In 1994, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) launched the Moving to Opportunity project in five major cities: Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City. The project was designed to test whether helping low-income families move from poverty-stricken neighborhoods to areas with less poverty would improve their well-being and their children’s outcomes. Under Moving to Opportunity (MTO), 4,600 families with children living in public housing were randomly assigned to one of three conditions. One group received housing vouchers that could only be used to move to a low-poverty neighborhood. Another received vouchers with no parameters on where they could move. A third group did not receive vouchers. Because the conditions were randomly assigned, researchers were able to identify the causal impact of moving to a low-poverty neighborhood by studying how families fared in the first condition (those given a voucher for a low-poverty neighborhood) compared to the other two. This allowed researchers to determine whether neighborhood contexts influence family outcomes.

Early studies on MTO found short-term benefits to families’ mental health for those moving to a low-poverty neighborhood (Kling, Liebman, and Katz 2007). Major benefits were also observed over the long run. Families who moved to low-poverty neighborhoods had more stable employment and higher earnings (Clampet-Lundquist and Massey 2008). Other studies have shown that benefits are particularly pronounced for children who moved prior to their teenage years. Raj Chetty, Nathaniel Hendren, and Lawrence Katz
(2016) uncovered that, by their midtwenties, children who moved to a low-poverty neighborhood as part of MTO earned wages that were 31 percent higher than those who were assigned to other conditions in the program. They were also more likely to attend college.

These results from the MTO program illustrate a key concept in studies of social stratification and family outcomes: Place matters. Where you grow up and where you live have a tremendous impact on the types of opportunities available, the barriers encountered, and even the adaptive characteristics developed. The importance of place is well established in the study of social mobility. In contrast, little attention has been directed toward examining how place impacts relationships between women and men and patterns of gender inequality. Instead, we tend to presume that the factors shaping gender inequality are more intimate, taking place in our families, homes, relationships, and workplaces. Certainly, many key contributors to gender inequality do occur in these settings. But the previous chapters have shown that the expectations characterizing gender relations within homes and workplaces can be very different across commuting zones depending on local gender norms. It is possible that spatial contexts play an important role in shaping levels of inequality between women and men. Just as place matters for social mobility, it may also matter for gender equality.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the relationship between local norms and patterns of gender inequality across U.S. commuting zones. I ask the question: Does place matter for gender inequality? Specifically, I focus on whether the four dimensions of local gender norms can help us understand spatial variation in the gender wage gap across the United States. Research on the contributors to wage inequality between women and men has found that individual-level factors, such as differences in work hours, education, and experience, play an important role in sustaining gender wage gaps (Cha and Weeden 2014). Yet, even after accounting for these and other human capital characteristics, women’s wages remain substantially lower than men’s (Scarborough and Moeder 2022). Economists have argued that this unexplained portion of the wage gap represents discrimination: When all reasonable factors have been accounted for, any remaining differences in the wages between women and men reflect cultural beliefs (implicit or explicit) that women deserve lower pay than men (Darity and Mason 1998).

Recent studies report that women earn approximately 20 percent less than men in the United States (Hegewisch and Barsi 2020). But these nationwide estimates hide substantial local variation. Figure 5.1 visualizes gender wage gaps across thirty illustrative commuting zones. These wage gaps were calculated with equations that account for observed individual-level human capital characteristics, such as education, work experience, age, and work hours, and therefore report gender wage gaps stemming from the dif-
Figure 5.1 Gender Wage Gaps across Thirty Illustrative Commuting Zones

Note: Wage gaps calculated with independent regression models for each commuting zone predicting logged hourly wage with gender and controls for race, age, age squared, education, marital status, work experience, work experience squared, and hours worked. Data are from the 2018 American Community Survey (Ruggles et al. 2020). Sample includes employed persons aged twenty-five to fifty-four.
ferent experiences of women and men in the labor market rather than differences in skills or qualifications. Although no place in the United States has erased the gender wage gap, Honolulu comes the closest, where women are paid 12.5 percent less than men. In contrast, the gender wage gap is almost three times as large in Baton Rouge, where women are paid about a third less than their men counterparts. The remaining commuting zones fill the range between Honolulu and Baton Rouge. The wage gap is over 15 percent in Los Angeles, 19.6 percent in Chicago, and 28.4 percent in Oklahoma City. In many cases, commuting zones in the same state have very different wage gaps. In Pennsylvania, the wage gap is over seven percentage points lower in Philadelphia (16.1 percent) than Pittsburg (23.2 percent). Wage gaps in Texas are highest in Dallas (23.6 percent), followed by Houston (22.5 percent), with San Antonio reporting the lowest gender wage gap of these three Texas cities, where women are paid 19.6 percent less than men.

Wage gaps vary across U.S. commuting zones. So do gender norms. But do they vary together? Do places with more egalitarian gender norms have lower gender wage gaps? Establishing a relationship between gender wage gaps and local norms is a first step to understanding how norms pattern inequality between women and men. I tested this association using a series of hierarchical linear regression models that independently tested whether the size of local gender wage gaps depended on the types of norms that prevailed in a particular commuting zone. Each equation included individual- and commuting zone-level controls to ensure the relationship between local norms and wage gaps was not confounded by observed variables. Figure 5.2 shows that, with one exception, places with more egalitarian gender norms have lower gender wage gaps. The strongest relationship is observed with respect to norms toward public sphere gender essentialism, where a difference of one unit in local gender norms (e.g., going from very traditional to traditional or egalitarian to very egalitarian) predicts a reduction in local gender wage gaps by 2.29 percentage points. This is a very large effect considering that the gender wage gap for the United States as a whole has improved by only 0.4 percentage points in the last decade (Hegewisch and Barsi 2020). Comparing extremes, the gender wage gap is predicted to be 9 percentage points worse in commuting zones with very traditional norms toward public sphere gender essentialism than those with very egalitarian norms on this dimension.

Egalitarian norms toward women’s advancement and private sphere gender essentialism also relate to lower gender wage gaps. The relationship is not as strong as observed for public sphere gender essentialism but still very substantial. For every one-unit increase in egalitarian norms on these two dimensions, gender wage gaps tend to reduce by about 1.3 percentage points. This means that the gender wage gap is predicted to be over 5 percentage points
Figure 5.2 Relationship of Local Gender Norms to Gender Wage Gaps

Note: Results calculated with hierarchical linear regression models predicting logged hourly wages with individual-level (race, age, age squared, education, marital status, work experience, work experience squared, and hours worked) and commuting zone (service sector size, percent employed in management or professional occupations, unemployment rate, share of population with college degree, percent foreign born, and racial composition) variables and an interaction between gender and local norms. Intercepts varied by commuting zone. Data are from the 2018 American Community Survey (Ruggles et al. 2020). *** indicates significance of wage gap at $p < 0.001$ level.
worse in places with very traditional norms on these dimensions than areas that are very egalitarian.

Local gender norms generally relate to lower wage gaps, but one exception is gender norms toward intensive mothering. Here, there is very little difference in local wage gaps between places with egalitarian or traditional norms. Previous research has shown that traditional norms toward intensive mothering predict lower rates of maternal employment (Ruppanner et al. 2021). Therefore, it is possible that norms of intensive mothering primarily limit opportunities for mothers’ employment and have a smaller effect on wage gaps for women who overcome these barriers to remain employed—likely a selective, highly skilled, and motivated group.

Besides norms toward intensive mothering, local gender norms have a strong relationship to gender wage gaps across commuting zones. This relationship even persists across diverse populations. Focusing on wage gaps for Black, Hispanic, and White residents, Figure 5.3 shows that the positive relationship of local egalitarian norms across dimensions of women’s advancement, public sphere gender essentialism, and private sphere gender essentialism consistently predict lower gender wage gaps for each group. Similarities are also observed between college graduates and those with less than a college education. Although gender norms have a slightly stronger relationship to wage gaps for the less educated, the difference is not significant. It is notable that intensive mothering norms are significantly related to wage gaps for White workers when analyzed separately. Among Hispanic residents, the coefficient for intensive mothering norms is larger than that observed for White residents, but it is not significant because the standard error is larger due to the smaller sample of Hispanic respondents in the data and variability in the relationship between norms and wage gaps for this group. Together, this suggests that the association of intensive mothering norms to wage gaps is tenuous, whereas the relationship of wage gaps and egalitarian norms across the three remaining dimensions is strong and a consistent predictor of lower wage gaps across subpopulations.

By and large, gender norms have a strong relationship to local wage gaps. This relationship exists over and above individual-level factors as well as additional commuting zone characteristics—meaning that the relationship of egalitarian norms to lower wage gaps is not due to the types of individuals who reside in egalitarian versus traditional places or the ways that egalitarian commuting zones differ from traditional ones in terms of economic or demographic composition. Beyond establishing a relationship between norms and wage gaps, however, the patterns illustrated in Figures 5.2 and 5.3 tell us little about how gender norms relate to wage gaps. We are yet unable to determine the underlying mechanisms driving the relationship between norms and wage gaps, only that there is some relationship occurring that causes
Figure 5.3 Relationship of Gender Norms to Gender Wage Gap for Full Sample, by Education, and by Race

Note: Results calculated with the same equation used for Figure 5.2 applied independently by race and education. Horizontal lines represent confidence intervals surrounding estimated coefficients. Confidence intervals overlapping the vertical line at 0 represent a nonsignificant relationship of norms to wage gaps. *** indicates significant effect of norms on wage gaps for full sample at p < 0.001 level.
gender norms to be so strongly associated with varying levels of gender inequality. We can, however, look to previous literature to consider how gender norms may operate through two mechanisms found to be primary contributors to wage disparities between women and men.

The first of these mechanisms relates to the sorting of women and men into different occupations with unequal levels of compensation. Economists and sociologists have emphasized the role of sorting mechanisms in research showing that occupational gender segregation is one of the largest contributors to the gender wage gap because women more commonly work in lower-paying jobs than men (Blau and Kahn 2017; Petersen and Morgan 1995). Recent studies also show that occupational gender segregation remains high. Documenting patterns of segregation in the United States, Paula England, Andrew Levine, and Emma Mishel (2020) find that approximately 42 percent of women and men workers would have to switch jobs in order for them to be evenly distributed across occupations. This level of segregation has changed very little in recent decades because much of the gains in women’s employment and occupational advancement have occurred in different fields than men. For example, women predominate in care and service sectors, whereas men make up the majority of workers in technical and blue-collar roles (Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey 2012). Occupational segregation is the consequence of many factors sorting women and men into different fields. This includes the tendency for women and men to prefer different careers, the chilly climate women often experience in male-dominated fields that causes them to leave, and hiring discrimination where men are preferred over equally or more qualified women (Alegria 2019; Cech 2014; Correll, Benard, and Paik 2007).

The second mechanism contributing to gender wage gaps is rooted in unequal valuation of women’s and men’s labor. In this mechanism, women and men may work in the same occupation and hold similar qualifications, but women are paid less than men because their contributions are perceived as less valuable. Whereas sorting operates between occupations, valuation occurs within occupations. Different valuation resulting in within-occupation wage gaps may result from men’s wage premiums in jobs that are stereotypically viewed as masculine. Because the stereotypical computer scientist is a man, managers may perceive them as more deserving of higher pay than equally qualified and performing women. Claudia Goldin (2014a, 2014b) argues that these within-occupation processes related to valuation now constitute the most important contributor to gender wage gaps.

In what follows, I investigate the mechanisms underlying the relationship between local norms and gender wage gaps. I first examine whether gender norms relate to wage gaps through shaping how women and men are sorted into different occupations. It is possible, for example, that places with
egalitarian norms have a higher percentage of women in well-paying occupations, therefore reducing the gender wage gap. After investigating the relationship between norms and occupational sorting, I then examine the role of valuation by testing whether wages between women and men in the same occupation vary as a function of local gender norms, reflecting systematic differences in the value placed on women’s work relative to men’s.

**Local Gender Norms and Occupational Sorting**

Women more often work in lower-paying jobs than men. This is particularly evident at the extremes. Analyzing data from the ACS, Will McGrew (2016) uncovered that none of the ten highest paying occupations are majority women. The closest is financial managers, where women make up just under half of all workers. In every other high-paying occupation, women make up between 10 and 40 percent of workers. They account for about 10 percent of architects and engineers, a quarter of dentists, and around a third of all lawyers. The highest rank is overwhelmingly male dominated: Women make up only 21 percent of all executive-level managers. Representation in high-paying occupations is even lower for women of color, who account for only 3 percent of all executive-level managers (Krivkovich et al. 2020).

Not only are women underrepresented in the highest-paying occupations, but they are also overrepresented in the lowest-paying ones. McGrew’s analysis found that women make up the majority of workers in seven of the ten lowest-paying occupations. Women are over 90 percent of all childcare workers, more than 75 percent of all personal care aids, and over 60 percent of fast-food counter workers and retail cashiers. Analysis conducted by the National Women’s Law Center found that women workers make up 65 percent of those employed in low-wage occupations that pay less than $10.50 an hour (Morrison and Robbins 2015). Black and Hispanic women are even more likely than White women to be employed in low-wage jobs. Relative to their share of the labor force, Black and Hispanic women are about twice as likely as White women to be working in low-wage occupations.

The uneven distribution of women and men across occupations with varying pay is not only present at the extremes. Research has long established that occupational gender segregation is a widespread and enduring feature of the U.S. labor market. In 1970, it was extremely rare for women and men to work in the same occupations. Paula England, Andrew Levin, and Emma Mischel (2020) estimate that nearly 70 percent of all workers would have had to change occupations at that time in order for gender integration to be achieved. Today, segregation has declined but remains at high levels, with just over 40 percent of all workers needing to change occupations to achieve occupational gender integration. In other words, it continues to be rare for women and men
to be equally represented within occupations. Drawing from surveys of a representative sample of U.S. employees, Kim Parker (2018) found that only about a third of women and men report that their workplace is balanced in terms of gender.

The persistence of occupational gender segregation is a driving factor behind gender wage gaps because the occupations where women tend to be employed generally have lower pay. Analyzing data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn (2017) estimate that approximately a third of the gender wage gap in the United States is due to the segregation of women in lower-paying occupations than men. Two primary factors sustain this pattern. The first relates to economic contexts. Over the past four decades, the U.S. service sector has grown at the same time that women’s educational attainment and labor force participation has increased (Albrecht and Albrecht 2010). Consequently, women entering the labor force throughout this period are more likely to work in service-providing occupations such as education and healthcare support, rather than integrate long-standing male-dominated jobs in architecture, engineering, and blue-collar occupations such as construction (England 2010). By influencing the types of opportunities available, economic contexts foster labor market conditions that are conducive to ongoing gender segregation when an increased supply of women job seekers is met by a growing number of job opportunities in sectors of the economy traditionally associated with feminine characteristics, such as care and customer service.

The second factor sustaining occupational gender segregation relates to gender norms. If economic structures shape the types of opportunities available to women and men in the labor force, cultural norms influence how these opportunities are distributed and rewarded. Gender stereotypes toward the types of jobs women and men are best suited for often creates barriers for women and advantages for men in accessing well-paying masculine-typed occupations when hiring managers implicitly perceive their ideal candidate as a man based on the view that men, on average, are more likely to hold qualities associated with the position. This process is commonly referred to as statistical discrimination (Bielby and Baron 1986; Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey 2012). At the same time, these cultural gender stereotypes are also reflected in job seekers’ socialized preferences. Research has found that women more often pursue careers in lower-paying caregiving fields than men (Cech 2013). In contrast, many men expressly avoid employment in fields associated with feminine characteristics (Yavorsky, Ruggs, and Dill 2021). Bias among hiring managers and socialized preferences among job seekers work in tandem to sustain the sorting of women and men into different fields. Socialization functions to steer women and men into gender-typical professions. But those who break socializing norms face additional
barriers stemming from bias and hiring discrimination that may sort them into gender-conventional occupations despite personal efforts otherwise.

Stereotypes channeling women and men into gender-typical occupations and women's and men's developed preferences for different types of work do not occur in isolation. Instead, the logics individuals use to navigate their job search and the criteria used by managers in hiring decisions are informed by local norms. Individuals develop their ideas about their personal careers and the qualifications of others for certain jobs by drawing upon common understandings for the type of work women or men generally do, the tasks women or men are usually good at, and the jobs that are appropriate for women or men. An experiment by Shelley Correll and colleagues (2017) provides a clear example of how local cultural contexts shape individuals’ perceptions of women and men job candidates. These researchers asked study participants to review two candidates’ resumes and select one to be hired as a police chief in a U.S. town. After their selection, they were informed that they chose the woman candidate for the job and that the other resume belonged to a man candidate. One randomly selected group of participants was told at this point that the police chief position was located in a traditional town in Kansas, while another group was told the job was in a progressive town in Massachusetts. Study participants were then given the opportunity to change their selection. Those informed that the job was located in a traditional Kansas town were twice as likely to change their decision and select the man candidate than those who were told they were recommending a hire for a progressive Massachusetts town.

Correll’s experiment provides strong evidence that people use their understanding of local norms to inform their decisions around the types of jobs women and men are suited for. Through learning only that their decision was made in the context of a place with traditional norms, study participants commonly adjusted their views to align with those conventional expectations. Consequently, they were less likely to recommend a woman candidate for the male-dominated position of police chief. Results from this study affirm key findings from Chapter 4: local norms have contextual effects that shape individuals’ attitudes and behaviors. Correll and colleagues’ study also shows how these contextual effects contribute to patterns of inequality. When local norms influence attitudes and behaviors in ways that pose barriers for women’s access to male-dominated jobs, they contribute to ongoing patterns of occupational gender segregation.

Cultural contexts can influence hiring managers’ perceptions and decision-making in ways that contribute to or challenge occupational gender segregation. Other research, however, also shows how gender norms operate through shaping workers’ job preferences. Following graduates from four universities throughout the United States, Erin Cech (2013) found that in-
Individuals’ perceived personal strengths were the largest predictor of whether they pursued employment in a female- or male-dominated occupation. Respondents who felt they were emotional, unsystematic, and people oriented were more likely to pursue work in female-dominated occupations that were traditionally associated with these feminine characteristics. Importantly, women respondents were more likely to hold these self-conceptions than men. As a result, these gender differences in self-conceptions are a major driver of occupational sorting where women tend to pursue jobs in majority-women occupations with a perceived match between job qualifications and personal traits. Similar patterns were observed among men in Cech’s study: Those who felt that they possessed masculine-typed traits, such as being systematic and unemotional, were more likely to pursue careers in male-dominated technical or blue-collar occupations. Men more commonly perceived themselves as holding these strengths and were therefore more likely than women to pursue work in majority-men careers.

Central to Cech’s study was the idea that individuals’ self-conceptions were much more influential in determining their career pursuits than their personal attitudes about gender equality. Participants in her study may have felt women and men were equally suitable for different types of jobs but nonetheless perceived themselves as having gender-typical qualities. Cech argues that this reflects the influence of cultural norms. By residing in a particular context with norms that convey messages about women’s and men’s essential difference and suitability for different types of work, individuals internalize these expectations to form self-conceptions consistent with predominant norms. At the same time, they may occasionally form reactionary attitudes that challenge traditional gender roles while also possessing gender-typical personality traits that shape their occupational pursuits in ways that sustain segregation.

Economic context and cultural conditions operate together to sustain occupational gender segregation. Economic contexts set the structure of opportunity, while cultural norms provide the logic individuals use to navigate the labor market. Research on these two processes, however, has generally occurred at different levels of analysis. Sociologists and economists have studied the role of economic context by comparing industry composition across local labor markets and testing its relationship to occupational gender segregation (Kongar 2008; McCall 2001). These studies have found that service sector expansion facilitates women’s labor force participation but also reinforces occupational gender segregation because women’s employment gains are primarily made in feminine-typed occupations within the service industry (Charles and Grusky 2004). In contrast, studies of cultural processes have generally focused on the way norms shape individual-level attitudes that influence job-seeking and hiring behavior (Cech 2013; Correll et al.
In the following section, I explore how local variation in gender norms across the United States relates to the sorting of women and men into different occupations. I draw from studies focusing on economic context and apply a macro-comparative approach that tests whether spatial differences in local gender norms are associated with women’s and men’s varying representation across a set of occupations that have different pay and emphasize either feminine or masculine characteristics. In doing so, I explore whether local gender norms relate to gender wage gaps through influencing the types of occupations where women and men are typically employed.

**Testing the Relationship of Local Gender Norms and Occupational Sorting**

Occupations hold distinct cultural associations that advantage women or men for some roles and disadvantage them for others. The prototypical blue-collar worker possesses physical strength, hand-eye coordination, and mechanical skills—traits typically associated with men, who make up the vast majority of these employees. Men also make up over two-thirds of workers in STEM occupations, but the traits associated with these jobs are very different from blue-collar positions. STEM workers are expected to be analytic, systematic, and possess technical skills. Although these attributes differ from those required in blue-collar occupations, they are also stereotypically associated with men. Management is yet another occupation historically associated with an additional masculine-typed trait of leadership. However, recent research shows that public attitudes have grown increasingly supportive of women in leadership, a trend that corresponds to the dramatic rise in women’s managerial representation over the past four decades (Scarborough, Sin, and Risman 2019).

Just as the cultural associations linking occupational characteristics to gender stereotypes are diverse, patterns of occupational gender segregation are multidimensional. One dimension of segregation captures gender differences in representation at managerial and executive ranks. Maria Charles and David Grusky (2004) refer to this as *vertical* segregation because it pertains to gender disparities in how workers climb occupational ladders. Another dimension of segregation is a *horizontal* component that describes a pattern where women and men work in different jobs that occupy similar positions in the workplace hierarchy (Charles and Grusky 2004). For example, women are more likely to be office administrators, and men are more commonly blue-collar workers. These jobs offer similar pay but have very dif-
ferent responsibilities. A third dimension of occupational gender segrega-
tion pertains to women’s and men’s representation in jobs requiring tech-
nical skills. Here, men most commonly make up the majority of workers in
occupations requiring computer skills, mathematics proficiency, or analytic
expertise, whereas women are more commonly employed in fields that
emphasize people skills and relationships.

Occupational segregation has multiple dimensions that correspond to
the diverse array of gender norms associating women and men with separate
skills and characteristics. To capture these dynamic patterns, I examine
the relationship of local gender norms to women’s and men’s employment
in four key occupations that reflect different cultural associations. Charac-
teristics of these occupations are reported in Table 5.1. First, I examine
the relationship of local norms to women’s and men’s employment in manage-
ment. This occupation emphasizes leadership skills and decision-making,
characteristics historically associated with men but increasingly applied to
women in recent decades. Consistent with this, women now make up nearly
half (43 percent) of all managers. Yet, as prior chapters have shown, gender
norms are multidimensional and vary spatially. Therefore, it is possible that
women have made fewer inroads in management in places with more con-
ventional norms toward women’s advancement or workplace leadership. In
addition, a focus on management may shed light on whether the relationship
of gender norms to local wage gaps, illustrated earlier in this chapter in Fig-

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<th>TABLE 5.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF MAJOR OCCUPATIONS</th>
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Note: Gender wage gaps calculated with independent linear regression models for each occupation predicting logged hourly wages with individual- and commuting-zone-level controls and with varying intercepts by commuting zone. Individual controls include race, age, age squared, education, marital status, work experience, work experience squared, and hours worked. Commuting-zone controls include the share of workers in the service sector, the share employed in management or professional occupations, the unemployment rate, the percentage of residents with a college degree, the percent foreign born, and the racial composition.
Chapter 5, is driven by occupational sorting. The median wage of managers is over thirty dollars an hour, about 50 percent higher than the median wage of workers in the total labor force. Therefore, egalitarian gender norms may reduce gender wage gaps by sorting women into better-paid managerial roles.

Second, I examine the relationship of local norms to women’s and men’s employment in STEM occupations to capture the dimension of segregation related to technical skills. Women make up less than a third of all workers in STEM fields. Their underrepresentation in this occupation is a contributing factor to the overall gender wage gap because the median wage in STEM is nearly fifteen dollars an hour higher than the median wage for all workers. Local gender norms may therefore relate to gender wage gaps through an association with women’s representation in high-paying STEM occupations.

Management and STEM are two high-wage occupations emphasizing different characteristics conventionally associated with men. I also examine the relationship of gender norms to women’s and men’s representation in two low-wage positions: office administration and blue-collar occupations. Median wages in these jobs are less than half the median wages in STEM and about three dollars an hour less than the median wage for all workers. Beyond similar wages, however, office administration and blue-collar occupations have little in common. Office administration requires organization and people skills, which are commonly associated with women. Consistent with this, women make up about three-fourths of office administrators. In contrast, blue-collar work requires mechanical skills and hand-eye coordination—traits more often associated with men, who make up over 80 percent of these workers. Although sharing similar pay, office administration and blue-collar jobs are highly segregated from one another, making them ideal to explore the horizontal dimension of segregation.

In the following section, I examine the relationship of local gender norms to the sorting of women and men across these four occupations. For my analyses, I used data from the 2018 ACS, which is the most comprehensive source of information on U.S. labor markets and families (Ruggles et al. 2021). I restricted my sample to the employed population aged twenty-five to fifty-four, which included 993,471 respondents. With these data, I examined whether women’s and men’s probability of employment in each occupation depended on the local gender norms in their commuting zone. I conducted a series of hierarchical logistic regression models predicting employment in each occupation with a set of controls for individual and commuting zone characteristics. Each equation also included an interaction term between gender and local norms to capture whether local gender norms affect the sorting of women and men into different occupations. From this interaction term, I calculated how the probability of employment in each occupation varies for women and men when we compare places that differ by one unit of egali-
tarianism in a dimension of local gender norms. This difference is equal to comparing commuting zones with very traditional to traditional, traditional to average, average to egalitarian, or egalitarian to very egalitarian norms.

I conducted independent models predicting the relationship of each dimension of gender norms to the probability of employment in each of the four selected occupations. If the effect of gender norms is significantly different for women and men, there is strong evidence that local norms have a meaningful and important relationship to occupational sorting. If local egalitarianism improves women’s probability of employment in high-paying management and STEM jobs relative to men, this will also help reduce overall gender wage gaps. The sorting of women and men between low-paying office administration and blue-collar jobs may not affect gender wage gaps because these occupations have similar pay. Nonetheless, an analysis of these patterns may shed important insight on the reasons why these occupations are so heavily segregated. In the following four sections, I report the results of these analyses by focusing on how gender norms relate to the sorting of women and men across management, STEM, office administration, and blue-collar occupations.

Management

Figure 5.4 illustrates the relationship of each dimension of gender norms to women's and men's representation in management. The length of each line represents how a difference in one unit of egalitarianism in local gender norms relates to a shift in the probability of employment in management for women (dark line) and men (light line). Lines to the right of center reflect a higher probability of employment with more egalitarian gender norms, whereas those to the left reflect a lower probability of employment. The capped line between those representing women and men corresponds to the difference in the relationship of gender norms to managerial employment for these two groups. A dashed capped line means that the difference in the probability of employment is not significant and, therefore, the corresponding dimension of gender norms does not relate to the occupational sorting of women and men in management positions. A solid capped line means the opposite: that the association of gender norms to managerial employment is significantly different between women and men, representing a meaningful relationship between local norms and occupational sorting.

Figure 5.4 shows that local norms of public sphere gender essentialism have a stronger relationship to women's employment in management than all other dimensions of gender norms. Comparing commuting zones that differ by one unit in local gender norms (e.g., average to egalitarian), women's likelihood of employment in management increases by 0.2 percentage points in a more egalitarian context. Comparing extreme cases, this means...
Figure 5.4 Relationship of Local Gender Norms to Women’s and Men’s Probability of Employment in Management

Note: Results calculated from independent hierarchical logistic regression models predicting employment in management with individual-level (race, age, age squared, education, marital status, work experience, work experience squared, and work hours) and commuting zone-level (share of workers in the service sector, share employed in management or professional occupations, unemployment rate, percentage of residents with a college degree, percent foreign born, and racial composition) controls. Intercepts were specified to vary by commuting zone. An interaction between gender and local norms was used to calculate the average marginal effects of one unit in egalitarian norms on the probability of employment in management for women and men.
that women residing in very traditional commuting zones on the dimension of norms related to public sphere gender essentialism are 0.8 percentage points less likely to work in management than those in very egalitarian commuting zones. Whereas egalitarian norms on this dimension facilitate women’s managerial employment, they have a slightly negative association with men’s employment in management. The difference between women and men in the relationship of local norms toward public sphere gender essentialism is significant, indicating that this dimension of local norms has a meaningful relationship to the occupational sorting of women and men in management positions that operates to increase women’s representation in these high-paying roles.

Besides norms toward public sphere gender essentialism, no other dimension of gender norms was significantly related to the occupational sorting of women and men in management. Norms toward women’s advancement and private sphere gender essentialism had a positive relationship between cultural egalitarianism and women’s managerial employment, but the effect was not significantly different from men. Egalitarian norms toward intensive mothering have a negative association with managerial employment for both women and men, suggesting that these norms prevail in areas where employment in management is less likely regardless of gender.

**STEM Occupations**
The relationship of local gender norms to women’s and men’s probability of employment in STEM occupations is illustrated in Figure 5.5. Again, public sphere gender essentialism has the largest effect. Women in very egalitarian commuting zones on this dimension are 0.2 percentage points more likely to work in a STEM occupation than those in an egalitarian area, 0.4 percentage points more likely than those in an average area, 0.6 percentage points more likely than those in a traditional location, and 0.8 percentage points more likely than residents in a very traditional commuting zone. This positive effect is significantly greater than the relationship of public sphere gender essentialism to men’s STEM employment, which is slightly negative. Therefore, these results indicate that egalitarian gender norms of public sphere gender essentialism promote women’s representation in STEM, helping to desegregate this high-paying occupation.

The three remaining dimensions of local gender norms did not have a meaningful relationship to the occupational sorting of women and men in STEM occupations. Egalitarian norms of women’s advancement and private sphere gender essentialism were predicted to have a positive relationship to women’s STEM employment and a slightly negative relationship to men’s STEM employment, but the size of this relationship was minimal and not significant. Egalitarian norms of intensive mothering predicted lower prob-
Figure 5.5 Relationship of Local Gender Norms to Women’s and Men’s Probability of Employment in STEM Occupations

Note: Results calculated from independent hierarchical logistic regression models predicting employment in STEM with individual-level (race, age, age squared, education, marital status, work experience, work experience squared, and work hours) and commuting zone-level (share of workers in the service sector, share employed in management or professional occupations, unemployment rate, percentage of residents with a college degree, percent foreign born, and racial composition) controls. Intercepts were specified to vary by commuting zone. An interaction between gender and local norms was used to calculate the average marginal effects of one unit in egalitarian norms on the probability of employment in STEM for women and men.
abilities of employment for both women and men, suggesting that STEM employment is universally less common in areas with egalitarian norms toward intensive mothering.

Office Administration
Figure 5.6 shows that gender norms across all four dimensions have a substantial relationship to the representation of women and men in office administration. Across each dimension, women are less likely, and men more likely, to work in office administration when local gender norms are more egalitarian. Although each dimension of gender norms has significant effects, the largest patterns are again observed in norms toward public sphere gender essentialism. On this dimension, a one-unit difference in local egalitarianism relates to a 0.3 percentage point reduction in women’s likelihood of employment in office administration and a 0.4 percentage point increase in men’s probability of employment in this role. Combining men’s increased representation with women’s decreased representation, women’s probability of working in office administration relative to men reduces by nearly 1 percentage point between commuting zones that differ in only one unit of local egalitarianism on this dimension. The size of this combined effect is only slightly smaller for private sphere gender essentialism (0.5 percentage points) and women’s advancement (0.5 percentage points). Egalitarian norms toward intensive mothering relate to lower odds of employment in office administration for both women and men, but the relationship is significantly larger for women, meaning that men make up a larger share of office administrators in commuting zones with egalitarian norms on this dimension.

Women make up the majority of workers in office administration. However, the results from Figure 5.6 show that this occupation is more integrated in commuting zones with egalitarian gender norms across each of the four dimensions. When local gender norms convey women and men as more equal and as possessing similar skills and characteristics, men account for a larger share of positions in conventionally feminized occupations like office administration.

Blue-Collar Occupations
The relationship of local gender norms to women’s and men’s employment in blue-collar occupations is in the opposite direction than what was observed with respect to office administration (see Figure 5.7). This corresponds to the fact that office administration jobs are mostly held by women, whereas blue-collar occupations are held mostly by men. Egalitarian norms toward women’s advancement, public sphere gender essentialism, and private sphere gender essentialism have a positive relationship to women’s employment in blue-collar occupations and a negative relationship to men’s
Figure 5.6 Relationship of Local Gender Norms to Women’s and Men’s Probability of Employment in Office Administration

Note: Results calculated from independent hierarchical logistic regression models predicting employment in office administration with individual-level (race, age, age squared, education, marital status, work experience, work experience squared, and work hours) and commuting zone-level (share of workers in the service sector, share employed in management or professional occupations, unemployment rate, percentage of residents with a college degree, percent foreign born, and racial composition) controls. Intercepts were specified to vary by commuting zone. An interaction between gender and local norms was used to calculate the average marginal effects of one unit in egalitarian norms on the probability of employment in office administration for women and men.
Figure 5.7 Relationship of Local Gender Norms to Women’s and Men’s Probability of Employment in Blue-Collar Occupations

Note: Results calculated from independent hierarchical logistic regression models predicting employment in blue-collar occupations with individual-level (race, age, age squared, education, marital status, work experience, work experience squared, and work hours) and commuting zone-level (share of workers in the service sector, share employed in management or professional occupations, unemployment rate, percentage of residents with a college degree, percent foreign born, and racial composition) controls. Intercepts were specified to vary by commuting zone. An interaction between gender and local norms was used to calculate the average marginal effects of one unit in egalitarian norms on the probability of employment in blue-collar occupations for women and men.
employment in these roles. This means that egalitarian gender norms across these dimensions operate to desegregate blue-collar jobs.

The largest effects are again observed on the dimension of local norms related to public sphere gender essentialism. For each unit difference in local egalitarianism, women are 0.5 percentage points more likely to work in blue-collar occupations while men are 0.3 percentage less likely. This relates to a combined shift of 0.8 percentage points favoring women's representation in blue-collar jobs. In addition to public sphere gender essentialism, egalitarian norms toward women's advancement and private sphere gender essentialism also have a strong relationship to women's integration in blue-collar occupations. For each of these dimensions, a one-unit difference in local egalitarianism relates to about a 0.5 percentage point increase in the probability of women's employment in blue-collar occupations relative to men. Gender norms toward intensive mothering were not significantly related to the sorting of women and men in blue-collar occupations.

**Summary of Results: Occupational Sorting**

Gender norms are related to the sorting of women and men across occupations. But not all dimensions of gender norms play an equal role or have consistent relationships with women's and men's employment. Norms of public sphere gender essentialism were associated with the sorting of women and men across each of the four occupations analyzed. In each case, egalitarianism on this dimension was related to lower levels of occupational segregation. Egalitarianism was associated with a higher probability of employment for women relative to men in majority-men management, STEM, and blue-collar occupations. It was also associated with a lower probability of employment for women relative to men in the majority-women occupation of office administration.

Other dimensions of gender norms were only relevant for the sorting of women and men in some occupations. Egalitarian norms of women's advancement and private sphere gender essentialism were associated with employment patterns in office administration and blue-collar occupations. Egalitarian norms on these dimensions related to a lower probability of women's employment in office administration and a higher probability of women’s employment in blue-collar roles. The opposite pattern was observed for men. Consequently, egalitarianism on these norms was associated with reduced segregation in these low-wage occupations. Norms of intensive mothering had the weakest relationship to occupational sorting. However, intensive mothering was associated with employment in office administration. Women in places with greater support for working mothers were less likely to work in office administrative positions.