Article

Gender, Race, and Diversity Values Among Local Government Leaders

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Abstract

Despite the increased emphasis placed on diversity and inclusion, there is relatively little research that focuses on diversity values in small and medium-sized cities. This research uses data from a 2016 nationally representative survey to investigate how city department leaders' perceptions of their organizations valuing diversity are related to the identity of the department head, the mayor, and the community. We find that women and people of color are underrepresented in city department leadership. Reporting that one's organization values racial and gender diversity is significantly related to respondent gender, respondent race (for women), mayoral race (for women), and diversity in the community (for men), and that the interaction of mayoral and community identity is related to perceived diversity values. We conclude with a discussion of what these findings mean for diversity and inclusion in practice in local government departments, which often lack demographic diversity.

Keywords

diversity, gender, workplace culture, local government, values

Introduction

In 2016, women accounted for 20% of mayors and 25.8% of department heads in medium and small cities in the United States (e.g., populations 250,000-25,000); 17% of mayors were people of color.[1] Although women and people of color are generally well integrated into the modern labor American workforce, they remain underrepresented in higher level management. Organizations are the creation of the people they

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embody (Hutchinson, 2011); thus, when organizations are led by homogeneous groups, they are less likely to embody multiple values, perspectives, and diverse interests. In all levels of government, when the lower ranks of the civil service are made up of women and people of color and men and White men dominate the upper levels, equal opportunity to influence government is undermined (Wise, 1990). This is especially problematic in local government where federal hiring programs do not apply and where government most closely interacts with the public.

A lack of diversity in leadership inevitably shapes the culture of the public sector and its effective delivery of public services to diverse communities. Public organizations that lack diversity are more likely to undervalue inclusion and engage in actions such as self-selection away from diversity in recruitment and discrimination in hiring (Baekgaard & George, 2018). Demographic diversity in the upper levels of public organizations leads to more progressive policies aimed at diversity and inclusion through the organization; women and people of color in leadership serve as a model for others aspiring to leadership (AbouAssi, Bauer, & Johnston, 2019; Riccucci, 2002). Since the 1960s, affirmative action (AA) programs, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policies, and diversity management strategies have aimed to advance diversity in government organizations (Pitts, 2009; Rosenbloom, 1977). Recently, there has been an emerging focus on creating a climate that welcomes and appropriately manages diversity (Bae, Sabharwal, Smith, & Berman, 2017; Gonzalez & Denisi, 2009; Oberfield, 2016).

Diversity research is loosely concentrated in three areas: inclusion and integration, diversity policies and programs, and diversity effects (Pitts, 2006). Thomas (1990) was the first to focus on the concept of "valuing diversity," an intermediary between the progression of AA and EEO programs and diversity management. Valuing diversity in the workplace is often seen as an organizational focus that encourages employees to value diversity through bulletins, newsletters, workshops, and team building (Pitts, 2006). Although legal mandates emphasize employing people of particular identities, there is little research on the perceptions that government leaders have about diversity norms and values. This research is motivated by the following research questions:

Research Question 1: Do city department leaders perceive their organizations as valuing gender and racial diversity?
Research Question 2: How are the characteristics and identity of the department head, mayor, and community related to gender and racial diversity values?

Diversity is an important aspect of government organizations from two perspectives: management and governance (Blessett, Alkadry, & Rubaii, 2013). Managing diversity is important for administrators that work in diverse organizations. Research finds when organizations manage diversity well, women report higher levels of job satisfaction (Choi & Rainey, 2014) and organizations can increase productivity (Naff & Kellough, 2003). Governance considers the interactions of administrators with multiple stakeholders in different environments (Blessett et al., 2013)—seeking to

govern for inclusion in a diverse work environment where different stakeholders have distinct needs. Managing and governing diversity enhances organizational effectiveness and organizational productivity and can provide organizations with a broad range of ideas, skills, and insights (Cox, 1994; Ely, 2004; Wiersema & Bantel, 1992). Organizations with a culture where managers are committed to diversity can increase job satisfaction, innovative behavior, and work group performance (Moon, 2018; Pitts, 2009).

The theory of representative bureaucracy argues diversity matters for leadership in public agencies and that bureaucracy should reflect the diversity of its citizenry (Kellough & Naff, 2004). Gender, racial, and ethnic diversity in bureaucracies are expected to translate to policies and programs that target or benefit women and people of color in the general population (Riccucci, Van Ryzin, & Lavena, 2014). Some government agencies have introduced diversity management programs to increase heterogeneity (Choi & Rainey, 2014; Wise & Tschirhart, 2000) and develop a climate and culture that is committed to the inclusion of diverse individuals (Bae et al., 2017; Oberfield, 2016). Although formal equal opportunity hiring programs have been in effect for decades and there is a preponderance of evidence that representation matters and a diverse climate is valuable for organizations (Gonzalez & Denisi, 2009), women and people of color remain underrepresented in government leadership and little is known about how local governments value diversity. For our purposes, diversity values are defined as a department administrator's awareness that diversity is permitted to flourish, broadly encompassing inclusion and integration, diversity policies and programs, and diversity effects.

This research examines whether the social identity of city department leaders and political leadership (e.g., mayors) is related to perceptions of diversity values in their organizations—including the hiring and advancement of women and people of color. We analyze how the gender and racial and ethnic identity of city department leaders, mayors, and communities are related to diversity values in city departments. We use data from a 2016 nationally representative survey of 500 small and medium-sized cities, U.S. Census data, and data collected from government websites. We describe the proportion of women and people of color in municipal leadership positions across the 500 cities and contribute to the broader diversity research in government by illustrating how individual identity and representation are related to perceptions of diversity values in municipal government. We conclude with a discussion of next steps to move beyond counting demographics to assessing social identity, diversity values, and inclusive practice.

Diversity and Social Identity

Public organizations, compared to private organizations, tend to have more diverse employee populations in terms of race, sex, and age. Many suggest this is the result of a commitment to increasing workforce diversity by recruiting, hiring, and retaining employees with different backgrounds (Cornwell & Kellough, 1994; Foldy, 2004). Although women and people of color have made gains in government employment in

the United States, there remain a host of discriminatory practices and biases (Riccucci, 2002). Despite broader organizational shifts in programs and policies committed to diversity, recent research on a sample of U.S. federal employees indicates white men are more likely to report a diversity climate while minority men and women indicate their organizations are less committed to diversity (Oberfield, 2016).

Recruitment is a central focus across diversity management programs (Kellough & Naff, 2004). Unfortunately, programs and efforts to recruit diverse individuals have led to perceptions of reverse discrimination and are often viewed with disdain by employees who feel threatened by them or feel that they are unfair (Pitts, 2006). Riccucci (1997) found that many white male employees believe anything associated with diversity is reverse discrimination. Thus, recruitment programs alone are insufficient at building a culture that values diversity. Valuing diversity requires individuals to feel their identity is welcomed, safe, and acceptable in the organization.

According to social identity theory (SIT), people classify themselves and others into social categories defined by organizational membership, religious affiliation, gender, race, ethnicity, age cohort, and so on (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social classification enables an individual to locate or define themselves in the social environment (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) and leads to varying perceptions of likeness and difference in social identification. This identification can describe or reinforce structural barriers, for example, women and people of color often face institutional and structural barriers to advancement (Riccucci, 2002). Often these barriers relate to subtle assumptions, attitudes, and stereotypes. Perceptions of differences in divisions of labor, racism, decades of formal and informal discrimination, power relations, and cultural symbolism can leave women and people of color in lower paying and lower status jobs (Connell, 2006; Miller, Kerr, & Reid, 1999; Riccucci, 2002), which may affect their views of the organization's commitment to and valuing of diversity. These diversity values—perceptions of gender and racial diversity—are linked to perspectives, attitudes, and experiences that diverse individuals bring to government agencies. In the US, social identity and classification often occurs by gender and race (Riccucci, 2002). For women, identity can be specified as perceived similarity to other women, the perception of common fate (i.e., a belief that women are treated similarly based on their group membership; Gurin & Townsend, 1986). Similarly, race and ethnicity can be an identified commonality for group status. Racial and ethnic identity can result in empowerment or marginalization, access to or exclusion from power, and the development of individual and collective perceptions, stereotypes, and identities (Ospina & Foldy, 2009).

The self-identification of an individual into a social group leads to perceptions of in-group stereotypes and perceptions of out-group members that lead to out-group stereotypes (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). Identifying with particular in-groups or out-groups can lead to intergroup behavior that brings competitive and discriminatory properties to the nature of group relations (Hogg et al., 1995). For example, high-status group members will be motivated to preserve their dominance if they perceive it to be legitimate (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Because men hold higher status in society, they would, on average, be expected to exhibit positive attitudes and supportive behavior toward other men, as members of their in-group, and treat women negatively as the

out-group (Tolbert, Graham, & Andrews, 1999). Similarly, as White people in the United States have higher socioeconomic status, they will be more likely to support in-group members and treat those in racial or ethnic out-groups negatively. Thus, self-identification and perceptions of in- and out-group status in organizations are related to perceptions of and efforts aimed at valuing diversity. We focus on two forms of diversity values, gender and race and ethnicity.

Gender

We explore the relationship between the gender identity of city department heads and their reports of their organizations' diversity values. On one hand, research shows that leadership values and styles in the public sector differ by gender and matter for gendered outcomes (Feeney & Langer, 2016; Jacobson, Palus, & Cynthia, 2010; Meier, Toole, & Goerdel, 2006). Female leaders are more inclusive and engage broader participation (Weikart, Chen, Williams, & Hromic, 2007). Gender diversity in government can increase organizational performance, perception of trust and fairness, inclusion, job satisfaction, and lower turnover intention and empowerment for women (AbouAssi et al., 2019; Andrews & Ashworth, 2015; Choi & Rainey, 2014; Moynihan & Landuyt, 2008; Riccucci et al., 2014). Women report higher levels of commitment to equal opportunity (Guy, 1993), and employees perceive that women-led federal agencies outperform those run by men (D'Agostino, 2015). It follows that women can lead city departments toward a culture that values diversity and inclusion.

On the other hand, given the low proportion of women in political and managerial leadership in city government, women department heads might perceive themselves and be perceived as the out-group and feel pressure not to engage in gendered leadership. For example, Weikart and colleagues (2007) found female mayors were more likely to report that they faced gender-based obstacles in their leadership roles, and Guy (2016) reported that when women hold a minority of decision-making positions within organizations it creates a cycle of problems associated with tokenism. Naff (1995b) found that women who work in male-dominated agencies as compared to those who work in female-dominated agencies are more likely to believe women are discriminated against. A recent Pew survey found women in male-dominated workplaces are more likely to say their gender has made it harder for them to get ahead at work, they are less likely to say women are treated fairly in personnel matters, and they report experiencing gender discrimination at significantly higher rates (Funk & Parker, 2018). Women in gender-balanced or majority-female workplaces report higher levels of gender equity and lower levels of gender discrimination (Funk & Parker, 2018; Naff, 1995b).

Thus, while female leaders may be strongly committed to diversity, they are also more likely to have experienced bias and obstacles in their own advancement, potentially making them more sensitive to and critical of the organization's commitment to these issues. In addition, even in leadership positions, women remain the out-group in these male-dominated organizations. Given this reasoning, the expectation is that

female leaders will report lower levels of diversity values in their organizations as compared to their male counterparts.

> **Hypothesis 1 (H1):** Female leaders, as compared to male leaders, will report lower diversity values in their departments.

Race and Ethnicity

There is extensive evidence that people of color face substantial structural and institutional barriers to advancement in the workforce, including lower pay, micro aggressions, barriers to powerful networks, overt racism, discrimination, stereotyping, and prejudice (Combs, 2003; Ferdman & Cortes, 1992; Holvino & Blake-Beard, 2004). Governments have adopted numerous policies and programs aimed at eliminating discrimination and promoting diversity hiring and retention (Rosenbloom, 1973; Rosenbloom & Berry, 1978). One might expect that individuals who have benefited directly from efforts and policies to reduce discrimination will be more sensitive to the need for advancing diversity values.

Yet, people of color continue to be clustered at lower ranks in government organizations and underrepresented in leadership positions (Sanchez-Hucles & Sanchez, 2007). Research notes that broad equitable employment for minorities in the public sector is related to their representation on city councils, in key bureaucratic decision-making positions (Sass & Mehay, 2003), and overall representation in the population (Eisinger, 1982). This suggests that department heads might be in a key position to advance diversity values.

The research on leadership and race and ethnicity presents a set of complex findings—often because of methodological limitations, differences across and between racial and ethnic groups, and variation in the ways in which individuals and groups characterize and respond to power differentials and opportunities for empowerment (Ospina & Foldy, 2009). For example, Abney and Hutcheson (1981) found that following the election of a black mayor, identification with city government among blacks increased. Fraga, Meier, and England (1986) concluded that Hispanic representation on school boards impacted Hispanic teacher employment and educational outcomes. However, Cook and Glass (2014) concluded that minority leaders have a limited effect on equitable policies, but their leadership combined with diverse boards increases equitable practices.

Leader racial identity can drive outcomes for minority stakeholders and the public, but does it affect culture and values? Oberfield (2016) examined perceptions of a diversity climate among employees with diverse managers and found a negative relationship between minority representativeness of managers and diversity climate, though White respondents primarily drove this relationship. Oberfield concluded diversity in management is insufficient to create a positive diversity climate for out-group members. We expect that as the out-group in predominately white organizations, leaders of color will be especially sensitive to the barriers they face (or have

faced) and the need for an increased focus on diversity values. Thus, they will report lower diversity values in the organizations they lead.

> **Hypothesis 2 (H2):** Leaders of color, as compared to White leaders, will report lower diversity values in their departments.

Intersectionality

Although demographic measures of social identity are useful for empirical purposes, they should not be interpreted to suggest that gender, race, and ethnicity can be reduced to simple variables. Public administration research on gender and racial diversity is often criticized for a reliance on simple measures without a focus on intersectionality (Sabharwal, Levine, & Agostino, 2018). Intersectionality refers to how multiple marginal and socially constructed identities converge within a single social group (Breslin, Pandey, & Riccucci, 2017). Intersectionality interrogates the hierarchies and structures that are in place that inform and produce categorical differences (MacKinnon, 2013). Research on identity groups and intergroup theory notes that groups defined by common biology or historical and social experience, and some combination of the two can result in different experiences in the workplace.

Organizational activities aimed at advancing intergroup relations and diversity values have different ramifications for each group and for those in intersecting groups (Kossek & Zonia, 1993). Perceptions of diversity values and climate will be conditioned by group membership and intergroup relations—white women will experience the organization differently than white men, blacks will experience the organization differently than whites, and those at the intersection (black women) will have a different reference for group membership than white women and black men. While white women and racioethnic minority men and women are likely to hold similar views about the dominance of white men, and be expected to cooperate against the status quo, they do not necessarily value diversity efforts in the same way and there is the possibility of intergroup competition within these groups (Alderfer, 1987). For example, Kossek and Zonia (1993) found valuing diversity varies by gender, race, and the interaction of the two. Mor Barak and colleagues (1998) found that compared to White men, women and racial/ethnic minorities were more comfortable with and value diversity in their organizations. There are positive, cooperative links between different groups, though competition and rivalry is also present. Mor Barak and colleagues (1998) concluded that men perceive organizational diversity more favorably than women, possibly because they do not experience or participate in creating these barriers. Similarly, whites perceived the organization as fair, while racial minorities reported discrimination. Minorities were more comfortable with diversity than whites were. They conclude that threats from diversity efforts for men as compared to women are differently perceived than threats and opportunities across racial/ethnic groups (Mor Barak et al., 1998) and that women of racial/ethnic minority groups felt more excluded than those of one group.

Research is clear that group identity matters and that gender group identity is different from racial/ethnic group identity. For example, women of color experience the collective perceptions and stereotypes of their racial identity intertwined with their gender identity—an intersection that is quite distinct from the experiences of men of color, white women, or the summation of the two. Given previous research on intersectionality, we expect that women of color in city government who experience the out-group status of gender and race will report lower diversity values in their organizations.

> **Hypothesis 3 (H3):** Female leaders of color—as compared to white men, white women, and men of color—will report lower diversity values in their departments.

Community Diversity

The existence of a diverse bureaucracy can translate into benefits for the citizenry without direct actions by bureaucrats (Gade & Wilkins, 2013; Riccucci, 2017). The demographic characteristics of bureaucrats can passively produce political responsiveness and policy effectiveness that are favorable to the community (Fernandez, Malatesta, & Smith, 2013; Fraga & Elis, 2009). In addition, public perceptions about bureaucratic legitimacy can be positively affected when the identity of the bureaucrat matches that of the clientele (Gade & Wilkins, 2013; Meier & Nicholson-Crotty, 2006; Riccucci et al., 2014).

The public administration literature has reached a consensus that race and ethnicity is perhaps the most important demographic characteristic for comparing bureaucratic and public representation in the United States (Meier, 1975; Selden & Selden, 2001). The distribution of tangible benefits and economic goods to minority communities can be tied to that group's political power (Eisinger, 1982). For example, Hispanic representation on school boards is a significant determinant of student performance (Fraga et al., 1986), and the presence of a Latino or African American mayor is significantly related to minority police officer employment (Zhao, He, & Lovrich, 2005).

The size of a minority population in a city is related to the proportion of representation that demographic group has in municipal workforces, and this representation translates into outcomes for those racial and ethnic groups (Fraga & Elis, 2009; Fraga et al., 1986; Stein, 1986; Zhao et al., 2005). Cities with larger African American populations have more minority city council members and mayors, which in turn increases equitable hiring and promotion practices (Saltzstein, 1989; Walker & Bumphus, 1992). Research finds Black political empowerment, measured by having a Black mayor, is a consistent positive predictor of representation of Black police officers in U.S. cities (Saltzstein, 1989; Sass & Mehay, 2003; Zhao et al., 2005). In sum, racially diverse communities are more likely to have diverse political and bureaucratic representation and increased political engagement from minority groups (Spence, McClerking, & Brown, 2009). We expect that diversity values in the bureaucracy will be related to heterogeneity in local communities. Specifically, managers working in more racially

and ethnically diverse communities will report increased diversity values in their departments.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Racially diverse communities will be positively related to diversity values in city departments.

Political Leadership

Leader gender, race, and ethnicity influence agency performance, citizen trust, and political engagement. Differences in leadership are partially explained by self-categorization, identity, in-group and out-group status, and social expectations. For example, women in management roles tend to be more collaborative, and their presence has an impact on policy outcomes and organizational performance (Meier et al., 2006). Women city managers are more likely to include citizen input, facilitate communication, and encourage citizen involvement in their decision-making processes (Fox & Schuhmann, 1999).

Women in political leadership can affect policy and bureaucratic structures. Women legislators are more likely to initiate legislation on women's issues (Saint-Germain, 1989), and female mayors emphasize different policy issues, seek broader participation, and are more inclusive than male mayors (Weikart et al., 2007). Having a women mayor increases the number of women in municipal employment (Ferreira & Gyourko, 2011; Saltzstein, 1986). Given the extensive research indicating that female-elected officials influence organizations differently than men, we expect that valuing gender diversity will be related to visible female political leadership in the city.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Having a female mayor will be positively related to diversity values in city departments.

Similarly, a person of color in political leadership can affect organizational outcomes, trust in government, and employment and representation in the bureaucracy. Political leaders who present as African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, or another minority racial or ethnic group are often expected to better represent, advocate for, and advance the interests of their respective communities (Eisinger, 1982; Fraga & Elis, 2009; Mladenka, 1989; Saltzstein, 1989; Stein, 1986). Research indicates that when people of color hold political office, community members of that same racial or ethnic group are able to identify with a visible political actor which in turn increases positive perceptions of and trust in government, levels of empowerment, and political engagement (Abney & Hutcheson, 1981; Bobo & Gilliam, 1990).

The lack of minorities in high-level leadership positions in municipal government is presumably a block to the representation of minorities in government (Meier, 1975; Thompson, 1976), leading many to argue that in addition to serving as visual role models to organizational members and the community at large, leaders of color can alter the demographics of the city's workforce (Marschall & Shah, 2007). Mayoral

race and ethnicity can be an important predictor of political empowerment and participation, trust in government, distribution of resources throughout the community, and municipal workforce diversity (Abney & Hutcheson, 1981; Marschall & Shah, 2007; Spence et al., 2009), but these findings vary by city demographics, leadership race and ethnicity, and other factors (Kerr, Miller, Schreckhise, & Reid, 2013). Given previous findings, we hypothesize that diversity values will be related to visible diverse political leadership in the community.

> **Hypothesis 6 (H6):** Having a mayor of color will be positively related to diversity values in city departments.

Intersectionality adopts a distinctive stance, "where systems of race, gender, and class domination converge" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1246), and where awareness is on people and experiences (MacKinnon, 2013). Intersectionality suggests that the processes of racialization and gendering are specific yet interrelated (Hawkesworth, 2006). Racialization may produce marked commonalities between men and women of dominant race and ethnic groups and of disadvantage among men and women of the subordinate race and ethnic groups. Gendering may produce commonalities (stylization of the body, voice intonations and inflections, interests, aspirations) among women across race and ethnic groups and among men across race and ethnic groups (Hawkesworth, 2006). Race and gendering are active processes where identities of women of color are constituted through practices that construct them as "other" (to White women, men of color, and White men; Hawkesworth, 2006). Studies of elected women of color consistently document forms of marginalization, including stereotyping and lack of institutional responsiveness to the policies advanced by women of color (Bratton & Haynie, 1999; Swain, 2000). Given the extensive research on how intersectionality changes the experiences and perceptions of individuals, we hypothesize that diversity values will be related to visible intersectional political leadership in the community.

> **Hypothesis 7 (H7):** Having a female mayor of color will be positively related to diversity values in city departments.

Data and Method

The hypotheses are tested using data from the 2016 National Study of Technology Use in Government conducted by the Center for Science, Technology and Environmental Policy Studies at Arizona State University, U.S. Census data 2015, and information gathered from websites. The survey data were collected from a sampling frame of 2,500 managers in 500 cities with populations ranging from 25,000 to 250,000. For each city, surveys were sent to department heads in community development, finance, city management, parks and recreation, and police. Cities were selected based on two criteria: all 184 cities with populations between 100,000 and 250,000 and a random sample of the 316 cities with populations 25,000 to 99,999. Weights are applied in the

Table 1. Questionnaire Items for Dependent Variable: Diversity Values.

Questionnaire items	Factor loading
Please indicate the extent to which your organization values and prioritizes . . .	
The advancement of women	0.748
Sensitivity about racial diversity	0.828
Ensuring that minority communities are represented in decision making	0.835
Actively recruiting qualified minorities for employment	0.849
Ensuring that there is greater and more equitable access by minorities to programs and services	0.845
Actively recruiting qualified women for employment	0.831
Providing information to policy makers to assist them in making decisions concerning minority community needs and perspectives	0.811
Extraction sums of squared loadings	
Total	4.725
% of variance	67.494

Source. These items were drawn from Sowa and Selden (2003).
Note. Extraction method: principal component analysis; 1 component extracted. Response categories:
1 = to a very small extent, 2 = to a small extent, 3 = to a moderate extent, 4 = to a large extent, and 5 = to a very large extent.

analysis to adjust for the sampling strategy. The survey was administered online from September 27, 2016, to December 27, 2016, to an adjusted sample of 2,166 municipal managers (e.g., removed ineligible individuals, retired, open positions, bad addresses). A total of 667 complete responses were returned from 386 municipalities for a final response rate of 30.8%. Of those 667 responses, 427 came from respondents in smaller cities (populations 25,000-99,000). Response bias tests indicate no significant differences across the two groups or across all respondents by city size. The final models include 599 individuals who responded to the questions on diversity values.

The dependent variable was derived from seven questionnaire items listed in Table 1. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which their organization values and prioritizes the advancement and recruitment of women and racial minorities and values related to representation. A factor analysis indicates the seven items load together as a single concept. *Diversity values* is the average scale of responses (Cronbach's alpha = 0.919), ranging from 1 to 5 with a mean of 3.12.

The primary independent variables are at the individual and city level. *Woman* indicates if the respondent is a woman (=1). *Person of color* indicates if the respondent identifies as black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Native American, biracial, multiracial, or other than white (=1). While it is not ideal to combine individuals of distinct and overlapping racial and ethnic groups, they are combined here for two reasons. First, this research is theoretically interested in aggregate diversity values as indicated in the language in the questionnaire items that comprise the dependent variable. Second, from an empirical standpoint, the number of respondents that fall within each category

(6.7%-2.7%) is too small to maintain statistical power in the models. *Woman of color* (=1) is the intersection of the two variables.

Proportion POC is the proportion of the city's population that identifies as a person of color and comes from the 2016 U.S. Census. *Female mayor* indicates if the city had a female mayor in 2016 (=1). *Mayor of color* indicates if the city had a mayor in 2016 who is a person of color (=1). Mayoral data were collected from website searches. We include an interaction variable to capture intersectionality of the mayor (Female Mayor × Mayor of Color) and two interactions for mayoral characteristics and community diversity (Mayor of Color × Proportion POC and Female Mayor × Proportion POC).

The control variables are at the individual, organizational, and community levels. At the individual level, *job satisfaction* is a scale derived from six questionnaire items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.731). Respondent education is captured with two dummy variables that indicate if the respondent has a *public service graduate degree* (=1, not=0) and a *business graduate degree* (=1, not=0). *Age* is a continuous variable, ranging from 28 to 75.

At the organizational level, there are five dummy variables indicating the department the respondent leads—this controls for organizational culture by department type. There are five controls for community variation. *Mayor-council* notes form of government (=1, Manager-Council = 0). This control is important because it captures variation based on the power of the mayor to set policy and shift organizational culture. *GARE cities* indicates if the city is a member of the local and regional Government Alliance on Race and Equity (=1), a group that works with governments to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. The *% in poverty* indicates the proportion of the city that is living below the poverty line (2015). The *% bachelors* is the percent of people in the city who have a bachelor's degree (2015). *Population (ln)* is the natural log of the city population (2015). The appendix reports a correlation matrix including means and standard deviations.

Results

Sampling Frame and Respondent Description

The sampling frame and respondent characteristics show the underrepresentation of women and people of color in political and managerial leadership in the 500 U.S. cities in this study. In 2016, 100 cities (20%) had a female mayor and 17% had a mayor who is a person of color. Women are more likely to serve as mayors in larger cities; 23.5% of cities with populations 150,000 to 199,999 and 25% of cities with populations 200,000 to 250,000 had female mayors. Only 16.7% of smaller cities (populations 25,000-49,999) had female mayors. In 2016, 415 mayors in the sampling frame were white. Among the 500 cities, 9.6% (48) have mayors who are Black, 1.8% (9) are Asian, and 5.8% (29) are Hispanic. The likelihood of having a non-white mayor increases with city size. In all, 15% of cities with populations 25,000 to 99,999 have non-white mayors, compared to 32% of cities with populations 200,000 to 250,000.

Table 2. Sampling Frame of Department Leaders, by City Size and Department Type.

	Men	Women
Total	1,795	624
Population categories		
0 to 49,999	655	237
50,000 to 99,999	484	149
100,000 to 149,999	374	133
150,000 to 199,999	179	73
200,000 to highest	103	32
Department type		
Mayor's office	393	101
Community development	343	137
Finance	284	203
Parks and recreation	334	144
Police	441	39

Note. n = 2,419, total of 2,500 in study sampling frame for which gender data were available.

Table 2 shows the distribution of women managers in the sampling frame, by city population and department type. Women account for 25.8% of department heads. As compared to the general population, women are underrepresented in leadership across these governments, with variation by city size and department type. Women are most likely to be department heads in cities with populations of 100,000 to 250,000, where they occupy 26.3% of leadership positions. Women are least represented (23.5%) in leadership positions in cities with populations of 50,000 to 99,999. Women are underrepresented across all departments. In the sampling frame, women are most represented in finance departments (41.7% of department heads) and least represented in police departments (8.3%). Across all departments women are underrepresented in comparison to the broader population (e.g., women make up less than 26% of department leadership, but 50.8% of the U.S. population). As compared to the distribution of women and men across leadership positions in this study, women are significantly underrepresented in leadership in police departments ($p < .000$) and significantly overrepresented as directors of finance departments ($p < .000$).

The responses from managers by department type and gender match the overall distribution in the sampling frame. Women accounted for 24.6% of respondents, a fair representation of the 25.8% women in the sampling frame. Responses from managers across department type were proportional to the overall gender distribution across the sampling frame. While underrepresented in municipal management, women make up a higher proportion of department leadership than political leadership (e.g., mayoral positions). The descriptive statistics point to a clear pattern of underrepresentation of women in city government.

There are no race and ethnicity data on the managers in the sampling frame, preventing a comparison of the racial and ethnic distribution of respondents to the sampling

Table 3. Racial, Ethnic, and Gender Distribution of Respondents, by Department and Population.

	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Women	Men
Total	17	43	23	549	164	503
Population categories						
0 to 49,999	7	9	5	228	74	188
50,000 to 99,999	6	11	4	133	33	132
100,000 to 149,999	1	11	4	104	29	99
150,000 to 199,999	3	6	4	50	18	47
200,000 to highest	0	6	6	34	10	37
Department type						
Mayor's office	2	4	2	74	15	73
Community development	3	16	6	125	45	111
Finance	8	5	5	91	44	73
Parks and recreation	2	9	6	127	43	108
Police	2	9	4	131	16	138

frame. We only report race and ethnicity data for respondents of which 13.9% were people of color (43 Black, 17 Asian, 23 Hispanic, 11 Other). Respondents of color account for 16.7% community development directors, 16.5% of finance directors, 11.8% parks and recreation directors, 10.3% deputy police chiefs, and 9.8% administrative heads in mayor's offices. Table 3 reports the racial and ethnic distribution of respondents by department type and city population. Among respondents, there is an underrepresentation of people of color across department leadership.

Model Results

Table 4 presents the results from the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models predicting the dependent variable, *Diversity values*. The data are weighted for the sampling procedure. Standard errors are clustered by city. The model was run on the full sample and separately for men and women enabling assessment of the intersection of respondent gender and race and ethnicity. An independent *t* test was run to determine if there were differences in the dependent variable by gender. No assumptions were violated for the dependent variable diversity values. On average, women ($m = 3.11$) reported significantly lower levels of commitment to diversity values compared to men ($m = 3.61$), $t(243.26) = 6.1$, $p < .001$. The full model for diversity values explains approximately 23% of the variance. For female respondents, the variables in the model explain 34% of the variance in the dependent variable as compared to 16% for the model on male respondents. Table 4 includes both standard errors and confidence intervals to show the magnitude of the independent variables. The model was examined for heteroscedasticity, multicollinearity, and nonlinear relationships. There are no significant methodological issues.

Table 4. OLS Model Predicting Diversity Values.

	Full model			Men			Women		
	β	SE	CI	β	SE	CI	β	SE	CI
Constant	0.12	0.65	[−1.15, 1.40]	−0.49	0.74	[−2.02, 1.04]	0.49	1.32	[−1.79, 2.77]
Woman	**−0.30****	**0.07**	**[−0.46, −0.13]**						
Person of color	0.15	0.10	[−0.08, 0.39]	0.14	0.12	[−0.12, 0.40]	**0.41†**	**0.25**	**[−0.24, 1.07]**
Proportion POC	**0.01****	**0.003**	**[0.00, 0.02]**	**0.01****	**0.003**	**[0.00, 0.02]**	0.01	0.01	[−0.01, 0.02]
Female mayor	0.09	0.15	[−0.22, 0.39]	0.07	0.17	[−0.29, 0.43]	0.36	0.29	[−0.29, 1.00]
Mayor of color	**0.45***	**0.22**	**[0.01, 0.89]**	−0.05	0.27	[−0.53, 0.43]	**1.49****	**0.39**	**[0.89, 2.10]**
Female Mayor × Mayor of Color	−0.12	0.22	[−0.52, 0.29]	0.24	0.24	[−0.19, 0.67]	**−0.85†**	**0.48**	**[−1.86, 0.16]**
Female Mayor × Proportion POC	−0.001	0.004	[−0.01, 0.01]	−0.002	0.005	[−0.01, 0.01]	0.001	0.01	[−0.02, 0.02]
Mayor of Color × Proportion POC	**−0.01***	**0.004**	**[−0.02, 0.00]**	−0.003	0.01	[−0.01, 0.01]	**−0.02****	**0.01**	**[−0.04, −0.01]**
Community development	**−0.36****	**0.11**	**[−0.60, −0.12]**	**−0.28***	**0.12**	**[−0.53, −0.02]**	**−0.54***	**0.24**	**[−1.14, 0.06]**
Finance	−0.14	0.12	[−0.41, 0.12]	−0.001	0.14	[−0.28, 0.28]	**−0.50†**	**0.26**	**[1.15, 0.15]**
Parks and recreation	**−0.22***	**0.11**	**[−0.45, 0.00]**	−0.19	0.12	[−0.43, 0.06]	−0.25	0.24	[−0.83, 0.34]
Police	**0.21†**	**0.11**	**[−0.03, 0.44]**	**0.25***	**0.12**	**[0.01, 0.50]**	0.48	0.32	[−0.12, 1.09]
Mayor-Council	−0.04	−0.09	[−0.19, 0.11]	−0.04	0.08	[−0.21, 0.13]	−0.02	0.16	[−0.39, 0.35]
Job satisfaction	**0.37****	**0.05**	**[0.22, 0.53]**	**0.32****	**0.06**	**[0.12, 0.53]**	**0.54****	**0.11**	**[0.32, 0.75]**
Public service degree	−0.03	0.08	[−0.18, 0.12]	0.06	0.08	[−0.11, 0.23]	**−0.31†**	**0.16**	**[−0.63, 0.01]**
Business degree	**−0.33****	**0.12**	**[−0.60, −0.50]**	−0.16	0.14	[−0.42, 0.11]	**−0.79****	**0.25**	**[−1.44, −0.14]**
Age	**0.01***	**0.004**	**[0.00, 0.02]**	**0.01****	**0.004**	**[0.00, 0.02]**	0.004	0.01	[−0.01, 0.02]
GARE cities	0.03	0.10	[−0.22, 0.27]	0.08	0.11	[−0.20, 0.36]	0.02	0.20	[−0.47, 0.51]
% in poverty	0.005	0.004	[−0.00, 0.01]	0.001	0.004	[−0.01, 0.01]	**0.01†**	**0.01**	**[−0.00, 0.03]**
Population (ln)	**0.10†**	**0.05**	**[0.00, 0.20]**	**0.16****	**0.06**	**[0.05, 0.28]**	0.001	0.11	[−0.20, 0.20]
Observations	599			446			153		
R^2	.26			.20			.42		
Adjusted R^2	.23			.16			.34		
Residual SE	1.15 (df = 578)			1.12 (df = 426)			1.16 (df = 133)		
F statistic	10.17*** (df = 20; 578)			5.59*** (df = 19; 426)			5.07*** (df = 19; 133)		

Note. CI = confidence interval.
†Significant items are in bold.
†p < .1. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

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There is support for H1. Perceptions about the organization's diversity values vary by respondent gender. Women report significantly lower levels of department commitment to advancing and recruiting women and people of color ($\beta = -0.30$, $p < .01$).

The models do not support H2 and H3. Overall, department heads of color do not report significantly different perceptions of diversity values in their departments, as compared to White department heads. H3 expected that women of color would report significantly lower diversity values as compared to White women or men of color. We find the opposite. Women of color report higher perceptions of diversity values as compared to White women; the relationship is significant at the .10 level ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < .10$). Thus, women overall report lower diversity values, but when gender and race intersect there are significant differences in those reports.

There is support for H4. Department head reports of diversity values are positively related to an increased proportion of people of color in the community. This relationship holds in the full model ($\beta = 0.01$, $p < .001$) and the male model ($\beta = 0.01$, $p < .01$).

There is no support for H5, which expected that having a female mayor would be related to diversity values in city departments.

There is support for H6. Respondents who work in a city with a mayor of color report significantly higher levels of diversity values in their departments ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < .05$). This relationship is driven by responses from female department heads ($\beta = 1.49$, $p < .001$) as the relationship is not significant for male department heads. However, this relationship is not necessarily because mayors of color are serving in more diverse cities.

This relationship reverses when mayor of color is interacted with the proportion of people of color in the city ($\beta = -0.01$, $p < .05$). For female respondents, there is not a significant relationship between their reports of diversity values and the proportion of people of color in the community, but there is a positive significant relationship between having a mayor of color and reporting increased diversity values in the department ($\beta = 1.49$, $p < .001$). This relationship reverses when we interact mayor of color with proportion of people of color in the community ($\beta = -0.02$, $p < .01$), indicating that the positive effects from having a mayor of color for female and male managers do not hold in communities with higher proportions of people of color.

There is not substantial support for H7, which expected the gender and racial intersectionality of the mayor would be related to reported diversity values in city departments. Female respondents report lower levels of diversity values in their departments when there is a women of color who is mayor, but this relationship is only significant at the .10 level ($\beta = -0.85$, $p < .10$).

It is important to note the limitations of this study. First, the study uses cross-sectional data and therefore cannot make causal claims. Second, because of the limited number of minorities in the dataset, we combine different races and ethnicity into one category, which obscures potential divergence across racial and ethnic groups. Third, the models do not control for procedural justice or formal policies, which are important predictors of diversity climate (Oberfield, 2016). Fourth, this study relies

on self-reported perceptions of values. However, perceptions are important for understanding organizational environments, which are enacted realities where individual perceptions mediate relationships between objective characteristics of the work environment and individual responses (Yang & Pandey, 2009). Values, attitudes, and beliefs of top-level administrators are expected to be linked to organizational action and outcomes, manifesting in the organizations they manage (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Finally, we offer an assessment of diversity values that captures averages across the United States rather than a deep analysis offered with qualitative approaches (Rubin & Baker, 2018). Despite these limitations, the data have the advantage of being a representative sample of department heads in medium and small U.S. cities, making the results important for understanding representation, leadership, and diversity values across city governments.

Discussion

Historically, in U.S. government, diversity efforts have aimed to increase employment numbers for women and people of color. More recently, scholars and practitioners have focused on the importance of organizational learning and creating an environment that embraces and values diversity. This research looks at both representation by number and perceptions of diversity values.

The descriptive analysis indicates women and people of color are underrepresented in bureaucratic leadership in small and medium-sized U.S. cities. Women are underrepresented in leadership across city size and department type and most represented in finance. People of color are more represented in leadership in cities with populations 150,000 to 250,000 and in finance and community development departments.

Our research questions asked if city department leaders perceive their organizations as valuing gender and racial diversity and how these perceptions are related to the characteristics and identity of the department head, mayor, and community. The regression models indicate that reporting that one's organization values diversity is significantly related to identity, including respondent gender, respondent race for women (but not for men), mayoral race (for female respondents), and the proportion of people of color in community (for men, not for women), and that the interaction of mayoral and community identity shapes perceptions in different ways, depending on mayoral race and gender.

Our findings related to department head characteristics confirm SIT. Female department heads regardless of race and ethnicity are significantly more likely to report that their organizations do not value racial diversity and are not advancing women. This finding confirms previous research on women's perceptions of gender equity in male-denominated workplaces (Mor Barak et al., 1998; Funk & Parker, 2018; Naff, 1995a) and offers clear evidence that being a female leader or having a female mayor is not sufficient in shaping the broader organizational culture toward valuing diversity and inclusion. Inclusion requires more than demographic representation, but a culture that

values members of the minority or out-group in a way that enables those individuals to fully participate and view themselves as valued.

Our results indicate that respondent race, alone, is not significantly related to reports of diversity values in city departments. This finding is in contradiction to previous research indicating that racial minorities are more likely to report discrimination (Mor Barak et al., 1998) and that their organizations do not value diversity (Oberfield, 2016), while Whites are more likely to report their organization is fair and values diversity. Our inability to confirm previous research may be partially explained by the low number of people of color (13.9%) in our dataset.

However, we do find that the intersection of race and gender is significantly related to reports of diversity values. This confirms previous research that indicates intersectionality is an important factor to account for because valuing diversity is different by gender, race, and the intersection of identities (Mor Barak et al., 1998; Kossek & Zonia, 1993). Women report lower diversity values in their organizations, but women of color report higher diversity values than White women. These findings contradict Oberfield's (2016) finding that Whites are the most likely and minority men the least likely to report their organizations are committed to diversity. Our findings also contradict Barak et al. (1998) who, in a study of workers at an electronics company, found that women of racial and ethnic minority groups report more feelings of exclusion than women or minorities when measured separately. It is possible that our more positive findings for women of color may be the function of our study focusing on public sector workers, where efforts to address diversity and inclusion efforts are more prevalent, or the result of our study focusing on department heads rather than general employees. Future research should investigate whether the experiences of women of color in the public sector differ between managers and employees, or if these differences are sector based (e.g., comparing the perceptions of women of color in equivalent public and private organizations).

The findings on mayoral characteristics indicate that mayoral gender is not significantly related to bureaucratic reports of organizational commitment to racial and gender diversity. This aligns with Funk's (2015) finding that female mayors are not better nor more participatory in their leadership than men. We find that working in a city with a mayor of color is positively related to diversity values for female department heads. This finding aligns with previous research that notes that racial minorities and women often cooperate and support one another to achieve diversity values, but also pursue distinct agendas (Bratton & Haynie, 1999). But women department heads also report lower racial diversity values when they serve under an intersectional mayor (female person of color). This finding points to the important role the intersection of gender and race plays in diversity values—where mayoral racial identity is differently experienced by male and female bureaucrats and the effects of mayoral racial identity reverses when the mayor is a woman of color. Future work should unpack the ways in which diversity in political representation (e.g., mayor) and the bureaucracy (e.g., department heads) explains (or does not explain) values in public organizations and how the intersection of race and gender is related to diversity values and outcomes.

Finally, our results indicate that diversity values in city departments are related to the proportion of people of color in the city. An increased proportion of people of color in the city is significantly related to reporting that the department values diversity. Female respondents working in a city with a mayor of color report significantly higher diversity values in their departments. However, this positive relationship reverses in cities with higher proportions of residents of color. For female department heads, the interaction of proportion of people of color in the city and having a mayor of color is negatively related to diversity values in their organizations. These findings point to two important yet understudied components of diversity in public management—(a) the interaction of community demographics and individual identity and (b) the ways in which community diversity and diversity in political leadership shape diversity values.

Different levels of racial awareness may lead to different expectations about an organization's commitment toward diversity efforts (Choi & Rainey, 2014). One type of personnel structure identified as an "identity-conscious" structure (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995) considers group identity to support protected groups (women and racial/ethnic minorities). This personnel structure was designed to help protected groups but is often met with unfavorable views by the majority. When employees believe that individuals from distinct demographic groups are unjustly awarded organizational benefits, they express resentment (Bies & Shapiro, 1987; Richard & Kirby, 1998). The negative relationship in our models when mayor of color is interacted with the proportion of people of color in the city may be identifying negative views from department heads that are reacting to a perceived threat from minority groups. This may also be an important result of public administration research focusing solely on demographic counts or values in isolation, rather than considering the two diversity management and inclusion approaches together.

Public administration researchers have long argued for public organizations to represent the communities that they serve (Meier, 1975; Riccucci, 2017), and research often looks at political representation (mayoral or city council) or bureaucratic leadership, but not the two together. There is a great deal of work indicating that when a city's minority population increases, governments become more representative in political and bureaucratic leadership (Mladenka, 1989; Spence et al., 2009; Stein, 1986; Zhao et al., 2005). Future research should look at (a) how the changing demographics of a city reshape diversity values in the bureaucracy—even when the bureaucracy fails to be demographically representative, (b) how diversity in political and bureaucratic leadership interacts to advance diversity values throughout city government, and (c) how these values might be differently experienced by people of different and intersecting identities.

Conclusion

This research points to important differences in representation in municipal government and perceived efforts to address diversity values in departments. We investigate

diversity values within a context that is not that diverse—small and medium-sized U.S. cities. Women and people of color are underrepresented in mayoral and bureaucratic leadership in these cities. The results indicate that diversity values in city departments are significantly related to gender identity, but unrelated to racial identity (likely due, in part, to the low number of people of color in the respondent pool). Female department heads likely have higher expectations for diversity values in their organizations, thus reporting lower diversity values as compared to men. Moreover, department heads working in communities with larger populations of color are more likely to report that their departments value racial and gender diversity. This points to the need to understand how bureaucratic organizations embody or represent the identity of the communities they serve.

These findings point to the important, hard conversations that public organizations need to have about diversity values and culture. How do political and bureaucratic leaders effectively manage diversity when the intended targets of those programs are the least likely to report that diversity is valued? Would programs aimed at advancing a diversity culture be better targeted to those unaccustomed to a diverse workplace (e.g., White men), rather than out-groups in the organization? Our findings indicate that cultural change in the bureaucracy requires much more than having women and people of color in leadership positions, but a more concerted effort to change values and the perceptions of organizational leaders of all types.

Although public organizations have expanded their efforts to incorporate diversity management practices and enhance promotion opportunities for women and people of color (Riccucci, 2002), they have not achieved equal representation in leadership nor widespread acceptance of diversity values. This research investigates the expectations that are created within public organizations regarding racial and gender diversity values. Our research partially responds to the call for more empirical study on the intersection of diversity dimensions in a comparative context (Sabharwal et al., 2018). The results from this study support the need to continue to investigate diversity not only from the perspective of counting bodies and reporting proportions, but by assessing social identity, culture, and values that are differently experienced by people of different identities. By accounting for these various social forces and dynamics in organizations, public administration research can better understand intersectionality in government agencies—both the intersection of race and gender, and the intersection of political and bureaucratic representation and their relationship to community demographics. The challenge moving forward will be measuring intersectionality, which focuses awareness on people and experience (MacKinnon, 2013), and advancing a *shared* culture that values diversity, where those of the in-group and the out-group have a common vision and experience for what it means to value diversity and be included.

Appendix

Correlation Table of Study Variables.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Diversity values	3.12	0.92	1																			
Woman	0.25	0.43	-.21***	1																		
Person of color	0.14	0.35	.10**	0	1																	
Proportion POC	28.81	18.02	.14***	.01	.27***	1																
Female mayor	0.21	0.41	.05	.05	.01	.10**	1															
Mayor of color	0.16	0.37	.09*	.03	.25***	.40***	.08*	1														
Community development	0.23	0.42	-.15***	.05	.05	.02	.08*	.02	1													
Finance	0.18	0.38	-.06	.14***	.06	-.04	.02	.02	-.25***	1												
Parks and recreation	0.23	0.42	-.05	.05	-.03	.01	-.03	-.03	-.30***	-.25***	1											
Police	0.23	0.42	.20***	-.18***	-.04	-.01	-.05	.01	-.30***	-.25***	-.30***	1										
Mayor's office	0.13	0.34	.07	-.07	-.04	.01	-.03	-.03	-.22***	-.18***	-.21***	-.21***	1									
Mayor-council	0.25	0.43	.03	-.06	.04	-.04	.04	-.09*	0	-.02	.02	.05	-.06	1								
Job satisfaction	3.92	0.68	.26***	-.04	-.04	-.07	-.02	-.01	-.14***	-.10*	.04	.13**	.09*	0	1							
Public service graduate degree	0.27	0.44	-.01	0	.05	.02	.02	0	.13**	-.14***	-.03	-.13***	.20***	-.07	.03	1						
Business graduate degree	0.08	0.27	-.10*	-.01	-.02	-.04	.02	-.01	-.07	.16***	.01	-.09*	0	.02	.04	-.17***	1					
Age	51.82	8.33	.09*	-.10**	.07	.07	-.01	.02	-.04	.07	.05	-.10*	.03	-.01	.02	-.10*	-.08*	1				
GARE cities	0.14	0.35	.05	.03	.03	.27***	.11**	.13***	.03	.08*	-.06	-.07	.02	-.16***	-.02	.06	.01	-.03	1			
% in poverty	16.41	8.29	.11**	.01	.14***	.24***	0	.20***	.01	-.02	-.01	.05	-.04	.18***	0	-.04	.01	-.04	-.08*	1		
% with bachelors	32.38	14.63	0	.03	-.10*	-.19***	.10*	-.18***	.02	-.02	-.03	0	.05	-.05	.03	-.02	.03	.05	.11**	-.48***	1	
Population (ln)	11.25	0.69	.16***	-.05	.12**	.15***	.12**	.11**	0	-.02	0	-.01	.03	-.04	.01	.04	.05	.02	.07	.08*	.02	1

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

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Note

1.   Data from a representative sample of 500 cities with populations 25,000 to 250,000.

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