

Center for the
Study of Women
in Television and Film

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The Celluloid Ceiling

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Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women in the Top 250 Films of 2007

Executive Summary

In 2007, women comprised 15% of all directors, executive producers, producers, writers, cinematographers, and editors working on the top 250 domestic grossing films. This represents a decline of 4 percentage points from 2001 and represents no change from 2006.

Women accounted for 6% of directors in 2007, a decline of 1 percentage point since 2006. This figure is approximately half the percentage of women directors working in 2000 when women comprised 11% of all directors.

This study analyzed behind-the-scenes employment of 2,883 individuals working on the top 250 domestic grossing films (foreign films omitted) of 2007 with combined domestic box office grosses of approximately \$9.3 billion. The following summary provides employment figures for 2007 and compares the most recent statistics with those from the last 10 years.

Findings

- Twenty one percent (21%) of the films released in 2007 employed no women directors, executive producers, producers, writers, cinematographers or editors. No films failed to employ a man in at least one of these roles.
- A historical comparison of women's employment on the top 250 films in 2007 and 1998 reveals that the percentage of women in every role considered has declined.
- Women comprised 6% of all directors working on the top 250 films of 2007. Ninety four percent (94%) of the films had no female directors.
- Women accounted for 10% of writers working on the top 250 films of 2007. Eighty two percent (82%) of the films had no female writers.
- Women comprised 14% of all executive producers working on the top 250 films of 2007. Sixty seven percent (67%) of the films had no female executive producers.
- Women accounted for 22% of all producers working on the top 250 films of 2007. Thirty seven percent (37%) of the films had no female producers.
- Women accounted for 17% of all editors working on the top 250 films of 2007. Seventy nine percent (79%) of the films had no female editors.

- Women comprised 2% of all cinematographers working on the top 250 films of 2007. Ninety eight percent (98%) of the films had no female cinematographers.
- By genre, women were most likely to work on romantic comedies, romantic dramas, and documentaries and least likely to work on science fiction, horror, and action-adventure features.

Report

In 2007, women comprised only 15% of all directors, executive producers, producers, writers, cinematographers, and editors working on the top 250 domestic grossing films. Twenty one percent (21%) of these films employed no women in any of the roles considered. No films failed to employ a man in at least one of these roles.

Women accounted for only 6% of directors last year, a decline of 1 percentage point since 2006. This figure is approximately half the percentage of women directors working in 2000 when women comprised 11% of all directors.

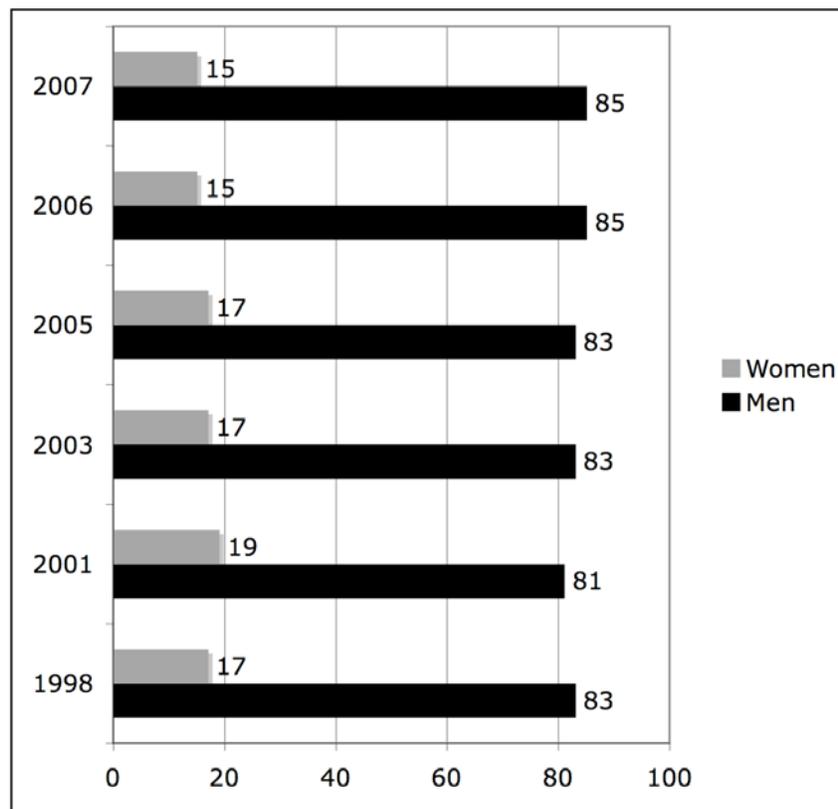
In total, this study analyzed behind-the-scenes employment of 2,883 individuals working on the top 250 domestic grossing films (foreign films omitted) of 2007 with combined box office grosses of approximately \$9.3 billion. The following summary provides employment figures for 2007 and compares the most recent statistics with those from the last 10 years.

A Historical Perspective

Overall, women accounted for 15% of all directors, executive producers, producers, writers, cinematographers, and editors working on the top 250 domestic grossing films. This represents a decline of 4 percentage points from 2001 and no change from last year (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.

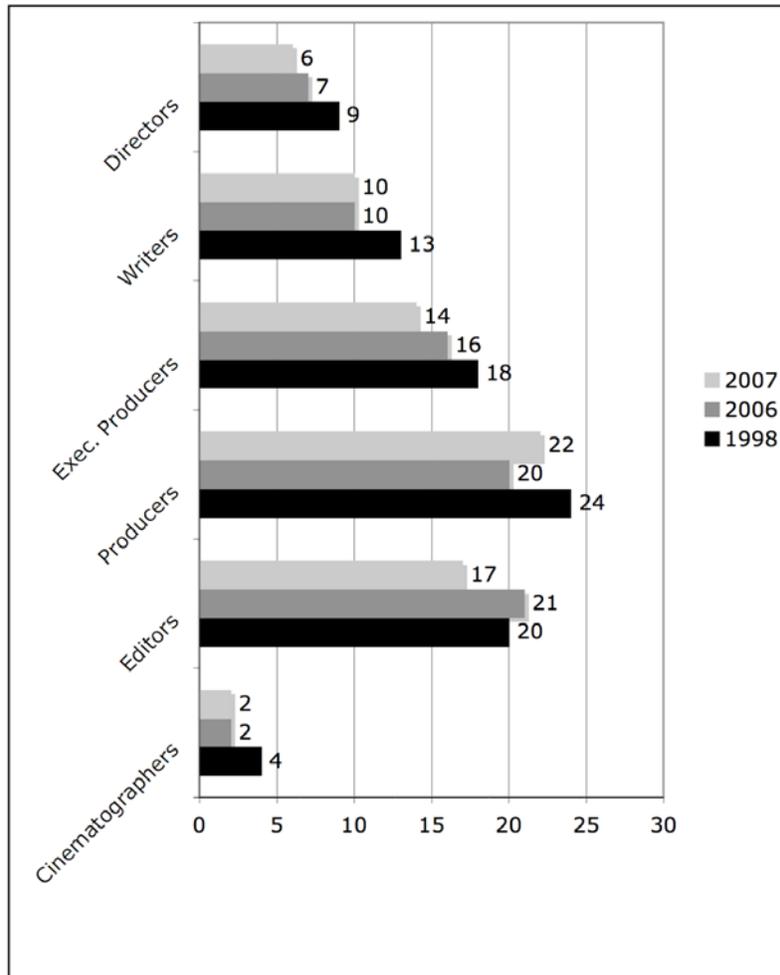
Historical Comparison of Percentages of Women Employed in Key Behind-the-Scenes Roles



As Figure 2 illustrates, the percentages of women in every role considered remained below recent historical highs. Women accounted for 6% of directors in 2007, down 1 percentage point from 2006 and down 3 percentage points from 1998. The percentage of women writers has held steady at 10% for the last two years (2007 and 2006), down 3 percentage points from 1998. Women comprised 14% of executive producers, down 2 percentage points from 2006, and down 4 percentage points from 1998. The percentage of women producers actually increased from 20% in 2006 to 22% in 2007. However, this number remains 2 percentage points below women's representation as producers in 1998 (24%). Women accounted for 17% of editors in 2007, down 4 percentage points from 2006 and 3 percentage points from 1998. Women comprised 2% of all

cinematographers in 2007, even with 2006, but down 2 percentage points from 1998.

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



Gender and Genre

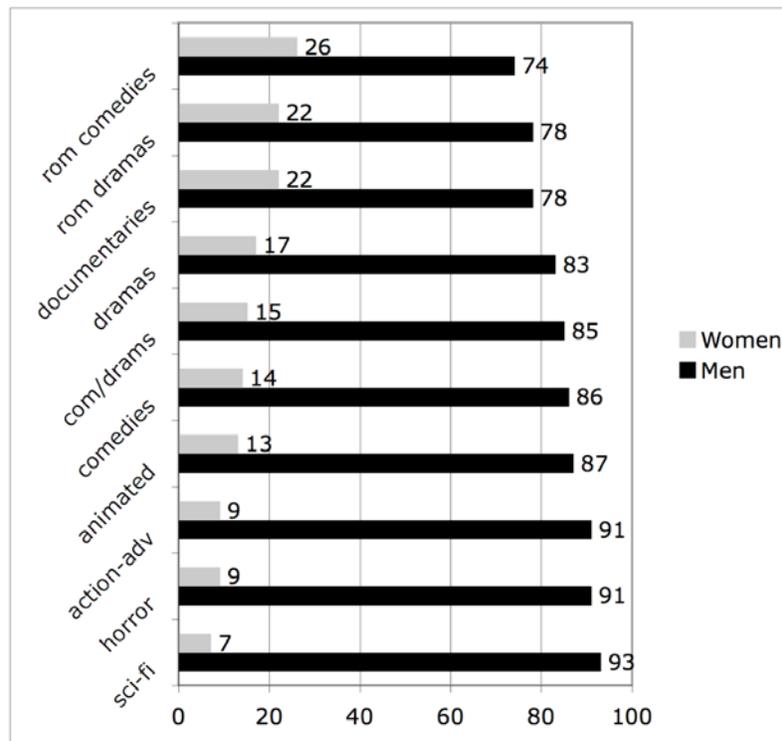
This annual study found that women were more likely to work in certain film genres than others. Figure 3 compares the percentages of women and men working on the top 250 films by genre. Overall, women were most likely to work on romantic comedies (26%), followed by romantic dramas (22%) and

documentaries (22%), dramas (17%), comedy dramas (15%), comedies (14%), animated features (13%), action-adventure features (9%) and horror features (9%), and sci-fi features (7%).

It is unclear whether women work in these genres because they contain the kinds of stories women are stereotypically expected to be interested and excel in or if women favor these genres to others. Anecdotal evidence from a variety of books written on women in the film industry suggests the former is a more plausible explanation. According to writer/director Robin Swicord, "There aren't that many women on the Hollywood A-list of writers. The women on that list are not offered the Elmore Leonard novels; they're offered movies about dogs and horses and mermaids and genies coming out of bottles . . . It's very limiting" (Gregory, 2002, p. 321).

Figure 3

Percentages of Behind-the-Scenes Women by Genre



Gender by Role

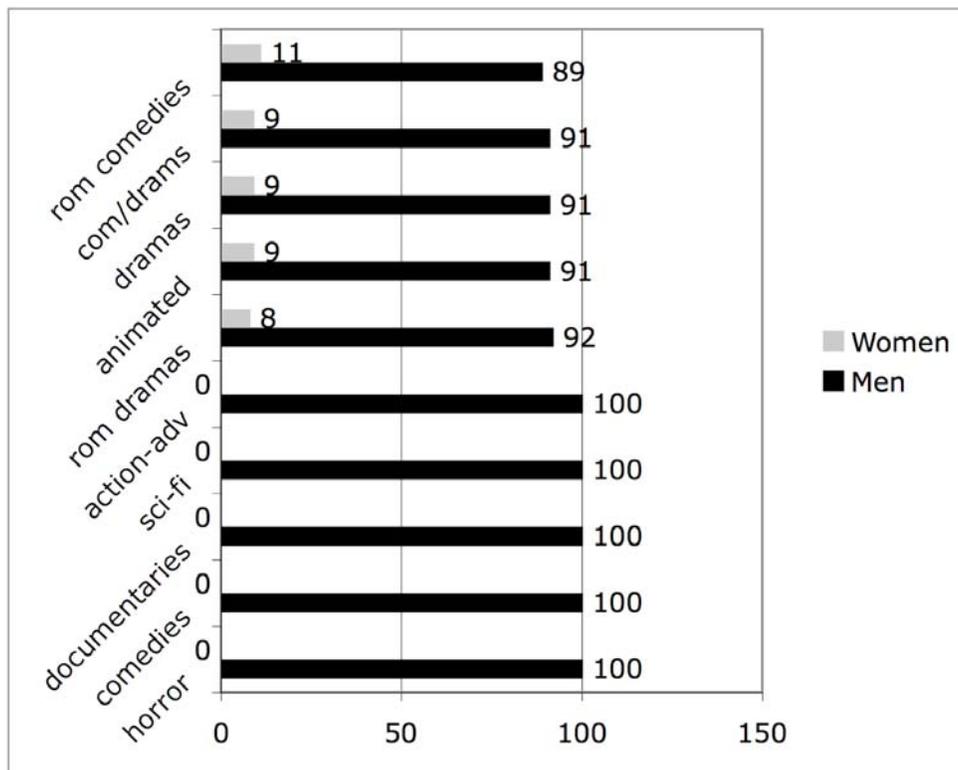
Directors. Women comprised 6% and men 94% of directors working on the top 250 films of 2007.

Ninety four percent (94%) of films had no female directors.

Among the top 250 films, women were most likely to direct romantic comedies (11%), followed by comedy dramas (9%), dramas (9%) and animated features (9%), and romantic dramas (8%). Women did not direct action-adventure features, sci-fi features, documentaries, comedies or horror features (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Percentages of Women and Men Directors by Genre



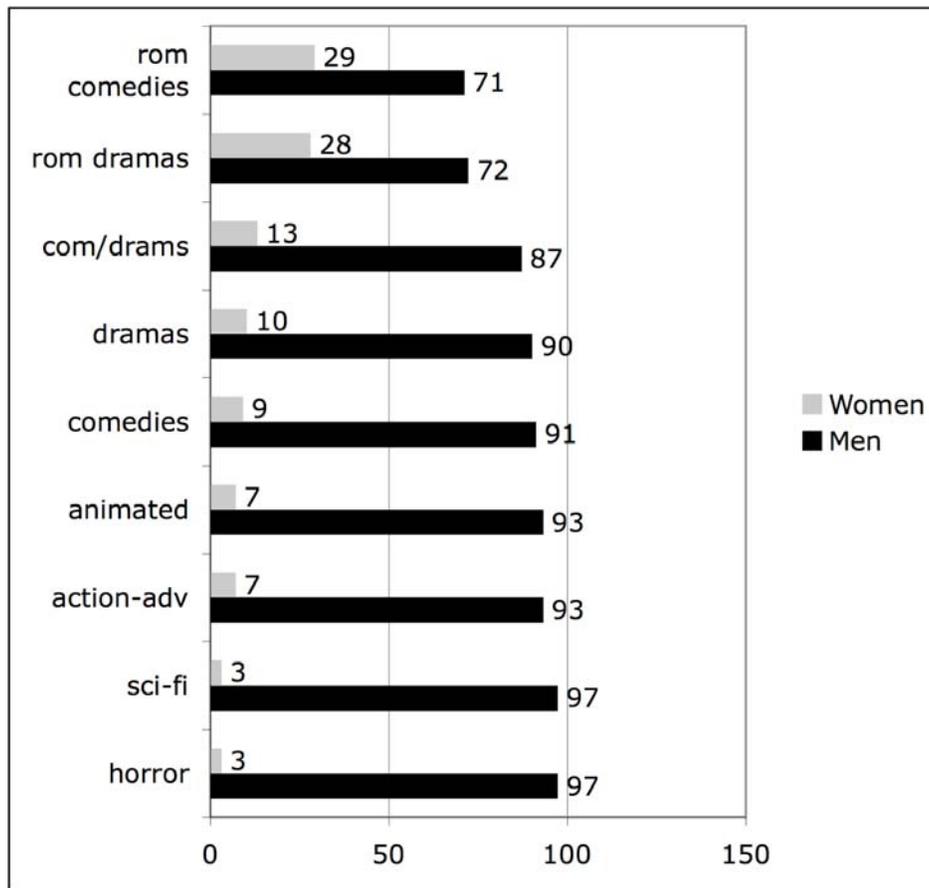
Writers. Women accounted for 10% and men 90% of all writers working on the top 250 films of 2007.

Eighty two percent (82%) of films had no women writers.

On the top 250 films, women were most likely to write romantic comedies (29%), followed by romantic dramas (28%), comedy dramas (13%), dramas (10%), comedies (9%), animated features (7%) and action-adventure features (7%), and sci-fi features (3%) and horror features (3%) (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Percentages of Women and Men Writers by Genre



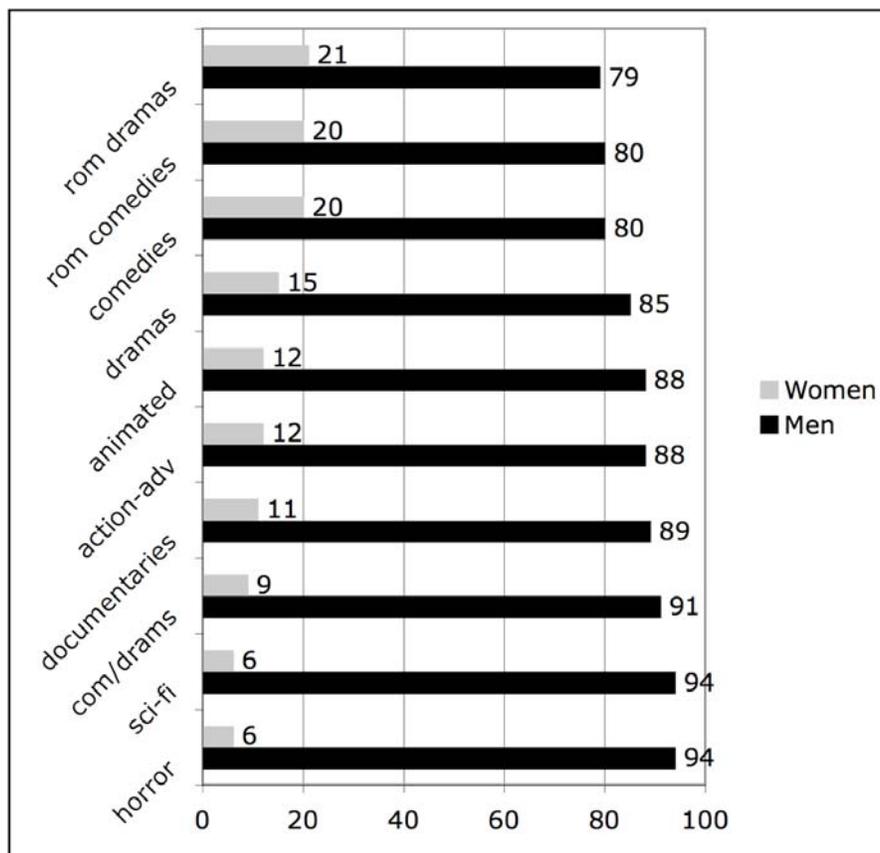
Executive Producers. Women comprised 14% and men 86% of all executive producers working on the top 250 films of 2007.

Sixty seven percent (67%) of films had no women executive producers.

Among the top 250 films, women were most likely to executive produce romantic dramas (21%), followed by romantic comedies (20%) and comedies (20%), dramas (15%), animated features (12%) and action-adventure features (12%), documentaries (11%), comedy dramas (9%), sci-fi features (6%) and horror features (6%) (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Percentages of Women and Men Executive Producers by Genre

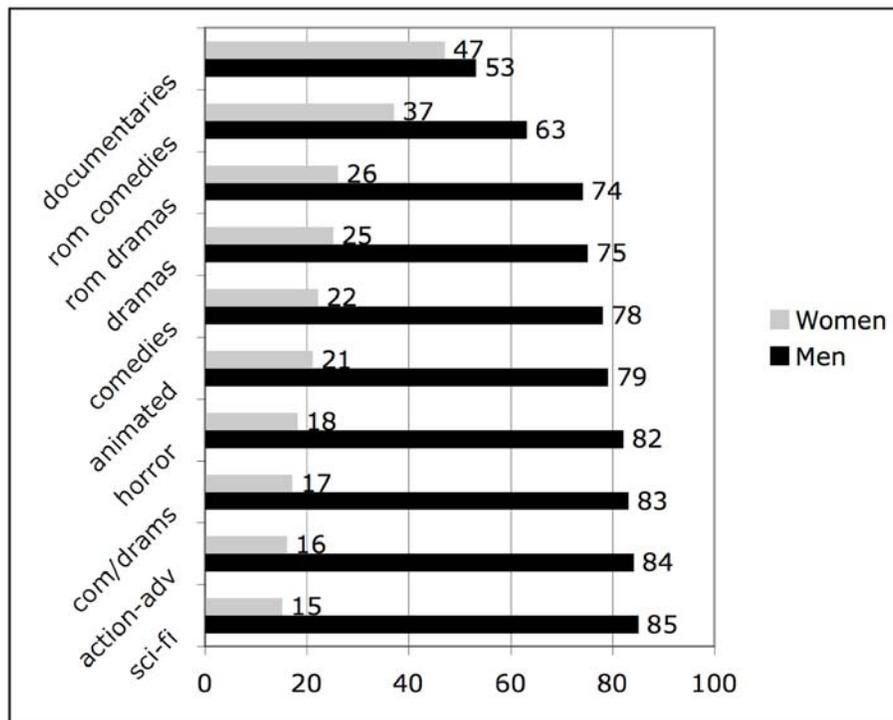


Producers. Women accounted for 22% and men 78% of all producers working on the top 250 films of 2007.

Thirty seven percent (37%) of films had no women producers.

On the top 250 films, women were most likely to produce documentaries (47%), followed by romantic comedies (37%), romantic dramas (26%), dramas (25%), comedies (22%), animated features (21%), horror features (18%), comedy dramas (17%), action-adventure features (16%), and sci-fi features (15%) (see Figure 7).

Figure 7
Percentages of Women and Men Producers by Genre

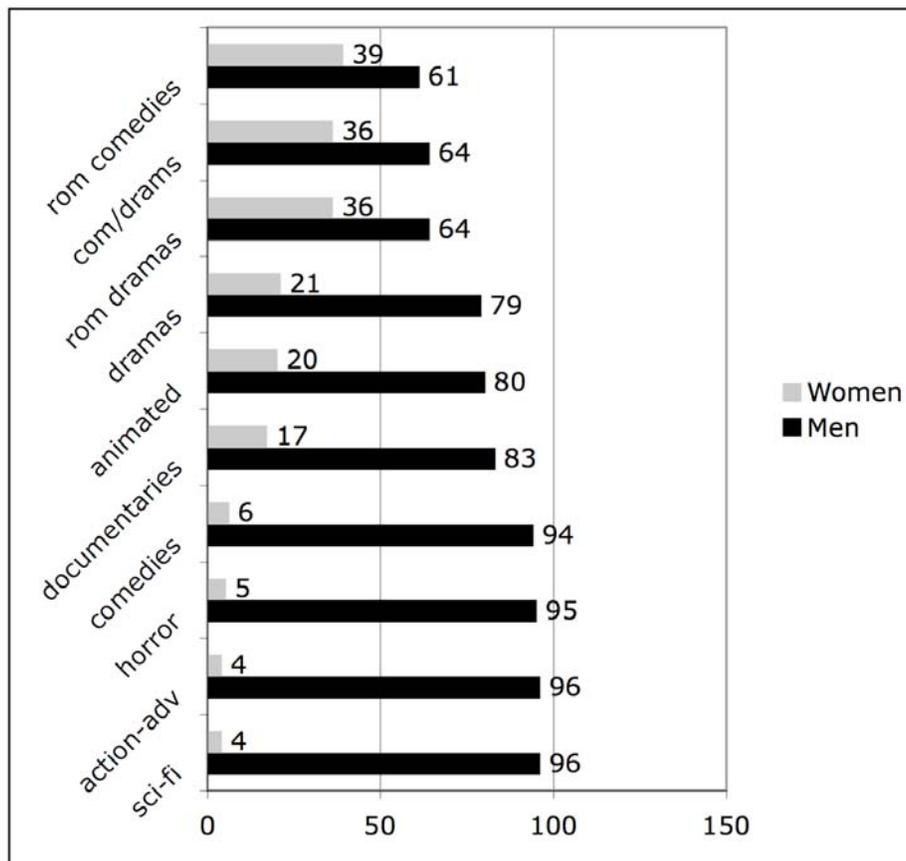


Editors. Women comprised 17% and men 83% of editors working on the top 250 films of 2007.

Seventy nine percent (79%) of films had no women editors.

Among the top 250 films, women were most likely to edit romantic comedies (39%), comedy dramas (36%) and romantic dramas (36%), dramas (21%), animated features (20%), documentaries (17%), comedies (6%), horror features (5%), and action-adventure features (4%) and sci-fi features (4%) (see Figure 8).

Figure 8
Percentages of Women and Men Editors by Genre



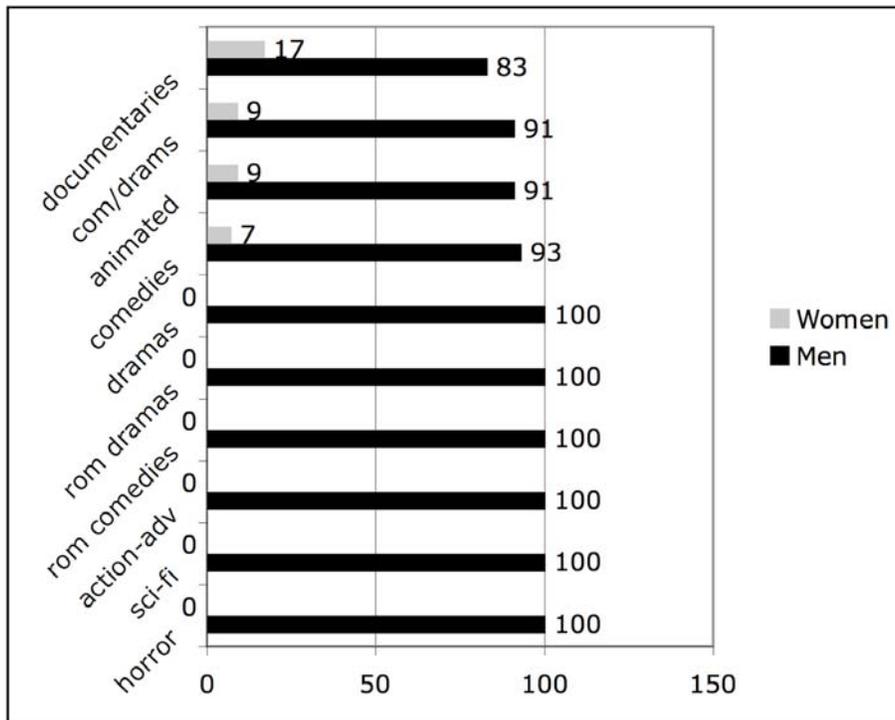
Cinematographers. Women accounted for 2% and men 98% of all cinematographers working on the top 250 films of 2007.

Ninety eight percent (98%) of films had no women cinematographers.

Among the top 250 films, women were most likely to serve as cinematographers on documentaries (17%), followed by comedy dramas (9%) and animated features (9%), and comedies (7%). Women did not serve as cinematographers on dramas, romantic dramas, romantic comedies, action-adventure features, sci-fi features, or horror features (see Figure 9).

Figure 9

Percentages of Women and Men Cinematographers by Genre



References:

Gregory, M. (2002). *Women who run the show*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

About the Center

The Center's mission is to celebrate the accomplishments of women directors, writers, producers, cinematographers, and editors in television and film, encourage more women to pursue careers as storytellers, and conduct an extensive program of original research. *The Celluloid Ceiling* and *Boxed In* serve as the cornerstones for the Center's expanded agenda of research examining women's behind-the-scenes employment, and the impact of their employment on television and film content. In addition, the Center hosts a lively speaker series featuring women working in these industries. The series highlights the careers and works of the women featured, and addresses current issues in film and television.

About the Author

Dr. Martha M. Lauzen is founder and Executive Director of the Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University. A nationally and internationally recognized expert on the employment of women on screen and behind the scenes, her research has been widely published in scholarly journals, trade publications, and the popular press. Dr. Lauzen teaches classes including *The Women of Prime Time: From "That Girl" to "Saving Grace"* and *Film Directors: When Women Call the Shots* in the School of Theatre, Television and Film at SDSU. She holds a doctorate from the University of Maryland and M.A. and B.A. degrees from the University of Iowa.