

The Celluloid Ceiling: Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women on the Top 100, 250, and 500 Films of 2015

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The Celluloid Ceiling has tracked women's employment on the top grossing films for the last 18 years. It is the longest-running and most comprehensive study of women's behind-the-scenes employment in film available. This annual study is sponsored by the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA 92182, <http://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu>, lauzen@mail.sdsu.edu

In 2015, women comprised 19% of all directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and cinematographers working on the top 250 domestic grossing films. This represents an increase of 2 percentage points from last year and is even with the percentage achieved in 2001 (see Figure 1).

Women accounted for 9% of directors, up 2 percentage points from 2014, and even with their representation in 1998. In 2015, 91% of films had no female directors.

Traditionally, this study has tracked women's employment on the top 250 grossing films (foreign films omitted). This year, the study also offers breakdowns of females working on the top 100 and 500 films. The results are divided into three sections. The first section reports the findings for the top

250 films, offering comparisons of percentages from 2015 with figures dating from 1998. The second section provides the numbers for the top 100 films, comparing this year's figures with those from 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010. The third section includes the employment figures for the top 500 films, and offers analyses of important relationships between women directors and those in other key behind-the-scenes roles, such as writers and editors.

*Figure 1.
Historical Comparison of Percentages of
Behind-the-Scenes Women on Top 250
Films*



Findings / Top 250 Films

- This section analyzes behind-the-scenes employment of 2,735 individuals working on the top 250 domestic grossing films of 2015.

- Women fared best as producers (26%), followed by editors (22%), executive producers (20%), writers (11%), directors (9%), and cinematographers (6%).

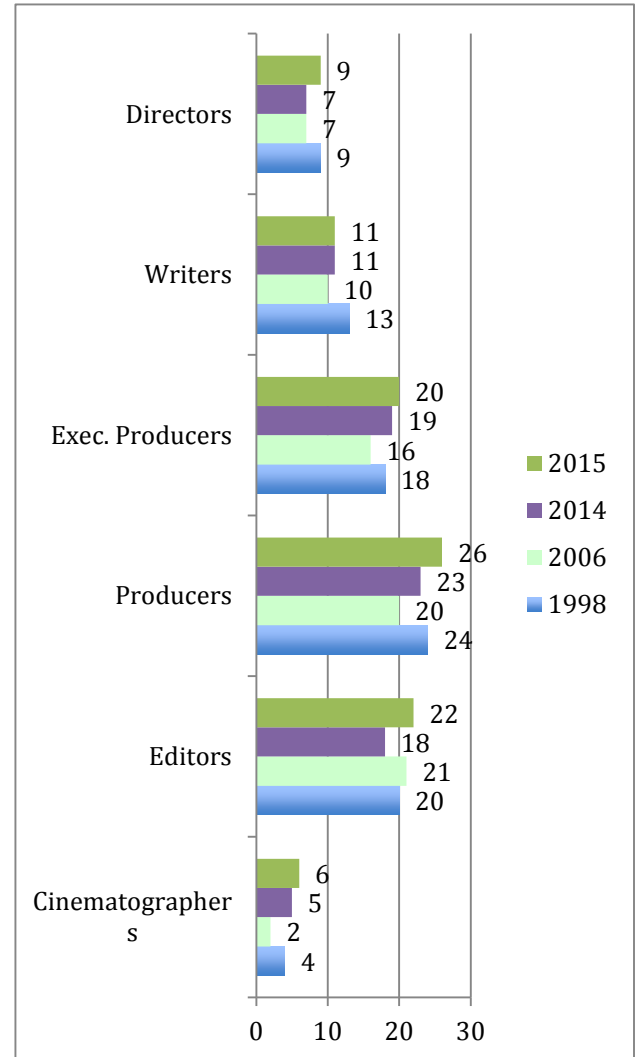
- Last year, fully one-third or 33% of films employed 0 or 1 woman in the roles considered. 36% of films employed 2 to 3 women, 20% employed 4 to 5 women, 10% employed 6 to 9 women, and 1% employed 10 to 11 women. In contrast, 1% of films employed 0 or 1 man in the roles considered, 7% employed 2 to 5 men, 31% employed 6 to 9 men, and the remaining majority (61%) employed 10 to 27 men.

- A historical comparison of women’s employment on the top 250 films in 2015 and 1998 reveals that the percentages of executive producers, producers, editors, and cinematographers have increased. The percentage of directors has remained the same, and the percentage of women writers has declined (see Figure 2).

- A comparison of women’s employment on the top 250 films in 2015 and 2014 reveals that the percentages of women directors, executive producers, producers, editors, and cinematographers have increased. The percentage of women writers has remained the same.

- Women comprised 9% of all directors working on the top 250 films of 2015. This represents an increase of 2

Figure 2.
Historical Comparison of Percentages of Women Employed Behind the Scenes on Top 250 Films by Role



- percentage points from 2014 and is even with the figure for 1998. Ninety one percent (91%) of the films had no female directors (see Figure 3).

- Women accounted for 11% of writers working on the top 250 films of 2015. This represents no change from 2014 and a decrease of 2 percentage points from 1998. Eighty two percent (82%) of the films had no female writers.

*Figure 3.
Percentages of Top 250 Films with No
Women in Roles Considered*

91% had no women directors
82% had no women writers
52% had no women exec. producers
32% had no women producers
74% had no women editors
94% had no women cinematographers

Fully one-third or 33% of films had no or 1 woman in the roles considered

•Women comprised 20% of all executive producers working on the top 250 films of 2015. This represents an increase of 1 percentage point from 2014 and an increase of 2 percentage points from 1998. Fifty two percent (52%) of the films had no female executive producers.

•Women accounted for 26% of all producers working on the top 250 films of 2015. This represents an increase of 3 percentage points from 2014 and an increase of 2 percentage points from 1998. Thirty two percent (32%) of the films had no female producers.

•Women comprised 22% of all editors working on the top 250 films of 2015. This represents an increase of 4 percentage points from 2014 and an increase of 2 percentage points from 1998. Seventy four percent (74%) of the films had no female editors.

•Women accounted for 6% of all cinematographers working on the top 250 films of 2015. This represents an increase of 1 percentage point from 2014 and 2 percentage points from 1998. Ninety four percent (94%) of the films had no female cinematographers.

•Women were most likely to work in the documentary and comedy genres, accounting for 36% and 34% of individuals working on these films in these films respectively. Women were least likely to work in the action and horror genres, accounting for 9% and 11% of those working on these films respectively.

Findings / Top 100 Films

•This section considers the behind-the-scenes employment of 1,337 individuals working on the top 100 domestic grossing films (foreign films omitted) of 2015.

•Overall, women accounted for 16% of all directors, writers, executive producers, producers, editors, and cinematographers working on the top 100 films.

•Women fared best as producers (22%), followed by editors (20%), executive producers (18%), writers (11%), directors (7%), and cinematographers (3%).

•Figure 4 provides a historical comparison of the 2015 figures with those from 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010. When comparing the most recent figures for 2015 with 2010, the percentages of women have increased for almost every role considered with the exception of editors for whom the numbers remained the same.

•Women comprised 7% of directors working on the top 100 films of 2015. This represents an increase of 5 percentage points from 2010.

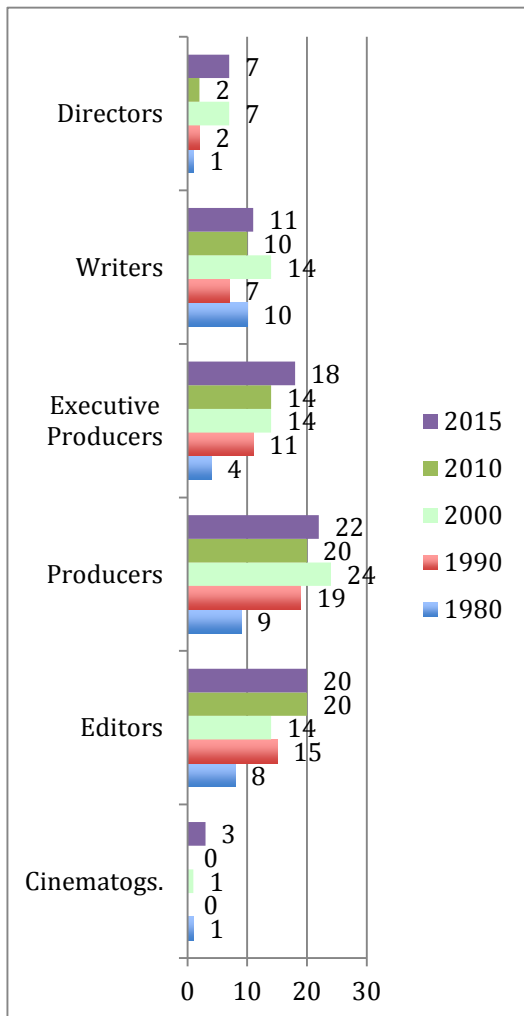
•Women accounted for 11% of writers

working on the top 100 films of 2015. This represents an increase of 1 percentage point from 2010.

- Women comprised 18% of executive producers working on the top 100 films of 2015. This represents an increase of 4 percentage points from 2010.

Figure 4.

Historical Comparison of Percentages of Women Employed Behind the Scenes on Top 100 Films by Role*



*Note that relatively minor fluctuations in the numbers affect this sample to a greater extent than the other samples included in this report due to its smaller size.

- Women accounted for 22% of producers working on the top 100 films of 2015. This represents an increase of 2 percentage points from 2010.

- Women comprised 20% of editors working on the top 100 films of 2015. This figure is even with the one from 2010.

- Women accounted for 3% of cinematographers working on the top 100 films of 2010. This represents an increase of 3 percentage points from 2010.

Findings / Top 500 Films

- This section analyzes behind-the-scenes employment of 4,478 individuals working on the top 500 domestic grossing films (foreign films omitted) of 2015.

- Overall, women accounted for 21% of all directors, writers, executive producers, producers, editors, and cinematographers working on the top 500 films.

- Women fared best as producers (26%), followed by executive producers (23%), editors (21%), writers (15%), directors (12%), and cinematographers (10%).

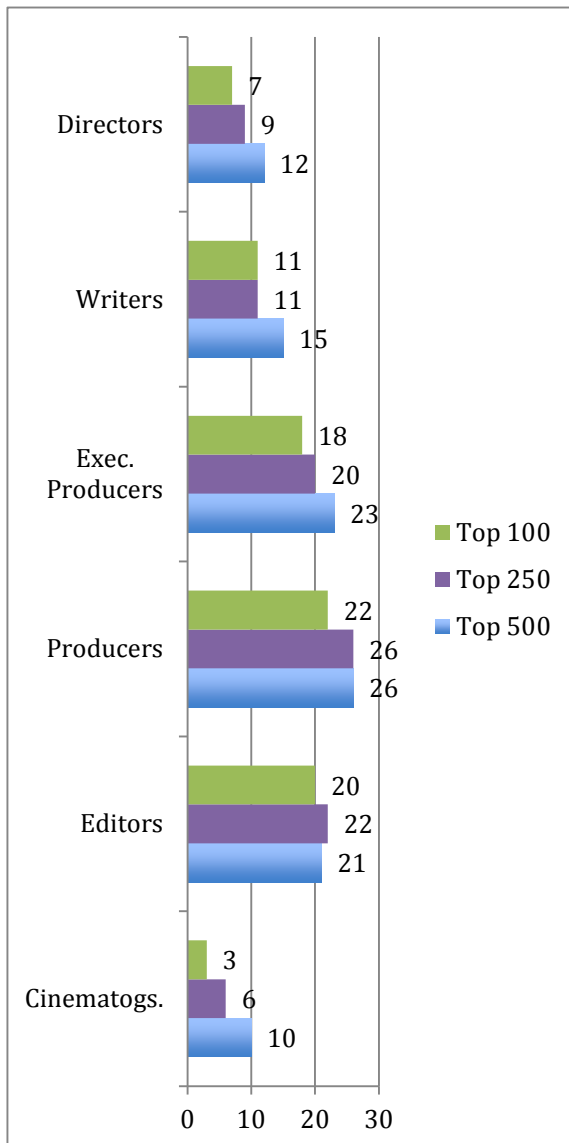
- Women comprised 12% of directors working on the top 500 films of 2015, compared with 9% on the top 250 and 7% on the top 100. Figure 5 provides a summary of the employment of women on the top 100, 250, and 500 grossing films.

- Women accounted for 15% of writers working on the top 500 films of 2015, compared with 11% on the top 250 and top 100.

- Women comprised 23% of executive producers working on the top 500 films of 2015, compared with 20% on the top 250, and 18% on the top 100.

Figure 5.

Comparison of Percentages of Women Working in Key Behind-the-Scenes Roles on the Top 100, 250, and 500 Domestic Grossing Films of 2015



- Women accounted for 26% of producers working on the top 500 films of 2015 compared with 26% on the top 250 and 22% on the top 100.

- Women comprised 21% of editors working on the top 500 films of 2015, compared with 22% on the top 250 films and 20% on the top 100.

- Women accounted for 10% of cinematographers working on the top 500 films of 2015, compared with 6% on the top 250 and 3% on the top 100.

Top 500 Films/Comparison of Films with at Least One Female Director vs. Films with Exclusively Male Directors

- Films with at least one female director employed greater percentages of women working as writers, editors, and cinematographers than films with exclusively male directors.

- On films with at least one female director, women comprised 53% of writers. On films with exclusively male directors, women accounted for 10% of writers (see Figure 6).

- On films with at least one female director, women comprised 32% of editors. On films with exclusively male directors, women accounted for 19% of editors.

- On films with at least one female director, women comprised 12% of cinematographers. On films with exclusively male directors, women accounted for 10% of cinematographers.

*Figure 6.
Comparison of Percentages of Women
Working on Films with at Least One
Female Director vs. with Exclusively
Male Directors*

