

## Boxed In: Employment of Behind-the-Scenes and On-Screen Women in the 2010-11 Prime-time Television Season

by Martha M. Lauzen, Ph.D.

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Women comprised 25% of all individuals working as creators, directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and directors of photography on broadcast television programs during the 2010-11 prime-time season. This represents a decrease of 2 percentage points from last season (2009-2010) and an increase of 4 percentage points since 1997-98.

The percentage of women working as writers on broadcast programs plummeted this season, declining from 29% in 2009-2010 to 15% in 2010-2011. The percentage of women directors also declined from 16% in 2009-2010 to 11% in 2010-2011.

On screen, females accounted for 41% of all characters. This represents a decline of 2 percentage points from the 2007-08 season when female characters accounted for a historical high of 43% of characters. However, programs with at least one woman creator or writer featured more female characters than programs with no women creators or writers.

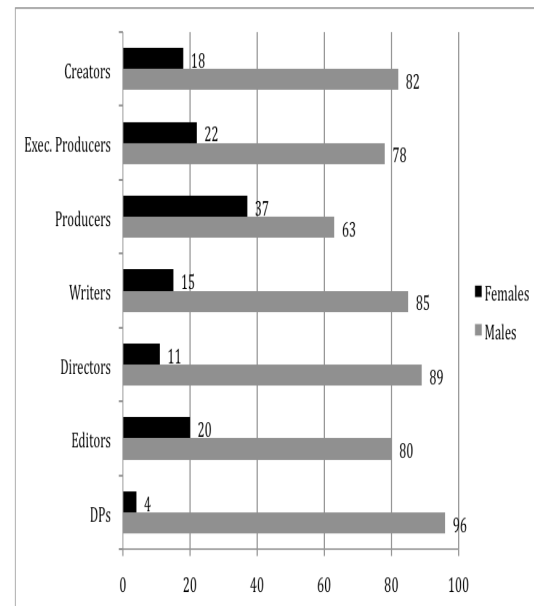
### Findings/Behind the Scenes

□ This study includes individuals working behind the scenes on one randomly selected episode of every prime-time drama, situation comedy, and

reality series airing on ABC, CBS, CW, Fox, and NBC.

□ Overall, women fared best as producers (37%), followed by executive producers (22%), editors (20%), creators (18%), writers (15%), directors (11%), and directors of photography (4%) (see Figure 1).

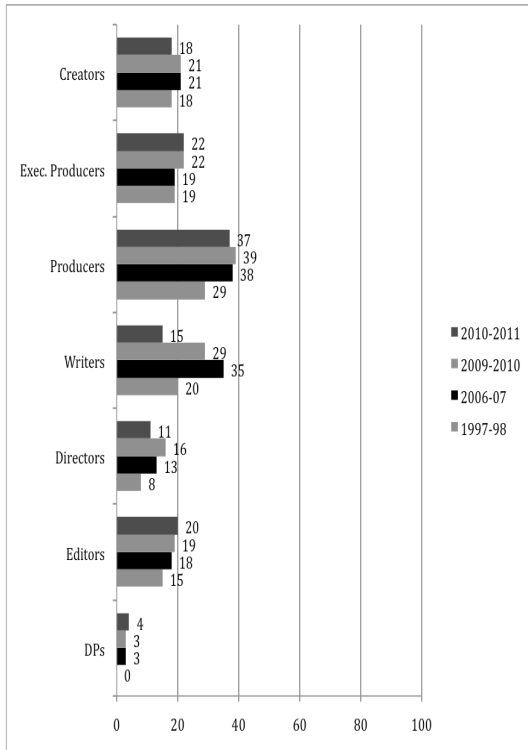
Figure 1.  
Percent of Behind-the-Scenes Women and Men on Broadcast Programs during the 2010-11 Season



□ The representation of behind-the-scenes women differs across program genres. Reality programs employed 28% women and 72% men. Dramas employed 25% women and 75% men. Situation comedies employed 22% women and 78% men.

• The representation of behind-the-scenes women differs substantially by network. Women accounted for 28% of behind-the-scenes individuals at CW and ABC, followed by 26% at CBS, 22% at NBC, and 18% at Fox.

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



□ Women comprised 18% of creators. This represents a decline of three percentage points from the 2009-10 season, and no change from 1997-98. 86% of programs employed no women creators (see Figure 2).

□ Women accounted for 22% of executive producers. This represents no change from 2009-10 and an increase of 3 percentage points from 19% in 1997-98. 25% of programs employed no women executive producers.

□ Women comprised 37% of producers. This represents a decrease of 2 percentage points from 2009-10 (39%) but an increase of 8

percentage points from 1997-98 (29%). 15% of programs had no female producers.

□ Women accounted for 15% of writers. This represents a decline of 14 percentage points from the 2009-10 season and a decrease of 5 percentage points from 20% in 1997-98. 84% of the programs employed no women writers.

□ Women comprised 11% of directors. This represents a decrease of 5 percentage points from 2009-10 and an increase of 3 percentage points from 1997-98. 89% of programs employed no women directors.

□ Women accounted for 20% of editors. This represents an increase of one percentage point from 2009-10 and an increase of 5 percentage points from 1997-98. This represents a recent historical high. 80% of programs employed no women editors.

□ Women comprised 4% of directors of photography. This represents an increase of one percentage point from 2009-10 and an increase of 4 percentage points from 1997-98. 97% of programs employed no women directors of photography.

• For the first time, this year's study also tracked the representation of behind-the-scenes women working on original programs appearing on popular cable channels such as Lifetime, TBS, TNT, and USA. On these channels, women accounted for 23% of behind-the-scenes individuals. By role, women comprised 31% of producers, 25% of writers, 24% of editors, 21% of executive producers, 20% of creators, 10% of directors, and 0% of directors of photography.

### *Findings/On Screen*

- 41% of all characters and 43% of major characters were female in the 2010-2011 season. This represents a decline of 2 percentage points from the 2007-08 season when female characters accounted for a historical high of 43% of characters.

- Female characters continue to be younger than their male counterparts. 67% of characters in their 50s and 71% of characters 60 and above were male.

- Female characters 40 and older comprised 11% of all characters. Males 40 and older accounted for 23% of characters.

- 76% of female characters were white, 12% were African American, 5% were Asian American, 5% were Latina, and 1% were some other race or ethnicity.

- Viewers were less likely to know the occupational status of female characters than male characters. 36% of female characters but only 22% of male characters had an unknown occupational status.

- Viewers were most likely to see female characters on programs airing on CW where female characters accounted for 52% of all characters. CW is the only network that represents females in accurate proportion to their representation in the U.S. population. On the other networks, females accounted for 43% of characters on ABC programs, 40% on CBS, 39% on Fox, and 36% on NBC.

- Regarding genre, viewers were more

likely to see female characters on reality programs where they accounted for 46% of all characters, than on drama programs (40%), or situation comedies (34%).

### *Findings/Behind the Scenes x On Screen*

- On programs with no women writers, females accounted for 39% of all characters. On programs with at least one woman writer, females comprised 43% of characters.

- On programs with no women creators, females accounted for 40% of all characters. On programs with at least one woman creator, females comprised 44% of characters.

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