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# I'll Have What She's Having: Network Formation and Social Spillovers on Film Consumption on Letterboxd.com

Johnny Ma

University of Chicago

May 2, 2018

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# 5 Future Plans

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Questions					

- Why do we watch what we watch?
- Do we base film consumption decisions on friend recommendations (social information) ?
- Do we watch movies simply because they are popular, and we want to be a part of the conversation (social utility) ?

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# Main Question

Do film consumption decisions during a box office run depend on social information or social utility?

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# Main Question

Do film consumption decisions during a box office run depend on social information or social utility?

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# Main Question

How can I convince my friends to watch a movie with me?



- Global Entertainment Industry worth billions of dollars and hours.
- Box Office dynamics: Pareto distribution, winner take all. Hype and word of mouth important.
- Numerous different information signals from marketing prior to Week 1, various information signals after.

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• Who doesn't watch movies?

Outline Introduction

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# Black Panther and Avengers

Why Black Panther blew everyone away at the box office



Julia Bianco @jewliabianco

Black Panther doubled initial loss offlet tracking numbers in its opening weekend, mashing activity 100 to \$120 cml libor projections with a record breaking 1253 million for out you that. This is good for the second biggest Mavet opening weekend and the fifth biggest domestic opening weekend at all time. These numbers are even more impressive when you consider the fact that Black Panther opened in February, which is typically one of the slowest box office months of the year.

How did Black Panther manage to crush expectations and take over the cultural consciousness? While every Marvel movie can be expected to be a commercial juggernaut, Black

#### 'Avengers: Infinity War' Opens with Record Shattering \$250M Domestically & \$630M Worldwide

by Brad Brevet April 29, 2018

Audiences assembled worldwide as Disney and Marvel's **Avengers: Infinity War** broke both the domestic opening weekend box office record and worldwide opening record with a massive \$250 million domestically and \$530 million worldwide. In its weeke, the majority of films on the weekend box office chart fell dramatically, though fieldow Marvel Cinematic Universe release **Black Panther** improved its position from eighth place last weekend to a spot in this weekend; the one file. The second s

Infinity War's opening weekend bests the previous record of \$247.9 million set by Star Wars: The Force Awakens back in December 2015 by just over \$2 million, but it's also worth mentioning Disrupt under-estimated The Avengers's performance by \$7 million opening by nearly \$10 million on Sunday. The studio also under-estimated The Avengers's performance by \$7 million and under-estimated Avengers: a gef Olltron by \$35 million. As such, don't be surprised to see Infinity War's debut blosson come actuals on Monday afternoon. At this moment, the film accounts for \$44.96 of the domestic tog twebs, second only to Ultron's 94.5% market share.

#### GET MORE: Compare Infinity War's opening weekend to fellow \$200M+ openers!

Additional domestic records of note include the largest single Saturday gross, largest single Sunday gross, largest April opening, largest Spring opening, widest PG-13 release and fastest film to \$150, \$200 and \$250 million.

Internationally, Infinity War delivered a monstrous \$380 million from approximately 72% of the international marketplace. The debut is the second largest to Fate of the Furious though its important to note that film had the benefit of China grosses over its opening weekend, which represented \$185 million (\$1.7%) of its \$443 million international debut. Altogether, Infinity War's global debut reached \$530 million, shatering the previous record of \$541.9 million set by Fate of the Furious and doing so without China, where the film will go no May 11.

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Empi					

- Becker (1991) first hypothesizes that "the pleasure from some goods is greater when many people want to consume it."
- Gilchrist (2016) use weather shocks to identify early viewership orthogonal to quality. Finds social utility effect.
- Conley and Udry (2010) use Pineapple farmers in Ghana to model social learning in networks using "surprise."
- Einav, DellaVigna, etc. provide some empirical background for regressions on movies.

• Bursztyn et al. (2014) run a great experiment identifying social learning versus social utility in finance assets.



Moretti (2011) sets up a model of "expected appeal" and information from peers and tests using aggregate sale data.

- Sign of realization over expected quality diverges sales.
- Some notion of priors, some notion of type of shock.
- Positive shocks are strong for those in large social networks.
- Can estimate some social multiplier.

Overall an interesting model. We will borrow the idea of "surprise" and microfit the model. Not sure how reliable aggregate sales data can ever be.

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More	tti Model				

$$U_{ij} = \alpha_j^* * + CV_j + \epsilon_{ij}$$

$$\alpha_j^* \sim N(X_j'\beta, \frac{1}{m_j}), \quad CV_j \sim N(f(X_j'\beta), \frac{1}{d_j}), \quad \epsilon_{ij} \sim N(0, \frac{1}{k_j})$$

$$P_1 = \Pr(\mathbb{E}_1[U_{ij1}|X'_j\beta]) = \Pr(\omega_j X'_j\beta + (1-\omega_j)f(X'_j\beta) > q_{i1})$$

With  $S_{ijt}$  quality signals from f peers in i's network k and  $RES_{jt}$  shocks for each film:

$$P_t = \Pr(\mathbb{E}_t[U_{ijt}|X'_j\beta]) = \Pr(\omega_{j1t}X'_j\beta + \omega_{j2t}f(X'_j\beta) + \sum_{f \in k} \omega_{j3f}S_{ijf} + \omega_{j4t}RES_{jt} > q_{it})$$

The idea is Bayesian priors prompt viewing during OW, self-selected crowd. The only difference between OW and 2nd week is updated information from Friend Reviews (social information) and Unanticipated Popularity (social utility).

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Empi	rical Pred	lictions			

- In the presence of strong social utility, stronger (weaker) than expected OW demand increases (decreases) probability of watching.
- In the presence of strong social learning, high (low) share of OW above average reviews increases (decreases) probability of watching.

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# Outline Introduction Literature and Theory Data Results Future Plans Social Model of Film Consumption Social Model of Film Consumption<

$$\mathsf{Pr}(\mathsf{Watch}_{ij})_{t+1} = lpha_i + eta_1 * \mathsf{s}(\mathsf{friend})_{k,t} + eta_2 * (\mathsf{residual})_{j,t=1}$$

$$+\beta_3 * user_i + \beta_4 * Z_j + \epsilon_{ijt}$$

j films, i individuals. Each i individual is in a network of k 'friends'. With user fixed effects and some film controls.

 $s(friend) \in [0, 1]$  is the share of friends in your private network that liked the film above the film's average. This is "private information" connected by taste, the social information.

(residual)  $\in [0, 1]$  is the residual from regression of number of screen on opening gross. This is the week 1 "surprise" defined in Moretti. This is the aggregate shock, the unexpected difference in attendance, the channel of unexpected social utility.

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Empi	rical Con	tributions			

- Using both box office returns and **panel-level viewing behavior** instead of aggregates.
- Using data from social media platform, the future of human interaction.
- Can decompose heterogenous user-network information and aggregate demand shock.



- Founded in 2011 as a "social network for sharing your taste in film."
- Growing community of film-fanatics ranging from CEO of Indiewire to Professional Bloggers to college students
- Typically used as a movie diary, but social aspects are heavily incorporated.
- Amazing panel-data to scrape, almost every action is recorded.



Literature and Theory

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Introduction 00000 LATEST NEWS



#### Coming of Age

We caught up with Greta Gerwig, Luca Guadagnino and Todd Haynes at the 55th New York Film Festival to ask them about their childhood movie influences. **READ MORE** 

#### POPULAR REVIEWS WITH FRIENDS



Mr. DuLac
Thor: Ragnarok 2017
\*\*\*\*\* \$2



It took Taika Waithi to have Thor go full Banzal. In 2013 when I watched Thor: The Dark World I said that the comic book was like the Buckaroo Banzal of the Marvel Universe and then in 2015 I wrote that Thor was "The Flash Gordon of the Marvel Clnematic Universe". Wish I wouldn't have said either, because now I have nowhere to go with Thor: Ragnarok because now THIS really is... more

♥ Like review 16 likes

🚺 Tay



# nurder on the Orient Express

2017

It's this years Girl on the Train. A book based movie that I really shoudn't have liked!

And I'm not going to lie to look cool in the playground today cos I enjoyed it!

Even though my Dad and brother spoiled it on Sunday, I still enjoyed guessing who would be killed instead of who killed them.

And Johnny Depp was good!

♥ Like review 7 likes



Call Me by Your Name 2017



矜 Matt Singer

I Love You, Daddy 2017

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RI	ECENT ACTIVITY			esmoce 2	
				DIARY	119
				27 Avengers: Infinity 21 You Were Never R 14 A Quiet Place 5 It Follows 1 Holy Motors	War keally Here
	AVENUERS INPINION WAR	YOU WERE NEVER REALLY HERE		MAR 31 Kong: Skull Island	
*	*** ***	★½ ★★★ <b>=</b>	**** ≡	29 The Maltese Falco	on
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	DAY													
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		Heathers	1988 ★★★★北	*		/	
		Call Me by Your Name	2017 ★★★★★	*		<i>j</i> *	
		Phantom Thread	2017 <b>★★★★</b> ★			<i>j</i> *	
		I, Tonya	2017 <b>★★★★</b> ★			<i>j</i>	
	DEC 2017 28	Darkest Hour	2017 ★★★★★	*		<i>j</i>	
		The Shape of Water	2017 ★★★★★	*		<i>j</i> *	
		Star Wars: The Last Jedi	2017 ★★★★★	*		<i>j</i> *	
	NOV 2017 22	🌉 Lady Bird	2017 ★★★★★	*		<i>i</i>	
	<b>0 U U U</b> OCT 2017 27	The Shining	1980 ★★★★★	*		<i>i</i>	
		Blade Runner 2049	2017 ★★★★★	•		<i>i</i>	
		Spidor Man. Homosoming	2017			<i>i</i>	<i><b>S</b></i>

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### Casablanca 1942 Directed by Michael Curtiz

THEY HAD A DATE WITH FATE IN CASABLANCA!

In Casablanca, Morocco in December 1941, a cynical American expatriate meets a former lover, with unforeseen complications.

#### CAST CREW DETAILS GENRES

Humphrey Bogart Ingrid Bergman Paul Herneid Claude Bans Conrad Vetil: Sydney Geemater Pater Lorre S.Z. Sakal Madeleine Lebeau Dooley Wilson Joy Page John Qualen Leond Kinkey Cortexis Enrique Acotas Ed Agresti Louis V. Arco Frank Arrold Loon Belasco Nino Bellini Oliver Blake Monte Blue Eugene Borden Dick Botiller Maurice Brierre Sebastian Cabot Anta Camargo George M. Carleton Spencer Chan

102 mins More details at IMDB TMDB 🏴





ACTIVITY FROM FRIENDS

19 WATCHED • 2 WANT TO WATCH



#### EVIEWS FROM FRIENDS



Review by Mr. DuLac \*\*\*\*\* 💷 2

Here's looking at you kid.

-Rick

Literature and Theory 000000  Results 0000000 Future Plans



Introduction

#### POPULAR REVIEWS



#### Review by ellie \*\*\*\*

i would let 90's ralph fiennes carry my dead body through the desert

🖤 Like review 57 likes

#### Review by PTA ★★★★★ 💷 8

The more that I watch this film, the more it creeps up my top 100 film's of all time list. This film is an overlooked gem nowadays, even though it won a lot of awards back in 96.

An undeniable masterpiece and it almost puts every other film ever made to shame. Seriously give it another try if you don't believe me and if you have watched it more than once and you still aren't a fan then what can I say.

The direction and storytelling are impeccable and the cast all around are outstanding! Especially Juliette Binoche! And Ralph Fiennes, Kristin Scott Thomas, Willem Dafoe, Naveen Andrews (brilliant) and Colin Firth and freaking amazing.

Yep, I like this movie just as much as Taxi Driver, 2001 A Space Odyssey, Magnolia and Pulp Fiction...rounding out my top 5 film's.

♥ Like review 43 likes

#### Review by Naughty aka Juli Norwood ★★★★★ 💭 3

A sweeping epic tale of an ill fated love that transcends distance, time and even death!

I found the slow reveal thru a series of flashbacks to be deliriously intoxicating!

Extraordinary performances by one and all! However I felt Ralph Fiennes and Juliette Binoche performances were beyond exceptional!

The visuals were absolutely breathtaking!

♥ Like review 39 likes

Introduction Literatu

Literature and Theory

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fair, but still.

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Introduction

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Data  Results

### Film lovers, critics and friends — find popular contributors here.







Lucy 1.7k films 747 reviews





brat pitt 1.5k films 833 reviews





Katie 1.5k films 832 reviews



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YOU FOLLOW

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adrianbalboa 918 films 655 reviews





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Connect Twitter account

and we'll find your Twitter friends on Letterboxd. We will

Connect your Twitter account

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				GREATEST	TIME

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DOCTOR ZHiVAGO

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	FAVORITE FILMS					
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	RECENT REVIEWS			SEP 16	motherl	

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What	Data I I	Have			

- 9,000 users scraped from letterboxd.com with  $\geq$  50 diary entries. 1080 films from 2011-2018.
  - User time-stamped diary entries, user information, etc.
  - Average film rating, number watched, etc.
- Box Office data scraped from BoxOfficeMojo.com, industry standard.
  - Daily gross, cumulative gross, days in run, number of theaters showing, etc.

• String matching between sites, end up with 212 films with "Opening Weekend" behavior.



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# Outline Introduction Literature and Theory Data Results Social Model of Film Consumption

$$\mathsf{Pr}(\mathsf{Watch}_{ij})_{t+1} = lpha_i + eta_1 * \mathsf{s}(\mathsf{friend})_{k,t} + eta_2 * (\mathsf{residual})_{j,t=1}$$

$$+\beta_3 * user_i + \beta_4 * Z_j + \epsilon_{ijt}$$

j films, i individuals. Each i individual is in a network of k 'friends'. With user fixed effects and some film controls.

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Aggre	egate Film "Surpr	ise" Residuals		
	Table: RE	S term calculation from OV	N	
		Moretti Res Regr	ession:	
		OW Total Gro	OSS	
	Theaters Opening	1.278***		
		(0.039)		
	Observations	956		
	R <sup>2</sup>	0.841		
	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.816		
	Residual Std. Erro	or $0.654 (df = 8)$	24)	
	Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; *	***p<0.01	

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Outline Introd

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The Jungle Book	0.914122990855952
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	0.921263934579721
Think Like a Man	0.935865289576509
The Hunger Games: Mockingja	0.944826832288224
Straight Outta Compton	0.98159730000955
The Fate of the Furious	1.01747763171513
Batman v Superman: Dawn of	1.18129007390399
Arbitrage	1.18537827982556
Jurassic World	1.29852549088655
The Hobbit: An Unexpected J	1.36178034988977
Deadpool	1.40606940493808
Margin Call	1.43952481889234
Black Panther	1.80489706655424
	The Jungle BookTeenage Mutant Ninja TurtlesThink Like a ManThe Hunger Games: MockingjaStraight Outta ComptonThe Fate of the FuriousBatman v Superman: Dawn ofArbitrageJurassic WorldThe Hobbit: An Unexpected JDeadpoolMargin CallBlack Panther

# 'Deadpool's \$152.2M Opening: Why The Town Didn't See It Coming Until It Happened – Final

Literature and Theory



Introduction

Outline

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#### What's Hot on Deadline

- 1 Bill Cosby Sexual Assault Retrial Sent To Jury
- 2 'Halloween': Jamie Lee Curtis Unmasks First Trailer At CinemaCon
- 3 'Lethal Weapon': More On The Incidents & On-Set Environment That Led To Fox...
- 4 'Family Guy' Takes On Harvey Weinstein & Kevin Spacey Scandals In Emmy Mailer
- 5 Samuel L. Jackson, Bruce Willis, James McAvoy & More Shatter 'Glass' Trailer...
- 6 'Lethal Weapon's Fox Renewal On The Line Over Co-Lead Clayne Crawford's...
- 7 Donald Trump Tweet-Attacks "Silent" Press After Arizona Special Election



BOX OFFICE

Results

- BREAKING NEWS
- 20TH CENTURY FOX
- DEADPOOL
- FANDANGO

20th Century Fox

LER STREAM STREAM

8TH WRITETHRU, Tuesday update, charts updated: The 3-day revise on Deadpool is now \$13.4M with 4-day finally clocking \$152.2M for the Presidents' Day holiday. Global debut: \$284.5M all in. Countless records were broken here. As we saw all along, Deadpool easily flogged Fifty Shades of Grey's opening figures from last year (\$85.1M FSS, \$93M FSSM). But, Deadpool was also the biggest opening ever for an R-rated movie on a 3-day basis beating Matrix Reloaded's \$91.8M, but it also tore apart Hangover 2's four-day take of \$117.6M. For Fox executives, Deadpool is the biggest opening they've ever seen, surpassing Star Wars: Episode III: Revenge of the Sith (FSS \$108.4M). In addition, the studio already has \$100M+ grossing 2016 releases under its belt along with The Revenant and DreamWorks Animation's Kung Fu Panda 3, and February isn't even over yet.

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Results



Outline	Introduction 00000	Literature and Theory	Data 00000000000000000000000000000000000	Results ○○○○○●○○	Future Plans
Netwo	ork Forma	ition on Taste	Correlation		

## Table: Model of Network Formation based on Taste

	Is Friend Binary:	
	linked	
Cosine Similarity of Taste Vector	0.541 *** (0.0058)	
Observations <i>Note:</i>	159913 *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

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Regre	ession Re	sults			

## Table: Social Model of Film Consumption

		Probi	t Model:			
		Probability of Watching After OW				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)		
share of friends above average	0.0138*** (0.0011)		0.0146*** (0.0011)	0.0073*** (0.0004)		
residual box office surprise		0.1240 *** (0.0024)	0.1243 *** (0.0024)	0.1143 *** (0.0024)		
movie quality				0.0368 *** (0.0004)		
Fixed effcts? Observations R <sup>2</sup> Residual Std. Error	User 359983 0.1516 0.270 (df = 352071)	User 359983 0.1575 0.272 (df = 352071)	User 359983 0.1579 0.272 (df = 352070)	User 359983 0.1721 0.2705 (df = 352069)		
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01					

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# Main Question

Do film consumption decisions during a box office run depend on social information or social utility?

# Main Question

How can I convince my friends to watch a movie with me?

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Futur	e Plans				

- **1** Identity the models using exogenous shocks or IV strategy.
- Prest user level heterogeneity and its effect on importance of the social channels.
  - Include "favorites" and watchlist constraint.
  - Do more "snotty" film people react negatively to popularity?

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- Examine (theoretically or empirically) the effect of an information shock.
- Get a better understanding of friend network formation using network analysis of polarization.
- Suild a stronger collaborative filter using user-film-social information.

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Ackn	Acknowledgements							

Thanks to Professor Bursztyn, Professor Manresa, Professor DellaVigna, Professor Goldberg, and Professor Kamenica. Thanks to Professor Lima and Professor Kotaro for helpful advice.

Thanks to my movie night friends! Special thanks to Paul Beckman, William Jones, Thomas Yu, Richard Liu, Angela Sun, and Lindsey Currier.

Thanks to Letterboxd.com for being nice and not banning my IP. It's an amazing platform and I highly suggest checking it out!

Thanks to you, for listening and being interested!

Outline	Introduction 00000	Literature and Theory 000000	Data 00000000000000000000000000000000000	Results 00000000	Future Plans
	Film Covariance Matrix PCA, 500 films				
		monigit-2016 the-gurd-bodiegest-bole byr			
		anna-suronne-o-me-spooss-millo lady-bird ex-machina-2014 gmm-gH la-la-land bisde-runne-2019 Be-social-retwork inde-runne-2019	Di4		

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Outline	Introduction 00000	Literature and Theory	Data 00000000000000000000000000000000000	Results 00000000	Future Plans
1		1			
	Here's tooking at you,				
		R Fra	nkly, my dear, i don't give	a damn	
	and the second second	Fla	inkiy, my ucai, i uon t give	a uamin.	

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Literature and Theory

Results

Future Plans







I miss the old kanye @dale\_fromcali

When I start a job vs when I've been working there for a couple of weeks





WHEN YOU LET IN TOO MANY APPLICANTS ONE YEAR AND HAVE TO LET IN HALF AS MANY THE NEX.



Outline	Introduction 00000	Literature and Theory 000000	Data 00000000000000000000000000000000000	Results 00000000	Future Pl	lans
Regr	ession Re	sults				
			Table:			
			Favorites on Ratir	ng:		
			ratings_vec			
	fav1_d		0.987***			
			(0.062)			
	fav2_d		0.856***			
			(0.063)			
	fav3_d		0.731***			
			(0.065)			
	fav4_d		0.906***			
			(0.061) ► • •	∎≻ ≺≣≻ ≺≣		)

Outline	00000	000000	000000000000000000000000000000000000000	00000000	Future Flans
Regre	ession Re	sults			
			Table:		
		F	avorites on Rating, Scr	ambled:	
			ratings_vec		
	fav1_d		-0.054**		
			(0.028)		
	fav2_d		-0.002		
			(0.027)		
	fav3_d		-0.039		
			(0.027)		
	foul d		0.042		
	Idv4_0		-0.043 (0.029)		
			(0.020)		=