

Boxed In: Employment of Behind-the-Scenes Women in the 2009-10 Prime-time Television Season

by Martha M. Lauzen, Ph.D.

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In the 2009-10 prime-time season, women comprised 27% of individuals working as creators, directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and directors of photography on broadcast television programs. This represents an increase of 2 percentage points over last season (2008-2009) and a recent historical high.

Women directors and producers experienced substantial increases this year. The percentage of women directors increased from 9% in 2008-09 to 16% in 2009-2010. It also represents a recent historical high. The percentage of women producers increased from 35% in the 2008-09 season to 39% in 2009-2010. This percentage exceeds the previous high of 38% in 2006-07. The percentage of women directors of photography remained meager at 3%.

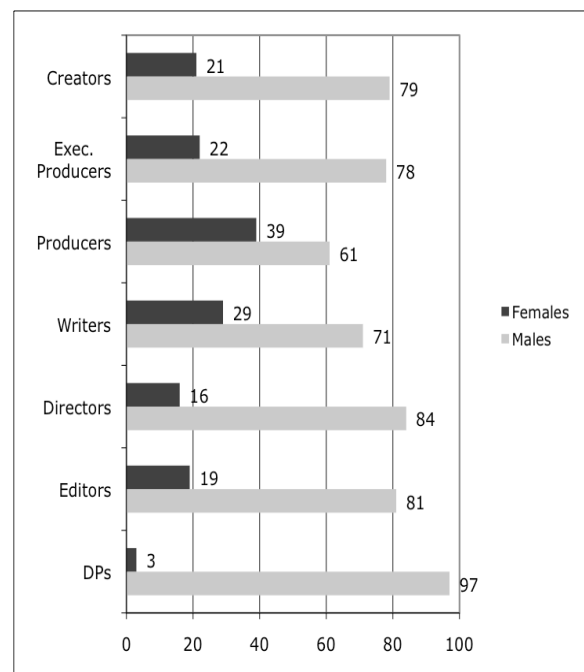
Findings

- This study examined 1,941 individuals working behind the scenes on one randomly selected episode of every prime-time drama, situation comedy, and reality program airing on ABC, CBS, CW, Fox, and NBC.
- Women accounted for 27% of all individuals working in the roles

considered. This represents an increase of 2 percentage points over the 2008-09 season and an increase of 6 percentage points since 1997-98. It also represents a recent historical high.

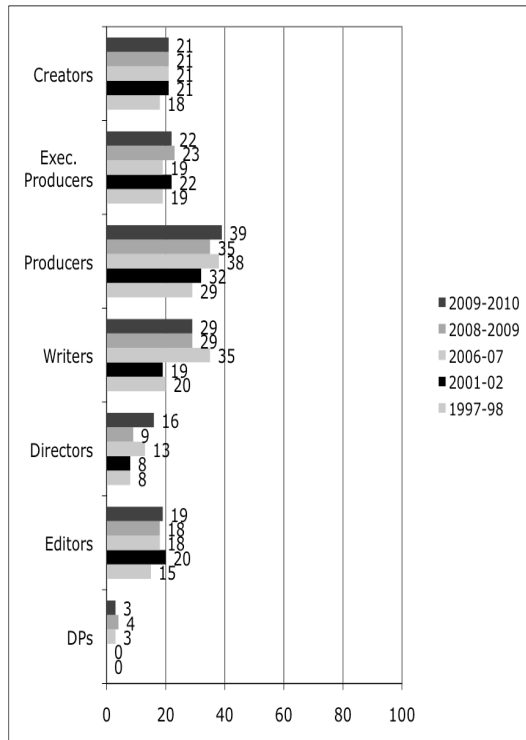
- Overall, women fared best as producers (39%), followed by writers (29%), executive producers (22%), creators (21%), editors (19%), directors (16%), and directors of photography (3%) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.
Percent of Behind-the-Scenes Women and Men during the 2009-10 Season



- The representation of behind-the-scenes women is similar across program genres. Dramas and situation comedies employed 27% women and 73% men. Reality programs employed 28% women and 72% men.

*Figure 2.
Historical Comparison of
Percentages of Behind-the-Scenes
Employment of Women
by Role*



- Women comprised 21% of creators. This represents no change from the 2008-09 season, and an increase of 3 percentage points from 1997-98. 81% of programs employed no women creators (see Figure 2).
- Women accounted for 22% of executive producers. This represents a decrease of one percentage point from 2008-09 and an increase of 3 percentage points from 19% in 1997-98. 32% of programs employed no women executive producers.
- In 2009-10, women comprised 39% of producers. This represents an increase of 4 percentage points from 2008-09 (35%) and an increase of 10

percentage points from 1997-98 (29%). Only 8% of programs had no female producers.

- Women accounted for 29% of writers. This represents no change from the 2008-09 season and an increase of 9 percentage points from 20% in 1997-98. However, it is less than the recent historical high achieved in 2006-07 when women accounted for 35% of writers. 68% of the programs employed no women writers.
- Women comprised 16% of directors. This represents an increase of 7 percentage points from 2008-09 and an increase of 8 percentage points from 1997-98. It also represents a recent historical high. 85% of programs employed no women directors.
- Women accounted for 19% of editors. This represents an increase of one percentage point from 2008-09 and an increase of 4 percentage points from 1997-98. However, it is less than the recent historical high achieved in 2001-02 when women accounted for 20% of editors. 72% of programs employed no women editors.
- Women comprised 3% of directors of photography. This represents a decline of 1 percentage point from 2008-09 but an increase of 3 percentage points from 1997-98. 96% of programs employed no women directors of photography.

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