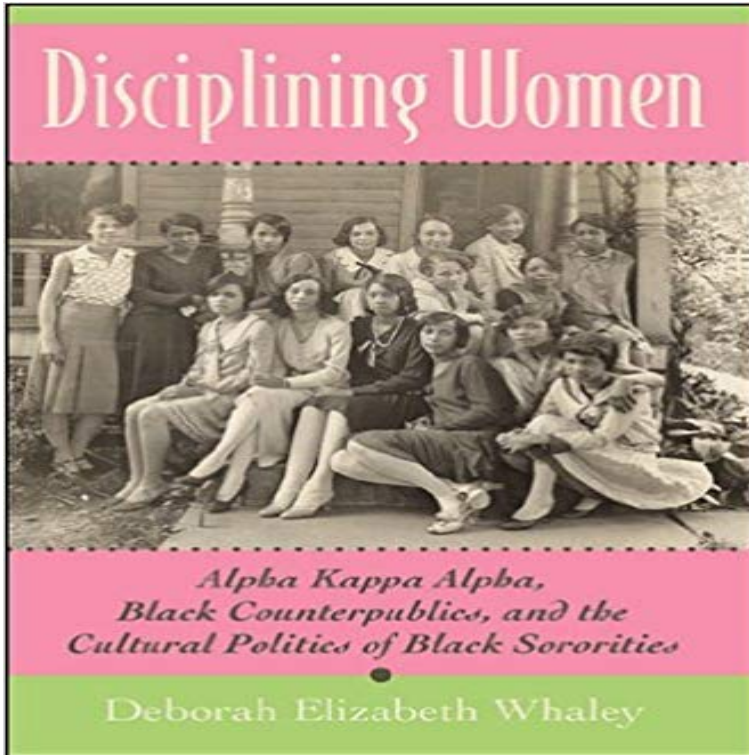


## Disciplining Women: Alpha Kappa Alpha, Black Counterpublics, and the Cultural Politics of Black Sororities



An interdisciplinary look Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA), the first historically Black sorority. Black Greek-letter organizations offer many African Americans opportunities for activism, community-building, fostering cultural pride, and cultural work within the African American community. *Disciplining Women* focuses on the oldest Black Greek-letter sorority, Alpha Kappa Alpha, established in 1908. In this innovative interdisciplinary analysis of AKA, Deborah Whaley combines ethnographic field work, archival research, oral history, and interpretive readings of popular culture and sorority rituals to examine the role of the Black sorority in women's everyday lives and more broadly within public life and politics. The study includes sorority members' stories of key cultural practices and rituals, including political participation, step dancing, pledging, hazing, and community organizing. While she remains critical of the shortcomings that plague many Black social organizations with activist programs, Whaley shows how AKAs' calculated cultivation of sorority life demonstrates personal and group-directed discipline and illuminates how cultural practices intersect with politics and Black public life. *Disciplining Women* is a deeply thought-out and well-constructed study that does as it intends to do by dissecting the meanings inherent in Black sorority life. Whaley's own identity as insider-outsider complicates her cultural readings of AKA and BGLOs in general and makes her analyses rich and provocative. *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* Whaley offers a fair and even treatment of Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) history. This book will be of particular interest to scholars of women's organizations, social movements, and activist groups. In addition, Whaley's work is a valuable contribution to the growing

literature on fraternal organizations. Journal of American History An insightful book that opens up a worthwhile discussion of a new intellectual discourse about the young generation. CHOICE Disciplining Women provides a unique outsiders/insiders peek into a world known only to a very few, and it situates that world within a larger context of black culture and black women's activism. Katrina Bell McDonald, author of Embracing Sisterhood: Class, Identity, and Contemporary Black Women Disciplining Women is a well-written scholarly engagement that drills deeper than most other recent works on this subject. As a political philosopher, I was impressed by the use of strong theory to shore up arguments. Ricky L. Jones, author of Black Haze: Violence, Sacrifice, and Manhood in Black Greek-Letter Fraternities Deborah Elizabeth Whaley is Assistant Professor of American Studies and African American Studies at the University of Iowa.

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