sup> (0.470)
Observations	172	171	171
Akaike Inf. Crit.	132.731	102.085	58.433
<i>Note:</i>	* $p < 0.1$ ; ** $p < 0.05$ ; *** $p < 0.01$		

*Source:* 2019 Greek Life Survey and Low-Income Survey



The lack of diversity and inclusivity in Greek life appears to be one of the main reasons for low-income students' decisions not to engage in the system. However, Latinx Greek organizations' inclusivity of economic diversity seems to be a main factor in decisions to participate in those organizations compared to HW organizations. The Latinx Greek organizations require students to pay dues each semester, as do HW Greek organizations. Dues to these organization are typically less than most dues for HW organizations, however, they still require students to pay hundreds of dollars a semester for their membership, which is a main reason the current literature uses to explain low-incomes students' lack of participation in Greek life. These findings suggest that the cost of Greek life is not as much of a factor when an organization is accepting of economic diversity, along with racial and ethnic diversity. It is important to note, however, that Latinx Greek organizations are specifically for Hispanic and Latinx students, thus, low-income students who do not have those identities do not have the opportunity to join these economically inclusive Greek organizations.

Table 6 displays the results of a linear model predicting feelings toward students in Greek life. Respondents to the LI Survey were asked to report their feelings toward students in Greek life on a five-point scale from very negative (1) to very positive (5). Being in a HW ( $P < 0.000$ ) and Latinx ( $P = 0.088$ ) Greek organization had a positive relationship with feelings toward students in Greek life. Being Black ( $P = 0.041$ ) and being a first-generation college student ( $0.005$ ) also had a positive correlation with students' feelings. The survey did not specify any type of Greek life (HW, historically Black or multicultural) when asking about feelings toward students in Greek life, leaving interpretation up to respondents. Thus, the positive effect of being Black on feelings toward students in Greek life may be a result of respondents reporting their feelings toward students in historically Black Greek life. Academic year ( $P = 0.001$ ) had a

negative relationship with feelings toward students in Greek life. This may be a sign that feelings toward students in Greek life intensify or worsen the longer a student has been at Duke. The proportion of friends with similar economic backgrounds did not have a statistically significant effect on feelings toward students in Greek life, but it had a negative effect, suggesting having fewer friends with similar economic backgrounds may be related to negative feelings toward students in Greek life.

Ultimately, these findings provide insight into low-income students' participation, and lack of participation, in Greek life. Negative feelings toward Greek life, as shown in the qualitative data, appear to influence low-income students' decisions not to participate whereas positive feelings, as shown in the quantitative data, appear to influence Greek membership. Also, low-income students excluding themselves from the Greek social system may be supported by the negative relationship of being Black with Greek membership, suggesting these students may be excluding themselves, likely due to the lack of racial diversity in these organizations, on top of the lack of economic inclusivity. Whether low-income students are in a Greek organization or not and if they are in a HW or multicultural organization are important to understanding the formation of economically homogenous friend groups and how this may maintain class stratification on campus.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i> Feelings Towards Students in Greek Life
First-Generation College Student	0.403 <sup>***</sup> (0.141)
White Greek Org	0.879 <sup>***</sup> (0.204)
Latinx Greek Org	0.567 <sup>*</sup> (0.330)
Black	0.316 <sup>**</sup> (0.153)
Year	-0.279 <sup>***</sup> (0.079)
Proportion of Friends with Similar Economic Backgrounds	-0.035 (0.071)
Observations	171
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.167
Note:	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Source: 2019 Greek Life Survey and Low-Income Survey

## Conclusion

The results of this research provide insight into understanding how class stratification and inequality are perpetuated through the Greek social system on campus by answering three primary research questions:

1. *To what extent do Greek membership and social class influence the formation of economically homogenous friend groups?*

This thesis finds that Greek membership among low-income students, whether it is in a HW or Latinx Greek organization, has a significant effect on the formation of economically homogenous friend groups. Low-income students who are in HW Greek organizations have fewer close friends with similar backgrounds to themselves whereas those in Latinx Greek organizations have more close friends with similar backgrounds. Finally, low-income students who do not engage in Greek life have significantly more economically similar close friend groups than those who participate in HW Greek life. For students in HW sororities, annual family incomes had a significant effect on the formation of both economically homogenous close friend groups and sororities. These findings show that the interplay between Greek membership and social class influences class stratification on campus through the formation of economically homogenous friend groups among high-income and low-income students.

2. *Why do low-income students rarely engage with the Greek social system and what factors influence Greek membership among these students?*

This study finds that the main reason low-income students do not participate in the Greek social system is their negative perceptions of and feelings towards Greek life. The decision not to participate is made early on, far before any form of Greek recruitment begins, supporting the process of self-exclusion by low-income students. Students' races are also a major factor in

determining Greek membership, as Black students are far less likely to engage in any form of Greek life, further suggesting the role of self-exclusion due to the lack of racial and economic diversity in Greek life. The lack of involvement of low-income students due to their self-exclusion from the system ultimately helps to maintain class stratification on campus by preventing the integration of social classes through participation and non-participation in the Greek social system.

3. *What determines one's position, or ranking, within the historically white Greek social system?*

This study does not find as strong relationship between sorority ranking and annual family incomes, however, other indicators of social class have a significant effect on determining one's position in the hierarchy within the HW sorority system. Knowing more members prior to recruitment, which is indicative of dirty rush, attending a private high school, going to more social events with their sorority and having more sorority members with similar economic backgrounds makes students more likely to be in a top-ranked organization. Higher social status, due to increased economic and cultural capital, appear to be given to these factors, along with being Black, which also has a positive effect on ranking and indicates a higher position in the HW sorority system. Although this study cannot explain the reasoning behind these results, the positive effect of being Black on HW sorority ranking may suggest that a higher social status is attributed to these organizations having this form of racial diversity. The extant literature argues that Greek members are less accepting of diversity, however, this study finds that HW Greek organizations may have something to gain from this form of diversity. These findings suggest an acceptance of, or at least a desire for, racial diversity yet show the continued importance of class

in determining one's position within the Greek social system, as economic diversity does not appear to be associated with this higher social status.

These findings further support the presence of a stratified class hierarchy within the HW Greek social system, as those with the highest status are placed at the top, which appears to be indicative of their higher social class. Overall, the process selective inclusion by high-income groups, along with self-exclusion by low-income students, appears to maintain class inequality within the HW Greek social system and ultimately perpetuates class stratification on campus by promoting economically homogenous friend groups as a function of social class and Greek membership.

### **Discussion and Recommendations**

This thesis has several implications for policies at elite institutions of higher education. There is frequent debate over whether Greek life should be eliminated on campus, however, I do not believe that this will resolve issues surrounding class inequality and stratification, as it is likely these processes of selection and exclusion will manifest in other parts of campus life. At Duke University, there are several Duke-specific selective living groups that do not have national ties. Shifting towards expanding these organization and limiting national Greek organizations may allow for greater authority of the university in monitoring these organizations and implementing policies and sanctions. Likewise, this will probably not prevent the production and reproduction of a social class hierarchy, but it may allow for more serious ramifications for dirty rush and other discriminatory practices that have not occurred with the current system of governance for HW Greek organizations. These governing bodies consist of members of Greek organizations on campus, thus, consequences for dirty rush are close to nonexistent, as the quote in the

introduction suggests that many of these students are involved in these practices. By giving the university greater authority over these organizations, conducting dirty rush processes may result in losing housing or dissolving a chapter, deterring students from engaging in these discriminatory activities.

As the policies mentioned above do not provide significant hope into dismantling the social class hierarchy in the Greek social system and class stratification on campus, specific initiatives are needed by the university to promote serious conversations about classism on campus. This may be accomplished through a mandatory course or curriculum for first-year students to explore issues of class and racial inequality on campus and the historical practices and policies of the university that have produced and maintained stratification and inequality. As this university is dominated by the economically and socially elite, it is essential for these students to learn about their privilege and the drastically different experiences of low-income and first-generation students to promote a truly inclusive campus and prevent further marginalization of these students. Finally, institutional efforts are greatly needed to recruit more low-income students to address the severe lack of economic diversity in elite universities. Additional programs are also necessary to better support these students when they arrive on campus and to allow for greater integration among students of different backgrounds. It is imperative to continue to study class stratification and inequality on campus and to implement policies to address these issues.

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## Appendices

**Appendix A: Sample Sorority and Fraternity Rankings from GreekRank.com**

End of Year Side by Side Ranks

by: frat boy

May 15, 2016 12:26:52 AM

Tridelt - Adphi  
Kappa/Pi Phi - DSig/SNu  
APhi - KA/Pike

Theta - Wayne/Pikapp/ATO

DG - KSig

Zeta /ADPi - SigEp/DTD  
GphiB - AEPI/Sig Chi

Chi O - Chi Psi/SAE/DKE

Post Reply

170 | 196 | 7782 Views

Report

Source: <https://www.greekrank.com/uni/151/topic/1042362/end-of-year-side-by-side-ranks/>

Official New Sorority Rankings

by: TricksR4Tridelts

Oct 18, 2019 11:16:22 AM

Tridelt / PiPhi  
Kappa  
APhi

Theta  
DG

ADPi / Zeta

GPhi  
ChiO

Post Reply

7 | 3 | 415 Views

Report

Source: <https://www.greekrank.com/uni/151/topic/2175572/official-new-sorority-rankings-/>

## Appendix B: GL Survey Questions

Q2 How many semesters have you been a member of your sorority?

▼ One ... Seven

Q3 Why did you join a sorority?

Q4 How often do you attend social events or go out (e.g. bars/clubs, parties, mixers, formals, etc.) with your sorority?

▼ Less than 1x/week ... More than three times a week

Q5 How often do you volunteer or participate in community service with your sorority?

▼ Less than once a month ... More than three times a month

Q6 How do you think your sorority is ranked in relation to the 10 Panhellenic sororities?

1. Top
2. Upper-middle
3. Middle
4. Lower-middle
5. Bottom

Q7 Did you know any members (current or alumna) of your sorority's chapter before you joined (not including members of your pledge class)?

1. Yes
2. No

*Display This Question:*

*If Did you know any members (current or alumna) of your sorority's chapter before you joined (not in... = Yes*

Q8 How many members did you know before you joined your sorority?

▼ One ... Four or more

*Display This Question:*

*If Did you know any members (current or alumna) of your sorority's chapter before you joined (not in... = Yes*

Q9 When did you meet them? (Choose all that apply)

1. Before starting my first semester at Duke
2. In the fall of my first semester at Duke
3. In the spring of my first semester at Duke (pre-recruitment)
4. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q10 Are you a legacy in your sorority?

1. Yes (1)
2. No (2)

Q11 Are you a legacy student at Duke? (Did a family member attend Duke University before you?)

1. Yes
2. No

Q20 Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity (check all that apply):

1. Asian
2. Black/African American
3. Caucasian
4. Hispanic/Latinx
5. Native American
6. Pacific Islander
7. Prefer not to say

Q12 What type of high school did you attend?

1. Private
2. Public
3. Home school
4. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Q13 Compared to other families, would you say your family's annual income is:

1. Far below average
2. Below average
3. Average
4. Above average
5. Far above average

Q14 Approximately how much would you estimate your family makes each year before taxes?

1. \$40,000 or less
2. \$40,001-80,000
3. \$80,001-120,000
4. \$120,001-200,000
5. \$200,000-500,000
6. \$500,000-1,000,000
7. Over \$1,000,000

Q15 Compared to other students, how would you classify the annual family incomes of students in Greek life?

1. Far below average
2. Below average
3. Average
4. Above average
5. Far above average

Q21 Approximately what proportion of the members of your sorority have economic or financial backgrounds **similar** to yours?

1. All
2. Approximately 3/4
3. About half
4. Approximately 1/4
5. None

Q16 Approximately what proportion of your closest friends have economic or financial backgrounds **similar** to yours?

1. All
2. Approximately 3/4
3. About Half
4. Approximately 1/4
5. None

## Appendix C: LI Survey Questions

Q1 What year are you at Duke?

▼ First-year ... Senior

Q2 Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity (check all that apply):

1. Asian
2. Black/African American
3. Hispanic/Latinx
4. Native American
5. Pacific Islander
6. Prefer not to say

Q3 To which gender identity do you most identify?

1. Male
2. Female
3. Gender Variant/Non-Conforming
4. Other
5. Prefer not to say

Q16 Do you receive financial aid at Duke?

1. Yes - I receive full financial aid
2. Yes - I receive partial financial aid
3. No

Q12 Do you identify as a:

1. Low-income student
2. First-generation college student
3. Both
4. Neither

Q4 Did you go through sorority or fraternity recruitment (formal or informal)?

1. Yes
2. No

*Display This Question:*

*If Did you go through sorority or fraternity recruitment (formal or informal)? = Yes*

Q5 Are you a member of a Greek organization?

1. Yes - I am a member of a fraternity
2. Yes - I am a member of a sorority
3. No (5)

*Display This Question:*

*If Are you a member of a Greek organization? = Yes - I am a member of a fraternity*

Q6 Which Greek organization are you a member of?

▼ Alpha Delta Phi ... Sigma Phi Epsilon

*Display This Question:*

*If Are you a member of a Greek organization? = Yes - I am a member of a fraternity*

Q15 Why did you join a fraternity?

*Display This Question:*

*If Are you a member of a Greek organization? = Yes - I am a member of a sorority*

Q13 Which Greek organization are you a member of?

▼ Alpha Delta Pi ... Zeta Tau Alpha

*Display This Question:*

*If Are you a member of a Greek organization? = Yes - I am a member of a sorority*

Q19 Why did you join a sorority?

*Display This Question:*

*If Are you a member of a Greek organization? = No*

Q7 Why did you drop out of recruitment/not join a Greek organization?

*Display This Question:*

*If Did you go through sorority or fraternity recruitment (formal or informal)? = No*

Q8 Why didn't you go through recruitment?

*Display This Question:**If Did you go through sorority or fraternity recruitment (formal or informal)? = No*

Q9 When did you decide not to partake in recruitment?

1. Before coming to Duke
2. In the fall of my first year at Duke
3. In the spring of my first year at Duke
4. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Q10 Compared to other students, how would you classify the annual family incomes of students involved in Greek life?

1. Far below average
2. Below average
3. Average
4. Above average
5. Far above average

Q18 To what extent do you associate with students involved in Greek life?

1. All of my friends are involved in Greek life
2. Most of my friends are involved in Greek life
3. Some of my friends are involved in Greek life
4. A few of my friends are involved in Greek life
5. None of my friends are involved in Greek life

Q20 How would you describe your feelings towards students involved in Greek life?

1. Very positive
2. Somewhat positive
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat negative
5. Very negative

Q11 To what extent do your closest friends have economic or financial backgrounds **similar** to yours?

1. All
2. Approximately 3/4
3. About half
4. Approximately 1/4
5. None

**Appendix D: GL Survey Regression Table Predicting Proportions of Sorority Members  
with Similar Economic Backgrounds**

<b>Determinants of Economically Homogenous Sororities</b>	
<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
Proportion of Sorority Members with Similar Economic Backgrounds	
Estimated Annual Family Income	0.279 <sup>***</sup> (0.046)
Observations	152
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.192
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01



### Appendix E: LI Survey Responses to Why Students Joined a Fraternity or Sorority

LI Survey: Why Did You Join a Fraternity?	
Fraternity Type	Response
Historically Black	Brotherhood
HW lower-middle	Friends
HW lower-middle	Social life and a community
HW lower-middle	I joined as a sophomore, because i did not feel the level of community that I had felt my freshman year.
HW lower-middle	to have fun and make new friends
HW lower-middle	to meet people
HW middle	Brotherhood
HW middle	Network and service
HW middle	My best friends were rushing so I wanted to be with them
HW middle	To join a strong network and have an established friend group on campus.
Latino	For networking and brotherhood
N/A	For community
N/A	To find a social group to be a part of
N/A	It was full of individuals I felt I could become close friends with

LI Survey: Why Did You Join a Sorority?	
Sorority Type	Response
HW bottom	Friendship, networking, support, empowerment
HW bottom	I went to an informal meeting and felt very welcome and confident which I had not felt for a long time
HW bottom	I was bored living as an independent my sophomore year, so I joined to meet new people.
HW bottom	Peer culture encouraged me to do so. I did not know about many of the drawbacks I would face given none of my family members had been in Greek Life before.
HW lower-middle	To find a female community
HW lower-middle	To make new friends, connections, social life
HW lower-middle	Have a home base/community + meet new people
HW lower-middle	To have more female friends, to have connections to upperclassmen, to connect with more people in my year, to have a more certain idea of where I would live sophomore year (live in section this year), to build greater community, meet new freshman during rush, to mix with other social groups to meet knew people
HW upper-middle	For a bigger circle and social events
HW upper-middle	To become a part of a larger community and develop long lasting friendships!
Latina	For the community
Latina	I joined because I was in need of a tight knit community that shared my same values and background. I identified strongly with the members of the sorority.
Latina	I liked the people that were in it and I was searching for a social group
Latina	It was the only space on campus dedicated to empower Latina women
Latina	To feel closer to home by surrounding myself with driven, Latina women who embrace the culture.
Latina	To find a Latina, supportive community on campus.

**Appendix F: GL and LI Survey Descriptive Statistics**

<b>Greek Life Survey Descriptive Statistics</b>					
Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Sorority Ranking	168	3.7	1.2	1.0	5.0
Estimated Annual Family Income	153	5.0	1.3	1.0	7.0
Members with Similar Economic Backgrounds	158	3.2	0.8	1.0	5.0
Friends with Similar Economic Backgrounds	160	3.3	0.9	1.0	5.0
Legacy in Sorority	161	1.9	0.3	1.0	2.0
Number of Members Known Pre-Recruitment	170	1.4	1.5	0	4
Number of Semesters in Sorority	170	3.2	2.0	1	7
Social Events Attended Weekly	169	2.5	0.9	1.0	5.0
Monthly Community Service	167	1.7	0.8	1.0	5.0
Legacy at Duke	161	1.7	0.5	1.0	2.0
Private School	159	0.5	0.5	0.0	1.0

<b>Low-Income Survey Descriptive Statistics</b>					
Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Gender	204	0.7	0.5	0.0	1.0
Receive Full Financial Aid	203	0.7	0.5	0.0	1.0
First Generation	203	0.7	0.5	0.0	1.0
Greek Member	189	2.9	0.8	2.0	4.0
Year at Duke	187	2.7	1.0	1.0	5.0
Feelings Towards Students in Greek Life	188	2.7	0.9	1.0	5.0
Friends in Greek Life	188	2.4	0.9	1.0	5.0