2019

# Gender Inequality in Hollywood: The Magnitude, Determinants, and Influence of the Gender Wage Gap in the Film Industry

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# GENDER INEQUALITY IN HOLLYWOOD:

# THE MAGNITUDE, DETERMINANTS AND INFLUENCE OF THE GENDER WAGE GAP IN THE FILM INDUSTRY

by

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**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT**

**OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS**

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**DECEMBER 14, 2018**

**Abstract**

In the field of labor economics, abundant research has been conducted on the cause and magnitude of the gender wage gap in various industries in the United States. While the national gender wage gap has decreased over the last few decades, this trend has not been observed in every industry. The film industry, in particular, has experienced a notable lack of progress in both its social and economic treatment of women. Because Hollywood has significant influence in the United States, its misguided portrayal of women and failure to ensure equal pay for male and female actors sets a harmful standard for the rest of the nation. Due to the confidential nature of actors' salaries, however, there is little research on the topic of the gender wage gap in Hollywood. Using a couple hundred observations, I examined the magnitude of the gender wage gap in Hollywood and compared the impact of gender on actors' salaries to that of more pertinent variables, such as critical success and available finances. I concluded that gender has a greater effect on an actor's salary than any other variable. In consideration of the relative lack of literature on this topic, I recommend several ways to further the research conducted in this study.

**Acknowledgements**

I would first like to thank my thesis readers, Professor Roberto Pedace and Professor Carlin Wing, for guiding me through this process. I am grateful to Professor Wing for her insightful feedback and for her equal support of the written and visual aspects of my thesis. I thank Professor Pedace for his guidance in framing this paper and for his presence as my thesis reader, my econometrics professor, and my advisor throughout the semester.

I would like to thank the Scripps community for encouraging my diverse academic interests and for consistently challenging me to become a more industrious, engaged, and reflective individual. Thank you to my friends who have shown me unwavering support and encouragement in all aspects of my life. I could not have asked for a better place to live and study for the last four years. I will be forever grateful for the experiences that I have had and the friendships that I have formed throughout my time at Scripps.

Finally, thank you to my family for supporting my personal and academic pursuits and for providing me with this invaluable college education. I would not be where I am today without you.

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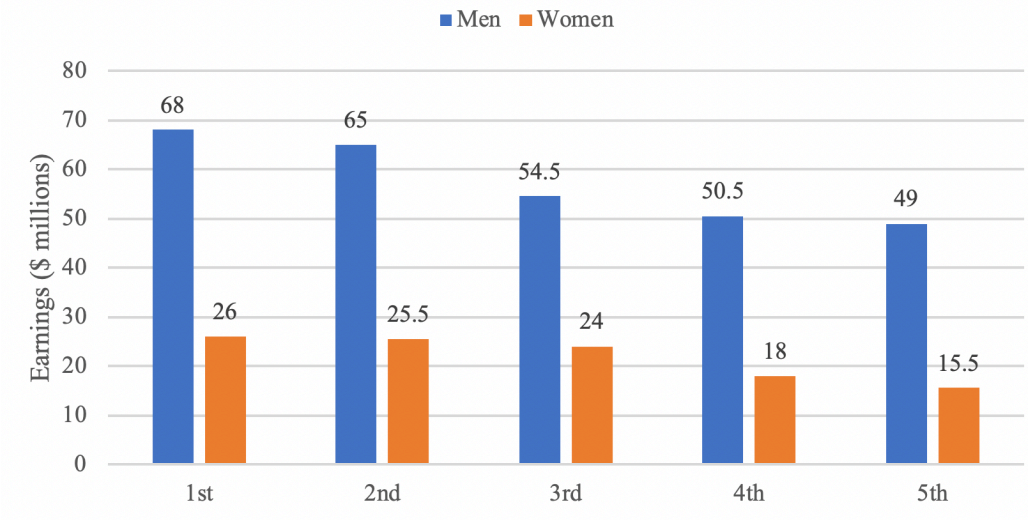
## Introduction

The gender wage gap, or the average difference in pay received by men and women for the same work, is well-documented, and although there have been many attempts to close the gap, there is one industry that is failing greatly to do so: the film industry. While it may seem absurd for figures in Hollywood to demand more money when lesser paid actors are likely still earning significantly more than the average American, the fact of the matter is that it is not uncommon for a leading male actor's paycheck to amount to several multiples of that of his female costar. Although it has yet to be empirically investigated, outstanding examples of the gender wage gap in Hollywood, as seen in Figure 1, seem too significant to be entirely rationalized by differences in talent, experience, and available finances, among other relevant factors. According to the theory of labor economics, any portion of the wage gap that cannot be explained by such variables would amount to gender discrimination (Blau and Kahn 2016).

**Figure 1. Highest Paid Actors in the World (2017)**




Adapted from Robehmed, Natalie. 2017, 'Full List: The World's Highest-Paid Actors and Actresses 2017,' *Forbes.com*, 22 August.

The importance of further research on the magnitude of the gender wage gap in Hollywood, as well as the effect of gender on actors' salaries, as it compares to that of other variables, stems

from two basic facts when considering the likely impact of gender discrimination on the determining of wages. First, present earnings are affected by past earnings (NWLC 2017). This indicates that without an active effort to combat gender discrimination, any discrimination that has occurred in the past will maintain or increase the wage gap moving forward. Second, Hollywood has an immense impact on national culture (Eliashberg et al. 2006). The industry's influence places it in the unique position of being able to set the standard for gender equality, but instead, the widely publicized difference in earnings between men and women in Hollywood perpetuates gender inequality throughout the industry and throughout the nation. For these reasons, it is imperative for the gender wage discrepancy in the film industry to be addressed now.

In this thesis, I will examine the magnitude of the gender wage gap in the film industry, the factors that influence it, and the ways in which Hollywood's perpetuation of gender inequality reach far beyond one industry. This will be accomplished through a review of literature and through econometric analysis, the latter of which will be the focus of this inquiry. My analysis of literature regarding both prominent explanations of the gender wage gap and the cultural influence of Hollywood will be presented first in order to lay a foundation for the reader's understanding of the matters at hand. I will subsequently perform multiple regressions on an econometric model built to analyze a data set containing information on salaries, film budgets, gender, and measures of performance. This will provide concrete evidence of the gender wage gap in Hollywood and demonstrate the effects of each variable on actors' salaries. Due to the confidential nature of actors' salaries, the econometric evidence introduced in this study will be largely unprecedented, but it will provide some insight into the determination of film actors' salaries, as well as the ways in which influencing factors divergently affect the estimated salaries of men and women.

## Literature Review

It is clear that the United States has a long history of wage disparity between men and women, but varying definitions and methods of calculation for the gender wage gap have caused disagreement among the economic community about what the wage gap is and whether it is truly a problem. One of the earliest interpretations of discriminatory wage practices suggests that employers have a preference to associate with individuals of specific qualitative characteristics, such as race or gender; discrimination occurs when those employers are willing to pay more in order to associate with their preferred group (Becker 1957). Since the introduction of this theory, the number of interpretations has grown substantially. Petersen and Morgan present three processes of discrimination that would allow the gender wage gap to be interpreted differently: allocative discrimination, valuative discrimination, and within-job wage discrimination (1995). Respectively, these types of discrimination address the practice of women being allocated to lower paying occupations, the tendency for occupations held primarily by women to be paid lower wages than those held primarily by men regardless of education and experience, and the event of women receiving lower wages than men within the same occupation and establishment. Although it has been found that allocative discrimination cannot be explained by differences in human capital characteristics, the gender wage gap attributed to valuative discrimination becomes smaller when occupational controls become finer (Marini 1989). While it has been suggested that gender segregation in the occupational qualification can largely account for the gender wage differential, this explanation becomes ineffectual when applied to studies of wage disparities within a single occupation (Kunze 2005). Because male and female actors in Hollywood are considered to work in the same occupation, and they work in that occupation at nearly equal rates, the type of discrimination affecting any existing gender wage gap in the film industry would be within-job

wage discrimination. It should be noted, however, that the gender wage gap has often been attributed to the other types of wage discrimination and that wage differences have traditionally been believed to be less of an issue with within-job wage discrimination (Petersen and Morgan 1995).

With these interpretations in mind, it is important to understand that from an economic perspective, wage gaps are not inherently problematic. Every gap can be divided into an explained portion, in which the wage differential is justified by differences in qualifying characteristics, and an unexplained portion, which amounts to wage discrimination (Blinder 1973). The latter portion of the division is the troubling aspect of the wage gap, because it involves the practice of compensating minority groups with lesser wages regardless of job title and performance level. Although it is not common to report the decomposition of a wage gap, discriminatory practices have been observed for decades, and existing literature provides a clear indication of enduring inequality. From the 1950's to the 1980's, the gender wage gap in the United States remained relatively steady, with the ratio of women to men full-time, year-round earnings in all occupations hovering around 0.60; the ratio subsequently increased from 0.592 in 1981 to 0.655 in 1987 (Goldin 1990). The gender wage gap experienced a great reduction during the 1980's due to women's increasing education and participation in the workforce, but since then, convergence of the remaining gap has been slow. Since 2010, conventional human capital variables have failed to explain the gender wage gap, which is particularly large and unexplained for those in high-skill occupations (Blau and Kahn 2016). The Institute for Women's Policy Research reports that in 2010, the gender wage gap remained notably large at 22.6 percent, meaning that at that time, the ratio of women to men median, full-time, annual earnings was 0.774; remarkably, in the decade prior, the gender wage gap narrowed by less than one

percentage point, which is the smallest decade-long convergence observed in modern times (IWPR 2011).

While the gender wage gap is most commonly referenced as the average difference in pay between men and women across all occupations, the literature referenced in this section has been used extensively to research the gender wage gap in a multitude of specific industries. It has been applied to manufacturing, computer science, and financial corporations, among others, but due to the confidential nature of the data needed to conduct industry-specific research, there is a distinct lack of literature focused exclusively on the wages of those who work in the film industry. This is particularly true for actors. In the 1950's, the studio system, in which actors signed long-term contracts with studios for steady wages, was abandoned, allowing Hollywood stars to become free-agents, whose wages can fluctuate greatly based on their perceived market value (Ravid 1999). Although SAG-AFTRA requires annual income statements from actors in the union, this information has yet to be made public, meaning that actors' individual and collective wage information is not reported by any single institution and can be difficult to uncover (SAG-AFTRA 2018). There is one research paper that uses a sample of 265 discovered salaries to examine the Hollywood wage gap based on both gender and age, but the bulk of its content focuses on the confirmation that men in Hollywood are able to command high salaries for an appreciable number of years, whereas women in Hollywood tend to be able to command high salaries only in their younger years (De Pater et al. 2014). Although the aforementioned study is tangentially related to the topic being addressed in this paper, it does not consider gender as an exclusive variable, it does not give a ratio for the gender wage gap in Hollywood prior to contemplating the impact of age, and it does not consider impact of productivity.

The presence of the gender wage gap in the film industry and the finding that women in Hollywood often have shorter career-spans than men in Hollywood seem unsurprising when considered alongside the representation of women on screen. It has been theorized that the role of women in film is one of a supporting nature – that women are present only to motivate the male protagonist to action and provide erotic, visual pleasure for the male gaze found in both the protagonist and the audience (Mulvey 1975). The positioning of women as marginal figures and sexual objects becomes especially problematic when it is acknowledged that exposure to media influences observational learning by developing the expectation that what is seen on screen will be reinforced in real life (Hall et al. 2011). This can be particularly true for relationships between men and women, as audiences look to media for insight on how personal relationships should be approached (Johnson and Holmes 2009). The influence of the media's gendered representations, however, reaches beyond personal relationships. Wood presents three ways in which the media perpetuates harmful representations of women, resulting in limiting and unrealistic perceptions in real life (1994). First, the underrepresentation of women in media positions men as the 'cultural standard' and relegates women to the sidelines. Second, stereotypical portrayals of men and women sustain socially constructed views of gender. Third, depictions of interactions between men and women emphasize traditional gender roles and normalize the inferior treatment of women. If gendered behaviors observed on film are reinforcing to behaviors practiced in everyday life, then it can be expected that the secondary role of women on screen will influence the treatment of women off screen. While there is no limit to how these behaviors might be expressed, one manifestation of this inequality could be the comparatively low compensation that women in Hollywood receive for performing what is largely considered to be the same work as men.

The difficulty with addressing this kind of inequality, however, arises at the intersection between social and economic value. What constitutes labor of a similar nature? Although work is generally compared by occupation, industry, and labor hours, there are no explicit terms defined to compare the work of two individuals. In a creative industry like Hollywood, there may be room to stretch the idea of equal work based on the importance or depth of a character being portrayed by an actor. If the portrayal of women in media is often secondary to that of men, as suggested by Wood, then it is conceivable that a female actor's work would be valued less than a male actor's work, regardless of talent or productivity (1994). In response to the consideration of roles available to women in film, it has been suggested that "women, *as women* rather than as glossy image and spectacle, are 'not there' in media representations," or in the critical frameworks through which their representations are understood (Thornham 2007). While there are many reasons to demand more nuanced representations of women in film, the possibility of a connection between the importance of women's roles and the value of women's labor is certainly a priority.

It is widely acknowledged that due to its high cultural significance, Hollywood often sets an example for the rest of the nation to the point where its impact on American culture has been described as "disproportional" (Eliashberg et al. 2006). It is possible, then, that Hollywood has a significant influence on the perceived acceptability of the gender wage gap when it is considered that lead actresses in Hollywood have personally acknowledged and publicly announced having received salaries that are a 0.3 ratio to that of their male counterpart, which is well below the national average (CNBC 2017). Given that Hollywood is considered to be a mass culture industry and "mass culture industries are sites where symbolic representations of gender are literally produced," it is particularly important for the gender wage gap in Hollywood to be addressed, because convergence of the gender wage gap in Hollywood could improve both the cultural and

financial valuation of women (Bielby and Bielby 1996). It will be difficult to employ the Hollywood gender wage gap as an agent for national change, however, without first discovering the actual ratio of women to men average earnings per film.

With consideration of the information presented in this section, the purpose of this paper is to contribute to the existing literature by using a sample of wages of male and female actors to calculate the gender wage gap in an industry with far too little economic research, compare the impact of gender on salary to that of more pertinent variables, and decompose the resulting gender wage gap to discover the explained and unexplained portions. This study is important for economic research, because great wage disparities are being observed between the men and women who work in what is perhaps the most culturally influential industry in the United States, and it is integral to examine the details of this phenomenon if we hope to understand exactly what Hollywood's gender wage gap is and whether it can be justified.

## Model

Drawing on the theory of labor economics, which often relies on human capital to explain patterns of wages, I will perform three regressions to test for the relationship between salary, gender, various measures of skill, and available finances. In this case, human capital refers to acting experience and talent, which I attempt to quantify with three independent variables. The following model will incorporate every observation in the data set to test the effects of five independent variables on the salary of a silver screen actor.

$$lnsalary = \beta_0 + \beta_1 female + \beta_2 rank + \beta_3 awards + \beta_4 nominations + \beta_5 lnbudget + \varepsilon$$

where *lnsalary* is the (log) earnings of an individual who acted in a film, *female* is a dummy variable indicating whether or not an individual is female, *rank* is a quantifiable list of the importance of a role by the New York Times, *awards* is the number of Academy Awards in an acting category won by an individual through the year of his or her observed salary, *nominations* is the number of Academy Award nominations in an acting category received by an individual through the year of his or her observed salary, and *lnbudget* is the (log) budget of the film for which an individual earned a salary.

In this regression, *female*, *rank*, *awards*, *nominations*, and *lnbudget* are the independent variables affecting the dependent variable *lnsalary*. This model was designed as such because if the theory of labor economics holds, then salaries of Hollywood actors should be determined by the human capital of the individual in the labor market, or in this case, the acting ability of an individual in the film industry – measured by his or her critical success – and the budget of the film.

While the variable *female* will provide the estimated effect of being female on an individual's salary, the estimated effects of the remaining variables in the first equation will apply to both men and women in the data set. In order to develop a better understanding of each variable's effect on men and women individually, two regressions will be performed on the following model with specified values for the dummy variable *female*.

$$lnsalary = \beta_0 + \beta_1 rank + \beta_2 awards + \beta_3 nominations + \beta_4 lnbudget + \varepsilon$$

where each variable is defined in the same way as the variables in the first model. Although the variable *female* does not appear in this model, it will have an effect on the results of the regression.

When the dummy variable *female* is set equal to 0, the results of the regression will apply only to those observations in the data set that pertain to men, and when the dummy variable *female* is set equal to 1, the results of the regression will apply only to those observations in the data set that pertain to women.

## Data

For the purpose of this thesis, I collected pooled cross-sectional data on the salaries and genders of actors, the New York Times rank, Academy Awards, and Academy Award nominations received by each actor, and the budgets of the films in which each actor appeared. Data on individual salaries and film budgets were collected from a number of sources, including the Internet Movie Database (www.IMDb.com) and The Movie Times. Because the years of collected data range from 1984 to 2018, salaries and film budgets were adjusted for inflation using CPI indexes; these figures are reported in millions of 2017 dollars. The practice of the New York Times to include within film reviews a list of actors in order of the importance of their roles was quantified to create data for importance of performance. The rank of the individual to appear first on the list, indicating the actor with the most important role in the film, was assigned a 1 in the data set, while the rank of the individual to appear second on the list was assigned a 2, and so on so that within the data set, a lower number indicates a better rank, or greater importance of the actor's role. Data on Academy Award nominations and wins were collected from the Academy Awards Database (awardsdatabase.oscars.org). The nominations and wins recorded in the data set were only those which were received through the year of the actor's observed salary and received in one of the following categories: Actress in a Leading Role, Actress in a Supporting Role, Actor in a Leading Role, Actor in a Supporting Role, or Best Picture. In total, there are 203 observations (118 male

and 85 female). Summary statistics for all observations, only male observations, and only female observations are depicted in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3, respectively.

**Table 1. Summary Statistics for the Complete Data Set**

| Variable | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *female (%)* | 0.42 | 0.49 | 0 | 1 |
| *rank* | 1.69 | 1.11 | 1 | 8 |
| *awards* | 0.31 | 0.61 | 0 | 3 |
| *nominations* | 1.18 | 2.19 | 0 | 19 |
| *salary ($ millions)* | 9.70 | 8.23 | 0.01 | 52.61 |
| *budget ($ millions)* | 93.13 | 65.86 | 1.71 | 354.73 |

The given statistics are based on a data set containing 203 observations.

**Table 2. Summary Statistics for Male Observations (when *female* = 0)**

| Variable | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *female (%)* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| *rank* | 1.64 | 1.67 | 1 | 8 |
| *awards* | 0.24 | 0.58 | 0 | 3 |
| *nominations* | 1.04 | 1.96 | 0 | 12 |
| *salary ($ millions)* | 11.94 | 9.28 | 0.36 | 52.61 |
| *budget ($ millions)* | 97.07 | 62.07 | 5.34 | 354.73 |

The given statistics are based on a data set containing 118 observations.

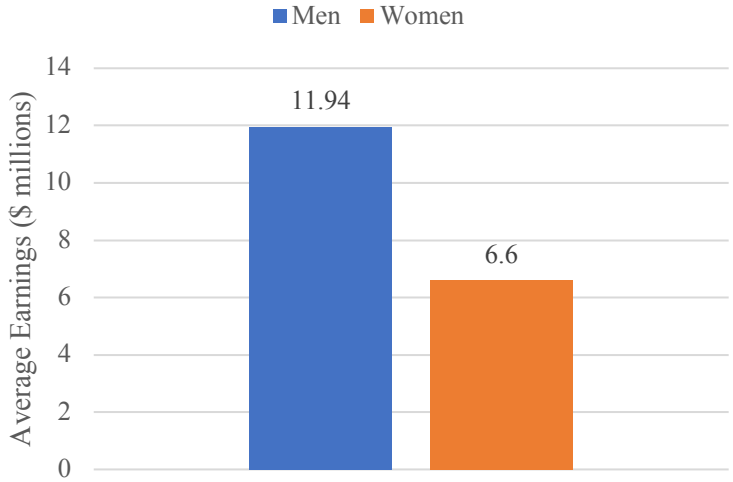
**Table 3. Summary Statistics for Female Observations (when *female* = 1)**

| Variable | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *female (%)* | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| *rank* | 1.78 | 1.04 | 1 | 6 |
| *awards* | 0.40 | 0.64 | 0 | 3 |
| *nominations* | 1.38 | 2.50 | 0 | 19 |
| *salary ($ millions)* | 6.60 | 5.36 | 0.01 | 25.10 |
| *budget ($ millions)* | 87.66 | 70.80 | 1.71 | 354.73 |

The given statistics are based on a data set containing 85 observations.

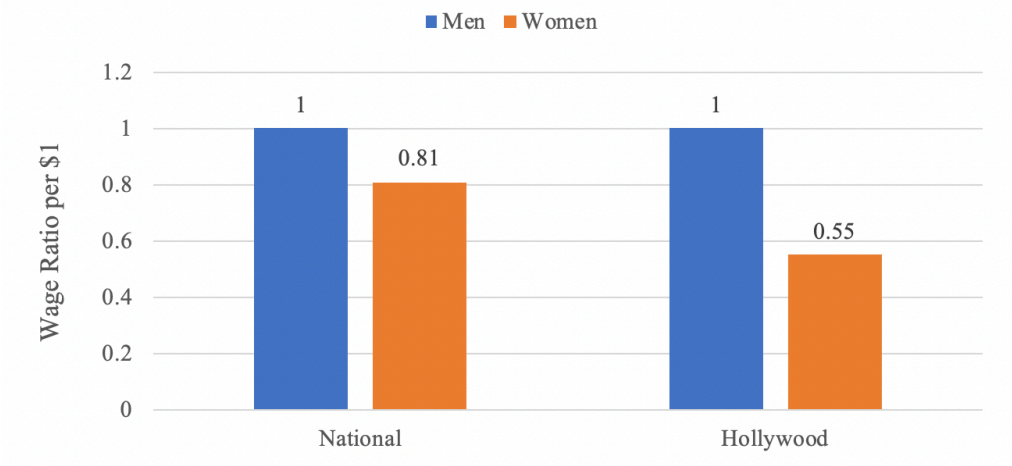
Using the statistics presented in Table 2 and Table 3, specifically the mean salary for men and the mean salary for women, it can be calculated that the ratio of women to men earnings for Hollywood actors is 0.55, which implies that the gender wage gap is a remarkable 45 percent. This is visually depicted in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. Summary Statistics: Mean Salaries**



While it is important to note that this is a simplistic interpretation of Hollywood's wage gap, as it has yet to account for the impact of the explanatory variables, the significance of its magnitude can be fully realized by comparing its ratio to that of the national gender wage gap.

**Figure 3. Gender Wage Gap 2017**




National data adapted from Graf, Nikki, Anna Brown, and Eileen Patten. 2018, 'The narrowing, but persistent, gender gap in pay,' *Pew Research Center*.

As demonstrated in Figure 3, the ratio of Hollywood's gender wage gap is more than twice as large as the ratio of the national gender wage gap, but the summary statistics reveal that differences in the explanatory variables are far more balanced. Although men and women receive Academy Awards and Academy Award nominations at equal rates due to gendered categories, a comparison of the independent variables reveals that the women in this sample are more likely than the men in this sample to both be nominated for and win an Academy Award in acting. The men in this sample, however, tend to receive better rankings of importance from the New York Times and work on films with larger budgets. The regression results presented in the next section will determine whether these variables can be used to explain the staggering gender wage gap in Hollywood.

## Results

**Table 4. Effect of Independent Variables on Salary (regression coefficients)**

| Variable | All | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|---|
| *female* | -0.61*** | n/a | n/a |
| *rank* | -0.29*** | -0.24*** | -0.37*** |
| *awards* | 0.34** | 0.16 | 0.56* |
| *nominations* | 0.01 | 0.07 | -0.6 |
| *lnbudget* | 0.52*** | 0.57*** | 0.49*** |
| N | 203 | 118 | 85 |
| $R^2$ | 0.31 | 0.33 | 0.18 |

* = p-value ≤ 0.10: significant at 10% level

** = p-value ≤ 0.05: significant at 5% level

*** = p-value ≤ 0.01: significant at 1% level

The results of the first regression, which tested the effects of each variable on the complete set of observations, reveal that the coefficients of four out of five independent variables are statistically significant, as depicted in Table 4. The variables that have a significant effect on the salaries of Hollywood actors are *female*, *rank*, *awards*, and *lnbudget*. The variable *nominations* did not have a significant effect on salary in any regression. The most notable coefficient in the first regression is $\beta_1$, the coefficient on the variable *female*, which is equal to -0.61. This suggests that if a Hollywood actor is female, salary decreases by 61 percent; with a p-value of 0.00, this effect is significant at the 1 percent level. For the remaining variables in the first regression, the coefficients suggest that when an actor's importance rank goes up by one place – in other words, when it gets worse – salary decreases by 29 percent, when an actor receives an additional Academy

Award, salary increases by 34 percent, and when the budget of a film increases by $1 million, salary increases by 52 percent. While these results provide a solid foundation for understanding the effects of these independent variables on the salaries of Hollywood actors, a more in depth understanding of the effects of the latter three variables, *rank*, *awards*, and *lnbudget*, results from an analysis of the gender-specific regressions.

When comparing the variable *rank* in the second regression, which tested the effects of each variable on only the male observations, and the third regression, which tested the effects of each variable on only the female observations, it is revealed that when an importance rank is placed one number higher, male salary decreases by 24 percent, and female salary decreases by 37 percent. Because the *rank* variable has a p-value of 0.00 in the second regression and 0.005 in the third regression, both of these coefficients are statistically significant at the 1 percent level. While the effect of an additional Academy Award is not statistically significant for male observations in the second regression, it is significant at the 10 percent level for female observations in the third regression. A coefficient of 0.56 suggests that when a female film actor receives an additional Academy Award, her salary will increase by 56 percent. Finally, the effect of the variable *lnbudget* is statistically significant at the 1 percent level for both men and women. The coefficient on the male-oriented regression suggests that when the budget of a film increases by $1 million, a man's salary will increase by 57 percent, and the female-oriented regression suggests that when the budget of a film increases by $1 million, a woman's salary will increase by 49 percent.

In consideration of these results, it can be understood that labor economics theory does not stand as an adequate explanation for the remarkable gender wage gap amongst actors and actresses in Hollywood. Regressions of the econometric models presented in this thesis indicate that the simple characteristic of being female lowers expected salary by more than 60 percent before

accounting for other factors. When the effects of the other variables are considered, it becomes clear that a change in film budget or critical success impacts men and women differently. Therefore, these variables alone cannot account for the existence and magnitude of the gender wage gap in the film industry, as evidenced by the $R^2$ values of each regression. An $R^2$ value of 0.33 in the second regression suggests that the variables given in this model can account for 33 percent of the variation in male salaries, while an $R^2$ value of 0.18 percent in the third regression suggests that the variables given in this model can account for 18 percent of the variation in female salaries. Although there are certainly more explanatory variables that could be added to the model utilized in this thesis, the statistics resulting from the three regressions performed suggest that there is a lack of acceptable rationale behind the gender wage gap.

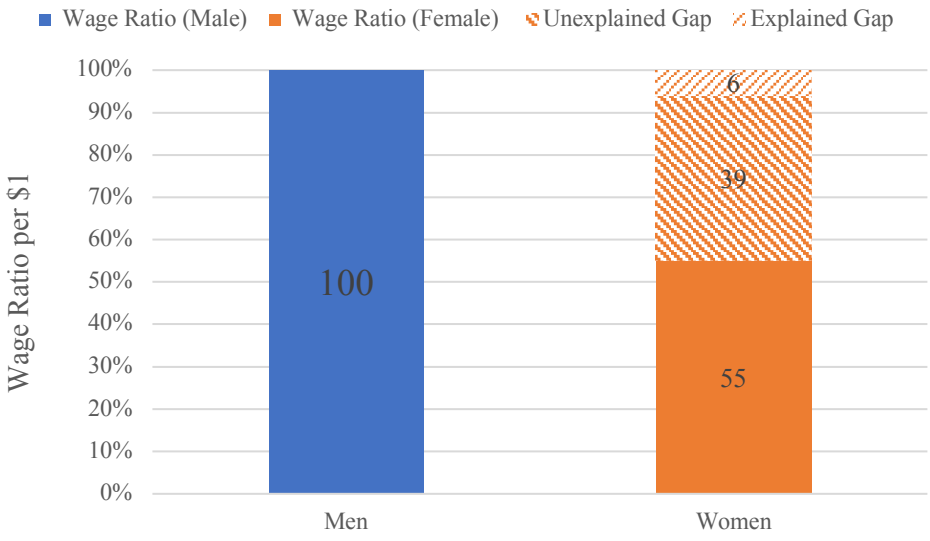
In order to confirm this conclusion, I performed a Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition, which decomposed the given gender wage gap, 45 percent, into two components: the explained portion and the unexplained portion. Generally, the explained portion of any wage gap arises because one group is more qualified than the other; in this case, that could mean that one group tends to have more Academy Awards and take on roles of greater importance. The unexplained portion, however, generally arises because one group is treated more favorably than the other, which is considered discrimination. The results of the decomposition are depicted in Table 5.

**Table 5. Blinder-Oaxaca Decomposition: Hollywood's Gender Wage Gap**

| *lnsalary* | Coefficients |
|---|---|
| male | 15.941 |
| female | 15.247 |
| difference | 0.694 |
| explained | 0.087 |
| unexplained | 0.608 |

The results of the Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition suggest that approximately 13 percent of Hollywood's gender wage gap is explained, or due to differences in the levels of the explanatory variables, while approximately 87 percent is unexplained, or due to varying effects of the coefficients. In other words, the decomposition suggests that approximately 87 percent of Hollywood's gender wage gap is due to gender discrimination. As demonstrated in Figure 4, this accounts for about 39 cents on the dollar.

**Figure 4. Hollywood Gender Wage Gap Decomposition**



Although these numbers imply that a reasonable gender wage gap in the film industry would be about 6 percent, it is possible that the estimated discrimination in this study is overstated due to the existence of relevant characteristics, such as the previous number of leading roles held by an actor, that have not been captured by the given variables.

## Conclusion

In this thesis, I examined the magnitude of the gender wage gap in Hollywood and the impact of gender on actors' salaries as compared to other variables. I accomplished this by running several regressions on two different models incorporating several measures of critical success and film finances. What I found is that there is a significant wage gap between men and women actors in the film industry, with women making approximately 55 cents to a man's dollar. While the men in my sample found employment with films that had, on average, a 10 percent larger budget than those with which women found employment, the women in my sample tended to outperform men on several measures of critical success. Although each variable affected the salaries of men and women differently, every variable was statistically significant with the exception of *nominations*. The most striking discovery from this research is that of all the variables included in the model, the variable *female* had the largest effect on salary. Specifically, the coefficient implied that the base salary for a woman – without accounting for any other variable – would be, on average, more than 60 percent lower than that of a man; after accounting for the remaining variables, it was discovered that a large majority of the wage gap was unexplained, leaving gender discrimination as one possible explanation.

As discussed in the literature review section of this paper, the economic implications of this study are far-reaching due to the cultural influence of Hollywood. While a difference in pay

may not have an alarming effect on the well-being of actors, who are all likely still earning paychecks in the millions, a gender-based discrepancy in pay is rooted, at least in part, in discrimination, which reverberates in industries throughout the nation. Because individuals tend to imitate what they see in the media, an inclination to dismiss gender equality in Hollywood, as evidenced both by the gender wage gap and the passive portrayal of women in the media, encourages the continuation of gender inequality in many other areas of life and work. The tendency to treat women as lesser than men is a long-standing norm, and as the most powerful and influential industry in the United States, Hollywood is in a unique position to lead the campaign for national gender equality.

This study is intended to serve as a simple starting point for further research on the gender wage gap in the film industry; as such, there is ample room for this work to be improved. The data used in my regressions consisted of only 203 total observations and only 85 female observations. As with all economic studies, more observations provide more accurate results. While the results of this study are important and should not be dismissed, the relatively small sample size is one limitation of this study. Furthermore, nearly every observation correlates to an accomplished actor. Although it is helpful to have figures for the gender wage gap amongst such influential and well-known individuals, the results found in this study may not accurately extend to lesser known actors.

With this in mind, there are several steps that could be taken to further research on the gender wage gap in the film industry. In direct relation the limitations previously mentioned, the data set could be expanded to include more observations, which could improve the accuracy of the results and provide more diversity in the data. The inclusion of lesser-known actors and more actors of color would allow for a further breakdown of the gender wage gap, disclosing further details on the ways in which the gender wage gap affects different groups of actors. Alongside an

extension of the data set, one could extend the econometric model to include new variables supplementing those intended to measure an individual's deserved salary. While the model in this study measured critical success through a set of variables indicating the importance of an individual's role and award history, one could create variables intended to measure an individual's productivity. This could be accomplished by determining the number of lines spoken by an individual in a movie or by the number of minutes an individual appears on screen. Although this particular study is somewhat simplistic, there are numerous ways to further research on the gender wage gap in the film industry, and there are many, versatile ways in which the basic model presented in this paper could be used as a foundation to do so.

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