MORE DISSIMILAR THAN ALIKE? COMPARING MINORITY AND NON-MINORITY MANAGERS’ VALUE PREFERENCES

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ABSTRACT

Interest in public values has grown considerably over the past two decades. Much of this attention reflects a growing awareness that public values hold considerable significance for citizens and public employees. Yet, despite the rapid expansion of research on public values, we still know little about the role of race and ethnicity in shaping and determining public employees’ values preferences. To begin remedying this gap, this paper examines whether minority and non-minority public managers in large U.S. local governments exhibit the same value preferences when making departmental decisions. Results from a multiple group confirmatory factor analysis indicate minority and non-minority managers express similar preferences for traditional public administration values; however, minority managers, on whole, report a stronger preference for both traditional public administration (e.g., efficiency and effectiveness) and equity-oriented (e.g., equity, representation) values. Findings are discussed in terms of their relevance for theory and practice.
INTRODUCTION

Public values, and their role in decision making for public officials, continue to be an important topic in public management research (see e.g., Bozeman and Johnson 2015; Hamidullah, Ricucci and Pandey 2015; Van der Wal, Nabatchi and de Graaf 2013). While scholars have regularly discussed differences in values based on employment sector (Perry and Rainey 1988; Bozeman and Moulton 2011), specific policy focus, and even gender (Hamidullah et al. 2015), we still know relatively little about how perceptions of public values differ by race or ethnicity. In this paper, we consider how perceptions of values differ along racial and ethnic lines in local government service. We are specifically interested in two sets of values: traditional public administration values related to efficiency, effectiveness, and professionalism; and equity-oriented values related to representation, rights, and opportunity.

While the concept of public values has garnered significant recent attention, it is still relatively underspecified (Rutgers 2015), and empirical application has been limited. Scholars have called for more empirical work to address the normative implications of public values (Bozeman and Johnson 2015), and we respond to this call by empirically exploring differences in the espoused value preferences of senior local government officials. Using data from Phase IV of the National Administrative Studies Project (NASP-IV), we explore how value preferences are framed by race and ethnicity for local government managers. We first discuss the status of values research, followed by a review of the role of public values assume in public administration, and then relate public values research to racial framing. We then present our data and methodology along with findings from our work. Finally we discuss the practical and normative implications for racial framing of values preferences and differences.
THE IMPORTANCE OF VALUES TO MANAGEMENT

Since Rokeach’s (1973) foundational work on terminal and instrumental values in the 1970s, values have assumed a prominent role in management research. Much of this attention stems from a considerable body of evidence that demonstrates values—regardless of employment sector—influence individual behavior as well as employee and organizational performance. Values both derive from and are a component of an individual’s belief system, ultimately reflecting one’s preferences for particular outcomes or end states (Rokeach 1973). In a management context, values are useful constructs insofar as they help explain what is important for individual employees (at the individual-level) as well as the entire organization (at the organizational-level) (Kabanoff, Waldersee, and Cohen 1995; Locke 1976; Rokeach 1973).

At the individual-level, values are primarily associated with employees’ affective on-the-job behavior (see e.g., Locke 1976; Lyons, Duxbury, and Higgins 2006; Rokeach 1973). In other words, values shape the importance employees attach to their work (Rokeach 1973). When employees believe their work (or that of their organization) comports with their own values and belief systems, they exert more energy toward the completion of key tasks and are more likely to engage in activities, such as organizational citizenship behaviors, that benefit organizations (see e.g., Kristof-Brown 1996; Locke 1976; Ryan 2002). When employees struggle to connect their work and values, job satisfaction, motivation, and performance decline and employee turnover becomes more likely (George and Jones 1996; Kristof-Brown 1996; Locke 1976). Furthermore, employees’ interactions with particular facets of their work environment (e.g., managers and supervisors) can enhance or diminish the likelihood that employees will believe their organization facilitates value attainment (Lewin 1951; Locke 1976). For example, employees
who believe managers’ values overlap with their own are more likely to report they “fit” well with their organizations, which in turn impacts employee performance (Kristof-Brown 1996).

At the organizational-level, values and value management are frequently seen as the bedrock upon which successful management practices rest. In this context, values become part of, and are embedded in, an organization’s culture (O’Reilly and Chatman 1996; Rokeach 1979; Schein 1985). Strongly held, homogenous values are typically associated with improved performance and motivation (Pinder 2008) whereas poor performance, declining motivation, and unethical behavior are blamed on changing and/or ambiguous organizational values and cultures (Meglino and Ravlin 1998; Nord et al. 1988). Consequently, successful management requires creating robust organizational cultures grounded upon shared value systems—a task achieved by either socializing employees or hiring workers who already share an organization’s values (Pinder 2008).

Despite widespread consensus that values matter to individual employees and organizations, a number of problems have plagued existing research, limiting in turn the utility of values scholarship for managers and practitioners. As Pinder (2008, 100) notes, many of these problems are primarily methodological in nature, emerging from concerns that it can be difficult to empirically determine “what” workers actually value. If researchers are unable to identify what workers value, then it becomes difficult—if not impossible—to predict “how” they will behave in practice (Pinder 2008, 100).

Fortunately, public administration scholarship has devoted considerable time and attention to mapping those values seemingly associated with public service—values typically referred to as “public values” (see e.g., Bozeman 2007; Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007).¹ Moreover, public organizations generally and master’s degrees in public administration and
public affairs specifically appear to play a strong role in inculcating a set of shared common beliefs and values among practitioners (see e.g., Mosher 1982; Nalbandian and Edwards 1983; Perry 1996; Stazyk and Davis 2015). Together, these factors suggest many of the concerns identified by management scholars are likely less problematic in public administration research.

INDIVIDUAL PUBLIC VALUES AND PUBLIC MANAGERS

Scholars have long recognized the importance of individual public values for citizens, public administrators, and public organizations. Individual public values have been defined as “the content-specific preferences of individuals concerning, on the one hand, the rights, obligations, and benefits to which citizens are entitled and, on the other hand, the obligations expected of citizens and their designated representatives” (Bozeman 2007, 14). Beyond public organizations’ need to both behave and generate policies, goods, and services that comport with citizens’ expectations, individual public values are significant to public organizations for at least two additional reasons.

First, public administrators are themselves citizens, meaning public employees carry their own individual public values with them into their jobs (Bozeman 2007; Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007). It is clear individual public employees frequently have preferences for particular policy aims or outcomes and that public values play a key role in informing and influencing the actual behavior, conduct, and decisions of public administrators—despite calls from some for administrators to display neutral competence (Bozeman 2007; Frederickson 1997; Perry and Hondeghem 2008; Stazyk and Davis 2015). Second, public organizations have their own shared value systems. Organizational values are often promulgated to and among public employees through formal and informal organizational socialization processes (Bozeman 2007; Chatman 1991; Frederickson 1997; Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007; Mosher 1982; Vrangbaek 2006).
That public employees are socialized to emphasize particular organizational values and also bring their own value systems with them into their jobs raises a number of pressing questions for scholars and practitioners: 1) to what extent do individual and organizational values overlap (value consistency); 2) when values fail to overlap, which set of values do employees tend to favor (value primacy); and 3) which factors determine whether an employee will favor one set of values over another and under what conditions (value moderators)? The current paper begins to address these questions by examining whether white and minority senior managers (race and ethnicity as a value moderator) in several U.S. local government jurisdictions express similar value preferences (value consistency) when making major decisions in their own departments. Recent research conducted by Hamidullah and colleagues (2015) demonstrates public value preferences differ between female and male public administrators, but—to our knowledge—no study has yet to determine whether public value preferences vary in any meaningful way on the basis of administrators’ minority status.

Addressing whether and how minority status affects value preferences and subsequently decision-making is of paramount importance for public administration scholars and practitioners. Simply, the extent to which organizational and individual public values systems differ likely has widespread implications for citizens and the activities of public organizations. For instance, diversity management and representative bureaucracy scholarship argue having a diverse set of values and value preferences in public organizations will improve decision-making (see e.g., Langbein and Stazyk 2013). Alternatively, but consistent with broader management scholarship, public administration research also indicates organizational and individual values systems must overlap for employees to remain committed to and engaged in their organizations (Bright 2008; Kristof-Brown 1996; Steijn 2008; Wright and Pandey 2008). Significant divergence between
value systems may introduce conflict into organizations, thereby slowing decision-making processes and possibly producing suboptimal decisions (see e.g., Levi 1986).

At a more basic level, it is clear that value systems influence managerial behavior and decision-making processes in important ways. As England and Lee (1974, 411) note, value systems shape managers’ (a) perceptions of situations and problems, (b) decisions and solutions, (c) views of other individuals and groups, (d) perceptions of success and achievement, (e) understanding of what constitutes ethical behavior, and (f) decisions to accept or resist organizational pressures and goals. It is also likely that some value systems “may contribute to managerial performance, some may be irrelevant, and some may be antithetical” (England and Lee 1974, 411). Consequently, the significance of investigating when and why senior managers’ individual public values converge or diverge from one another or from broader organizational value systems becomes obvious. Value convergence and divergence affect which organizational and social interests will receive attention and resources as well as how much—factors that are clearly significant in a democratic context (Bozeman 2007; Frederickson 1997).

PUBLIC VALUES: TRADITIONAL AND EQUITY-ORIENTED

Public values research indicates a great many values influence and are relevant to public administrators. In fact, in a summary of roughly 230 public values studies, Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) found that at least 72 distinct values grouped into eight, sometimes closely related constellations have bearing for public administrators. So large and complex is the potential body of values relevant to public administration that Jørgensen and Bozeman have called for an “intensive analysis of fewer values” that mirrors their approach by also identifying core “constellations of values and then determining their network properties” (377). In this sense, the challenge for public administration scholars is quite different than it is for generic
management scholars. Generic management scholars have struggled to identify which values matter; conversely, public administration scholars grapple with determining which of the numerous public values identified are most significant to practitioners and under what conditions. In other words, public administration scholars struggle to determine when and why public values are “core” or “instrumental” (Jørgensen and Bozeman 2007).

One method for identifying a smaller set of core public values constellations that likely have enduring importance in the field—at least in the U.S. context—rests in examining bedrock or guiding principles that have long framed how public organizations conduct their business as well as how these principles have morphed over time. In other words, the arc of public administration history points to certain prime values that have consistently shaped how practitioners think about and approach their jobs. This paper focus on two sets of core values: traditional public administration values and equity-oriented values.

**TRADITIONAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION VALUES**

Perhaps the oldest set of values governing public administration are those of efficiency and economy—the so-called “twin pillars of public administration”—and the closely related value effectiveness (Coggburn 2003; Frederickson 2010; Wilson 1989). Efficiency, economy, and effectiveness have been core values in public administration since at least the passage of the Pendleton Act in 1883, which sought to remedy rampant political corruption and graft by hiring employees on the basis of competence and expertise (Coggburn 2003; Rosenbloom 1998). The introduction and use of competitive civil service exams through the Pendleton Act would jointly result in the selection of qualified employees and reduction of systemic political abuse, thereby enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of the U.S. administrative apparatus (for further discussion see, Coggburn 2003, 204; Rosenbloom 1998).
Notably, the importance of efficiency, economy, and effectiveness have been reinforced over and over again—even as fundamental beliefs about our administrative institutions have changed. For instance, in “The Study of Administration,” Wilson (1887) asserted efficiency, economy, and effectiveness were secured through a professional body of neutral technical experts separated from the sphere of politics. Nearly 50 years later, support for Wilson’s politics-administration dichotomy had largely vanished in favor of theories that acknowledged the act of administering public policies and providing public services was inherently politically (Gaus 1950; Friedrich 1940). These new “political” theories of bureaucracy suggested strong professional norms were necessary to ensure public organizations remained accountable and sought to conduct the business of government efficiently, effectively, and economically (Friedrich 1940; Kettl 2012). In other words, a highly professionalized bureaucracy would share certain key norms, including first and foremost an emphasis on efficient, effective, and economical government (Friedrich 1940; Mosher 1982).

Even more recent management movements, such the new public management and reinvention movements, continue to emphasize the importance of efficiency, effectiveness, and economy (Ferlie et al. 1996; Kettl 2005). These more recent movements start from the assumption that efficiency, effectiveness, and economy are more likely when government organizations are held accountable for producing results both now and into the future. For example, the value of economy under new public management ideology necessitates administrators consider both “immediate cost saving in providing services” balanced against a strategic focus that may favor longer term investments that will “create [future] money-saving efficiencies” (Norman-Major 2011, 235).
While the precise nature of efficiency, effectiveness, and economy have changed slightly over the years to reflect prevailing norms and interpretations of “good governance,” it is clear that the arc of public administration history has witnessed the continued relevance of each value. Consequently, it is reasonable to assert public administration has long been guided by a set of core, deeply held values that encompass efficiency, effectiveness, economy, professionalism, and somewhat more recently a long-term outlook emerging from an effort to balance immediate and long term gains. We refer to these public values as *traditional public administration values* throughout the remainder of this paper.

**EQUITY-ORIENTED VALUES**

Juxtaposed against traditional public administration values are *equity-oriented values.* Notions of equity, fairness, and justice have long been significant in public administration with roots tracing back at least to Woodrow Wilson (Frederickson 2010, 60). Yet, most frequently, public administration scholars tend to focus on the somewhat narrower term social equity.

With the social turmoil of the 1960s as a backdrop and the first Minnowbrook conference as a catalyst, social equity became a prominent value within the field of public administration more than 50 years ago (Gooden and Portillo 2011; Norman-Major 2011). Frederickson’s (2005) introduction of social equity into the field focused on a question arising from traditional public management values of efficiency, effectiveness, and economy. He argued administrators must begin to ask the so-called “second question” of public administration: “For whom is this program effective or good?” (35). Although a simple question, it can make the work of local government administrators substantially more complex. After contemplating who will benefit from a program, public administrators cannot focus solely service development and distribution. They must also identify the beneficiaries of their work to ensure that those who need assistance receive
help. Frederickson (2005) frames social equity as a normative call to action for public administrators—a call that has received considerable attention in the field as demonstrated by the inclusion of social equity as a standing panel in the National Academy of Public Administration (see http://www.napawash.org/fellows/standing-panels/social-equity-in-governance.html).

Over time, as social equity joined the traditional public administration values with a focus on “the distribution of services and their impact” (Guy and McCandless 2012, 57), the field has broadened its focus. For example, throughout the past half a century, the literature on social equity has conceptualized the term broadly, encompassing ideas of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, and other social identities. Scholars no longer focus just on the distribution of services and their impact, but argue that social equity is a professional public service value (Nalbandian and Edwards 1983). The expansion of social identities, and flexibility of social equity as outcome and process oriented has led some scholars to question the conceptual clarity of social equity within the field (Gooden and Portillo 2011; Norman-Major 2011).

Other scholars argue that social equity as a professional value is at odds with traditional public administration values (Guy and McCandless 2012). Guy and McCandless (2012) frame the conflict as a tradeoff between efficiency, effectiveness, and equity. Where in order to focus on social equity practitioners must forgo efficiency and/or effectiveness of services. Klinger and Nalbandian (2003) argue that professional managers must learn how to balance competing values. While LeRoux and Pandey (2011) assert that ambitious city managers must focus on traditional values in lieu of equity if they are striving to get ahead in their career. Similarly, Norman-Major (2011) and Hassett and Watson (2002) argue that while questions of social equity seem manageable, it is rare for practitioners to address equity concerns while implementing
policy, relying instead on questions of efficiency and effectiveness. Some of this may be due to political pressure and the focus of the discipline. Alkadry, Blessett and Patterson (2015) argue that New Public Management and a focus on performance may have moved local government practitioners away from equity as a core value and back toward traditional public management values of efficiency and effectiveness.

Despite considerable ongoing debates about the precise nature of [social] equity, research and practice converge on the notion that equity in public administration requires 1) we have administrators who assume it is their duty to create a government that is highly responsive to, and representative of, all citizens, and 2) the just distribution of resources (Frederickson 2010; Norman-Major 2011). Equity also necessitates administrators account for individual rights and due process considerations (Norman-Major 2011, 239; Rosenbloom 2005). Laws frequently reflect prevailing social norms and, more importantly, set constraints around what administrators can and cannot do (Rosenbloom 2005; Stazyk and Davis 2015). Moreover, while laws can at times disenfranchise certain groups, they can also act as a shield against discrimination (Rosenbloom 2005). As a consequence, some consideration of laws is fundamental to equity in practice (Norman-Major 2011).

MINORITY STATUS, PUBLIC VALUES, AND DECISION-MAKING

That public administration practice inherently involves accounting for and balancing diverse public values, such as those represented by traditional public administration and equity-oriented values, raises important issues for the field. For example, research has long shown an emphasis on traditional public administration values frequently comes at the cost of equity-oriented values; what is efficient, effective, or economical for one group in society is rarely the same for other groups (Frederickson 2010).
A recognition of the salience of this point has been deeply embedded in representative bureaucracy scholarship, which presumes public organizations staffed with diverse employees benefit from having a wide-range of knowledge, skills, and abilities upon which to draw when making decisions about the design and implementation of public policies (see e.g., Langbein and Stazyk 2013). In short, representative bureaucracy research assumes minority and under-represented groups possess qualitatively different values and experiences that are often marginalized in predominately white, male organizations. When organizations are staffed with larger proportions of diverse employees, it becomes more likely that minority and under-represented groups will influence policies in ways that reflect their own value preferences. This process, in turn, is expected to benefit both majority and disenfranchised populations within and outside organizations (see e.g., Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard 1999).

While representative bureaucracy scholarship has demonstrated that both passive and active forms of representation within organizations can affect outcomes for workers as well as citizens (Dolan and Rosenbloom 2003; Hindera 1993a, 1993b; Meier 1993; Meier and Stewart 1992; Theobald and Haider-Markel 2009), we still know relatively little about how managers, particularly minority managers, operationalize their own public values preferences. Some research, for example, indicates minority and under-represented groups must have adequate grants of discretion and autonomy in order to engage in behaviors that comport with their personal value preferences (Sowa and Selden 2003). Other research generates conflicting evidence about whether representative bureaucracy and diversity management strategies actually bring about equitable work environments for employees (see e.g., Naff and Kellough 2003).

Despite any uncertainty, this article follows the major of representative bureaucracy scholarship, assuming minority and under-represented managers are likely to express a stronger
preference for equity-oriented values than non-minority managers; conversely, we assume non-minority managers will express a stronger preference for traditional public administration values. Notably, the current sample includes high-level, senior managers who are likely to have adequate grants of autonomy and discretion given their organizational rank, thereby mitigating one existing research concern identified by representative bureaucracy scholars. Specifically, the following hypotheses are tested:

**H1: Minority managers, on average, exhibit greater preference for equity-oriented values when making decisions that will affect their departments.**

**H2: Non-minority managers, on average, exhibit greater preference traditional public administration values when making decisions that will affect their departments.**

**DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

Data for this study come from Phase IV of the National Administrative Studies Project (NASP-IV). NASP-IV is a multi-method study, a key part of which included a survey administered during 2007 to a national sample of city managers, assistant city managers, and department heads in U.S. local government jurisdictions with populations at, or above, 50,000 residents. Departments surveyed include Finance/Budgeting, Public Works, Personnel/HR, Economic Development, Parks and Recreation, Planning, and Community Development. Sample design and construction were aided by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). ICMA is widely regarded as the authoritative source of information about U.S. local government jurisdictions and professionals serving in these jurisdictions. Based on study criteria, ICMA compiled a list with contact information for potential respondents. The NASP-IV team used the initial list provided by ICMA and augmented it in numerous ways to finalize the sample. These steps included 1) verifying the accuracy of the information, 2) adding
to the list where ICMA lacked information, 3) correcting the list to ensure only individuals who met study criteria were included, and 4) compiling working e-mail addresses for sample members. These efforts resulted in a sample of 3,316 potential respondents.

The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Kansas. Each respondent in the sample received an initial letter through the U.S. mail that introduced the project and explained how to participate in the study. Potential respondents were directed to the study website and provided a secure participation code. On visiting the website, a respondent received an informational note about their rights as a study participant. This note highlighted participation was voluntary, except for respondents’ time there were no foreseeable risks, and the study team would take all necessary steps to protect respondents’ confidentiality, including conducting analyses and reporting results at the aggregate level only. After the initial letter, multiple methods were used to follow up with respondents, including e-mail, fax, and phone calls.

When the study concluded, 1,538 individuals had participated for a response rate of 46.4 percent. The 1,538 respondents came from 545 different jurisdictions—with one respondent from 126 jurisdictions, two respondents from 130 jurisdictions, and three or more from 289 jurisdictions. The mean age of respondents was 51.4 with an inter-quartile range of 10 (25th percentile being 47 and 75th percentile being 57). As expected in this sample, most respondents were male (70.6 percent), white (85.9 percent), highly educated (more than 60 percent with graduate degrees), and well compensated (68.3 percent with salaries over $100,000). Roughly 28 percent of respondents were general managers (i.e., city managers or deputy/assistant city managers), while the remainder supervised specific city departments or functions. This
distribution closely matched the distribution of functional specializations in the sample. Select demographic characteristics of the 1,538 respondents are provided in table 1.

[Table 1 here]

The statistical method we use, multiple group confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), allows us to empirically evaluate 1) the extent to which constructs are similarly measured across groups and 2) the degree to which latent parameters (e.g., means, variances, and correlations) vary across groups. The second component of multiple group CFA is well suited for addressing our two related research questions. First, we examine the extent to which the application of specific types of public values differ across racial categories by looking at differences in construct means. Second, we seek to explore whether the application of traditional public values and equity-oriented based public values relate differently across racial groups by examining potential differences in the correlations between latent constructs.

Before examining the models a brief note on missing data is in order. We chose to recover missing data using full information maximum likelihood estimation (FIML). FIML estimation is preferable to ignoring missing data because it eliminates the need to discard useful, but incomplete, information provided by respondents (Enders 2010; Enders and Bandalos 2001). FIML estimation is not akin to data imputation (Enders and Bandalos 2001). Rather, the model computes a likelihood function for each individual based on available information then uses all individual likelihood functions to estimate model fit. Simulation studies illustrate that FIML estimation provides unbiased parameter estimates and standard errors when data are missing at
random (Enders 2010; Enders and Bandalos 2001). Observations with data missing on model controls and observations with no data for any model variables, however, are discarded.

Additionally, we use variables from a single survey instrument to examine the application of public values across racial categories. Using a single data source, however, raises concerns regarding potential common methods bias. Common method bias occurs when respondents tend to answer questions in the same instrument in a similar fashion. To alleviate some of this concern we employed the Harman single factor test (Podsakoff et al. 2003). The Harman single factor test examines the amount of variation in the survey items explained by a single, unrotated factor. When a single factor explains less than 50% of the variation in items, potential common method bias is not problematic. In our model the single factor explains only 38.42% of the variation in our items, which suggests that common methods does not pose a serious problem.

We use several questionnaire items drawn from prior literature to measure the perceived application of public values to major organizational decisions. The items we employ were adapted from previous research examining public values conducted by Galloway and Edwards (1982) and Nalbandian and Edwards (1983). The degree to which an individual believes that organizational decisions are based on traditional public values is measured using four questionnaire items. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the following values, where 1 represents “of little importance” and 6 represents “extremely important,” when making major decisions about public service:

1. Efficiency (avoidance of waste)
2. Effectiveness (valid and useful outcomes)
3. Long-term outlook
4. Professionalism (expertise)
Similarly, we assessed the extent to which an individual believes that organizational decisions are based on equity-oriented public values using three questionnaire items. Equity-oriented public values include:

1. Equity (a just distribution of resources)
2. Representation (responsiveness to all residents)
3. Individual rights (property rights, civil rights)

The descriptive statistics for the variables we use are provided in Table 2.

[Table 2 here]

**FINDINGS**

We evaluated several models to determine whether racial subgroups differ in terms of the extent to which they believed certain public values factored into organizational decisions and the extent to which two different types of public values correlated. We first estimated two separate CFA models for non-minorities and minorities. The results indicated that each of these models were reasonable approximations of population characteristics, and that the items we used were acceptable measures of the theoretical constructs we examined. After examining separate CFA models, we conducted a multiple group CFA. Figure 1 illustrates the CFA parameter estimates each group independently, the contribution of each group to the model $\chi^2$, and the overall model fit statistics for both groups combined.

[Figure 1 here]
Although the model appears to fit the data, it is necessary to establish measurement invariance prior to exploring possible variation in parameter estimates across groups. The first level of measurement invariance, weak factorial invariance, examines whether the factor loadings are equivalent across groups. To test for weak factorial invariance we constrained the factor loadings to equality across groups and conducted a $\chi^2$ difference test on 5 degrees of freedom.\(^3\) The results of the difference test reveal that the loss in model fit is not statistically significant ($\Delta\chi^2(5 \text{ d.f.}) = 7.356, p = 0.195$). This suggests that the factor loadings are statistically equivalent across groups. Figure 2 illustrates the parameter estimates for the weak factorial invariance model. In instances where dual parameter estimates are provided the estimates above the line represent minorities and estimates below the line represent non-minorities. A single estimate for a given parameter signifies that it was constrained to equality across groups.

[Figure 2 here]

After establishing weak factorial invariance it is possible to test for homogeneity of variances and covariances across groups. We first conducted an omnibus test to determine if factor variances and covariances were equal across groups. The results did not support this constraint, and indicated a statistically significant loss in model fit when variances and covariances were held equal across the non-minority and minority groups ($\Delta\chi^2(3 \text{ d.f.}) = 17.715, p < 0.001$). A follow-up test revealed that factor variances differed across groups so we took steps to standardize factor variances so we could compare the relationships between factors as correlations. Following the standardization of factor variances, the model indicates that the correlation between the perceived application of traditional public values and equity-oriented
public values in the minority group is 0.748 whereas the correlation in the non-minority group is 0.873. To determine if these correlations were statistically different we constrained them to equality across groups and conducted a $\chi^2$ difference test. The results reveal that constraining these parameters to equality results in a statistically significant loss in model fit ($\Delta \chi^2 (1 \text{ d.f.}) = 9.777, p = 0.002$). Practically this finding indicates that non-minority respondents perceive the application of traditional public values to be more highly correlated with the application of equity-oriented public values as compared to minorities.

After exploring potential differences in factor correlations we proceeded to test the second level of measurement invariance, strong factorial invariance. Strong invariance tests whether the means of observed variables differ across groups. The findings reveal that constraining the indicator means to equality results in a statistically significant loss in model fit as compared to a model where indicator means are freely estimated in both groups ($\Delta \chi^2 (5 \text{ d.f.}) = 18.919, p = 0.002$). This finding indicates that indicator means vary across groups. Given the sample size in this data set, however, statistical significance is relatively easy to achieve. An alternative test to evaluate whether indicator means are reasonably similar involves comparing model fit statistics across nested models. If the RMSEA values of the two models fall within one another’s confidences intervals it is reasonable to assume measurement invariance. In the model where indicator means in both groups are freely estimated $\chi^2 (31, n=1,435) = 115.883; \text{RMSEA} = 0.062_{(0.050, 0.074)}$, and in the model where indicator means are constrained to equality $\chi^2 (36, n=1,435) = 134.802, p < .001; \text{RMSEA} = 0.062_{(0.051, 0.073)}$. Since the RMSEA values are identical and fall within one another’s confidence intervals we assume strong measurement invariance. Figure 3 illustrates the parameter estimates for a model where factor loadings and indicator means are constrained to equality.
Given that we can reasonably establish strong measurement invariance, it is possible to examine latent means across groups. Figure 3 also presents the latent means for perceptions that traditional public values govern organizational decisions and perceptions that decisions are based on equity-oriented public values. For the purposes of estimation factor means are constrained to 0 in the minority portion of the model. In the non-minority portion of the model factor means represent mean differences between non-minorities and minorities. Differences in means were evaluated using $\chi^2$ tests between nested models. First, non-minorities report .270 mean units less perceived importance placed on the application of traditional public values when making organizational decisions as compared to minorities ($\Delta\chi^2(1 \text{ d.f.}) = 10.501, p = 0.0011$). Second, non-minorities report a .480 mean unit lower level of perceived importance for equity-oriented public values when making organizational decisions as compared to minorities ($\Delta\chi^2(1 \text{ d.f.}) = 25.935, p < 0.001$). It is also important to note that the average gap between perceived importance of values between minority managers and non-minority managers is wider for equity-oriented public values as compared to the average gap for traditional public values. In sum, the results suggest that minority managers place more emphasis on both traditional and equity-oriented public values when making organizational decisions, however the differences between minority and non-minorities are more pronounced when it comes to equity-oriented public values.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

This study takes a first step in assessing the value preferences of minority and non-minority public managers. However, as with any study, there are limitations. First, the survey
data used here is cross-sectional and relies on the willingness of managers to report their actual value preferences. Given the nature of the data we are unable to determine how value preferences evolve over time. It may be reasonable for future studies to examine how value preferences among minority and non-minority managers converge [or diverge] as socialization processes unfold in organizations. Moreover, managers may feel a sense of obligation to state that equity-oriented values are important even if they hold these values as tangential to the day-to-day management of public organizations. We assume here that managers are truthful about the values that they hold, but future research could employ in other methodological approaches such as participant observation to examine if managerial behavior actually comports with espoused value preferences. Finally, not all decision contexts are the same. It is possible that some problems require decisions based on traditional public administration values whereas other problems necessitate a stronger focus on equity-oriented values. Both sets of values are important and the necessity of application may be driven by factors other than managerial preference.

Despite any limitations, study findings are significant in several regards. First, consistent with diversity management and representative bureaucracy scholarship, we hypothesized that minority managers (H1) would be more likely to favor equity-oriented values whereas non-minority managers would prefer traditional public administration values when making important decisions affecting their departments. Results indicate that both minority and non-minority managers place considerable weight on traditional public administration values. In many ways, this finding is unsurprising. At the very least, senior managers—regardless of minority status—are likely to be attentive to traditional public administration values insofar as budgetary allocations are likely contingent on departmental performance (Melkers and Willoughby 2005). Moreover, as a large body of research suggests, public administrators are frequently attracted to
public service precisely because they desire opportunities to help others (e.g., Frederickson 1997; Perry and Hondeghem 2008). In this context, altruistic public administrators might express a preference for traditional public administration values because such values allow them to maximize service or program delivery (e.g., reach more people within the constraints of otherwise limited resources).

Yet, contrary to our expectations, study results also indicate that the minority managers included in our sample place greater emphasis on both traditional public administration and equity-oriented values than non-minority managers. On its face, this finding may seem somewhat counter-intuitive. Applying the logic above, however, offers one possible explanation. To the extent that minority managers attach greater weight to equity-oriented values and hope to provide services and programs to as diverse and wide-spread an audience as possible, such managers may find it even more beneficial to emphasize traditional public administration values to the extent that such values help maximize delivery, allowing in essence minority managers to “do more with less.”

From a research standpoint, our findings suggest that public management scholarship needs to account—both theoretically and empirically—for race and ethnicity in the public values context, just as Hamidullah and colleagues (2015) found sex matters. As study results demonstrate, respondents with different socio-demographic profiles (our proposed value moderator) demonstrated some value overlap (value consistency) in that both groups of managers reported emphasizing traditional public administration values when making departmental decisions. However, results also provide evidence of meaningful value inconsistency insofar as minority managers favor traditional public administration and equity-
oriented values at higher levels than non-minorities, suggesting value primacy differs across both groups of managers included in the current sample.

Findings also suggest accounting for race and ethnicity in the public values context matters insofar as it likely affects how public managers make decisions about service and program delivery. Such decisions directly and indirectly affect what services and programs look like in practice (i.e., design structure) as well as how services and programs are delivered (i.e., program implementation). In simpler terms, not accounting for socio-demographic factors seemingly misses an important piece of the puzzle.

Practically, study results suggest it would likely be beneficial for cities to develop new systems or restructure existing systems in ways that underscore the importance and significance of both viewing and approaching organizational decisions through multiple public values vantages, such those rooted in traditional public administration and equity-oriented values. In this context, trainings and on-boarding initiatives that work to create strong, shared public values norms encompassing a diverse range of perspectives would likely be useful. Further, engaging with outside stakeholders and citizens may be likely to increase the range of lenses brought to bear when making organizational decisions.

Finally, while this study advances our understanding of public values, much more work is necessary. Moving forward, it would be useful for scholars and practitioners to explore a wider range of values and value moderators as well as how values and value moderators relate to other facets of individual behavior and organizational performance. It would also be beneficial to examine how value moderators, such as minority status, operate at and across multiple organizational levels. For instance, does the impact of minority status on decision-making change when one accounts for interactions between employees within an organization (e.g., how
diverse an organization is, identity congruence) or, alternatively, between organizational members and other stakeholders outside the organization.

**FOOTNOTES**

1 A second stream of research not covered here explores how public administrators can “create” value for citizens (see Moore 1995).

2 Researchers typically assert public values exist at two levels: society and individual (see e.g., Bozeman 2007). This paper is primarily concerned with individual public values, leaving aside a discussion of society’s public values.

3 The degrees of freedom in the weak factorial invariance model increases by 5 because 7 degrees of freedom are gained by constraining factor loadings to equality, but two degrees of freedom are lost by freely estimating construct variances in the second group.

**REFERENCES**


Kristen Norman-Major, “Balancing the Four Es; or Can We Achieve Equity for Social Equity in Public Administration?,” *Journal of Public Affairs Education* 17 (2011): 233-252.


### Table 1: Sample Characteristics (n = 1,538)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s in Public Affairs (MPA, MPP)</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Graduate Degree</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Origin</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>85.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salary</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $50,000</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 to $75,000</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 to $100,000</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 to $150,000</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,000 or more</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Functional Specialization</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>City Manager /CAO</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy or Assistant City Manager</td>
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<td>Finance/Budgeting</td>
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<td>Public Works</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel/HR</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parks &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

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<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Efficiency</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>0.826</td>
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<td>2. Effectiveness</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>0.692</td>
<td>.498**</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Equity</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>1.019</td>
<td>.395**</td>
<td>.333**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Long-term Outlook</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>0.795</td>
<td>.372**</td>
<td>.500**</td>
<td>.301**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Representation</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>0.942</td>
<td>.403**</td>
<td>.321**</td>
<td>.500**</td>
<td>.360**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Professionalism</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>0.746</td>
<td>.403**</td>
<td>.477**</td>
<td>.290**</td>
<td>.417**</td>
<td>.350**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Individual Rights</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>0.994</td>
<td>.336**</td>
<td>.340**</td>
<td>.384**</td>
<td>.274**</td>
<td>.426**</td>
<td>.351**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 1: Multiple Group CFA

Minority Model Fit: $\chi^2_{(13, n=198)} = 34.109, p = .0012; \text{RMSEA} = .091_{(.054, .128)}; \text{CFI} = .963; \text{NNFI(TLI)} = .940$

Non-Minority Model Fit: $\chi^2_{(13, n=1,237)} = 74.419, p < .001; \text{RMSEA} = .062_{(.049, .076)}; \text{CFI} = .971; \text{NNFI(TLI)} = .953$

Overall Model Fit: $\chi^2_{(26, n=1,435)} = 108.527, p < .001; \text{RMSEA} = .067_{(.054, .080)}; \text{CFI} = .969; \text{NNFI(TLI)} = .950$
Figure 2: Weak Factorial Invariance

Overall Model Fit: $\chi^2_{(31, n=1,435)} = 115.883, p < .001; \text{RMSEA} = .062_{(.050, .074)}; \text{CFI} = .968; \text{NNFI(TLI)} = .957$
Figure 3: Strong Factorial Invariance

Overall Model Fit: $\chi^2_{(36, n=1,435)} = 134.802, p < .001; \text{RMSEA} = .062_{(.051, .073)}; \text{CFI} = .963; \text{NNFI(TLI)} = .957$