

# Do I Belong Here? Examining Perceived Experiences of Bias, Stereotype Concerns, and Sense of Belonging in U.S. Law Schools

Elizabeth Bodamer

## Introduction

Before I completed my dissertation, I was a full-time law school student affairs professional. A part of my job was to counsel students, which meant that I had students coming to my office to talk about anything and everything related to or affecting their educational experiences. One day, a student—a woman of color—came in sobbing. She sat in my office for over an hour unloading the social and emotional pain she had carried in silence for weeks. She struggled with making friends in her classes; she had a resounding feeling of isolation and exclusion; and she perceived that others, including faculty, underestimated her abilities and intellect because of her appearance and accent. We spent a great deal of time unpacking her experience. This student was especially memorable for what she wrote to me later in the year. She left the following handwritten note in my office:

Thank you so much for all the support and guidance that you provided me throughout the last semester. I don't think I could've come this far without your help. Again, thank you so much for *making me feel like I'm belonging here*. It's nice to know that I have someone that I can count on [emphasis added].

This story echoes what empirical scholarship on diversity in legal education has found, that the experiences of minoritized<sup>1</sup> law students are significantly

**Elizabeth Bodamer**, J.D., Ph.D. is the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy & Research Analyst and Senior Program Manager at the Law School Admission Council. She was the 2019-2020 the ABF/AccessLex Doctoral Fellow in Legal Education & Higher Education. Pronouns: She/Her/Hers. This material is based upon work supported by AccessLex Institute and the Association for Institutional Research. I am grateful to the American Bar Foundation community, LSSSE, AccessLex, Professor Victor D. Quintanilla, the Mindsets in Legal Education team, and so many others for their support on this project. In particular, I would like to thank Dr. Anne Groggel, Alisha Kirchoff, Dr. Jessica López-Espino, Dr. Elizabeth Mertz, Dr. Ethan Michelson, and Aminta Moses Sharps for their feedback.

1. I use the term “minoritized students” in addition to students of color, minority students,

different from their white and male classmates.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, this story revealed that to improve legal education, belonging must enter the conversation, especially as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. In recent years, we have seen a demographic shift in law school enrollment, where there are more women and racially/ethnically minoritized students enrolled in the first year of law school than past generations, but the diversity in the profession remains stagnant.<sup>3</sup> If we are to improve access and equity in legal education and the legal profession, fostering a sense of belonging is crucial for the retention of students like the student in the above anecdote.<sup>4</sup>

In sociology, sense of belonging is a dimension of perceived cohesion, the extent to which individuals feel “stuck to” a particular group.<sup>5</sup> Empirically, sense of belonging is a promising construct that allows sociological and social psychological scholars to assess what factors (social, psychological, and academic) can further enhance students’ affiliation with their school.<sup>6</sup> Sense of belonging is linked to positive academic outcomes, such as increased academic motivation, engagement, intention to persist, and achievement.<sup>7</sup>

women of color, men of color, marginalized, or underrepresented students. The use of “minoritized” is intended to refer to the “process [action vs. noun] of student minoritization” that reflects an understanding of “minority” status as that which is socially constructed in specific societal contexts. Michael Benitez Jr., *Resituating Culture Centers Within a Social Justice Framework: Is There Room for Examining Whiteness?*, in *CULTURE CENTERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES ON IDENTITY, THEORY, AND PRACTICE* 119, 131 (Lori D. Patton ed., 2010); Dafina-Lazarus Stewart, *Racially Minoritized Students at U.S. Four-Year Institutions*, 82 *J. OF NEGRO EDUC.* 184 (2013). For example, women are not numerical minorities in legal education today, but they are among many minoritized groups. These are groups that face social, political, economic, and educational barriers that constrict them.

2. See, e.g., Sean Darling-Hammond & Kristen Holmquist, *Creating Wise Classrooms to Empower Diverse Law Students: Lessons in Pedagogy from Transformative Law Professors*, 25 *BERKELEY LA RAZA L.J.* 1 (2015); Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, *Women in Law* (2012); Louwanda Evans & Wendy Leo Moore, *Impossible Burdens: White Institutions, Emotional Labor, and Micro-Resistance*, 62 *SOCIAL PROBLEMS* 439, 439-54 (2015); Gerald F. Hess, *Heads and Hearts: The Teaching and Learning Environment in Law School*, 52 *J. LEGAL EDUC.* 75 (2002); Rachel F. Moran, *Diversity and its Discontents: The End of Affirmative Action at Boalt Hall*, 88 *CALIF. L. REV.* 2241, 2283-85 (2000). See also discussion *infra* Part I.B.
3. See discussion *infra* Part I.A.2.
4. Using 2016 ABA data, Thomas reported that American Indian, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian, and two or more races are disproportionately represented among students who do not persist beyond the first year of law school. Kylie Thomas, *ABA Data Reveals Minority Students Are Disproportionately Represented in Attrition Figures*, AccessLex (2018), <https://www.accesslex.org/xblog/aba-data-reveals-minority-students-are-disproportionately-represented-in-attrition-figures>.
5. Kenneth A. Bollen & Rick H. Hoyle, *Perceived Cohesion: A Conceptual and Empirical Examination*, 69 *SOCIAL FORCES* 479 (1990); Sylvia Hurtado & Deborah Faye Carter, *Effects of College Transition and Perceptions of the Campus Racial Climate on Latino College Students’ Sense of Belonging*, 70 *SOCIOLOGY OF EDUC.* 324 (1997).
6. Hurtado & Carter, *supra* note 5.
7. See, e.g., Tierra M. Freeman et al., *Sense of Belonging in College Freshmen at the Classroom and Campus*

Recently, a study using LSSSE data found that sense of belonging directly and significantly predicts law students' educational satisfaction and academic performance.<sup>8</sup> However, the same study also revealed that law students from disadvantaged backgrounds reported weaker relationships with faculty, staff, and peers, which predicted a lower sense of belonging compared with their classmates from advantaged backgrounds.<sup>9</sup>

Understanding how to foster a sense of belonging is crucial for leaders in the legal profession, deans, administrators, admissions staff, student affairs professionals, and faculty who are at the forefront of recruiting and retaining students as well as future lawyers, leaders, alumni, and donors. By asking the big question—what affects law students' sense of belonging?—we can empirically inform pedagogical and professional development and diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in law school that can translate into the future of diversity in the legal profession.

This article uses the concept of sense of belonging to add to the ongoing conversation surrounding diversity and inequity in legal education through an examination of how students' sense of belonging is influenced by perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns at the intersection of race and gender<sup>10</sup> in a sample of seventeen U.S. law schools. Overall, my findings provide evidence that the educational experience in law school differs by race-gender. Specifically, this article shows that women of color are more likely to have a low sense of belonging compared with all other race-gender groups. Moreover, I find that perceived experiences of bias and students' concerns about stereotypes associated with their social identity are pervasive in law school. Specifically, I find that minoritized students are more likely to perceive experiences of bias and stereotype concerns compared with their white male classmates. This finding is especially significant for women of color. Last, I find that these perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns are adversely and significantly associated with sense of belonging. Taken together, the results show that minoritized students—particularly women of color—must contend with marginalizing perceptions and concerns as they navigate through law school and negotiate their sense of belonging.

*Levels*, 75 J. OF EXPERIMENTAL EDUC. 203, 203–20 (2007); Leslie R. M. Hausmann et al., *Sense of Belonging as a Predictor of Intentions to Persist Among African American and White First-Year College Students*, 48 RESEARCH IN HIGHER EDUC. 803, 803–39 (2007).

8. Dorainne J. Green et al., *Group-Based Inequalities in Relationships in Law School Predict Disparities in Belonging, Satisfaction, and Achievement in Law School* (under review).
9. *Id.*
10. In my research, I use gender and sex interchangeably, but I recognize that sex and gender are distinct concepts. Gender is the performative aspect of one's behavior, which we use socially to signify our sex category assigned at birth—male or female. For example, stereotypes about women, the female sex, are cued by what one observes, gender. Candace West & Don H. Zimmerman, *Doing Gender*, 1 GENDER & SOCIETY 125 (1987). I also acknowledge that gender can be determined later in life.

To explain the importance of perceived experiences of bias, stereotype concerns, and students' sense of belonging, Part I of this article presents a brief review of the relevant sociological and social psychological literature, along with an overview of the empirical scholarship on diversity in legal education. In Part II, I turn to the research questions, hypotheses, measures, variables, and analytical strategy of this study. In Part III, I present my findings. Last, in Part IV, I conclude with a discussion of the findings and their implications for improving legal education.

### **Part I: Literature Review**

While sociology and social psychology have long focused on sense of belonging in education, the issue has only been recently picked up by legal scholars.<sup>11</sup> This section briefly reviews the empirical literature on belonging, stereotypes, and perceived discrimination from a social science perspective, then examines the empirical scholarship on law school diversity. While scholars have explored diversity in law school (most are individual school case studies), none have connected their empirical examination with the literature on sense of belonging. This article merges the various disciplines through an empirical examination of how race-gender, bias, and stereotypes affect law students' sense of belonging.

#### *A. Sociology and Social Psychology Literature on Belonging in Education, Stereotypes, and Perceived Discrimination*

##### *1. What is Belonging?*

In sociology of education, sense of belonging is defined as the "student's psychological sense of identification and affiliation with the campus community."<sup>12</sup> From this definition, sense of belonging is subjective.<sup>13</sup> The latest social psychology research on sense of belonging in law school more broadly defines it as "a 'general inference' of one's fit in a particular environment."<sup>14</sup> Therefore, this study focuses on sense of belonging as a "general inference"

11. See Green et al., *supra* note 8. In addition to Green et al.'s latest study on relationships and sense of belonging in legal education, Minneti discusses the role motivation and belonging play in law students' learning in the development and implementation of Seattle's inclusive Access Admission program. Jeffrey J. Minneti, *A Comprehensive Approach to Law School Access Admissions*, 18 U. MD. L.J. RACE RELIG. GENDER & CLASS 189 (2018); see also discussion *infra* Part I.B.3.
12. Leslie Hausmann et al., *Sense of Belonging and Persistence in White and African American First-Year Students*, 50 RES. IN HIGHER EDUC. 649, 650 (2009). Their definition is consistent with that of Hurtado & Carter *supra*, note 5.
13. *Id.*
14. Green et al., *supra* note 8; see also Mary C. Murphy & Sabrina Zirkel, *Race and Belonging in School: How Anticipated and Experienced Belonging Affect Choice, Persistence, and Performance*, 117 TEACHERS COLLEGE RECORD 1 (2015); Gregory M. Walton & Shannon T. Brady, *The Many Questions of Belonging*, in HANDBOOK OF COMPETENCE AND MOTIVATION: THEORY AND APPLICATION 272 (Andrew J. Elliot et al., eds., 2d ed. 2017).

of a student's fit in their law school. In other words, it is about how students subjectively feel a part of their law school community.

Sociology of education research has focused on students' sense of belonging to understand the achievement and persistence of marginalized students in colleges and universities, particularly in historically white institutions.<sup>15</sup> Hostile campus climate, perceived racial tension, stereotypes, and discrimination adversely affect students' sense of belonging, especially for minoritized students.<sup>16</sup> This literature consistently highlights that students' sense of belonging and their experience of higher education depend on their positioning within the broader context of U.S. society as racialized and gendered beings.

### 2. Race, Gender, Stereotypes, and Perceived Discrimination

Today, there are almost 1.34 million lawyers in the United States.<sup>17</sup> This elite profession mostly draws from relatively privileged socioeconomic strata. While as we move further into the twenty-first century, lawyers are more diverse in gender and race than the generations before them,<sup>18</sup> in the last decade we have seen little diversity change in the legal profession. According to the American Bar Association, in the fall of 2018 there were more women enrolled in the first year of law school than men (20366 women compared with 17977 men), and the number of racially/ethnically minoritized students enrolled in the first year had almost doubled from 1990 to 2010 (from 6933 to 11981).<sup>19</sup> Moreover, between 2017 and 2019, more women of color enrolled in the first year of law

15. Hurtado & Carter *supra*, note 5.
16. See, e.g., Catherine Good et al., *Why Do Women Opt Out? Sense of Belonging and Women's Representation in Mathematics*, 102 J. OF PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL PSYCH. 700 (2012); Sylvia Hurtado et al., *Creating Inclusive Environments: The Mediating Effect of Faculty and Staff Validation on the Relationship of Discrimination/Bias to Students' Sense of Belonging*, 1 J. COMMITTED TO SOCIAL CHANGE ON RACE & ETHNICITY 60 (2015); Sylvia Hurtado et al., *Latino Student Transition to College: Assessing Difficulties and Factors in Successful College Adjustment*, 37 RES. IN HIGHER EDUC. 135 (1996); Monica Kirkpatrick Johnson et al., *Students' Attachment and Academic Engagement: The Role of Race and Ethnicity*, 2001 SOCIOLOGY OF EDUC. 318 (2001); Joan M. Ostrove & Susan M. Long, *Social Class and Belonging: Implications for College Adjustment*, 30 REV. OF HIGHER EDUC. 363 (2007); Nicole M. Stephens et al., *Unseen Disadvantage: How American Universities' Focus on Independence Undermines the Academic Performance of First-Generation College Students*, 12 J. OF PERSONALITY & SOCIAL PSYCH. 1178 (2012).
17. *ABA National Lawyer Population Survey Historical Trend in Total National Lawyer Population 1878-2018*, American Bar Association, [https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/market\\_research/Total\\_National\\_Lawyer\\_Population\\_1878-2018.pdf](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/market_research/Total_National_Lawyer_Population_1878-2018.pdf) (last visited Dec. 20, 2019).
18. See Ronit Dinovitzer et al., *After the JD: First Results of a National Study of Legal Careers*, The NALP Foundation for Law Career Research and Education and The American Bar Foundation (2004), [http://www.americanbarfoundation.org/uploads/cms/documents/ajdl\\_final\\_report\\_for\\_distribution.pdf](http://www.americanbarfoundation.org/uploads/cms/documents/ajdl_final_report_for_distribution.pdf).
19. *Various Statistics on ABA Approved Law Schools*, AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, [https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal\\_education/resources/statistics/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/statistics/) (last visited May 26, 2020).

school than men of color.<sup>20</sup> Specifically, more than sixty percent of racially/ethnically minoritized students were women. These figures signal that the legal profession is moving toward more racial and gender diversity, but these numbers also come at a time when 86% of lawyers are white,<sup>21</sup> 37% of lawyers are women,<sup>22</sup> women of color have the highest probability of perceiving discrimination in the legal workplace,<sup>23</sup> and racial and gender inequities persist in the profession.<sup>24</sup>

Students' perceptions of fitting in are linked to their ideologies of themselves as racial, ethnic, cultural, and gendered beings within society.<sup>25</sup> To examine and to understand the full range of student experiences in legal education today, race and gender must be at the center of our discussion, because they are key dimensions of stratification in U.S. society that dictate individuals' judgment of and behavior toward others<sup>26</sup>—as well as how individuals perceive themselves in particular contexts and environments.<sup>27</sup> Actions informed by

20. *Id.*

21. *2020 ABA Profile of the Legal Profession*, AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/news/2020/07/potlp2020.pdf> (last visited Jan. 6, 2021).

22. *Id.*

23. Robert L. Nelson et al., *Perceiving Discrimination: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation in the Legal Workplace*, 44 *LAW & SOC. INQUIRY* 1051 (2019).

24. See, e.g., Fiona M. Kay & Elizabeth H. Gorman, *Which Kinds of Law Firms Have the Most Minority Lawyers? Organizational Context and the Representation of African-Americans, Latinos, and Asian-Americans*, in *DIVERSITY IN PRACTICE: RACE, GENDER, AND CLASS IN LEGAL AND PROFESSIONAL CAREERS* 263–300 (Spencer Headworth et al., eds., 2016); *2019 Report on Diversity in U.S. Law Firms*, National Association for Law Placement, [https://www.nalp.org/uploads/2018NALPReportonDiversityinUSLawFirms\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.nalp.org/uploads/2018NALPReportonDiversityinUSLawFirms_FINAL.pdf) (last visited May 12, 2020); Richard K. Neumann, Jr., *Women in Legal Education: What the Statistics Show*, 50 *J. LEGAL EDUC.* 313 (2000); Mary C. Noonan, Mary E. Corcoran & Paul N. Courant, *Is the Partnership Gap Closing for Women? Cohort Differences in the Sex Gap in Partnership Chances*, 37 *SOCIAL SCI. RES.* 156 (2007); Monique R. Payne-Pikus et al., *Experiencing Discrimination: Race and Retention in America's Largest Law Firms*, 44 *LAW & SOCIETY REV.* 553 (2010).

25. PRUDENCE L. CARTER, *KEEPIN' IT REAL: SCHOOL SUCCESS BEYOND BLACK AND WHITE* (2005).

26. Irene V. Blair & Mahzarin R. Banaji, *Automatic and Controlled Processes in Stereotype Priming*, 70 *J. OF PERSONALITY & SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY* 1142 (1996); Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation*, 62 *AM. SOCIOLOGICAL REV.* 465 (1997); JOE R. FEAGIN & MELVIN P. SIKES, *LIVING WITH RACISM: THE BLACK MIDDLE-CLASS EXPERIENCE* (1994); Susan T. Fiske, *Prejudice, Discrimination, and Stereotyping*, 2 *HANDBOOK OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY* 357 (1998); Peter Glick & Susan T. Fiske, *Gender, Power Dynamics, and Social Interaction*, in *REVISIONING GENDER* (Myra Marx Ferree et al., eds., 1999); Cecilia L. Ridgeway, *Framed Before We Know It: How Gender Shapes Social Relations*, 23 *GENDER & SOCIETY* 145 (2009).

27. See Mary C. Murphy et al., *Signaling Threat: How Situational Cues Affect Women in Math, Science, and Engineering Settings*, 18 *PSYCHOLOGICAL SCI.* 879 (2007); Claude M. Steele, *A threat in the air: How stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance*, 52 *AM. PSYCHOL.* 613 (1997); Claude M. Steele & Joshua Aronson, *Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans*, 69 *J. OF PERSONALITY & SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY* 797 (1995); Claude M. Steele et al., *Contending with group image: The psychology of stereotype and social identity threat*, 34 *ADVANCES IN EXPERIMENTAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY* 379 (2002).

racial and gender bias and stereotypes often result in the marginalization of groups and in inequitable outcomes in various aspects of society.<sup>28</sup>

Notions of minoritized groups' intellectual inferiority are pervasive in U.S. society.<sup>29</sup> For example, black and brown students are often portrayed as dumb, violent, lazy, irresponsible, and dirty.<sup>30</sup> Women are stereotyped as being less competent and authoritative than men and better suited for nurturing and caretaking.<sup>31</sup> Social psychology has established that these stereotypes of minoritized groups have a detrimental effect on performance and academic outcomes because members of minoritized groups are afraid of conforming to these stereotypes. This well-established phenomenon is called stereotype threat.<sup>32</sup> And as a result of long-standing stereotypes about their intellectual abilities, stigmatized students find higher educational environments threatening to their social identities.<sup>33</sup>

28. See Lincoln Quillian, *New Approaches to Understanding Racial Prejudice and Discrimination*, 32 ANN. REV. OF SOCIOLOGY 299 (2006) for a review. Similar to racial stereotypes, gender stereotypes and presumption of incompetence affect work evaluation and opportunities for women's career development. For example, gender bias is seen reflected in wage differences, as research on lawyers found that even after controlling for education, specialization, hours of work, and human and social capital, women still earn less than their male lawyer counterparts. See, e.g., Joni Hersch, *The New Labor Market for Lawyers: Will Female Lawyers Still Earn Less?*, 10 CARDOZO WOMEN'S L.J. 1 (2003); Ronit Dinovitzer et al., *The Differential Valuation of Women's Work: A New Look at the Gender Gap in Lawyers' Incomes*, 88 SOCIAL FORCES 819 (2009); Ronit Dinovitzer & Bryant Garth, *Lawyers and the Legal Profession*, in THE HANDBOOK OF LAW AND SOCIETY 103 (2015).
29. Stereotypes, "faulty or inflexible generalization[s]" about race and gender are so pervasive and ingrained in society that they are easily identified and listed by even those who do not endorse them. See Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954); Susan T. Fiske et al., *A Model of (Often Mixed) Stereotype Content: Competence and Warmth Respectively Follow from Perceived Status and Competition*, 82 J. OF PERSONALITY & SOCIAL PSYCH. 878 (2002); Quillian, *supra* note 28. A society with deeply rooted racial and gender stereotypes inherently yields implicit bias, a subconscious set of stereotypical beliefs "without conscious awareness or conscious control." Jerry Kang & Kristin Lane, *Seeing Through Colorblindness: Implicit Bias and the Law*, 58 UCLA L. REV. 465 (2010); Lincoln Quillian, *Does Unconscious Racism Exist?*, 71 SOCIAL PSYCH. QUARTERLY 6 (2008).
30. Daniel G. Solorzano & Tara J. Yosso, *From Racial Stereotyping and Deficit Discourse Toward a Critical Race Theory in Teacher Education*, 9 MULTICULTURAL EDUC. 2 (2001). In addition to negative stereotypes of inferiority in education associated with Black and brown students, positive stereotypes can have a detrimental effect on minoritized students' performance outcomes. For example, Asians have a positive stereotype that alleges that they have superior math abilities. Cheryan and Bodenhausen found that when ethnicity is made overly salient for Asian American students before a math test, they "choke"—underperform—under the pressure to conform to the stereotype. Sapna Cheryan & Galen V. Bodenhausen, *When Positive Stereotypes Threaten Intellectual Performance: The Psychological Hazards of "Model Minority" Status*, 11 PSYCHOLOGICAL SCI. 399 (2000).
31. Fiske et al., *supra* note 29; see also PRESUMED INCOMPETENT: THE INTERSECTIONS OF RACE AND CLASS FOR WOMEN IN ACADEMIA (Gutiérrez y Muhs et al., eds., 2012) to read about the experience of women of color in academia, including legal academia.
32. Steele & Aronson, *supra* note 27.
33. See, e.g., Tabbye M. Chavous, *The Relationships among Racial Identity, Perceived Ethnic Fit, and*

Similar to stereotypes, discrimination and bias have a detrimental effect on minoritized groups as well. Perceived discrimination<sup>34</sup> is based on self-reported experiences of discrimination by targets.<sup>35</sup> Here I use self-reported experiences of discrimination or bias not to establish the basis of a formal legal claim, but as a measure of inequality<sup>36</sup>—and in this article, self-reported experience of discrimination or bias is a measure of educational inequality. Race and gender, as ascriptive statuses, are associated with perceptions of discrimination.<sup>37</sup> In education, research on adolescents shows that greater perceptions of racial/ethnic discrimination are linked to increased psychological distress, poorer self-esteem, less academic motivation, lower academic achievement, and low engagement.<sup>38</sup> Perceived discrimination has similar detrimental effects on adults' well-being.<sup>39</sup> Both perceived discrimination and the awareness of stereotypes have a significant effect on individuals' performance and well-being.<sup>40</sup> In this article, I broadly refer to self-reported experience of discrimination or bias as perceived experiences of bias because students are asked about discrimination, bias, or unfair treatment.

---

*Organizational Involvement for African American Students at a Predominantly White University*, 26 J. OF BLACK PSYCH. 79 (2000); Stephanie A. Fryberg et al., *Of Warrior Chiefs and Indian Princesses: The Psychological Consequences of American Indian Mascots*, 30 BASIC AND APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY 208 (2008); SCHOOL CONNECTIONS: US MEXICAN YOUTH, PEERS, AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT (Margaret A. Gibson et al., eds., 2004); Murphy & Zirkel, *supra* note 14; Priya Mariana Shimpi & Sabrina Zirkel, *One Hundred and Fifty Years of "The Chinese Question": An Intergroup Relations Perspective on Immigration and Globalization*, 68 J. OF SOCIAL ISSUES 534 (2012).

34. Scholars have noted that perceived discrimination is subject to two kinds of errors: not seeing discrimination that objectively exists and seeing it when it does not exist. Cheryl R. Kaiser & Brenda Major, *A Social Psychological Perspective on Perceiving and Reporting Discrimination*, 31 LAW & SOCIAL INQUIRY 801 (2006); Nelson et al., *supra* note 23. From a personal and social justice perspective, I acknowledge that many minoritized law students often do not have the outlets or the time to express their experiences. Their self-reported experiences are real to them and the consequences, such as the loss of time and energy coping with experiences of bias, are real. Therefore, in their eyes, experiences of discrimination are not perceptions, but actual experiences. From a social science perspective, these self-reported experiences are known as perceived discrimination, and the concept should not be used in a way to dismiss or reinterpret students' experiences and the real impact of these experiences on students' lives.
35. Elizabeth Hirsh & Christopher J. Lyons, *Perceiving Discrimination on the Job: Legal Consciousness, Workplace Context, and the Construction of Race Discrimination*, 44 LAW & SOCIETY REV. 269 (2010); Nelson et al., *supra* note 23; Quillian, *supra* note 28.
36. Nelson et al., *supra* note 23.
37. *Id.*; see also Hirsh & Lyons, *supra* note 35.
38. Aprile D. Benner et al., *Racial/Ethnic Discrimination and Well-Being During Adolescence: A Meta-Analytic Review*, 73 AM. PSYCHOLOGIST 855 (2018).
39. Elizabeth A. Pascoe & Laura Smart Richman, *Perceived Discrimination and Health: A Meta-Analytic Review*, 135 PSYCHOLOGICAL BULLETIN 531 (2009); Michael T. Schmitt et al., *The Consequences of Perceived Discrimination for Psychological Well-Being: A Meta-Analytic Review*, 140 PSYCHOLOGICAL BULLETIN 921 (2014).
40. See *supra* note 27.



### B. Diversity in Legal Education

Critical scholars, qualitative sociologists, and linguistic anthropologists suggest that “law schools are not yet even playing fields for all students.”<sup>41</sup> Empirical scholarship focused on diversity in legal education consistently supports what scholars from other disciplines have found and assert—that minoritized students are experiencing law school differently from their mainstream classmates.

#### 1. Empirical Scholarship on Law School Diversity

In the past two decades, studies of law students’ experiences at various individual schools have mirrored one another. The results of the 2013 SCALE survey<sup>42</sup> of 118 J.D. students at UC Berkeley Law School found that across the 2013 to 2015 classes, minoritized students’ experiences were affected by stereotyping, implicit and explicit bias, and prejudice. Black and Latinx students feared confirming stereotypes.<sup>43</sup> This fear paralyzed them from seeking help—keeping them from admitting when they did not understand content reviewed in class. Moreover, women, Black, and Latinx students felt that faculty prejudged their academic abilities based on students’ race or gender. Darling-Hammond and Holmquist assert these findings are important to address, as “these fears of prejudgment might encourage fears of confirming stereotypes, which in turn might harm academic performance and silence students from pursuing clarification when necessary.”<sup>44</sup>

The findings at Berkeley mirrored those from studies at UCLA, Michigan, Florida, and other schools a decade before. At UCLA Law School, Rachel Moran conducted a survey of her student body that examined law school experiences generally and as they related to diversity.<sup>45</sup> She found that issues of

41. Elizabeth Mertz, *Inside the Law School Classroom: Toward a New Legal Realist Pedagogy*, 60 VAND. L. REV. 483, 511 (2007); see also CARRIE YANG COSTELLO, PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY CRISIS: RACE, CLASS, GENDER, AND SUCCESS AT PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS (2005); MEERA E. DEO ET AL., POWER, LEGAL EDUCATION, AND LAW SCHOOL CULTURES (2020); ROBERT GRANFIELD, MAKING ELITE LAWYERS: VISIONS OF LAW AT HARVARD AND BEYOND (1992); LANI GUINIER ET AL., BECOMING GENTLEMEN: WOMEN, LAW SCHOOL, AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE (1997); ELIZABETH MERTZ, THE LANGUAGE OF LAW SCHOOL: LEARNING TO “THINK LIKE A LAWYER” (2007); WENDY LEO MOORE, REPRODUCING RACISM: WHITE SPACE, ELITE LAW SCHOOLS, AND RACIAL INEQUALITY (2008); Wendy Leo Moore & Joyce M. Bell, *The Right to Be Racist in College: Racist Speech, White Institutional Space, and the First Amendment*, 39 LAW & POL’Y 99, 99–120 (2017); YUNG-YI DIANA PAN, INCIDENTAL RACIALIZATION: PERFORMATIVE ASSIMILATION IN LAW SCHOOL (2017); ROBERT B. STEVENS, LAW SCHOOL: LEGAL EDUCATION IN AMERICA FROM THE 1850S TO THE 1980S (1983); WILLIAM M. SULLIVAN ET AL., EDUCATING LAWYERS: PREPARATION FOR THE PROFESSION OF LAW (2007).
42. UC BERKELEY LAW SCHOOL STUDENT COMMISSION FOR ACCESS TO LEGAL EDUCATION (SCALE), ONE SERIOUS CHALLENGE: SEVEN STRATEGIC INITIATIVES 1 (2013).
43. Darling-Hammond & Holmquist, *supra* note 2.
44. *Id.* at 8.
45. Rachel F. Moran, *Diversity and Its Discontents: The End of Affirmative Action at Boalt Hall*, 88 CALIF. L. REV. 2241 (2000).

race and gender were mostly ignored in the law school curriculum. In fact, she found that when students initiated conversations around diversity, they were dismissed as being “activists” rather than “intellectuals.” A survey of Michigan law students a year later, similarly, found that students of color described the school environment as one characterized by racial separation, racial conflict, and racial misunderstandings, which resulted in their disengagement from the learning process.<sup>46</sup> At the University of Florida, a quantitative study found that many law students perceived that white males were the primary focus of classroom attention and legal knowledge.<sup>47</sup> A pilot daily diary study on law school engagement at an elite urban law school revealed that students who reported events related to their social identity, such as race, said those events adversely affected their self-confidence and sense of belonging in law school.<sup>48</sup> By the end of the first semester, this study found that minoritized students reported significantly lower levels of perceived competence and greater feelings of invisibility, isolation, and alienation.<sup>49</sup>

The race and gender differences in student experiences also appeared at UC Davis, which is considered to be a “kinder” law school.<sup>50</sup> A study there found that while law school is challenging for all students, systemic challenges and stresses were disproportionately experienced more by women and racially minoritized students than white and male students. For example, women described the Socratic method using a language of intimidation and bias.<sup>51</sup> In relation to in-class voluntary participation, students of color and women reported lower satisfaction with their own classroom participation than white and male students. In terms of the emotional labor of law school, law school was more emotionally taxing for women than men, and for students of color than white students.<sup>52</sup>

Other past empirical research from various law schools found that women and students of color participated at lower rates than men and white students.<sup>53</sup> In fact, some students of color refused to participate as a defense mechanism in what they deemed as hostile environments in and outside of the classroom.<sup>54</sup>

46. Walter R. Allen & Daniel G. Solorzano, *Affirmative Action, Educational Equity and Campus Racial Climate: A Case Study of the University of Michigan Law School*, 12 BERKELEY LA RAZA L.J. 237 (2001).

47. Nancy E. Dowd et al., *Diversity Matters: Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in Legal Education*, 15 U. FLA. J.L. & PUB. POL’Y 11 (2003).

48. Bonita London et al., *Psychological Theories of Educational Engagement: A Multi-Method Approach to Studying Individual Engagement and Institutional Change*, 60 VAND. L. REV. 455 (2007). This pilot study was done on two cohorts, with sample sizes of 120 and ninety, respectively.

49. *Id.*

50. Celestial S.D. Cassman & Lisa R. Pruitt, *A Kinder, Gentler Law School? Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Legal Education at King Hall*, 38 U.C. DAVIS L. REV. 1209 (2005).

51. *Id.* at 1248.

52. *Id.* at 1271.

53. Carole J. Buckner, *Realizing Grutter v. Bollinger’s “Compelling Educational Benefits of Diversity” - Transforming Aspirational Rhetoric into Experience*, 72 UMKC L. REV. 877 (2004).

54. *Id.*

The findings of these studies, Buckner argues, suggest that the disengagement of students of color based on classroom environment can have debilitating effects on their academic outcomes, which was echoed by Darling-Hammond and Holmquist in their study a decade later. This lack of engagement can be tied to feelings of isolation and alienation,<sup>55</sup> as Crenshaw similarly wrote about in her 1988 piece, “Toward a Race-Conscious Pedagogy in Legal Education.”<sup>56</sup>

## 2. Need for Intersectional Research

The scholarship on diversity in legal education primarily focuses on single dimensions of stratification, either race or gender. The term intersectionality, first coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, argues that focusing on one dimension of social stratification overlooks the complexity of inequality and how individuals’ multiple social statuses influence their lived experiences.<sup>57</sup> In particular, intersectionality acknowledges that individuals with multiple devalued identities face oppression<sup>58</sup> in a compound way.<sup>59</sup> As Deo explains, “Women of color may suffer oppression based on what is referred to . . . as *raceXgender*. This term highlights the compound effects often caused by holding multiple devalued identity characteristics, namely the intersection of race and gender.”<sup>60</sup>

From Yung-Yi Diana Pan’s qualitative sociological study on how the intersection of race and gender shapes the professional socialization of

55. *Id.*

56. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, *Toward A Race-Conscious Pedagogy in Legal Education*, 11 NAT’L BLACK L.J. 1, 2 (1988). Crenshaw argues that minoritized law students are placed in a difficult situation, where in order to participate in a discussion, they must “stand apart from their history, identity, and their immediate circumstances,” and become “colorless legal analysts.” If students incorporate their minoritized identities and experiences into their class contributions, their comments are disregarded as just subjective opinions. As a result, many minoritized law students tend to feel inferior, which silences their voices in the classroom. This piece still echoes true for many students today, over 30 years later.

57. For example, in her analysis of antidiscrimination law, Crenshaw argues that when black women are forced to assert either a race-based or a gender-based discrimination claim, their injuries as black women are not addressed and remedied. The discrimination experiences suffered by black women are different from that of white women and of black men. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*, U. CHIC. LEGAL FORUM 139 (1989).

58. Collins defines oppression as “any unjust situation where, systemically and over a long period of time, one group denies other group access to the resources of society. Race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, age, and ethnicity among others constitute major forms of oppression in the United States.” PATRICIA HILL COLLINS, *BLACK FEMINIST THOUGHT: KNOWLEDGE, CONSCIOUSNESS, AND THE POLITICS OF EMPOWERMENT* 4 (2000).

59. MEERA E. DEO, *UNEQUAL PROFESSION: RACE AND GENDER IN LEGAL ACADEMIA* (2019).

60. *Id.* at 8. In her study of inequality in legal academia, Deo examines *raceXgender* to see how and why race and gender intersect in the experiences of women faculty of color, as intersectional discrimination and overt and implicit bias hinder them from maximizing success.

Asian American women and Latina law students<sup>61</sup> to García's calls for more institutional and intentional support for Latinas in law school,<sup>62</sup> the need for more raceXgender research vibrates throughout various areas of scholarship on legal education. Women of color are underrepresented in leadership positions in law review,<sup>63</sup> they report being less satisfied in law school,<sup>64</sup> and they are graduating with extreme debt burdens of \$200,000 or more.<sup>65</sup> This article will add to the literature on diversity in law school by examining law students' sense of belonging at the intersection of race and gender, thus bringing the voices of women of color to the forefront.

### 3. Using Sense of Belonging to Study Diversity in Law School

With this empirical scholarship on diversity in law school in mind, it is unsurprising that the most recent study by Green et al. on law students' sense of belonging found that group-based relationship inequalities predict disparities in students' sense of belonging, performance, and education satisfaction.<sup>66</sup> Results of the 2016 LSSSE data from sixty-eight law schools showed that law students of color and first-generation college students—referred to as law students from disadvantaged backgrounds—compared with white, continuing-generation students reported weaker relationships in law school, lower grades,

61. Yung-Yi Diana Pan, *Typecast Socialization: Race, Gender, and Competing Expectations in Law School*, in *DIVERSITY IN PRACTICE: RACE, GENDER, AND CLASS IN LEGAL AND PROFESSIONAL CAREERS* 141 (Spencer Headworth et al., eds., 2016); Yung-Yi Diana Pan *supra*, note 41.
62. Glenda B. García, Comment, *Breaking Down the Walls: Supporting Latinas to Law School Success*, 7 *IND. J. L. SOC. EQUAL.* 374 (2019).
63. Adriane Kayoko Peralta, *The Underrepresentation of Women of Color in Law Review Leadership Positions*, 25 *BERKELEY LA RAZA L.J.* 69 (2015). Peralta argues that some of the challenges women of color face in competing for a law review leadership position lie in being doubly marginalized. Implicit bias hinders women of color's opportunities as they go unchecked in the selection committee processes. In her example, the white woman candidate for the editor-in-chief position was described as "neutral" and "impartial" while the woman of color candidate was described as "biased" and "opinionated." In addition to implicit bias, Peralta unpacks how the lack of faculty mentorship, the lack of peer mentorship, stereotype threat, and the challenges of networking and campaigning in a male- and white-dominated space all create an uphill battle for women of color trying to compete for a leadership position on law review.
64. Meera E. Deo & Chad Christensen, *The Cost of Women's Success*, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research (2019). The 2020 LSSSE annual report also found that "26% of Black women—more than any other raceXgender group—see their schools doing "very little" to create an environment that is supportive of different racial/ethnic identities." Meera E. Deo, & Chad Christensen, *Diversity & Exclusion*, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research (September 2020), <https://lssse.indiana.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Diversity-and-Exclusion-Final-9.29.20.pdf>
65. *Id.*; see also Aaron Taylor, *How the Law School Admission Process Marginalizes Black Aspiring Lawyers*, in *POWER, LEGAL EDUCATION, AND LAW SCHOOL CULTURES* 224 (Meera E. Deo et al., eds. 2020). Legal education is also more expensive for Black and Latinx students.
66. Green et al., *supra* note 8.

and lower law school satisfaction.<sup>67</sup> Additionally, using the 2018 LSSSE data from twenty-five law schools, Green et al. found that weaker relationships predicted a lower sense of belonging, which in turn predicted less education satisfaction and lower grades. These recent findings imply that a sense of belonging may play a role in students' involvement in various performance-based academic, co-curricular, and summer opportunities, which in turn affect their subsequent employment and representation in various areas of legal practice.<sup>68</sup> The implications of these findings are crucial to diversity in the legal profession and access to justice,<sup>69</sup> given that law graduates go on to hold some of the most powerful positions in U.S. society—leading in government, business, politics, and civil affairs.<sup>70</sup>

## Part II: Using LSSSE to Examine Sense of Belonging

### A. Research Questions and Hypotheses

This article engages with the literature in sociology of education and social psychology on students' sense of belonging by empirically examining the law school experience. Specifically, this study focuses on how perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns influence law students' sense of belonging. The following questions guided the research:

1. To what extent does sense of belonging vary by race-gender?
2. What effects do perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns have on law students' sense of belonging?
3. To what extent do perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns vary by race-gender?

Based on the literature review discussed in Part I, I anticipate that sense of belonging, perceived experiences of bias, and stereotype concerns will systematically vary by race-gender. Specifically, I have three hypotheses.

*Hypothesis 1: Compared with white men, white women, and men of color, women of color will have the highest predicted probability of having a low sense of belonging.*

67. These findings hold true above and beyond LSAT scores. Socially disadvantaged groups were defined as Black, Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, Native American, Pacific Islander, or multiracial students and first-generation college students from any racial background.
68. See, e.g., Gerald F. Hess, *Heads and Hearts: The Teaching and Learning Environment in Law School*, 75 J. LEGAL EDUC. 75 (2002); Kennon M. Sheldon & Lawrence S. Krieger, *Does Legal Education have Undermining Effects on Law Students? Evaluating Changes in Motivation, Values, and Well-Being*, 22 BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES & THE LAW 261 (2004); Paul T. Wangerin, *Calculating Rank-In-Class Numbers: The Impact of Grading Differences Among Law School Teachers*, 51 J. LEGAL EDUC. 98 (2001).
69. Research has shown that in a sample of the seventy-five largest counties in the United States, racial/ethnic disparities in criminal sentencing were attenuated when there were more Black and Latinx attorneys in the county. In other words, the differences in criminal sentences for Black and Latinx defendants compared with white defendants were smaller when there was more diversity in the local legal profession. Ryan D. King et al., *Demography of the Legal Profession and Racial Disparities in Sentencing*, 44 LAW & SOC'Y REV. 1 (2010).
70. Sullivan et al., *supra* note 41.

*Hypothesis 2: Perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns will significantly increase the probability of a low sense of belonging.*

*Hypothesis 3: Compared with white men, white women, and men of color, women of color will have the highest predicted probability of experiencing bias and having stereotype concerns.*

Because women experience stereotypes of lacking competence and students of color experience stereotypes of intellectual capacity, I expect those who are either women or a member of a racially or ethnically minoritized group will significantly have a higher probability of a low sense of belonging, a higher probability of perceiving experiences of bias, and a higher probability of having stereotype concerns than white men. However, since women of color are doubly marginalized by race and gender, I expect significant raceXgender differences, where women of color will have the highest probability of a low sense of belonging, of perceiving experiences of bias, and of having stereotype concerns compared with all their peers. Last, since prior research shows that racial tension, hostile racial campus climate, and discrimination adversely affect students' sense of belonging, I expect that perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns to be significantly and negatively associated with sense of belonging. To test these hypotheses, this study uses the 2018 Law School Survey of Student Engagement.<sup>71</sup>

#### *B. 2018 LSSSE Dataset*

The Law School Survey of Student Engagement questions measure various aspects of the student experience, including demographics, academic and intellectual experiences, mental activities, enriching education experiences, student satisfaction, time usage, law school environment, quality of relationships, career expectations, and educational and personal growth outcomes. In addition to these questions, belonging, experiences of bias, stereotype concerns, and personal and emotional support questions were added to the 2018 survey. The Mindsets in Legal Education team added four questions on sense of belonging. My questions on perceived experiences of bias, stereotype concerns, and personal and emotional support were sent to twenty-five U.S. law schools, where all but five of the schools were also given the questions on the sense of belonging. Only current J.D. students were surveyed, and the total analytical sample size is 2527 across seventeen law schools.<sup>72</sup> See Table 1 for a summary of all the variables used in this study.

*Refer to Table 1*

71. Data from the Law School Survey of Student Engagement were used with permission from participating schools and from The Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. The opinions and conclusions contained in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of LSSSE, participating schools, or IUCPR.
72. After cleaning the data, it was found that three schools did not provide LSAT scores for their students. These schools were excluded.

### C. Measures

#### 1. Main Dependent Variable

Belonging is a categorical variable measuring students' sense of belonging during the 2017-2018 school year. The dependent variable was created using two items in the 2018 survey ( $\alpha=.92$ ) that assessed students' sense of belonging.<sup>73</sup> Current J.D. students were asked to specify on a six-point scale if they strongly disagreed, disagreed, somewhat disagreed, somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with the following two statements, "I feel like I belong at this law school" and "I fit well at this law school." The two items were averaged to create a composite where higher numbers indicate greater sense of belonging.<sup>74</sup> However, a categorical measure of belonging was found to be more favorable over the continuous measure because ordinary least squares regression models on the continuous measure of belonging failed to meet the assumptions of the model. Residuals were not distributed normally. More importantly, a categorical analysis was investigated and selected<sup>75</sup> based on prior literature about sense of belonging and the motivation to understand why students feel a low sense of belonging. In the full analytic sample, fifteen percent of the respondents had a low sense of belonging, 54 percent had a moderate sense of belonging, and thirty-one percent had a high sense of belonging (see Table 1).

#### 2. Perceived Experiences of Bias

To capture the various kinds of perceived experiences of bias in law school, I use two individual items that broadly ask about negative experiences based on ascriptive characteristics.<sup>76</sup> Students were asked to respond to "I experienced not being taken seriously in a class because of my race/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation" and "I have experienced bias, discrimination, or unfair treatment at my law school based on my race/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation." The experienced discrimination/bias and not-taken-seriously variables are binary and each equals one if respondents agreed with the statements.<sup>77</sup> In the total analytical sample, thirteen percent of the respondents reported experiencing bias, discrimination, or unfair treatment at their law school based on their race/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation, and sixteen percent reported experiencing not being taken seriously in a class because of their race/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation (see Table 1).

73. These are measures used by Green et al., *supra* note 8 and Murphy & Zirkel, *supra* note 14.

74. See Green et al., *supra* note 8.

75. The categorical and OLS analyses both result in a similar conclusion. However, the OLS violated the assumptions of the model.

76. This helps avoid the difficulty of subjective definitions of discrimination. See Nelson et al., *supra* note 23.

77. Perceived-experience-of-bias variables were run as categorical as well, and the findings are the same. For interpretation and simplicity, I decided to keep the variables binary.

### 3. *Stereotype Concerns*

Stereotype concerns are measured by two individual items that asked respondents to specify whether they agreed with the following two statements: “In class, I worry that my professor underestimates my intelligence” and “Others in my school would be surprised to see me succeed.” The worry and surprised variables are binary and each equals one if respondents agreed with the statements.<sup>78</sup> In the full analytical sample, twenty-six percent of the respondents reported that in class they worry about their professor underestimating their intelligence, and nineteen percent of the respondents reported that others in their school would be surprised to see them succeed (see Table 1).

### 4. *Race-Gender*

The primary focus of this study is to examine the experiences of minoritized law students at the intersection of race and gender.<sup>79</sup> Race/ethnicity and gender information were self-reported by students and by law schools. For students who did not indicate their race/ethnicity or gender, I substituted the race or gender reported to LSSSE by their law schools. This study specifically analyzes sense of belonging of white men, white women, men of color, and women of color. In the full analytical sample, thirty-three percent of the respondents were white men, thirty-seven percent were white women, eleven percent were men of color, and nineteen percent were women of color (see Table 1).

### 5. *Controls*

Demographic, past performance, enrollment status, and school controls measures are included. LSSSE explicitly asks students if they are first-generation college students, which is defined as neither parent/guardian holds a bachelor’s degree. First-generation status is a dichotomous variable where the number of respondents who are first-generation college students is set to one. In the sample, thirty-one percent of the respondents are first-generation college students. I control for how life course can affect how students experience and navigate law school using age. Experiencing legal education while transitioning into a new country and education system brings its own set of needs and nuances. Therefore, I also control for whether or not students self-identified as international or foreign national. Moreover, I control for past academic performance that can affect how students perceive their personal abilities to succeed in law school. Specifically, I control for LSAT performance. The LSAT scores are provided by each individual law school and not self-reported by the respondents.

78. Stereotype-concern variables were run as categorical as well, and the findings are the same. For interpretation and simplicity, I decided to keep the variables binary.
79. The sample size limits my ability to explore the specific experiences of various groups of men and women of color. It is critical and essential to do more research to understand the needs and experiences of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other minoritized groups, especially at the intersection of gender identity.



Experiences may also vary based on their enrollment status. I control for full-time status because students in a part-time program will not be exposed to the same environments and dynamics as students who spend most of their time at the school. Most J.D. programs take three years to complete; however, for those in a part-time program, it may take longer. Therefore, I control for class status (1L, 2L, 3L, and 4L). Moreover, the first-year experience is one of the toughest students will endure; therefore, it is important to account for varying experiences across classes. Transfer student status is also controlled because transfer students have the added task of transitioning into a new school a year after everyone else has settled into their schools.

Last, the focus of this article is to examine individual-level effects. To protect the anonymity of the schools, no other information, such as geographic location, school size, or type of school (private versus public, online programs, and religious institutions) could be provided by LSSSE. Therefore, there were not enough variables to use to control every school-level factor.<sup>80</sup> However, LSSSE provided arbitrary school identification number variables. The school variables absorb all unobserved characteristics of the schools. As a result, including the school dummy variables is the best approach for isolating individual-level factors with precision.

#### *D. Analytical Strategy*

Since the main outcome of interest—sense of belonging—is categorical, ordered logistic regression models<sup>81</sup> are used to estimate students' sense of belonging.<sup>82</sup> Given that respondents are from seventeen law schools, concerns

80. I ran the models using three school-level covariates. From the school ID variable, I created aggregated variables for school diversity and school selectivity. School diversity was measured by the percentage of respondents in each school who reported being only white. School selectivity was measured by calculating the median LSAT score for each individual school. In addition to school diversity and school selectivity, each school was assigned an aggregated law school environment score by using LSSSE's law school environment scale. The five items used for the law school environment scores asked how much (very little, some, quite a bit, and very much) their law schools emphasized the following forms of support, contact, and help: "Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically," "Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, sexual orientation, and racial or ethnic backgrounds," "Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)," "Providing the support you need to thrive socially," and "Providing the financial counseling you need to afford your education." The higher the law school environment score, the more students perceived a supportive, encouraging, positive law school environment. The outcomes with these three school-level covariates were the same as the outcomes presented in this study with just the school id variables.
81. Proportional odds assumptions or parallel regression assumptions are tested for each model. Assumptions are not violated. Multinomial regression models replicated the findings.
82. Various studies examining LSSSE data use continuous dependent variables and multilevel regression models. However, unlike studies that examine data from twenty-five to sixty-seven schools, this study is examining respondents from seventeen schools. A multilevel modeling approach can protect against inflated standard errors. However, Bryan and Jenkins caution against the use of multilevel modeling with smaller sample sizes, which in their case was fewer than twenty-five countries. They found that in instances with a large sample size

about inflated standard errors are addressed by using clustered standard errors for all models. Because the various forms of perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns are dichotomous, binary logistic regressions are used to examine to what extent they vary by race-gender. Base and full models are presented. Base models regress only sense of belonging, perceived experiences of bias, or stereotype concerns on race-gender. Full models include other independent variables of interest along with demographic, past performance, enrollment status, and school ID controls. Average marginal effects (AMEs) are presented for each regressed model.<sup>83</sup>

For ease of interpretation, predicted probabilities and average marginal effects are presented throughout the article. Average marginal effects are estimated by calculating a marginal effect—the difference between the predicted probabilities for each group—for every observation in the sample, instead of fixing the other independent variables at means<sup>84</sup> and then averaging these effects.<sup>85</sup> For example, in this article an AME can be interpreted as the effect of changing the value from not perceiving experiences of bias discrimination or unfair treatment to perceiving experiences of bias discrimination or unfair treatment on the probability of a low sense of belonging, holding all remaining variables at observed values. In other words, AMEs illustrate the difference between perceiving experiences of bias discrimination or unfair treatment and not perceiving experiences of bias discrimination or unfair treatment on students' sense of belonging. This method is helpful for comparing groups.<sup>86</sup>

I proceed in two steps. First, I present overall AMEs and predicted probabilities for race-gender (Table 3 and Figure 1) and overall AMEs for perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns (Table 3). Comparing the magnitudes of these effects allows me to test *Hypotheses 1 and 2*. Second, I present overall AMEs and average predicted probabilities of race-gender (Table 4 and Figure 2). Comparing the magnitudes of these effects allows me to test *Hypothesis 3*.

Last, for a clear and concise explanation of the findings, the analyses in Part III are limited to the probability of a low sense of belonging, but the full

---

of individuals within each country but a small number of countries, analysts can reliably estimate individual-level effects but the estimates of parameters summarizing country effects are likely to be unreliable. Mark L. Bryan, & Stephen P. Jenkins, *Multilevel Modelling of Country Effects: A Cautionary Tale*, 32 *EUROPEAN SOCIOLOGICAL REV.* 3 (2016). Therefore, it was best to use clustered standard errors to address the standard errors concern.

83. Only parts of the models are presented in this article for practical purposes. The average marginal effects of the full ordered logistic regression models from this study are found in the Appendix.
84. Richard Williams, *Using the Margins Command to Estimate and Interpret Adjusted Predictions and Marginal Effects*, 12 *STATA JOURNAL* 308 (2012).
85. J. Scott Long & Jeremy Freese, *Regression Models for Categorical Dependent Variables Using Stata* (2014); Trenton D. Mize, *Best Practices for Estimating, Interpreting, and Presenting Nonlinear Interaction Effects*, 6 *SOCIOLOGICAL SCI.* 81 (2019).
86. *Id.*

ordered logistic regression models are presented in the Appendix where the AMEs are calculated for the probability of each sense of belonging category—low, moderate, and high. The story told by analyzing low sense of belonging is similar to the examination of moderate sense of belonging, and the same story is revealed when examining high sense of belonging, except in the inverse.

### *E. Limitations*

It is important to keep in mind the limitations and constraints of this study. First, this study is limited to a snapshot of the student experience, given that LSSSE is a cross-sectional dataset. A qualitative study, such as interviews and focus groups, could provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of sense of belonging in legal education. Second, this study examines the experiences of students across seventeen anonymous U.S. law schools and the generalizability of the findings is limited to those seventeen schools. Due to the small sample size in this study, more research is needed to examine intragroup heterogeneity. There may be more intragroup differences that are not captured when all racial and ethnicity students are grouped together along their gender. In particular, more research is needed about the experiences of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other marginalized groups. Even within Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other marginalized communities, there is diversity in experience based on ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, immigrant status, disability, socioeconomic status, and other intersecting identities.

In order to protect the identities of the schools, information about each school was limited. There is no information on geographic location, school size, and type of school (private versus public, online programs, and religious institutions). The focus of this study is on the individual-level experience, but I acknowledge that student experiences can vary at different tiered schools and shaped by other structural factors at their schools. However, to address this concern and limitation, fixed effects for law school were included to control for the heterogeneity of law schools and to isolate individual-level factors with precision. With these limitations in mind, this article still provides valuable insight on who perceives experiences of bias and stereotype concerns, and their effects on students' sense of belonging to help improve legal education.

## **Part III: Results**

### *A. Descriptive Statistics*

The descriptive statistics in Table 2 show the majority of students across race-gender groups have a moderate sense of belonging. However, more women of color have a low sense of belonging compared with the other groups. Additionally, women of color have the highest rates of perceived experiences of bias. Women of color have the highest rate of self-reporting experiences of bias, discrimination, or unfair treatment at their law school, at twenty-three percent, which is significantly higher than for white men, at nine percent ( $t =$

-6.85;  $p < .001$ ); white women, at twelve percent ( $t = -5.66$ ;  $p < .001$ ); and men of color, at thirteen percent ( $t = -3.48$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Similarly, women of color have the highest rate of self-reporting experiences of not being taken seriously in class, at twenty-nine percent, which is significantly higher than for white men, at nine percent ( $t = -10.10$ ;  $p < .001$ ); white women, at seventeen percent ( $t = -5.68$ ;  $p < .001$ ); and men of color, at thirteen percent ( $t = -5.36$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, white women have a significantly higher rate of self-reporting experiences of not being taken seriously than white men ( $t = -4.92$ ;  $p < .001$ ). These descriptive statistics show significant race-gender differences in law school experiences.

*Refer to Table 2*

*B. Probability of a Low Sense of Belonging: Who Feels a Sense of Belonging in Law School?*

Table 3 shows that there is evidence of significant race-gender differences in students' sense of belonging, even after including controls.<sup>87</sup> White women and women of color are significantly more likely than white men to have a low sense of belonging in law school. Specifically, in Table 3 Model 2, AMEs—the average white female predicted probability minus average white male predicted probability—reveal that white women have a probability of a low sense of belonging that is two percentage points ( $p < .01$ ) higher than for white men. Women of color have a probability of a low sense of belonging that is six percentage points ( $p < .001$ ) higher than for white men.

*Refer to Table 3*

Figure 1 shows that women of color are significantly more likely to have a low sense of belonging not only compared with white men ( $p < .001$ ) but also compared with white women ( $p < .05$ ) and men of color ( $p < .01$ ). Specifically, the calculation of marginal effects reveals that women of color have a predicted probability of a low sense of belonging of eighteen percent, which is significantly higher than white men's thirteen percent, white women's fifteen percent, and men of color's fourteen percent. The same patterns are observed when examining the predicted probabilities for a moderate sense of belonging and a high sense of belonging. Likewise, white women differ significantly from white men in their probability of a moderate sense of belonging and a high sense of belonging (see Appendix).

*Refer to Figure 1*

Overall, these findings indicate that white women and women of color significantly differ from white men in their experiences, but that women of color also significantly differ from white women and men of color in their predicted probability of a low sense of belonging. These findings support *Hypothesis 1*, which expected a significant raceXgender difference where women of color have the highest predicted probability of a low sense of belonging.

87. Model 1 shows the base model where sense of belonging is regressed only on race-gender. No controls are included in Model 1. The race-gender difference is significant even before the inclusion of controls.

*C. The Effects of Perceived Experiences of Bias and Stereotype Concerns on Students' Sense of Belonging in Law School*

Model 3 in Table 3 shows estimates of how exactly perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns influence sense of belonging after taking into account race-gender and demographic, enrollment status, past performance, and school controls. First, it should be noted that while transfer student status and upper-class year (3L and 4L) are significantly related to sense of belonging, they do not mitigate the relationship between perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns and sense of belonging (see Appendix). However, it appears that perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns explain away the significant effect of race-gender on sense of belonging. Compared with Models 1 and 2, the differences between white women and white men and between women of color and white men are no longer significant in Model 3. Therefore, these patterns suggest that perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns partially explain the race-gender differences in students' sense of belonging observed earlier. In other words, this finding suggests that white women and women of color have a higher probability of a low sense of belonging because of the experiences of bias and stereotype concerns they faced and felt in their law schools.

*Refer to Table 3*

All forms of perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns are significantly and adversely associated with sense of belonging. Students who perceived experiences of bias, discrimination, or unfair treatment at their law school have a probability of a low sense of belonging that is eight percentage points ( $p < .05$ ) higher than for students who do not. Students who perceived not being taken seriously in class also have a probability of a low sense of belonging that is four percentage points ( $p < .05$ ) higher than for students who do not perceive not being taken seriously. Those who indicate worrying that their professors underestimate their intelligence have a probability of a low sense of belonging that is twelve percentage points ( $p < .001$ ) higher than for students who do not worry. Students who agree that others in their school would be surprised to see them succeed have a probability of a low sense of belonging that is seven percentage points ( $p < .001$ ) higher than for students who do not. Similar patterns are seen in the probabilities of a moderate sense of belonging and a high sense of belonging (see Appendix).

Overall, these findings indicate that all measures of perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns significantly and adversely affect students' sense of belonging. These findings support *Hypothesis 2*, which expected perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns to significantly increase the probability of having a low sense of belonging.

*D. The Probability of Experiencing Bias and Stereotype Concerns by Race-Gender*

Table 4 shows that both in the base and full models, perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns are patterned by race-gender. While age,

LSAT score, full-time status, and class year controls are significantly related to students' perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns, they do not explain away the significant differences based on race-gender (see Appendix).

*Refer to Table 4*

The full models in Table 4 show that minoritized students are more likely to perceive experiences of bias than their white male classmates. Specifically, women of color have a probability of experiencing bias, discrimination, or unfair treatment at their law school that is thirteen percentage points ( $p < .001$ ) higher than for white men. White women have a probability of not being taken seriously that is eight percentage points ( $p < .001$ ) higher than for white men. Men of color have a probability of not being taken seriously that is five percentage points ( $p < .05$ ) higher than for white men.<sup>88</sup> However, women of color have a probability of not being taken seriously that is poignantly twenty-two percentage points higher than for white men.

Minoritized students are also more likely to report stereotype concerns than their white male classmates. White women have a probability of worrying that their professors underestimate their intelligence that is seven percentage points ( $p < .001$ ) higher than for white men. Women of color have a probability of worrying that their professors underestimate their intelligence that is thirteen percentage points ( $p < .001$ ) higher than for white men. White women have a probability of reporting that others in their school would be surprised to see them succeed that is three percentage points ( $p < .05$ ) higher than for white men. Men of color have a probability of reporting that others in their school would be surprised to see them succeed that is seven percentage points ( $p < .01$ ) higher than for white men. Women of color have a probability of reporting that others in their school would be surprised to see them succeed that is twelve percentage points ( $p < .001$ ) higher than for white men.

Figure 2 visually shows that across the board women of color have the highest predicted probabilities of perceived experiences of bias compared with not just white men, as seen in Table 3, but with everyone else. Specifically, women of color have a predicted probability of experiencing bias, discrimination, or unfair treatment at their law school of twenty-two percent, which is significantly higher than white women's twelve percent ( $p < .001$ ) and men of color's twelve percent ( $p < .01$ ). And women of color have a higher predicted probability of not being taken seriously of thirty percent, which is significantly higher than white men's eight percent ( $p < .001$ ) and men of color's thirteen percent ( $p < .001$ ).

*Refer to Figure 2*

Similarly, women of color have the highest predicted probabilities of stereotype concerns compared with everyone else. Specifically, women of color have a predicted probability of worrying that their professors underestimate their intelligence of thirty-four percent, which is significantly higher than white women's twenty-eight percent ( $p < .01$ ) and men of color's twenty-four percent

88. It should be noted that the inclusion of demographic, enrollment status, past performance, and school controls made the difference between men of color and white men significant.

( $p < .01$ ). And women of color have a predicted probability of reporting that others in their school would be surprised to see them succeed of twenty-seven percent, which is significantly higher than white women's eighteen percent ( $p < .001$ ) and men of color's twenty-two percent ( $p < .05$ ).

While minoritized students are more likely to self-report experiences bias and stereotype concerns than white men, the most poignant and consistent finding across all models is the alarmingly high predicted probabilities for women of color compared with white men, white women, and men of color. These findings support *Hypothesis 3* which expected women of color to have the highest predicted probability of experiencing bias and stereotype concerns in law school.

#### **Part IV: Discussion and Implication: Improving Legal Education**

At the individual level, minoritized law students are juggling more than just preparing for class. They must also actively engage with marginalizing biases and stereotypes to experience educational mobility.<sup>89</sup> This study presents four main findings that support prior established literature on diversity in legal education across various disciplines. First, this study reveals that there is a significant difference in sense of belonging between white women and white men and between women of color and white men. This finding is particularly salient for women of color, who have the highest predicted probability of having a low sense of belonging compared with not just white men, but white women and men of color too—suggesting a significant raceXgender difference of sense of belonging in legal education.

Second, this study shows that perceived experiences of bias, discrimination, or unfair treatment, experiences of not being taken seriously in class, worrying that the professor underestimates their intelligence, and indicating that others would be surprised to see them succeed all significantly and adversely influence students' sense of belonging—increasing the probability of a low sense of belonging. These findings hold even after accounting for demographic, enrollment status, past performance, and school controls.

Third, the findings of this study reveal that compared with white men, white women and women of color have a higher probability of a low sense of belonging in part because of their perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns. And fourth, this study found that perceived experiences of bias and students' concerns about stereotypes associated with their social identity are prevalent in law school. Minoritized students are more likely to perceive experiences of bias and report stereotype concerns than their white male classmates, but this finding, again, is particularly poignant for women of color, who also significantly differ from white women and men of color.

The significant raceXgender differences found throughout this study highlight the vulnerability and marginalization of women of color in legal education. Although these perceptions and concerns are self-reported by

89. Evans and Moore, *supra* note 2.

individuals from seventeen different law schools, in the aggregate, the findings suggest there is a pattern of a social experience that women of color likely have in common in law schools throughout the country. Therefore, to the extent these perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns are captured in this study, this raceXgender difference should be taken seriously in the ongoing conversation surrounding diversity and inequity in legal education, which are prevalent in the legal profession as well.<sup>90</sup>

Law schools are not immune to the effects of race, gender, and other social stratifying mechanisms in and outside the classroom. As Justice Sotomayor said, “Race matters because the slights, the snickers, the silent judgments that reinforce that most crippling of thoughts: ‘I do not belong here.’”<sup>91</sup> Students feel they do not belong because of the experiences they are having while in law school. Minoritized students are expected to excel in law school burdened by doubt, presumptions of incompetence, subtle implicit bias, and the pervasive stereotypes that hijack their interactions with others. These findings have implications for students’ persistence, engagement, and achievement, which have been empirically linked to sense of belonging.<sup>92</sup>

Therefore, to effectively foster a sense of belonging, it is imperative to understand who are our students and their racial, ethnic, and gendered lived experiences during law school that affect their well-being,<sup>93</sup> how they learn,<sup>94</sup> and how they interact with others, including faculty. Deans, administrators, faculty, clinicians, career advisors, student affairs professionals, and future employers must take these findings into account in policies, strategic planning, hiring,<sup>95</sup> pedagogy, mentorship, academic support programming, teaching of legal ethics, experiential learning opportunities, and access to other professional development opportunities, such as researching with faculty, clinics, internships, journal, and moot court.

90. See Eric Chung et al., *A Portrait of Asian Americans in the Law*, Yale Law School (2017); Deo, *supra* note 59; Gladys García-López, “*Nunca Te Toman En Cuenta [They Never Take You Into Account]*”: *The Challenges of Inclusion and Strategies for Success of Chicana Attorneys*, 22 *GENDER & SOCIETY* 590 (2008); Nelson et al., *supra* note 23; ARAVINDA NADIMPALLI REEVES, *GENDER MATTERS, RACE MATTERS: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF GENDER & RACE DYNAMICS IN LAW FIRMS* (2001) (doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University); see also *supra* note 24.
91. *Schuette v. Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action, Integration & Immigrant Rights & Fight for Equal by Any Means Necessary (BAMN)*, 134 S. Ct. 1623, 1667 (2014) (Sotomayor, J., dissenting).
92. Hurtado & Carter, *supra* note 5.
93. Eliza K. Pavalko et al., *Does Perceived Discrimination Affect Health? Longitudinal Relationships Between Work Discrimination and Women’s Physical and Emotional Health*, *J. HEALTH & SOCIAL BEHAVIOR* 18 (2003).
94. See, e.g., *supra* note 27.
95. See, e.g., Meera E. Deo et al., *Paint by Number? How the Race and Gender of Law School Faculty Affect the First-Year Curriculum*, 29 *CHICANA/O-LATINA/O L.J.* 1 (2010).



The latest research on diverse interactions<sup>96</sup> and inclusive teaching offer insight on how to better support and foster students' sense of belonging in the classroom. For example, a survey and focus group study of Michigan Law students during the 2009–2010 school year found that while there were sufficient numbers of students of color to yield diverse interactions and that in fact positive interracial student exchanges were occurring, lively discussions stemming from this diversity were not taking place in the classroom.<sup>97</sup> To experience the full academic and professional benefits of diversity education anticipated in *Grutter*<sup>98</sup> for all students, Deo argues, fostering diversity and inclusive discussions is key.<sup>99</sup> Scholars suggest that inclusive legal curriculum and transformative pedagogy will not only enrich students' learning, but will encourage students from all backgrounds to contribute and to feel that their contributions are valued.<sup>100</sup> The training and support for faculty as effective and inclusive facilitators in the classroom will send students, especially minoritized students, the encouraging message of inclusivity<sup>101</sup> to counter marginalizing experiences and concerns.<sup>102</sup>

Additionally, social psychology shows promising intervention strategies to cultivate a sense of belonging and to improve performance.<sup>103</sup> For example, in their study of women in math, Good, Rattan, and Dweck found that the message that math ability is a fixed trait and that women have a lesser math ability than men worked together to erode women's sense of belonging in math, which mediated their decision to pursue math in the future.<sup>104</sup> This

96. Rocconi et al. found that structural diversity, perceptions of a supportive and friendly law school environment, interactions with faculty members, positive relationships with other students, pro bono work, and membership in a student organization are related with more frequent diverse interactions. Louis M. Rocconi et al., *Beyond the Numbers: An Examination of Diverse Interactions in Law School*, 12 J. DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUC. 27 (2019).
97. Meera E. Deo, *The Promise of Grutter: Diverse Interactions at the University of Michigan Law School*, 17 MICH. J. RACE & L. 63 (2011).
98. *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306, 308 (2003).
99. *Id.*; see also Buckner, *supra* note 53; Okianer Christian Dark, *Incorporating Issues of Race, Gender, Class, Sexual Orientation, and Disability into Law School Teaching*, 32 WILLAMETTE L. REV. 541 (1996); Darling-Hammond & Holmquist, *supra* note 2; Deo et al., *supra* note 95; Mertz, *supra* note 41; Moran, *supra* note 45.
100. Deo et al., *supra* note 95; Darling-Hammond & Holmquist, *supra* note 2.
101. *Id.*
102. Hurtado, Alvarado, and Guillermo-Wann found that academic and general interpersonal validation mediated the impact of discrimination and bias on students' sense of belonging. This study suggests that students are reading cues from faculty and staff about whether the educational environment is inclusive. Efforts made by concerned institutional agents can help students feel empowered—validated—which can fortify students against the effects of discriminatory experiences. Hurtado et al., *supra* note 16.
103. See generally Gregory M. Walton & Timothy D. Wilson, *Wise Interventions: Psychological Remedies for Social and Personal Problems*, 125 PSYCH. REV. 617 (2018).
104. Good et al., *supra* note 16. .

study implies that interventions related to both messaging on mindset and stereotypes can improve sense of belonging and encourage students' career aspirations. The latest research on mindset and bar passage in California reveals this to be a promising strategy for improving legal education, especially for minoritized groups, like those in this study.<sup>105</sup>

Lastly, more intentional, interdisciplinary, and empirical research<sup>106</sup> is needed to inform *proactive* efforts for improving legal education, and consequently, the legal profession.<sup>107</sup> To systemically address inequity, it must first be observed and recorded. More work is needed to examine the experiences of men and women from Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other marginalized groups. How do various minoritized students cope with perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns, and whether these coping mechanisms help improve their sense of belonging?<sup>108</sup> How often do students who perceive that they are targets of bias leave law school? And at what point in their law school career do they leave? How does sense of belonging influence graduation rates across race-gender groups? How do perceptions of experiences of bias, stereotype concerns, and a low sense of belonging influence students' career aspirations and career trajectory after law school? The answers to these questions are important not just for the recruitment and retention of a diverse student body in law school, but also for the future of the legal profession.

105. Victor D. Quintanilla & Sam Erman, *Mindsets in Legal Education*, 69 J. LEGAL EDUC. 412 (2020).

106. Here, LSSSE provides rich data that can be mined to improve legal education, as shown by the other studies in this issue.

107. More needs to be done for our students. As the 2020 LSSSE Annual report revealed, "present day law students of color, especially Black women, and other law students from underrepresented groups continue to feel that their law schools do not value their presence or work hard enough to foster environments conducive to a wide range of students." Deo & Christensen, *supra* note 64. To learn more about how schools and deans can fight for justice and equity, check out the AALS Law Deans Antiracist Clearinghouse Project.

108. My dissertation research, using LSSSE data, takes this current research a step further. In addition to examining the influence of race-gender, perceived experiences of bias, and stereotype concerns on sense of belonging, I examine how various sources of social capital, specifically support from student affairs, having someone to confide in at the law school, quality of relationship with faculty, quality of relationship with other students, and support provided by student organizations influence students' sense of belonging and to what extent these sources of social capital mitigate the effects of perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns on students' sense of belonging.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Full Sample (N=2527)

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
<b>Sense of Belonging</b>				
Low	.15		0	1
Moderate	.54		0	1
High	.31		0	1
<b>Minoritized Status</b>				
White Men	.33		0	1
White Women	.37		0	1
Men of Color	.11		0	1
Women of Color	.19		0	1
<b>Demographic Controls</b>				
First-Generation College Student	.31		0	1
International Student	.04		0	1
Age: Younger than 30 years old	.81		0	1
<b>Past Performance Control</b>				
LSAT Score	153.95	6.03	135	174
<b>Enrollment Status Controls</b>				
Full-time Status	.87		0	1
Transfer Student	.03		0	1
Class				
1L	.35		0	1
2L	.32		0	1
3L	.30		0	1
4L	.02		0	1
<b>Perceived Experience of Bias</b>				
I have experienced <i>bias, discrimination,</i> or unfair treatment at my law school	.13		0	1
I experienced not being taken <i>seriously</i> in a class	.16		0	1
<b>Stereotype Concerns</b>				
In class, I <i>worry</i> that my professor underestimates my intelligence	.26		0	1
Others in my school would be <i>surprised</i> to see me succeed	.19		0	1

**Table 2 Means for Belonging, Perceived Experiences of Bias, and Stereotype Concerns by Race-Gender**

	White Men (N=829)	White Women (N=941)	Men of Color (N=279)	Women of Color (N=478)
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
<b>Sense of Belonging</b>				
Low	.13	.14	.14	.19
Moderate	.52	.56	.54	.54
High	.35	.30	.32	.26
<b>Perceived Experiences of Bias</b>				
I have experienced <i>bias</i> , <i>discrimination</i> , or unfair treatment at my law school	.09	.11	.13	.23
I experienced not being taken <i>seriously</i> in a class	.09	.16	.13	.29
<b>Stereotype Concerns</b>				
In class, I <i>worry</i> that my professor underestimates my intelligence	.20	.28	.24	.36
Others in my school would be <i>surprised</i> to see me succeed	.14	.18	.22	.29

**Table 3: Average Marginal Effects on Low Sense of Belonging Across Race-Gender, Perceived Experiences of Bias, and Stereotype Concerns (N=2527)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Minoritized Status</b> ( <i>versus White Men</i> )			
White Women	.02**	.02**	.01
Men of Color	.01	.01	.00
Women of Color	.06***	.06***	.01
<b>Perceived Experiences of Bias</b>			
I have experienced <i>bias, discrimination</i> , or unfair treatment at my law school			.08**
I experienced not being taken <i>seriously</i> in a class			.04*
<b>Stereotype Concerns</b>			
In class, I <i>worry</i> that my professor underestimates my intelligence			.12***
Others in my school would be <i>surprised</i> to see me succeed			.07***

Notes: Average marginal effects were calculated from ordered logistic regressions predicting sense of belonging. Model 1 is the base model with no controls. Model 2 includes school controls. Model 3 is the full model with all variables and demographic, enrollment status, past performance, and school controls. Only estimates for low sense of belonging are presented. Full models presented in the Appendix.

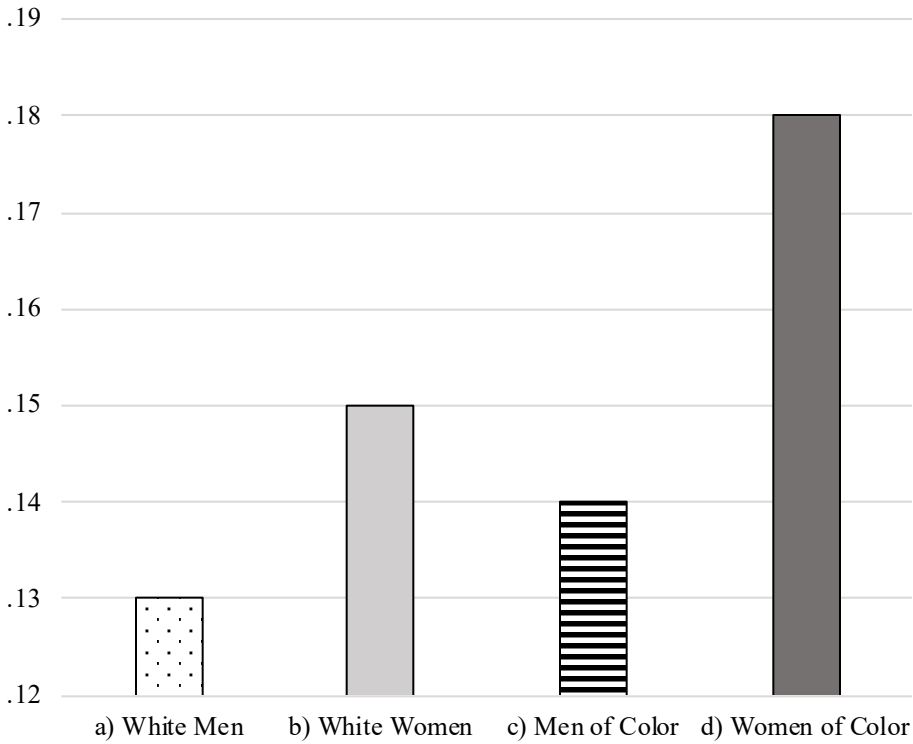
\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

**Table 4: Average Marginal Effects on Perceived Experiences of Bias and Stereotype Concerns Across Race-Gender (N=2527)**

Perceived Experiences of Bias				
	I have experienced <i>bias</i> , <i>discrimination</i> , or unfair treatment at my law school		I experienced not being taken <i>seriously</i> in a class	
	Base	Full	Base	Full
<b>Minoritized Status</b> ( <i>versus White Men</i> )				
White Women	.02	.02	.08***	.08***
Men of Color	.03	.03	.04	.05*
Women of Color	.14***	.13***	.21***	.22***
Stereotype Concerns				
	In class, I <i>worry</i> that my professor underestimates my intelligence		Others in my school would be <i>surprised</i> to see me succeed	
	Base	Full	Base	Full
<b>Minoritized Status</b> ( <i>versus White Men</i> )				
White Women	.08***	.07***	.04**	.03*
Men of Color	.04	.03	.08**	.07**
Women of Color	.16***	.13***	.15***	.12***

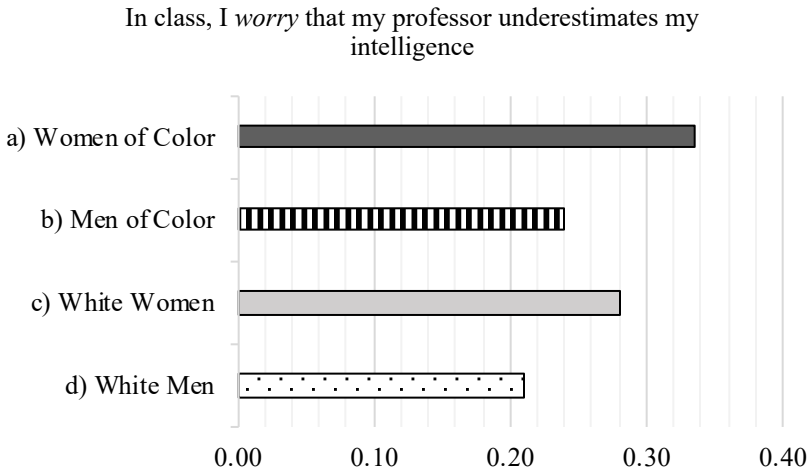
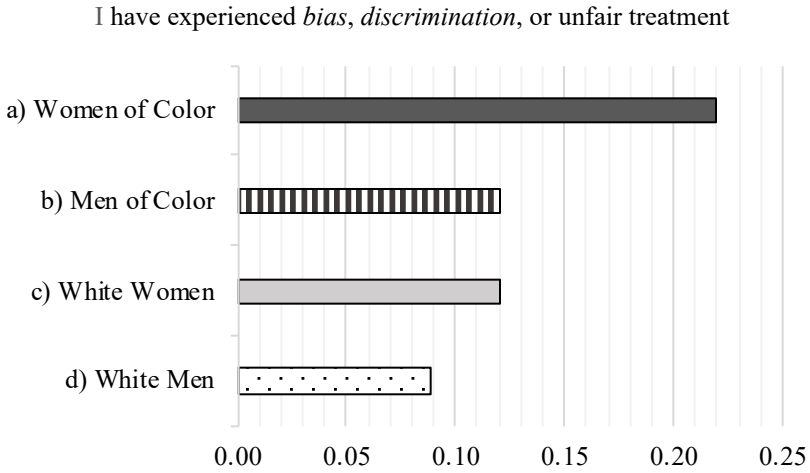
Notes: Average marginal effects were calculated from binary logistic regressions predicted each form of perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns. Full models are presented in the Appendix. \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

**Figure 1: Average Predicted Probabilities for Low Sense of Belonging by Race-Gender (N= 2527)**

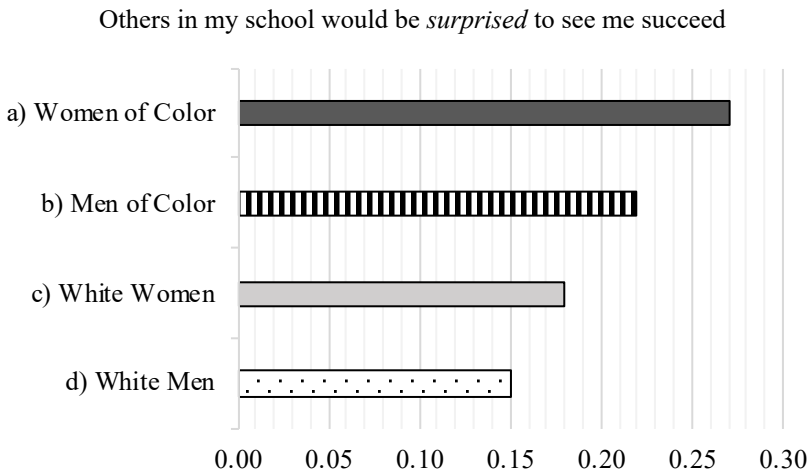


Notes: The predicted probabilities were calculated from ordered logistic regression predicting sense of belonging, including all control variables, but excluding variables for perceived experiences of bias and stereotype concerns. Only outcomes for low sense of belonging are presented. Letters denote group differences that are statistically significant by  $p < 0.5$ .

**Figure 2: Average Predicted Probabilities of Perceived Experiences of Bias and Stereotype Concerns (N=2527)**







Notes: The predicted probabilities were calculated from the binary logistic regressions predicting each variable of perceived experiences of bias and negative stereotype concerns, including all control variables. Letters denote group differences that are statistically significant by  $p < 0.5$ .

## Appendix

Table A1: Average Marginal Effects on Sense of Belonging Across Perceived Experiences of Bias, Stereotype Concerns, and Race-Gender

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	Low	Mod.	High	Low	Mod.	High	Low	Mod.	High
<b>Minoritized Status</b> ( <i>versus White Men</i> )									
White Women	.02**	.02**	-.04**	.02**	.02**	-.04**	.01	.01	-.01
Men of Color	.01	.01	-.03	.01	.01	-.02	.00	.00	.00
Women of Color	.06***	.03***	-.09***	.06***	.03***	-.09***	.01	.01	-.02
<b>Perceived Experiences of Bias</b>									
I have experienced <i>bias, discrimination, or unfair treatment</i> at my law school							.08**	.03***	-.11***
I experienced not being taken <i>seriously</i> in a class							.04*	.02**	-.06*
<b>Stereotype Concerns</b>									
In class, I <i>worry</i> that my professor underestimates my intelligence							.12***	.05***	-.17***
Others in my school would be <i>surprised</i> to see me succeed							.07***	.03***	-.10***
<b>Demographic Controls</b>									
First-Generation College Student				.02*	.01*	-.03*	.02	.01	-.03
International Student				.04	.03	-.06	.03	.03	-.06
Age: Younger than 30 years old				.00	.00	.00	-.01	-.01	.02
<b>Past Performance Control</b>									
LSAT Score				.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
<b>Enrollment Status Controls</b>									
Full-time Status				.01	.01	-.01	-.01	-.01	.01
Transferred Student				.06**	.04**	-.10**	.06**	.05**	-.11**
Class (versus 1L)									
2L				.02	.01	-.03	.01	.01	-.02
3L				.03*	.02*	-.05*	.03*	.02*	-.05*
4L				.06	.03**	-.09*	.05	.03**	-.08
Observations	2527	2527	2527	2527	2527	2527	2527	2527	2527
Clusters	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17

Notes: These are the complete models from Table 3 in the article. Average marginal effects calculated from Ordered Logistic Regressions. Models 2 and 3 also include school controls. \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

**Table A2: Average Marginal Effects on Perceived Experiences of Bias and Stereotype Concerns Across Race-Gender**

	Perceived Experiences of Bias			
	I have experienced <i>bias, discrimination, or unfair treatment</i>		I experienced not being taken <i>seriously</i> in a class	
<b>Minoritized Status (versus White Men)</b>				
	<b>Base</b>	<b>Full</b>	<b>Base</b>	<b>Full</b>
White Women	.02	.02	.08***	.08***
Men of Color	.03	.03	.04	.05*
Women of Color	.14***	.13***	.21***	.22***
<b>Demographic Controls</b>				
First-Generation College Student		.00		-.02
International Student		.01		-.01
Age: Younger than 30 years old		.02		.03
<b>Past Performance Control</b>				
LSAT Score		.00*		.00
<b>Enrollment Status Controls</b>				
Full-time Status		.10**		.09*
Transferred Student		-.02		-.02
Class (versus 1L)				
2L		.05**		.03
3L		.06***		.04
4L		.13*		.08

**Table A2: Average Marginal Effects on Perceived Experiences of Bias and Stereotype Concerns Across Race-Gender (continued)**

	Stereotype Concerns			
	In class, I <i>worry</i> that my professor underestimates my intelligence		Others in my school would be <i>surprised</i> to see me succeed	
	Base	Full	Base	Full
<b>Minoritized Status</b> ( <i>versus White Men</i> )				
White Women	.08***	.07***	.04**	.03*
Men of Color	.04	.03	.08**	.07**
Women of Color	.16***	.13***	.15***	.12***
<b>Demographic Controls</b>				
First-Generation College Student		.02		.01
International Student		.01		.05**
Age: Younger than 30 years old		.08***		.07**
<b>Past Performance Control</b>				
LSAT Score		-.01**		-.01***
<b>Enrollment Status Controls</b>				
Full-time Status		.01		.07**
Transferred Student		-.02		-.04
Class ( <i>versus 1L</i> )				
2L		.00		-.03
3L		-.04		-.03
4L		-.01		-.03
Observations	2527	2527	2527	2527
Clusters	17	17	17	17

Notes: These are the complete models from Table 4 in the article. Average marginal effects calculated from Binary Logistic Regressions. The full models include school controls. \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$