

Boxed In: Portrayals of Female Characters and Employment of Behind-the-Scenes Women in 2014-15 Prime-time Television

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*For the last 18 years, **Boxed In** has tracked women's representation in prime-time television. The study provides the most comprehensive historical record of women's employment in television available. The study is sponsored by the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, San Diego State University, <http://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu>, lauzen@mail.sdsu.edu.*

In 2014-15, female characters comprised 42% of all speaking characters on broadcast television programs and 40% of all characters on broadcast, cable, and Netflix programs.

Behind the scenes, women accounted for 27% of creators, directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and directors of photography working on broadcast programs and 25% of those working in these key roles on broadcast, cable, and Netflix programs.

Programs with at least one woman executive producer or creator featured a higher percentage of female characters and employed substantially greater percentages of women writers, directors, and editors than programs with exclusively male executive producers or

creators. For example, on broadcast programs with no women executive producers, females accounted for 37% of major characters. On programs with at least one woman executive producer, females comprised 43% of major characters.

On broadcast programs with no women executive producers, women accounted for 6% of writers. On programs with at least one woman executive producer, women comprised 32% of writers.

The findings in this year's report are divided into two major sections. The first section provides the on-screen and behind-the-scenes findings for the broadcast networks, offering historical comparisons for 2014-15 with figures dating from 1997-98. This section also includes an overview of important relationships between women in key behind-the-scenes roles such as executive producers and creators, and the representation of female characters and employment of women as writers, directors, and editors.

The second section provides the behind-the-scenes and on-screen findings for the total sample of programs appearing on the broadcast networks, basic and pay cable (A&E, AMC, FX, History, TNT, USA, HBO, Showtime), and Netflix, and includes a summary of important on-screen and behind-the-scenes relationships.

The study examines one randomly selected episode of every series. Random selection is a frequently used and widely accepted method of sampling episodes from the population of episodes in a season.

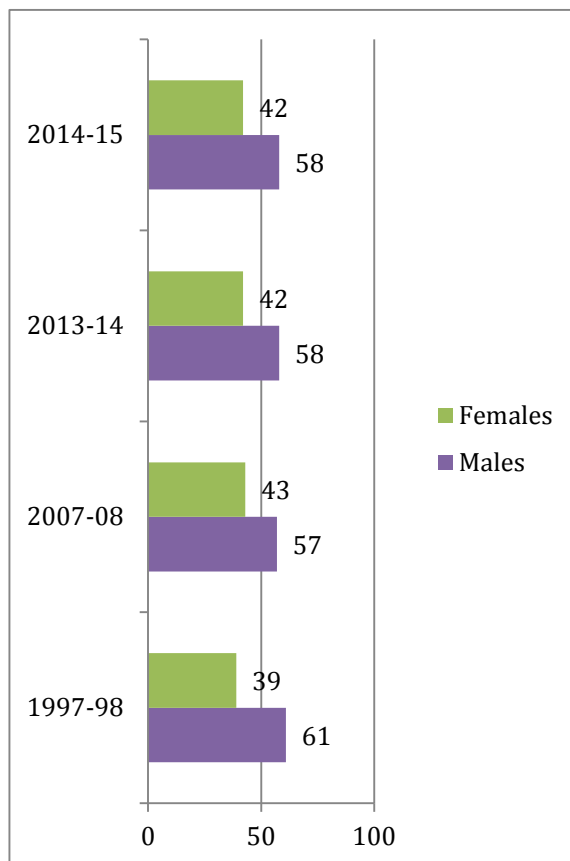
Findings for Broadcast Networks

Females On Screen

- 42% of all speaking characters and 42% of major characters were female in 2014-15. This represents no change from 2013-14, but an increase of 3 percentage points from 1997-98 (see Figure 1).

- Programs airing on ABC featured the highest percentage of female characters (45%), followed by CW (43%), NBC and Fox (40%), and CBS (39%).

Figure 1.
Historical Comparison of Percentages of Female Characters on Broadcast Network Programs



- Reality programs were more likely to feature female characters than programs in other genres. Females comprised 47% of characters on reality programs, 41% of characters on situation comedies, and 40% of characters on dramas.

- Female characters continue to be portrayed as younger than their male counterparts. The majority of female characters were in their 20s and 30s (60%), whereas the majority of male characters were in their 30s and 40s (55%).

- Female characters experience a precipitous decline in numbers from their 30s to their 40s. 31% of female characters were in their 30s but only 18% were in their 40s. Male characters also experience a decline but it is not as dramatic (from 30% to 25%).

- Few female or male characters age past 60. Only 2% of female and 4% of male characters were in their 60s or above.

- 77% of female characters were white, 15% were African-American, 3% were Latina, 4% were Asian, and 1% were of some other race or ethnicity.

- Viewers were less likely to know the occupational status of female characters than male characters. 35% of female characters but only 24% of male characters had an unknown occupational status.

Women Behind the Scenes

- In 2014-15, women comprised 27% of all individuals working as creators, directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and directors of photography. This represents no change

from 2013-14 and an increase of 6 percentage points since 1997-98 (see Figure 2).

- Overall, women fared best as producers (38%), followed by writers (26%), executive producers (26%), creators (23%), editors (21%), directors (14%), and directors of photography (2%) (see Figure 3).

- 45% of programs employed 4 or fewer women in the roles considered. Only 4% of programs employed 4 or fewer men.

*Figure 2.
Historical Comparison of Women Working Behind the Scenes on Broadcast Network Programs*



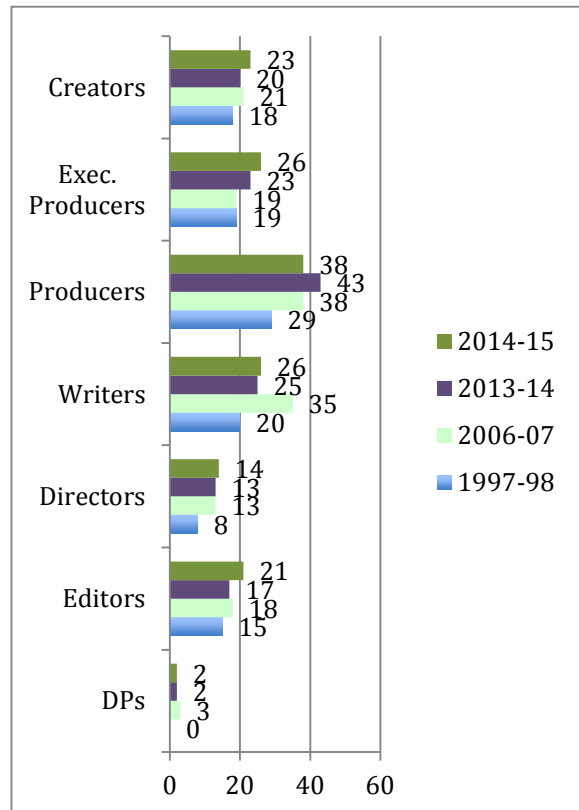
- Women comprised 23% of creators. This represents an increase of 3

percentage points from 2013-14 and an increase of 5 percentage points from 1997-98.

- Women accounted for 26% of executive producers. This represents an increase of 3 percentage points from 2013-14 and an increase of 7 percentage points since 1997-98.

- Women comprised 38% of producers. This represents a decrease of 5 percentage points from 2013-14, and represents an increase of 9 percentage points since 1997-98.

*Figure 3.
Historical Comparison of Percentages of Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women by Role on Broadcast Network Programs*



- Women accounted for 26% of writers. This represents an increase of 1 percentage point from 2013-14 and an increase of 6 percentage points since 1997-98.

- Women comprised 14% of directors. This represents an increase of 1 percentage point from 2013-14, and an increase of 6 percentage points since 1997-98.

- Women accounted for 21% of editors. This represents an increase of 4 percentage points from 2013-14, and an increase of 6 percentage points since 1997-98.

- Women comprised 2% of directors of photography. This represents no change from 2013-14 and an increase of 2 percentage points since 1997-98.

- 70% of the episodes considered had no female creators, 86% had no female directors, 70% had no female writers, 78% had no female editors, and 98% had no female directors of photography.

Important Relationships

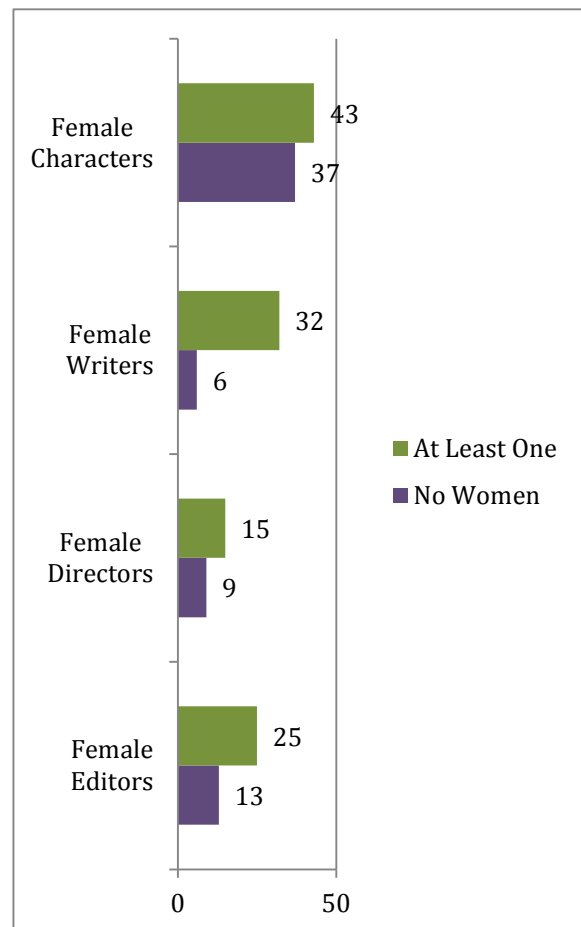
- Broadcast programs with at least one woman executive producer featured more female characters and employed more women directors, writers, and editors than programs with no women executive producers (see Figure 4).

- On programs with at least one woman executive producer, females comprised 43% of major characters. On programs with no women executive producers, females accounted for 37% of characters.

- On programs with at least one woman executive producer, women accounted for 32% of writers, compared to 6% of writers on programs with no women executive producers.

- On programs with at least one woman executive producer, women accounted for 15% of directors, compared to 9% of directors on programs with no women executive producers.

*Figure 4.
Comparison of Programs with At Least One Woman Executive Producer and Programs with No Women Executive Producers*



- On programs with at least one woman executive producer, women accounted for 25% of editors. On programs with no women executive producers, women comprised 13% of editors.

- Programs with at least one woman creator featured more female characters and employed more women directors, writers, and editors than programs with no women creators.

- On programs with at least one woman creator, females accounted for 45% of major characters. On programs with no women creators, females comprised 41% of major characters.

- On programs with at least one woman creator, women accounted for 50% of writers. On programs with no women creators, women comprised 15% of writers.

- On programs with at least one woman creator, women accounted for 23% of directors. On programs with no women creators, women comprised 10% of directors.

- On programs with at least one woman creator, women accounted for 36% of editors. On programs with no women creators, women comprised 14% of editors.

Findings for Broadcast Networks, Cable & Netflix Programs

On Screen Females

- Females accounted for 40% of all speaking characters and 40% of major characters.

- 78% of female characters were white,

13% were African American, 4% were Latina, 4% were Asian, and 1% were of some other race or ethnicity.

- The majority of female characters (60%) were in their 20s and 30s. The majority of male characters (57%) were in their 30s and 40s. The percentage of female characters drops dramatically from their 30s to their 40s. 32% of female characters were in their 30s but only 19% of female characters were in their 40s. Male characters experienced only a slight decline in numbers (from 29% to 28%).

- Male characters were much more likely than female characters to be seen working. 55% of male characters and 43% of female characters were seen at work and working.

Behind-the-Scenes Women

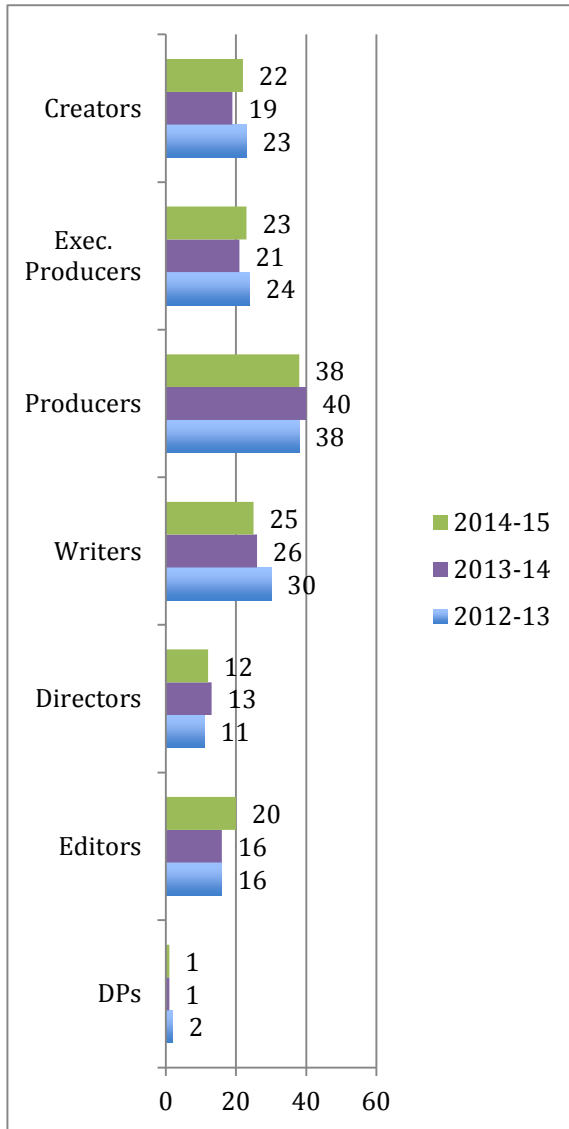
- Women comprised 25% of individuals in key behind-the-scenes roles on programs airing on the broadcast networks and cable channels, and available through Netflix in 2014-2015. This figure represents no change from 2013-14 and a decline of 1 percentage point from 2012-13.

- Women fared best as producers (38%), followed by writers (25%), executive producers (23%), creators (22%), editors (20%), directors (12%), and directors of photography (1%) (see Figure 5).

- 57% of the programs employed 4 or fewer women. Only 5% of programs employed 4 or fewer men.

- Women comprised 22% of creators. This represents an increase of 3 percentage points from 2013-14.

*Figure 5.
Historical Comparison of Percentages of
Behind-the-Scenes Employment of
Women by Role on Broadcast Network,
Cable and Netflix Programs*



•Women accounted for 23% of executive producers. This represents an increase of 2 percentage points from 2013-14.

•Women comprised 38% of producers. This represents a decline of 2 percentage points from 2013-14.

•Women accounted for 25% of writers, a decline of 1 percentage point from 2013-14.

•Women comprised 12% of directors. This represents a decrease of 1 percentage point from 2013-14.

•Women accounted for 20% of editors. This represents an increase of 4 percentage points from 2013-14.

•Women comprised 1% of directors of photography. This represents no change from 2013-14.

Important Relationships

•Broadcast and cable programs with at least one woman executive producer featured more female characters and employed more women directors, writers, and editors than programs with no women executive producers.

•On programs with at least one woman executive producer, females comprised 42% of major characters. On programs with no women executive producers, females accounted for 35% of major characters.

•On programs with at least one woman executive producer, women comprised 12% of directors, compared with 11% of directors on programs with no women executive producers.

•On programs with at least one woman executive producer, women accounted for 32% of writers, compared with 8% on programs with no women executive producers.

•On programs with at least one women executive producer, women comprised

24% of editors, compared with 12% on programs with no women executive producers.

- Broadcast and cable programs with at least one woman creator featured more female characters and employed more women directors, writers, and editors than programs with no female creators (see Figure 6).

- On programs with at least one woman creator, females accounted for 46% of major characters. On programs with no women creators, females comprised 39% of major characters.

- On programs with at least one woman creator, women comprised 49% of writers, compared with 15% on programs with no women creators.

- On programs with at least one woman creator, women accounted for 18% of directors, compared with 10% on programs with no women creators.

- On programs with at least one woman creator, women accounted for 37% of editors, compared with 13% of editors on programs with no women creators.

*Figure 6.
Comparison of Programs with At Least One Woman Creator and Programs with No Women Creators*

