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INNATE FACTORS AND THE LABOR MARKET – AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF GENDER AND PERSONALITY AT DIFFERENT CAREER STAGES

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VORWORT

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Charlotte Kräft Detmold, im Dezember 2021

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B&E	Business and Economics
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Engin.	Engineering
EU	European Union
FFM	Five Factor Model
GBP	Great Britain Pound
GSOEP	German Socio-Economic Panel
imr	inverse Mills ratio
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
Ped	Pedagogy
ph.d	Doctor of Philosophy
sd.	standard deviation
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
RE	Random-Effects
US	United States

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH AREA

The idea of applying economic principles to explain different areas and problems in our world won Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo a Nobel Prize in 2019. In their book "Good Economics for Hard Times," Banerjee and Duflo (2019) outline that "inequality is exploding, environmental catastrophes and global policy disasters loom" (p. *ix*). Moreover, they explain that many of the issues plaguing the world right now are based on core economic themes, such as trade, growth, and inequality. Thus, Banerjee and Duflo (2019) point out that economists are needed more now than ever to provide knowledge and guidance to combat major global problems. Economists should play a vital role in advising policy and decision-makers to cope with the challenges ahead of us. Yet, giving good advice only works on the basis of truly understanding phenomena explicitly based on executing rigorous analyses of solid data.

Interestingly, many of the actual global challenges are interconnected with the economics of gender. For instance, while the education of women and their participation in the labor market is seen as a driver against climate change[1] (Andrijevic et al., 2020), the promotion of women into superior political positions leads to more long-term-oriented decisions (Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2004; Profeta, 2017).[2] Further, a study by Klasen and Lamanna (2009) reveals that gender gaps in labor force participation (and education) are negatively linked to economic growth. This is due to a paucity of progress in employment that is equivalent to lost economic opportunity because "the precious resource woman" is not being put to its best possible use. Through a broad literature review, Duflo (2012) confirms this argument, namely that economic development and women's empowerment are closely interrelated. These examples show that many global issues are rooted in the labor market. Furthermore, the significance of women's attachment to the labor market is enormous for overcoming global challenges.

Currently, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences when it comes to the allocation of household and child-rearing work sharpened discussions in industrial countries about traditional gender roles and heated up public debate on how advanced we are when it

[1] This happens not only through lower fertility rates associated with female labor market participation but also women's role in mitigation and adaptation actions; see Andrijevic et al., 2020 for a more detailed explanation.
[2] These relate to more investments in education and social needs than their male counterparts.

comes to gender equality (e.g., Collins et al., 2020).[3] Thus, gender is not only a key component of major global issues, but it has also recently raised societal attention in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The overarching goal of this dissertation is to follow Banerjee and Duflo's call to provide sound economic advice. Precisely, it should help to gain more understanding of a key topic that is an inherent part of all the major global challenges that we face: the economics of gender, or more specifically, gender differences in the labor market.

Yet, an intuitive question that arises is: If gender equality is so desirable and a key to solving some of the world's most urgent problems, what causes gender differences in the labor market, and why do they seem to remain? Azmat and Petrongolo (2014) broadly categorize the factors that induce gender differences in the labor market into three different aspects: *productivity*, *preferences,* and *discrimination*. All these aspects might be interconnected. The thesis at hand deals with all three aspects in different settings.

In this regard, male-dominated industries or the so-called STEM industries (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) appear to be a fruitful study setting since female participation continues to be low. *Productivity*-related factors explain the gender ratios of those industries, in the sense that women generally have different college majors than men (Brown & Corcoran, 1997) or receive training in different fields (Kunze, 2005) that disqualify them for working in the STEM sector. Yet, *preferences* might also matter; because in male-dominated settings, masculine communication and decision-making patterns dominate. Research shows that men and women differ when it comes to some cognitive attributes, such as risk taking (e.g., Eckel & Grossmann, 2008) or preferences for competition (e.g., Booth & Nolen, 2012). Therefore, women might prefer to work in other industries where their communication and behavior patterns are salient. Lastly, in male-dominated industries, *discrimination* against women might prevail stating that male decision-makers still have preferences for male workers over comparable female workers (Zellner, 1972). In line with Becker's (1971) theory of taste-based discrimination, discrimination can be traced back to a certain discomfort dealing with women in specific job positions. These arguments lead to the development and continuance of male-dominated sectors.

[3] Generally, the debate discusses that the pandemic and resulting closure of schools and kindergartens caused women to do the bulk of housework. At the same time, this was not the case for men, see e.g., Del Boca et al., 2020 or Power, 2020.

Hence, in industrialized countries, political initiatives fostering women's participation in the labor market have been especially focused on the STEM industries. Interestingly, these sectors remain largely under-researched; only a scant number of studies exists that explores women's attachment to male-dominated sectors. However, despite all political endeavors, it is not clear if women (in superior or teammate positions) make a difference in these industries. Precisely, no study explores whether there is a link between the share of female supervisors or peers and (individual) performance in a male-dominated industry. My first study scrutinizes exactly this question, namely:

(i.) Is there a relationship between the growing share of female supervisors/peers and individuals' work performance in male-dominated industries?

Second, some types of affirmative gender-specific policies are based on female quotas for management board representation. With such quota laws, political decision-makers want to shatter the glass ceiling that is salient in many industrialized countries (e.g., Arulampalam et al., 2007). The term "glass ceiling" refers to the notion that women are unable to move beyond a certain hierarchical level due to vertical gender segregation and a bias in pay once these echelons have been reached by the "happy few" (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986). While existing glass ceiling studies yield mixed results on its existence and magnitude, no work analyzes the glass ceiling effect in a male-dominated industry. Given the fact that women in superior roles might serve as role models and weaken certain stereotypes in the vein of statistical discrimination (Athey et al., 2000), huge emphasis should be paid to whether a glass ceiling exists in male-dominated industries and, if yes, what magnitude of it is. Thus, my second analysis deals with this question:

(ii.) Do women encounter promotion barriers and pay discrimination in the executive sphere in male-dominated industries?

Third, moving away from male-dominated sectors, other industries have higher public exposure and attain special media interest. Gender differences in these industries might have a particular signaling effect and, should be a research focus. This is true for Hollywood's movie industry, which was prominently reported in the media due to accusations from several female actors for being *discriminated* against in the form of systematically lower pay than male actors (e.g., Rogers, 2015; The Telegraph, 2015). There is a *productivity* argument facilitating any gender research and making findings more telling, when it comes to this particular industry setting. The productivity of actors appearing in a movie is assumed to be

equal, i.e., the time and energy that actors spend on participating in a film are roughly the same, eliminating the possible impact of work hours and other productivity-related factors. Additionally, when it comes to *preferences,* Hollywood actors form a homogenous group of people, do the same jobs, in the same sector, in the exact location, and at the same time (Dean, 2008). Analyzing a potential gender pay gap in this type of industry is of utter importance since there is no longitudinal empirical study available on a potential pay gap in Hollywood that can examine if the accusations of female actors are true. Therefore, the third study investigates the following research question:

(iii.) Does a gender pay gap exist in the Hollywood movie industry, and if so, is there a discriminatory component of this pay gap?

Fourth, the analysis of a potential gender pay gap for Hollywood's movie industry reveals that "it is not all about gender," in the sense that other human capital variables need to be considered when it comes to the analysis of pay differences. Therefore, my last paper deals with another innate factor that might determine labor market outcomes: one's personality. To gain a broader understanding, it is reasonable to analyze data of workers who are actually in the labor market, and of individuals just before they enter the labor market. Thus, my last paper uses a large sample of higher education students to investigate the role their personalities play in the formation of salary expectations. Salary expectations are important since they resonate with actual future salaries that form one of the essential incentives in the labor market (Frick & Maihaus, 2016). This paper sheds light on students' expectation formation and thereby reveals interesting insights with respect to the role personality traits play. Hence, it explores the following research question:

(iv.) Are personality traits tied to the formation of students' salary expectations?

1.2 OUTLINE

In this thesis, four research questions will be analyzed in four separate empirical studies, which will be presented in individual chapters. All manuscripts differ from each regarding their length, scope, and style since they have been prepared for publication in different peer-reviewed scholarly journals. Thus, literature references may occur repeatedly. Following the introduction, five further sections follow, which will be described here briefly:

Throughout Chapter 2, *"It's a Man's World? Gender Spillover Effects on Performance in a Male-dominated Industry,"* I analyze possible gender spillover effects in a male-dominated

industry. In this context, the spillover effect can loosely be defined as the impact of growing female representation on an outcome variable – e.g., on individual performance. Gender spillover effects can further be distinguished into two different types: (1) downward-flowing effects (from higher-ranking to lower-ranking individuals) and (2) within-ranks effects (flows within the same hierarchical rank). Precisely, I shed light on my first research question by analyzing whether a growing share of female supervisors or female peers is linked to the individual performance for a unique sample with 6,874 workers of the Norwegian oil industry. While one study on the Israeli army has certain overlaps with my research endeavor (Pazy & Oron, 2001), no longitudinal study exists that explores both kinds of spillover effects: downward-flowing and within-ranks effects in a male-dominated industry. Another particularity is that I do not take linear relationships for granted. Instead, with a fixed-effects regression framework, I analyze if some of these relationships can be better described as cubic according to prevailing theory. Consistent with theory, the within-ranks analysis reveals that men's performance in response to a higher share of female peers follows a cubic pattern. This shows that men's performance is highest in gender-balanced teams. For women, this relationship cannot be confirmed. In terms of downward-flowing effects, female supervisors in this particular industry are found to have a negative effect on the individual performance of both men and women. These negative downward-flowing effects suggest that female leaders might manage differently or have issues in this "old boys' network" and require a deeper analysis of the corporate cultural background.

Chapter 3, *"Equal Pay Behind the 'Glass Door?' The Gender Gap in Upper Management in a Male-dominated Industry,"* sheds light on the second research question of whether there is a glass ceiling effect in a male-dominated sector. Using a unique sample of 8,072 workers in the British oil industry, the paper explores the two components of the glass ceiling effect: promotion barriers for women to the executive sphere and a gender-based differential in executive pay. By doing so, this piece closes some research gaps, i.e., there is no glass ceiling study of a male-dominated sector, and only a few existing papers have explored both components of the glass ceiling effect. Analyzing both components separately, the results suggest that females are promoted more frequently to the executive ranks while they still experience a pay bias compared to men. Thus, the analysis reveals that while the glass ceiling is cracking in this gender-imbalanced industry, pay discrimination continues to exist. However, as more and more women will advance to the top positions, female leaders will potentially take the roles of critical actors, according to the critical actor theory. That is, female leaders as women

representatives will promote ‘women's interests.’ They might act individually or collectively to bring about women-friendly changes in the business environment. These changes potentially encompass the correction of the gender pay gap which was found in the data. Furthermore, the present study suggests that gender pay discrimination decreases the higher one climbs up the very executive ladder. The latter finding raises the cynical question: How far up the hierarchy ladder does a woman need to climb to overcome gender-based pay discrimination?

Chapter 4, *“Mind the Gap: An Empirical Analysis of Pay Discrimination in Hollywood,”* explores the third research question on a potential gender pay gap in Hollywood’s movie industry. The analysis applies a rich panel data set including 178 actors with roles in 973 movies from 1980 to 2019. It explicitly differentiates between an explained and an unexplained gender pay gap. Only the latter can be referred to as “discrimination.” Approaches widely used to explain the gender pay gap from seminal literature are discussed in light of Hollywood’s labor market and captured in the model. The analysis reveals a pay difference between female and male actors. Yet, this pay difference can be explained by gender-specific representation in leading roles and systematic differences in performance measures. While female actors’ underrepresentation in leading roles reflects consumer tastes and, therefore, reflects discriminatory attitudes, no evidence can be found for direct pay discrimination in Hollywood’s movie business.

The analysis in Chapter 5, *“The Role of Student Personality in Salary Expectations and Subject Choice,”* is the first piece of research that aims to empirically disentangle the relation between students’ personality traits, subject choice, and salary expectations. The analysis is based on a large German student sample and focuses on business and economics students versus pedagogy students. Controlling for a potential selection bias, two Heckman selection models reveal that personality traits are a determinant for university subject selection. Yet, they are not associated with students’ salary expectations. The results enable universities and potential employers to accurately profile applicants and give insights into the mechanism of students’ salary expectation formation.

In Chapter 6, the dissertation concludes with an overall discussion that explains the significance and implications of the studies’ findings from an economic and societal perspective.

1.3 Scientific Contribution to the Dissemination Process

Several authors were involved in the writing and scientific dissemination process of each manuscript presented throughout the thesis.

The paper *"It's a Man's World? Gender Spillover Effects on Performance in a Male-dominated Industry"* (Chapter 2) is single-authored. It was published in the Open Access Journal *"Frontiers in Sociology"* (section Work, Employment and Organizations https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2021.677078).

The paper *"Equal Pay Behind the 'Glass Door?' The Gender Gap in Upper Management in a Male-dominated Industry"* (Chapter 3) is also single-authored. A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the Conference on Personnel Economics in Tübingen in May 2017. It is currently in its third revision stage at the journal *"Gender, Work & Organization."*

The paper *"Mind the Gap: An Empirical Analysis of Pay Discrimination in Hollywood"* (Chapter 4) is co-authored by Bernd Frick and Daniel Kaimann. While Daniel Kaimann developed the key idea and supervised the data collection process, Bernd Frick gave valuable support by commenting and editing working paper versions. I was in charge of the literature review, data processing, and estimations. The paper was presented at the Conference on Personnel Economics in Majorca in May 2016. It is currently under review at the journal *"Journal of Cultural Economy."*

The last paper, *"The Role of Student Personality in Salary Expectations and Subject Choice"* (Chapter 5), is co-authored by Laura Urgelles. While Laura Urgelles was in charge of the theoretical model and the literature review, I was responsible for data processing and estimations. This paper is forthcoming and will be published on December 15, 2021 in *"College Student Journal," 55*(2).

6 SUMMARY

Undoubtedly, the topic of gender differences in the labor market has become salient in the literature. This research trend has been accompanied by new political and societal initiatives to increase workplace gender equality. At considerable political and corporate expense, affirmative gender quotas and political regulations for gender wage equality have been established. In line with Milton Friedman's (1970) statement that "the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits," companies are usually profit maximizers. That said, they need not only to know whether gender equality pays off but also empirical truth to underpin corporate actions regarding the implementation of political regulations. Likewise, political decision-makers who need to manage the trade-off between enabling companies to accelerate their profits and, at the same time, making them comply with these regulations need to understand the implications of those concepts. Although gender's role in the labor market has been studied intensely, niche aspects remain largely under-researched.

Furthermore, the role of personality in labor market outcomes is not entirely clear. Parallel to gender, personality is an innate factor. According to the essential human capital paradigm, personality should not impact labor market outcomes because these are driven by individual productivity (Becker, 1964). While personality may indirectly impact labor market outcomes (e.g., through pre-labor market decisions), this relationship has not been analyzed before.

The overarching goal of this dissertation is to study some of these white spots, shed light on the status of gender equality in selected workplaces, and prepare the findings for political and corporate decision-makers. Specifically, it provides insights into the roles of gender and personality in the labor market, with four empirical analyses each addressing a different research question:

- *(i.) Is there a relationship between the growing share of female supervisors/peers and individuals' work performance in male-dominated industries?*
- *(ii.) Do women encounter promotion barriers and pay discrimination in the executive sphere in male-dominated industries?*
- *(iii.) Does a gender pay gap exist in the Hollywood movie industry, and if so, is there a discriminatory component of this pay gap?*
- *(iv.) Are personality traits tied to the formation of students' salary expectations?*

The analysis of research question one is based on a sample of the Norwegian oil industry and confirms that women in peer and supervisory positions make a difference to individuals' work performance (**Chapter 2**).

Specifically, regarding *within-ranks spillover effects* from female to male peers, the study indicates that men's performance in response to a higher share of female peers follows a cubic pattern. This shows that men's performance is highest in gender-balanced teams. Thus, the finding suggests that a critical mass of female peers is needed to increase men's performance gains. It also confirms the general suitability of female quota regulations since male performance is linked to a certain female peer share. In Norway, a female quota of 40% was introduced for board representation. My finding on within-ranks effects for men's performance suggests that 40% is a reasonable threshold for female peers, considering that men's performance is at its peak.

In terms of *downward-flowing spillover effects*, female supervisors in this particular industry are estimated to have a negative effect on the individual performance of both men and women. The negative findings regarding downward-flowing effects contradict most prior studies that reveal largely positive spillover effects from women to women (e.g., Cohen & Huffman, 2007 or Kunze & Miller, 2017). My results might be due to the imbalanced gender ratios that are salient in this type of industry. Consistent with prevailing theory, a critical mass of female supervisors is needed to overcome negative spillover effects. A female supervisor in this industry is still the exception. My results imply that the mere presence of female leaders does not improve men's or women's performance levels in a male-dominated industry during the research period. One reason might be that there are simply not enough female leaders.

Through this analysis, I contribute to the field of organizational and personnel economics and advance the debate on whether more women should enter male-dominated fields. As a takeaway for politicians and decision-makers, this work suggests that quotas not only are necessary at the executive level but need to be implemented throughout the organization. Further, more initiatives are needed to attract female students for male-dominated fields, focusing on leadership roles in these industries. Lastly, company leaders and personnel managers in these sectors should be aware that a relationship exists between gender proportion and individual performance.

My second paper analyzes the glass ceiling effect in the British oil industry, a typically male-dominated sector (**Chapter 3**), addressing the second research question. According to the results, females are promoted more frequently to executive ranks, and they still experience a bias in pay compared to men. Whereas the pay differential between men and women for the executive sphere is estimated to range between 21.7% and 26.8%, more than half of the total difference is explained by men's more favorable characteristics, such as their age levels, and job-related attributes. Yet, the higher in the executive hierarchy, the smaller is the wage differential between women and men.

Thus, the analysis reveals that while the glass ceiling is cracking in this gender-imbalanced industry, pay discrimination continues to exist. Nevertheless, following theory, female leaders should take the roles of critical actors and may initiate positve changes for other women. With some delay, more women in senior positions might improve women's working conditions, including the pay bias found in my data. Moreover, my analysis reveals that this kind of industry is about to change. Women's presence as leaders is linked to less gender segregation since their access to executive power is crucial to transforming the organization. Thus, female leaders are supposed to bring about positive changes for women, which will ultimately rebound to their labor force proportion. My analysis suggests that this virtuous cycle has been initiated.

For policy- and decision-makers, given the low female ratio in this industry, it makes sense to establish initiatives to attract more female students in male-dominated fields. Although the increased promotion probability of women might be a consequence of specific political regulations, I cannot infer a causal relationship since my data sample covers a timeframe only after the introduction of a specific political regulation on female quotas. However, my findings might suggest that those policies affect corporate behavior. Along this line, another political regulation could accelerate the pay convergence between female and male leaders. Based on my findings, such a regulation could be another pillar to combat pay inequality besides the presence of female leaders. Finally, female leaders can become critical actors if the working environment is supportive. Hence, corporate leadership tutorials on gender-specific communication patterns might help nurture understanding and create working routines for gender-diverse teams in this "old boys' network" setting.

Chapter 4 encompasses the third paper, which addresses the third research question. It is based on data of 178 Hollywood actors with roles in 973 movies. The analysis itself consists

of two steps. First, we investigate whether an explained gender pay gap exists in the sample. We discuss classic labor economic approaches for the explained gender pay gap in the context of Hollywood's labor market. Second, we examine whether a fraction of the gender pay gap cannot be explained through our data. The latter is treated as a discrimination measure in seminal literature and detected using the Blinder–Oaxaca decomposition method (Blinder, 1973; Oaxaca, 1973).

Our analysis reveals that female actors indeed earn less than male actors. Nevertheless, the lower wages of female actors are primarily due to their level of endowments. Specifically, we find that female actors' performance characteristics and, representation in predominantly supporting roles explain most of the gender pay difference. While this segregation could be driven by consumer tastes and reflect discriminatory attitudes, it may also be driven by actors' preferences for specific roles. Hence, we do not find any evidence for direct gender pay discrimination through our analysis. This finding is in line with the only comparable study (De Pater et al., 2014). However, that study finds a gender pay bias combined with age, which our work does not reveal.

The theoretical contribution of our work lies in its application of classic labor economics to the background of Hollywood's movie business. Moreover, our analysis uses a rich panel data set, allowing the explicit operationalization of all explanation approaches to a possible gender pay gap. We thereby add empirical evidence to the media discussion of potential gender pay discrimination in Hollywood.

Chapter 5 examines another source of human capital besides gender: innate ability. The analysis is based on a German student sample and disentangles the relationships between students' personality traits, subject choices, and salary expectations. Thereby, it addresses the last research question.

From a methodological perspective, the novelty of our study is the application of the Heckman correction model to address a specific selection issue with education research. We use the Big Five personality traits as explanatory variables and find that personality traits are a determinant for subject selection but not linked to the formation of salary expectations. Thereby, we contradict prior studies that find correlations between personality and salary (e.g., Nyhus & Pons, 2005). An explanation for this finding might be that academic performance and labor market-related variables are more important than personality traits in the formation of expectations. Accordingly, our analysis reveals that the type of first job

contract, as well as academic performance and gender, are among the determinants of students' expected salaries.

We further reveal that extroverted, neurotic, and conscientious students choose business and economics, while agreeable individuals self-select into pedagogy. This finding aligns with the extant literature on the personality-specific selection of subjects (e.g., Lounsbury et al., 2009 or Vedel et al., 2015).

Of course, the concept of innate ability encompasses more than just personality traits (e.g., talent). Nevertheless, this study analyzes a substantial part of innate ability. The results enable universities and potential employers to accurately profile applicants and understand how students form their salary expectations. As a key takeaway, universities should actively inform students about potential jobs, contract types, and alumni salaries in their fields. Based on our analysis, students should increase their labor market knowledge to better align their expectations with companies' expectations.

Overall, my thesis shows that gender- and personality-related issues in the labor market are complex. Bridging my findings with Friedman's paradigm (1970), companies should fulfill their social responsibility to increase profits *and* potentially leverage gender-related employment concepts to do so. That is, while men's performance is related to a certain share of female peers (Chapter 2), shattering the glass ceiling can be another step to achieve performance gains. With more women in senior roles, historically male-dominated sectors can be transformed into gender-diverse workplaces (Chapter 3). Using the full potential of gender diversity in the workforce results in performance gains, in line with Lazear's (1999a) considerations on diverse teams. Regarding labor market outcomes, personality is identified as an insignificant determinant of students' salary expectations (Chapter 5). Similarly, the innate factor of gender may soon lose its significance in explaining labor market outcomes. Lastly, with more women in executive work positions, their self-perception and self-confidence in society will increase. As consumers of experience goods, such as movies, their preferences will be more meaningful and might help to relocate female actors to more leading roles and big-budget movies that attract spectators (Chapter 4).

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Paderborn, 15.12.2021 Charlotte Kräft