Boxed In:

Women On Screen and Behind the Scenes on Broadcast and Streaming Television in 2023-24

by Dr. Martha M. Lauzen

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Following the promiscuous spending and feverish optimism about the potential of streaming services during the pandemic and the interruption in production caused by the writers' and actors' strikes, the television industry is now contracting and coming back down to earth. It appears that the recent tumult has taken a toll on women working behind the scenes, as well as on the percentages of female characters appearing on screen.

In 2023-24, the percentage of women working as creators on original television series appearing on broadcast networks and streaming services declined for the second year in a row. Women comprised just 23% of creators last year, down from 26% in 2022-23, and 30% in 2021-22. Unsurprisingly, the percentage of female characters in speaking and major roles also declined. Creators are especially important as programs with women in this role tend to hire substantially higher numbers of women in other key behind-the-scenes roles, such as writers, directors, and editors. Programs with women creators also feature higher percentages of female characters.

Since 1997, this report has tracked the representation and employment of women in television. The *Boxed In* project provides the longest-running historical record of women's employment in television available. This latest edition considers how women fared in original U.S. programming offered by broadcasters and streaming services in 2023-24.

Key Findings

•**For the second consecutive year, the percentage of women working as creators on original programs appearing on broadcast television and the streaming services declined.** In 2023-24, women accounted for only 23% of creators, down from 26% in 2022-23, and 30% in 2021-22. This decline is due to decreases in women creators on broadcast network programs, from 29% in 2021-22 to 20% in 2023-24, and from 30% to 27% on streaming programs (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.

Comparison of Creators on Broadcast and Streaming Programs
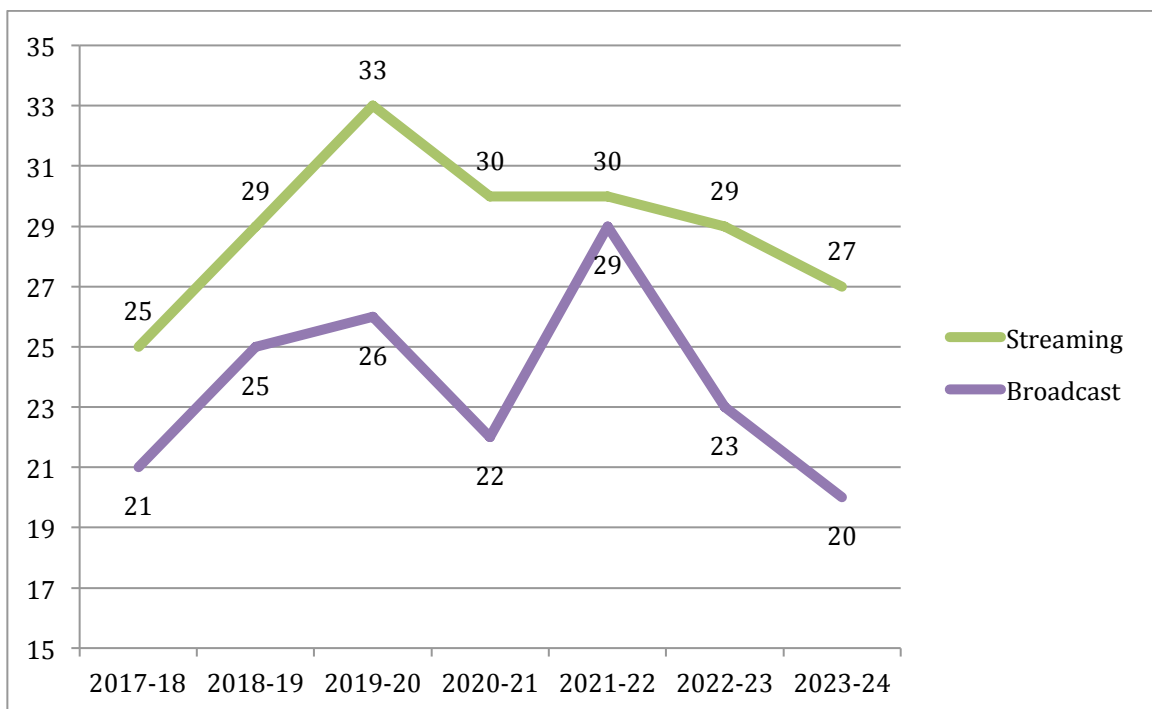
•**Programs with at least 1 female creator employed dramatically higher numbers of women working as directors, writers and editors than programs with exclusively male creators.** On programs with at least one female creator, women comprised 30% of directors, 60% of writers, and 26% of editors. On

programs with exclusively male creators, women accounted for 15% of directors, 17% of writers, and 17% of editors.

•**Programs with female creators were more likely to feature female protagonists than programs with male creators.** On programs with at least 1 woman creator, women comprised 50% of protagonists versus 26% on programs with exclusively male creators.

•**Over the last two years, the percentage of female characters in *speaking roles* has declined (includes broadcast and streaming programs).** The percentage declined from 46% in 2021-22, to 44% in 2022-23, to 43% in 2023-24 (see Figure 2).

•**Over the last two years, the percentage of female characters in *major roles* has declined (includes broadcast and streaming programs).** The percentage declined from 49% in 2021-22, to 48% in 2022-23, to 45% in 2023-24.

Figure 2.

Representation of Female Characters in Speaking and Major Roles in Original Broadcast and Streaming Programs/Last Three Years
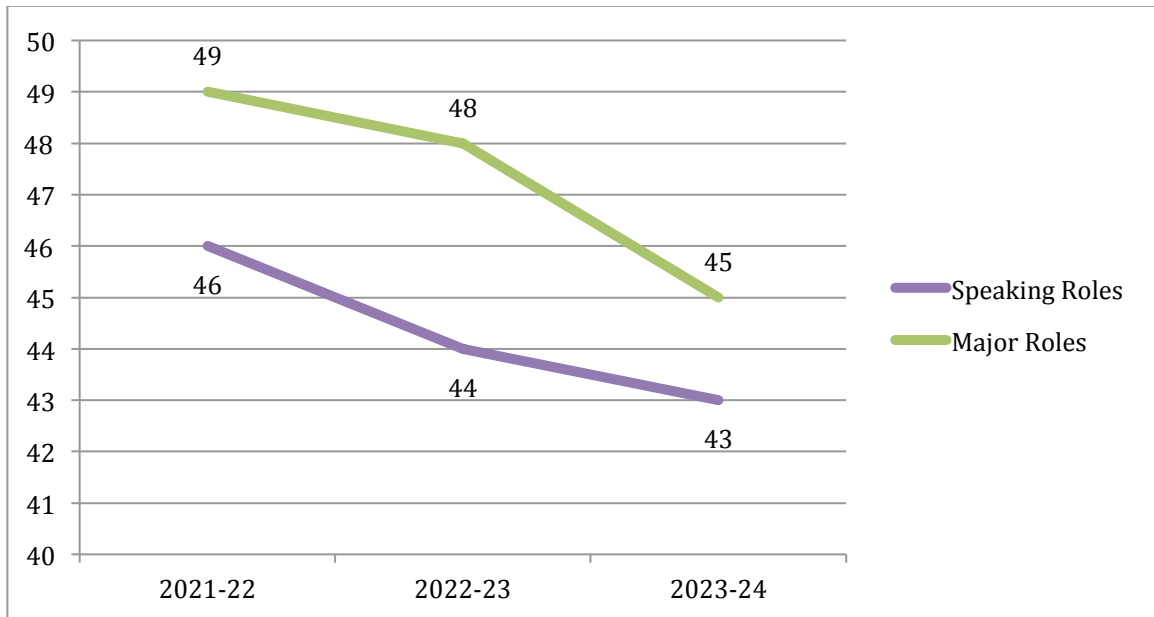
•**In 2023-24, females comprised 38% of** *protagonists* **on original programs appearing on streaming services and 30% on programs on the broadcast networks.**

•**In 2023-24, females accounted for 44% of** *major characters* **on original programs appearing on streaming services and 45% on programs on the broadcast networks.**

•**In 2023-24, females made up 43% of** *all speaking characters* **on original programs appearing on streaming services and 44% on programs on the broadcast networks.**

•**In 2023-24, female characters featured on original broadcast and streaming programs were substantially 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 (58%).

•**Viewers were much more likely to see male characters 40 and older than females in speaking roles.** 51% of male characters but 29% of female characters were 40+.

•**Original programs on broadcast networks and streaming services were more likely to feature male characters 60 and over in speaking roles than female characters (7% vs. 5%).**

•**Regardless of platform, female characters experience a steep decline in numbers as they age from their 30s into their 40s.** On broadcast and streaming programs, 37% of females were in their 30s but 15% were in their 40s. The percentage of male characters in their 30s and 40s remained stable at 29%.

•The percentages of characters of color in speaking roles remained relatively stable in 2023-24. 62% of females were White, 21% were Black, 9% were Asian or Asian American, 7% were Latina, 1% were Native American, less than 1% were MENA, and less than 1% were multiracial/multiethnic.

Background

This year's edition of *Boxed In* focuses on the employment of women working in key behind-the-scenes positions, as well as the representation of girls and women on screen in original U.S. dramas, comedies and reality programs featured on broadcast networks and streaming services from September 2023 through June 2024.

The study considers one randomly selected episode of series appearing on the broadcast networks during prime time (ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, CW) and streaming services (Amazon Prime, Apple TV+, Disney+, HBO Max, Hulu, Netflix, Paramount+, Peacock). In 2023-24, the study tracked 3,248 characters and 4,442 credits. Over the last 27 years -- from 1997-98 through 2023-24 – *Boxed In* has monitored over 59,700 characters and more than 74,200 credits.

Information on behind-the-scenes credits and on-screen portrayals was collected by viewing every episode in the sample one or more times in its entirety. The study considers the following behind-the-scenes credits: creators, directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and directors of photography. Every character who was seen speaking at least one line was included in the study. The attributes of each character that were coded include: sex, race/ethnicity, age, prominence of character (major vs. minor), marital status, and occupational status. The study also coded whether the characters were seen at work and actually working.

For the purposes of this study, protagonists are the characters from whose perspective the story is told. Major characters appear in more than one scene and are instrumental to the narrative of the story.

## *Findings for Broadcast Networks*

Females On Screen

Representation

In 2023-24, females comprised 44% (43.6%) of all speaking characters appearing on broadcast network programs. This is even with the percentage achieved in 2022-23 (see Figure 3). Males accounted for 56% (56.2%) of all characters. Non-binary individuals made up 0.1% of characters and transgender individuals accounted for 0.1% of characters.

Figure 3.

Historical Comparison of Percentages of All Speaking Female Characters on Broadcast Network Programs
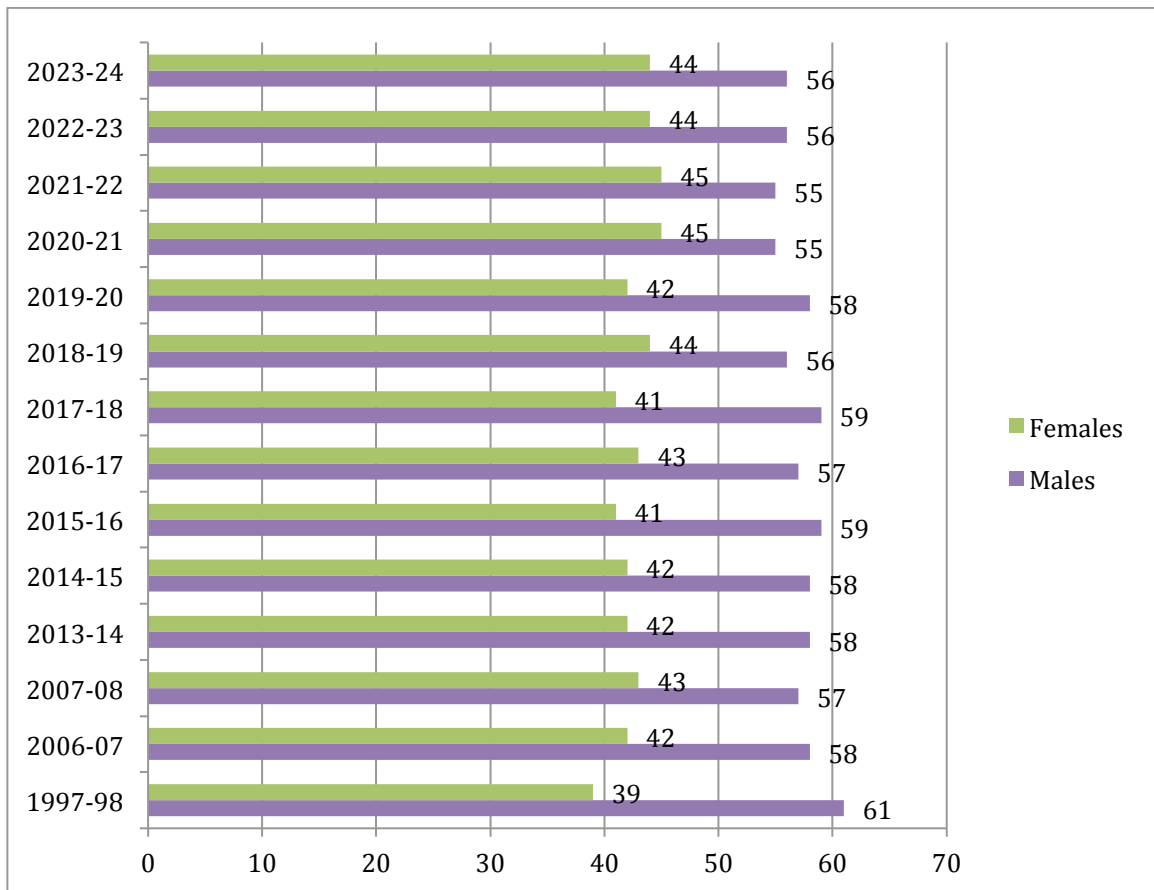
There has been no meaningful change in the percentage of female characters in speaking roles on broadcast television in the last decade and a half. In 2007-08 females comprised 43% of all characters. In 2023-24, females accounted for 44% of all characters in speaking roles.

45% (44.9%) of *major characters* were female in 2023-24. This represents a decline of 1 percentage point from 46% in 2022-23 (see Figure 4). For the purposes of this study, *major characters* appear in more than one scene and are instrumental to the narrative of the story. Males comprised 55% (54.5%) of major characters.

Figure 4.
Historical Comparison of Percentage of Major Female Characters on Broadcast Network Programs
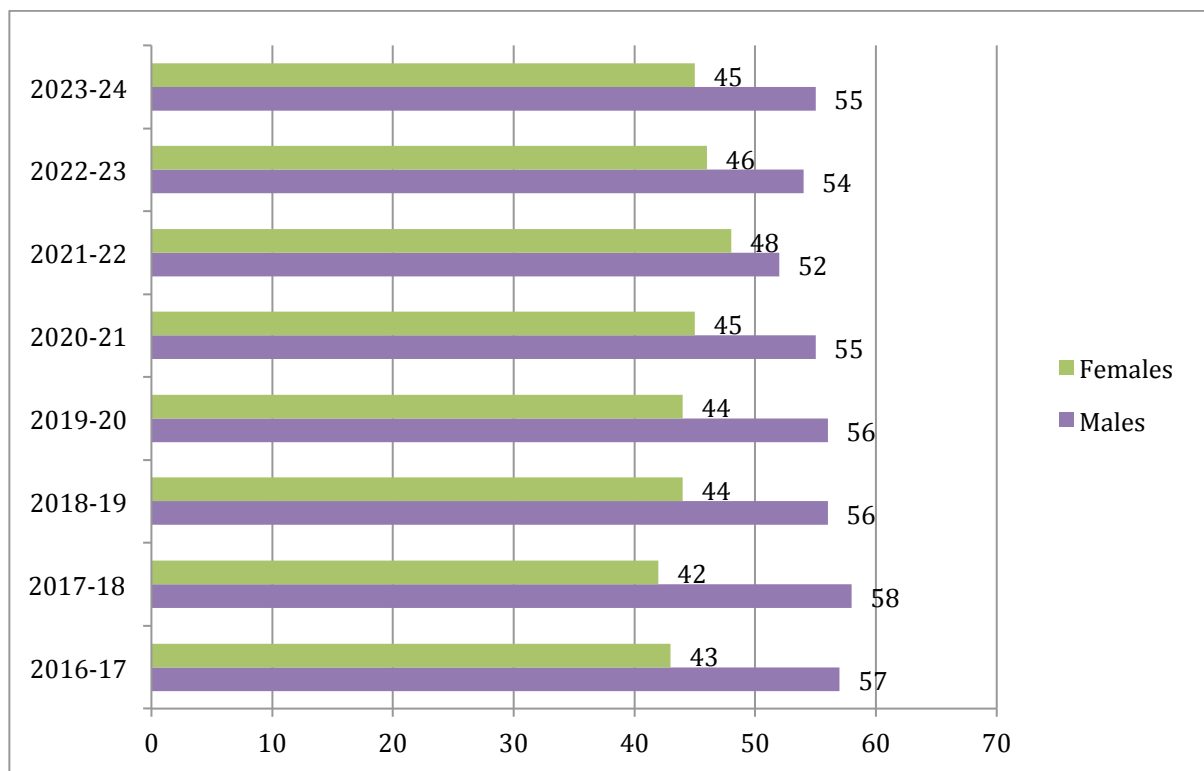
Females accounted for 30% (29.6%) of *protagonists* appearing on scripted programs on the broadcast networks. Males comprised 37% (37.0%), and ensembles 33% (33.3%) of protagonists. For the purposes of this study, protagonists are the characters from whose perspective the story is told.

Race/Ethnicity

In 2023-24, 61% (61.2%) of all *female characters in speaking roles* were White (up from 58% in 2022-23), 21% (21.4%) were Black (down from 23% in 2022-23), 8% (7.8%) were Asian or Asian American (down from 12% in 2022-23), 8% (7.7%) were Latina (up from 7% in 2022-23)[1], 1% (0.9%) were Native American (up from 0.7% in 2022-23), 1% (0.7%) were multiracial/multiethnic (up from 0.2% in 2022-23), and less than 1% (0.3%) were MENA[2] (down from 0.6% in 2022-23) (see Figure 5).

63% (62.6%) of *male characters in speaking roles* were White, 23% (23.4%) were Black, 7% (6.9%) were Asian or Asian American, 5% (5.0%) were Latino, and 1% (1.3%) were MENA.

100% of transgender characters and 100% of nonbinary characters in speaking roles were White.

Figure 5.

Race/Ethnicity of Female Characters in Speaking Roles on Broadcast Network Programs
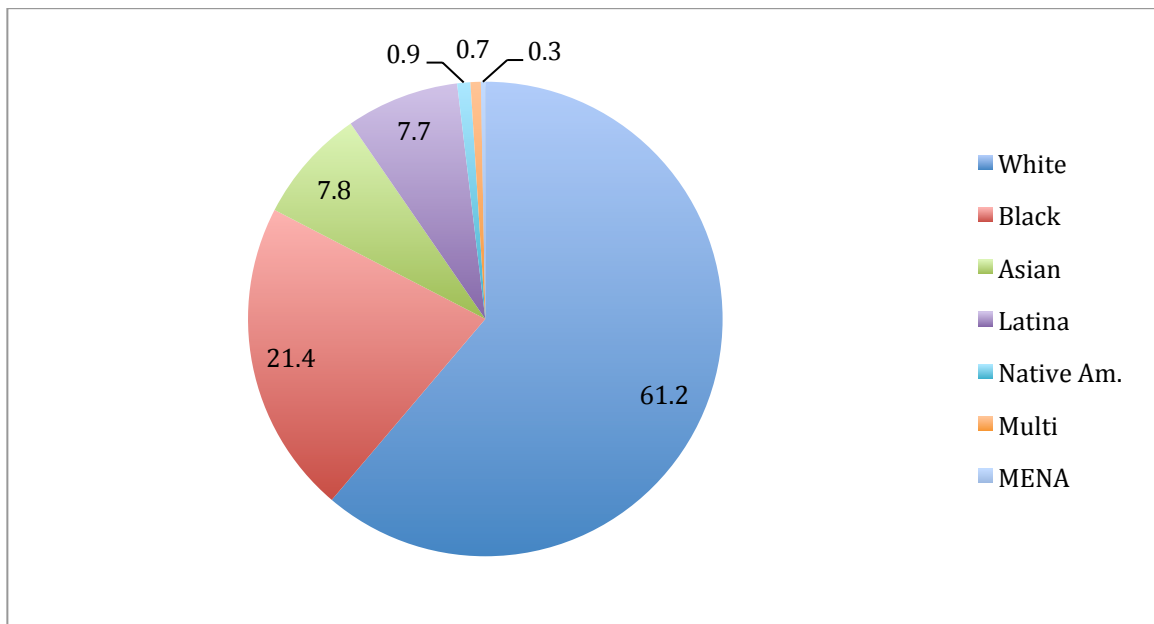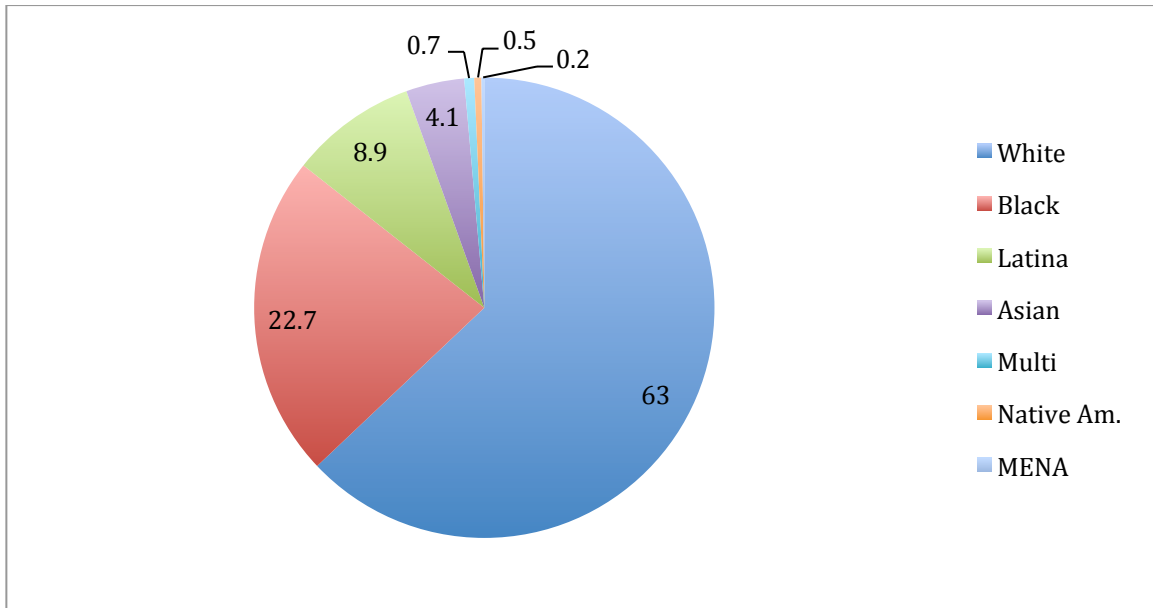
Figure 6.

Race/Ethnicity of Major Female Characters on Broadcast Network Programs

63% (63.0%) of *major female characters* were White (up from 61% in 2022-23), 23% (22.7%) were Black (up from 20% in 2022-23), 9% (8.9%) were Latina (up from 7% in 2022-23), 4% (4.1%) were Asian or Asian American (down from 10% in 2022-23), 1% (0.7%) were multiracial/multiethnic (up slightly from less than 1% in 2022-23), 1% (0.5%) were Native American (even with the percentage in 2022-23), and less than 1% (0.2%) were MENA (even with the percentage in 2022-23) (see Figure 6).

65% (65.2%) of *major male characters* were White, 22% (22.1%) were Black, 7% (7.1%) were Asian or Asian American, 5% (4.5%) were Latino, 1% (0.7%) were MENA, and less than 1% (0.4%) were Native American.

Age

By age cohort, 9% (9.4%) of *females in speaking roles* were children or teens, 21% (20.7%) were in their 20s, 40% (39.6%) were in their 30s, 15% (14.8%) were in their 40s, 11% (10.8%) were in their 50s, and 5% (4.7%) were in their 60s or older.

For *male characters in speaking roles*, 7% (7.2%) were children or teens, 13% (12.9%) were in their 20s, 30% (29.6%) were in their 30s, 30% (30.0%) were in their 40s, 14% (13.6%) were in their 50s, and 7% (6.8%) were in their 60s or older.

Overall, female characters were younger than their male counterparts. The majority of female characters were in their 20s and 30s (60%), whereas the majority of males were in their 30s and 40s (60%).

Female characters experienced a precipitous decline in numbers from their 30s (40%) to their 40s (15%). The percentages of male characters in their 30s (29.6%) and 40s (30.3%) were almost identical.

51% of male characters were 40 and older but only 30% of female characters were 40 and older. More male characters than female characters were 60 or older (7% vs. 5%).

The findings for *major characters* were similar. By age cohort, 5% (4.8%) of *major female characters* were children or teens, 21% (20.5%) were in their 20s, 40% (39.8%) were in their 30s, 17% (17.0%) were in their 40s, 12% (11.8%) were in their 50s, and 6% (6.1%) were 60 and older (see Figure 7).

4% (4.4%) of *major male characters* were children or teens, 13% (12.6%) were in their 20s, 30% (30.3%) were in their 30s, 29% (28.6%) were in their 40s, 15% (14.7%) were in their 50s, and 9% (9.3%) were 60 or older.

Overall, the majority of major female characters were in their 20s and 30s (60%), and the majority of males were in their 30s and 40s (59%).

The percentage of major female characters dropped precipitously from their 30s to their 40s (40% to 17%). The percentage of male characters remained virtually the same (30% to 29%).

There were more *major male characters than female characters* 60 and older (9% vs. 6%).
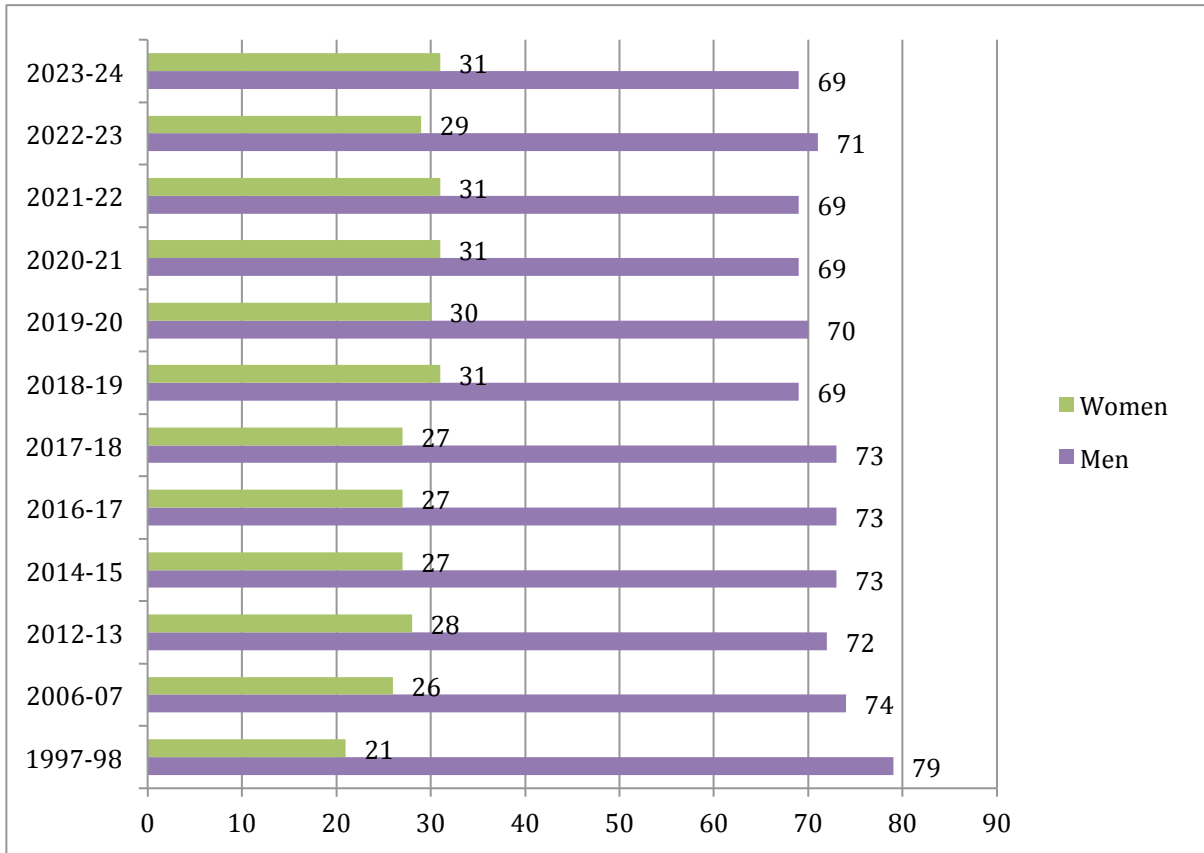
Figure 7.

Comparison of Ages of Major Female and Male Characters on Broadcast Network Programs
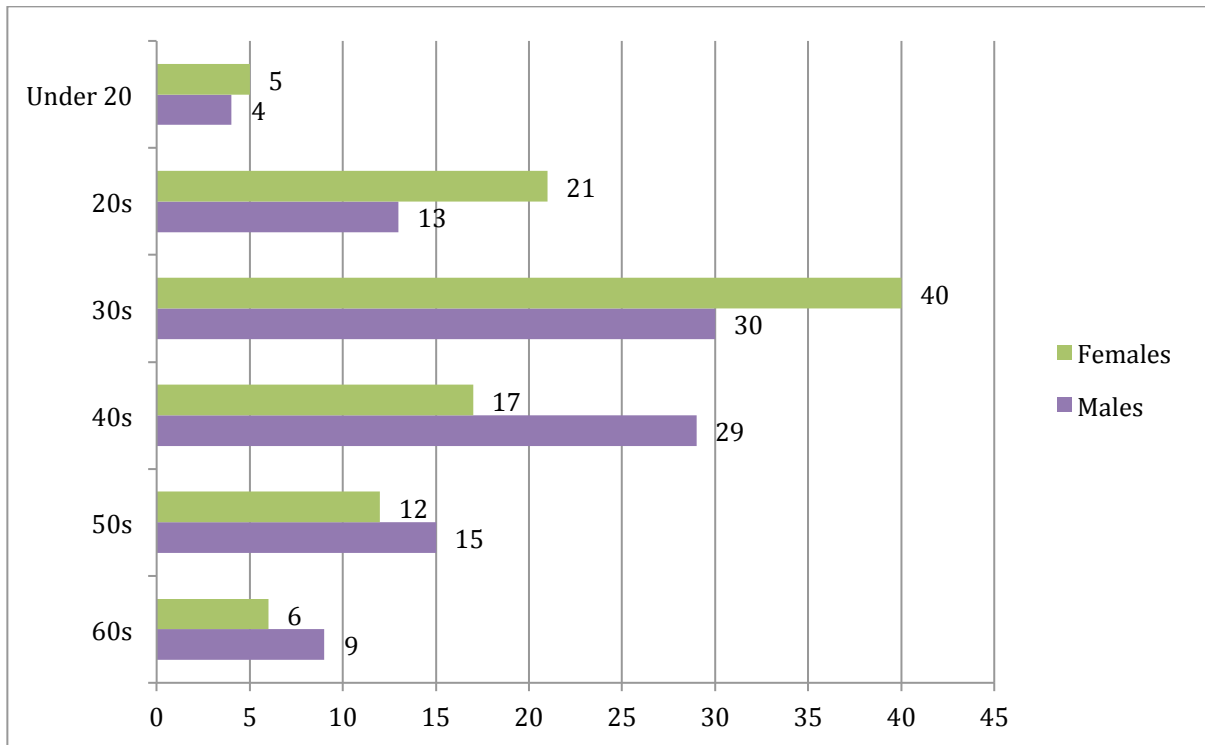
Women Behind the Scenes

In 2023-24, women accounted for 31% (31.3%) of all creators, directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and directors of photography working on broadcast network programs. This represents an increase of 2 percentage points from 29% in 2022-23 (see Figure 8). Men comprised 69% (68.6%) of individuals in behind-the-scenes roles.
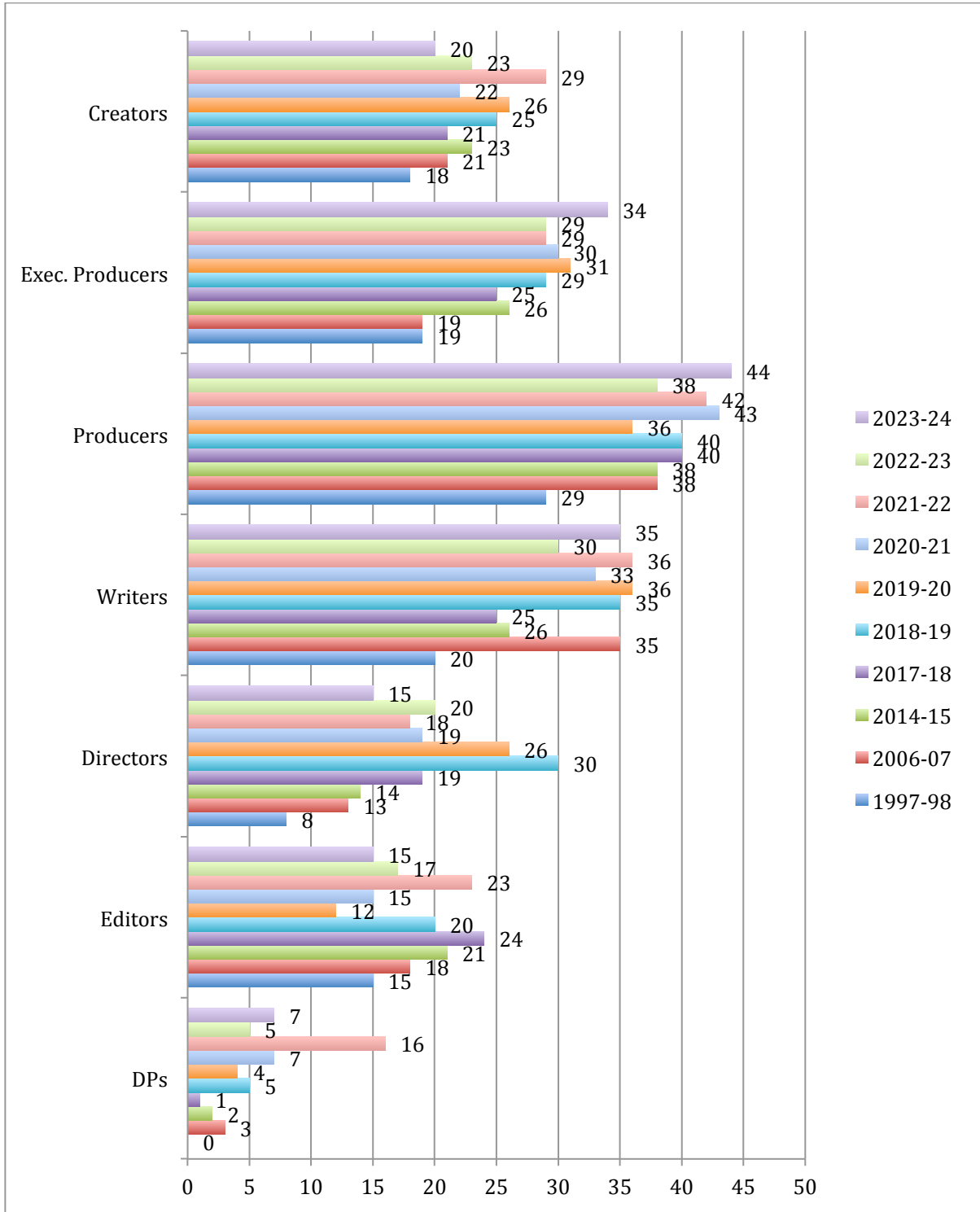
Figure 8.

Historical Comparison of Percentages of Women Working Behind the Scenes on Broadcast Network Programs

Overall, women fared best as producers (44%), followed by writers (35%), executive producers (34%), creators (20%), directors (15%), editors (15%), and directors of photography (7%) (see Figure 9).

In 2023-24, women comprised 20% (19.5%) of creators on broadcast network programs. This represents a decline of 3 percentage points from 23% in 2022-23, and of 9 points from 29% in 2021-22. This marks two consecutive years of decline for the percentage of women working as creators of broadcast television.

Figure 9.

Historical Comparison of Percentages of Behind-the-Scenes Women by Role on Broadcast Network Programs

Legend:
- 2023-24
- 2022-23
- 2021-22
- 2020-21
- 2019-20
- 2018-19
- 2017-18
- 2014-15
- 2006-07
- 1997-98

Creators: 20, 23, 29, 22, 26, 25, 21, 23, 21, 18

Exec. Producers: 34, 29, 29, 30, 31, 29, 25, 26, 19, 19

Producers: 44, 38, 42, 43, 36, 40, 40, 38, 38, 29

Writers: 35, 30, 36, 33, 36, 35, 25, 26, 35, 20

Directors: 15, 20, 18, 19, 26, 30, 19, 14, 13, 8

Editors: 15, 17, 23, 15, 12, 20, 24, 21, 18, 15

DPs: 7, 5, 16, 7, 4, 5, 1, 2, 3, 0

Women accounted for 34% (34.0%) of executive producers working on broadcast network programs. This represents an increase of 5 percentage points from 29% in 2022-23, and a recent historic high.

In 2023-24, women comprised 44% (44.4%) of producers working on broadcast network programs. This represents an increase of 6 percentage points from 38% in 2022-23, and a recent historic high.

Women accounted for 35% (34.5%) of writers working on broadcast network programs. This represents an increase of 5 percentage points from 30% in 2022-23.

Women comprised 15% (14.8%) of directors working on broadcast network programs last year. This represents a decline of 5 percentage points from 20% in 2022-23.

In 2023-24, women accounted for 15% (15.0%) of editors working on broadcast network programs. This represents a decline of 2 percentage points from 17% in 2022-23.

Women accounted for 7% (6.8%) of directors of photography working on broadcast programs last year. This represents an increase of 2 percentage points from 5% in 2022-23.

In 2023-24, 94% (94.2%) of broadcast programs had no women directors of photography, 87% (86.5%) had no women directors, 79% (78.8%) had no women creators, 71% (71.2%) had no women writers, and 65% (65.4%) had no women editors.
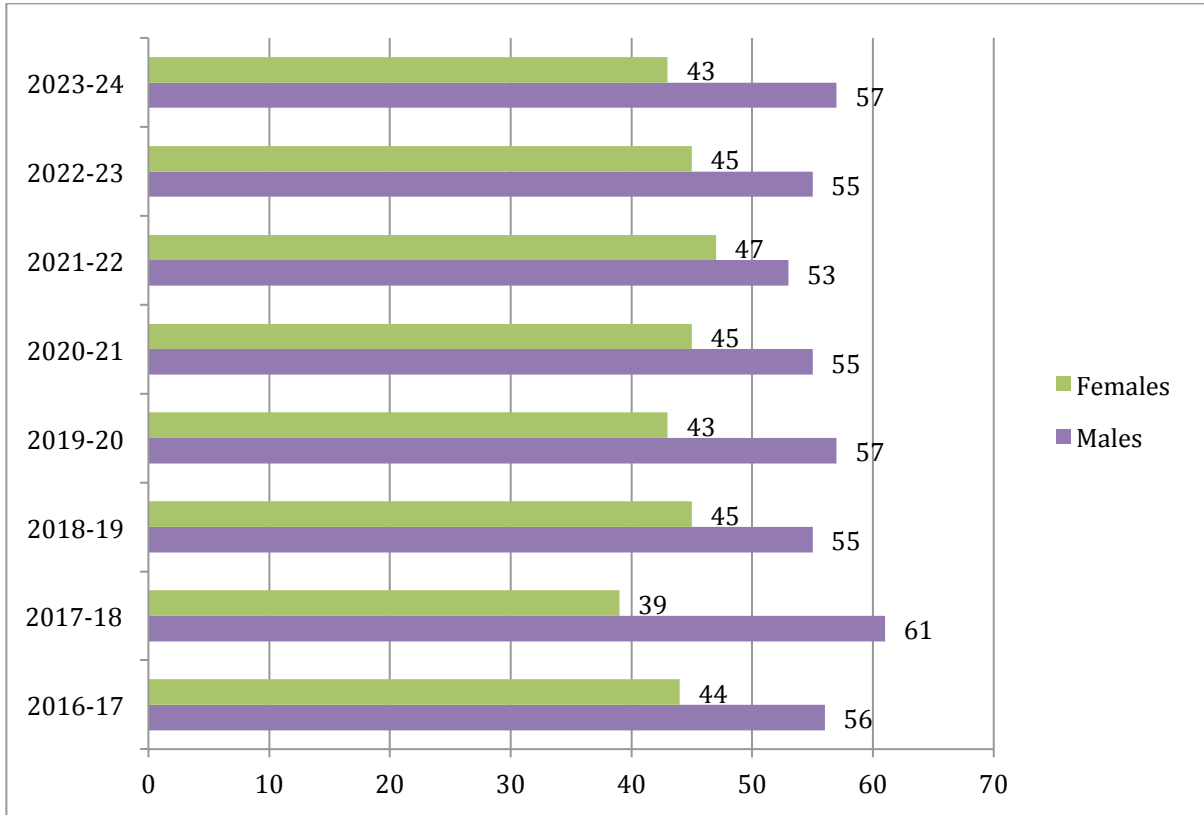
Findings for Streaming Services

Females On Screen

<u>Representation</u>

In 2023-24, females accounted for 43% (42.8%) of *all speaking characters* on streaming programs. This represents a decline of 2 percentage points from 45% in 2022-23, and 4 points from 47% in 2021-22 (see Figure 10). It is the second consecutive year that the percentage of female characters has declined.

Figure 10.

Historical Comparison of Percentages of All Speaking Female Characters
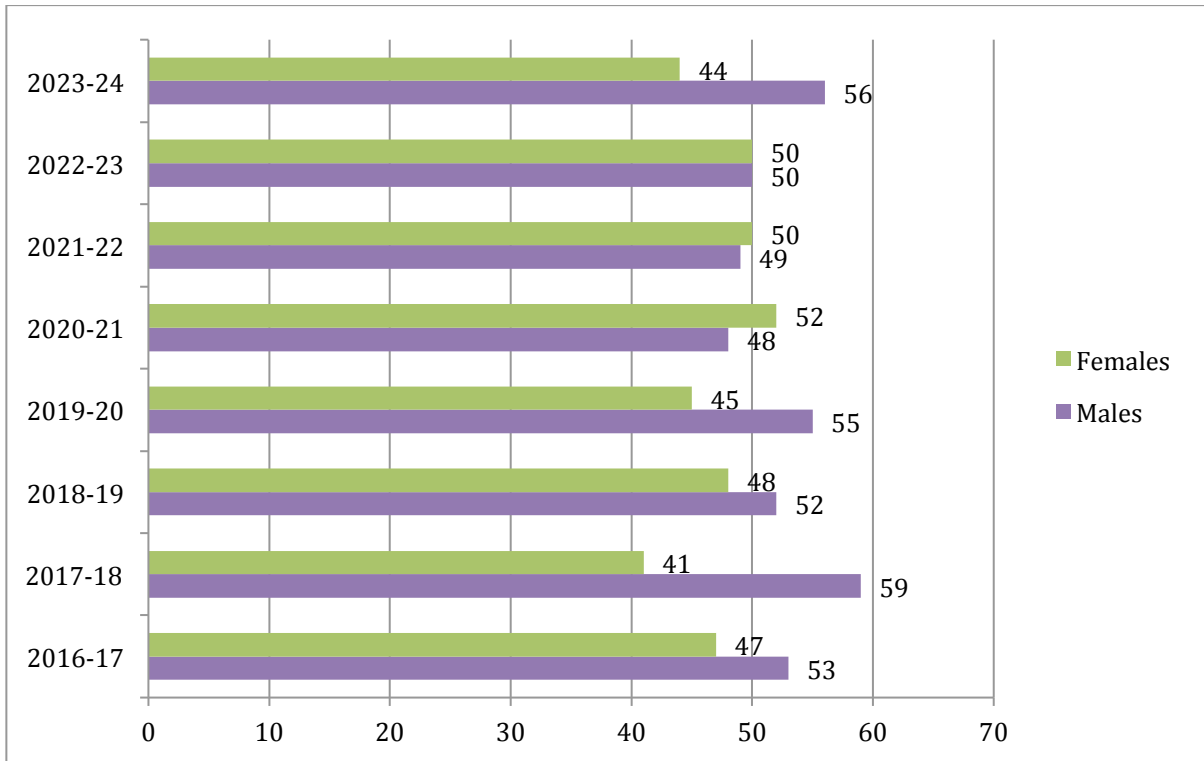
on Streaming Programs

Males comprised 57% (56.7%), transgender characters less than 1% (0.3%), and nonbinary characters less than 1% (0.1%) of all speaking characters.

The representation of female characters *in speaking roles* on streaming programs was slightly lower in 2023-24 (43%) than it was 8 years ago in 2016-17 (44%).

Females comprised 44% (43.9%) of *major characters* on streaming programs. This represents a decline of 6 percentage points from 50% in 2022-2023 (see Figure 11). Males accounted for 56% (55.5%), transgender characters for less than 1% (0.4%), and nonbinary characters for less than 1% (0.1%) of all major characters. For the purposes of this study, *major characters* appear in more than one scene and are instrumental to the narrative of the story.

Figure 11.

Historical Comparison of Percentages of All Major Female Characters on Streaming
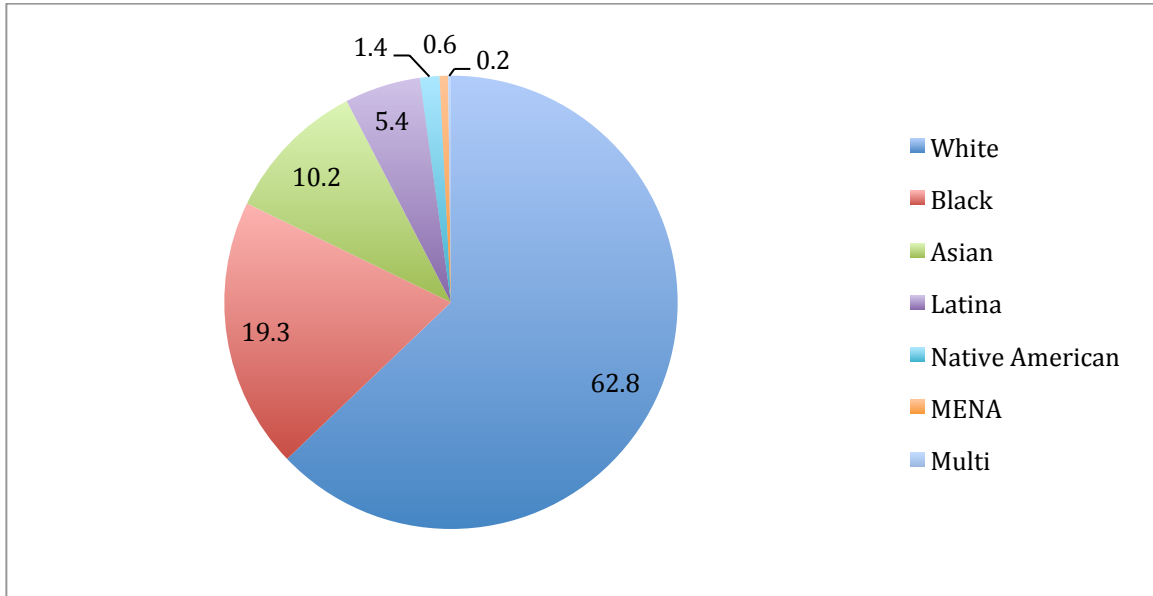
Programs

The percentage of *major female characters* on streaming programs has declined over the last 8 years, declining from 49% in 2016-17 to 44% in 2023-24.

Females comprised 38% (37.5%) of *protagonists* on scripted series appearing on streaming services. Males accounted for 44% (43.8%), and ensembles 19% (18.8%).

Race/Ethnicity

Regarding race and ethnicity on streaming programs, 63% (62.8%) of *females in speaking roles* were White (an increase from 59% in 2022-23), 19% (19.3%) were Black (a decline from 25% in 2022-23), 10% (10.2%) were Asian or Asian American (an increase from 8% in 2022-23), 5% (5.4%) were Latina (a decrease from 6% in 2022-23),), 1% (1.4%) were Native American (approximately even with 2022-23), 1% (0.6%) were MENA (even with 2022-23, and less than 1% (0.2%) were multiracial/multiethnic (down slightly from 1% in 2022-23) (see Figure 12).

64% (64.1%) of *males in speaking roles* were White, 21% (21.0%) were Black, 9% (8.6%) were Asian or Asian American, 5% (4.7%) were Latino, 1% (0.9%) were MENA, and 1% (0.6%) were Native American.

100% of *nonbinary characters in speaking roles* were White. 60% (60.0%) of transgender characters were White, and 40% (40.0) were Black.

For *major characters only*, 59% (59.0%) of females were White (up from 57% in 2022-23), 24% (24.0%) were Black (down from 27% in 2022-23), 7% (7.3%) were Asian or Asian American (even with the percentage in 2022-23), 7% (7.3%) were Latina (up from 6% in 2022-23), 1% (1.3%) were MENA (even with the percentage in 2022-23), 1% (0.9%) were Native American (even with the percentage in 2022-23), and less than 1% (0.3%) were multiracial/multiethnic (approximately even with the percentage in 2022-23) (see Figure 13).

Figure 13.

Comparison of Race/Ethnicity of Major Female Characters on Streaming Programs
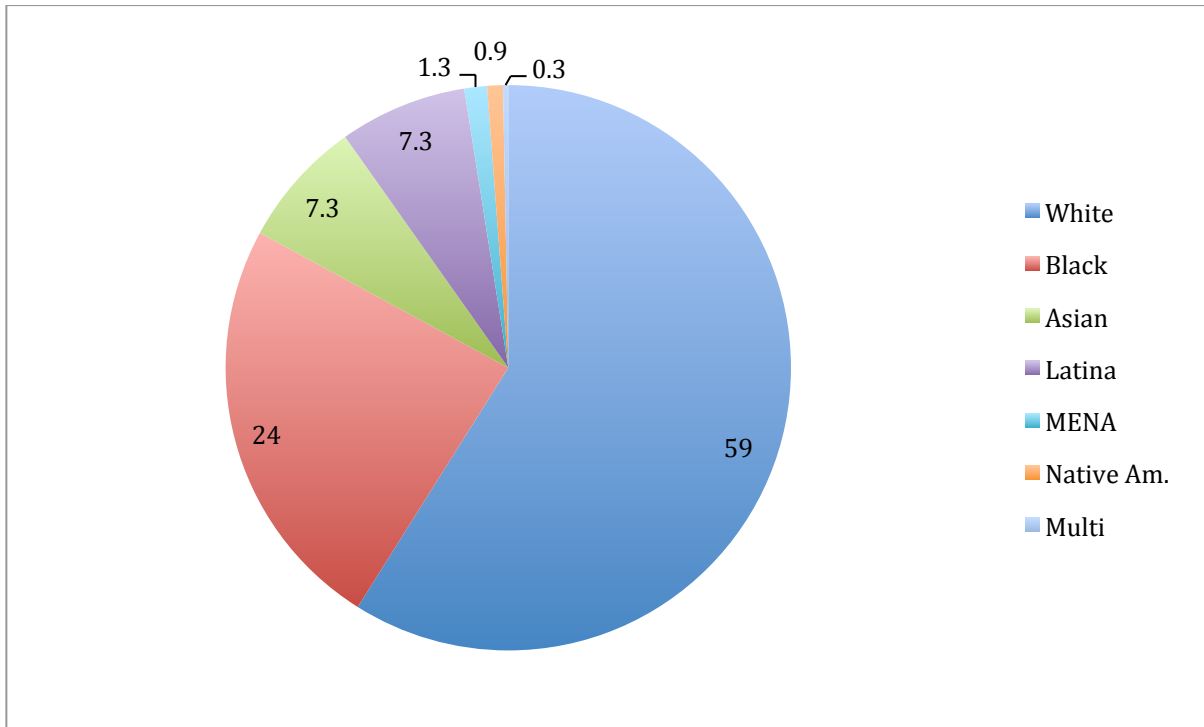
For *major characters only*, 61% (61.2%) of male characters were White, 23% (23.2%) were Black, 8% (8.3%) were Asian or Asian American, 6% (5.5%) were Latino, and 2% (1.8%) were MENA.

50% (50.0%) of transgender characters were White and 50% (50.0%) were Black. 100% of nonbinary characters were White.

Age

By age cohort, 12% (12.2%) of *female characters in speaking roles* were children or teens, 28% (27.7%) were in their 20s, 33% (32.5%) were in their 30s, 14% (13.9%) were in their 40s, 10% (9.6%) were in their 50s, and 4% (4.2%) were in their 60s.

For *males in speaking roles*, 8% (8.0%) were children or teens, 12% (11.9%) were in their 20s, 29% (28.5%) were in their 30s, 28% (27.8%) were in their 40s, 16% (16.0%) were in their 50s, and 8% (7.7%) were in their 60s.

100% of nonbinary characters were in their 20s. 40% (40.0%) of transgender characters were in their 20s, and 60% (60.0%) were in their 30s.
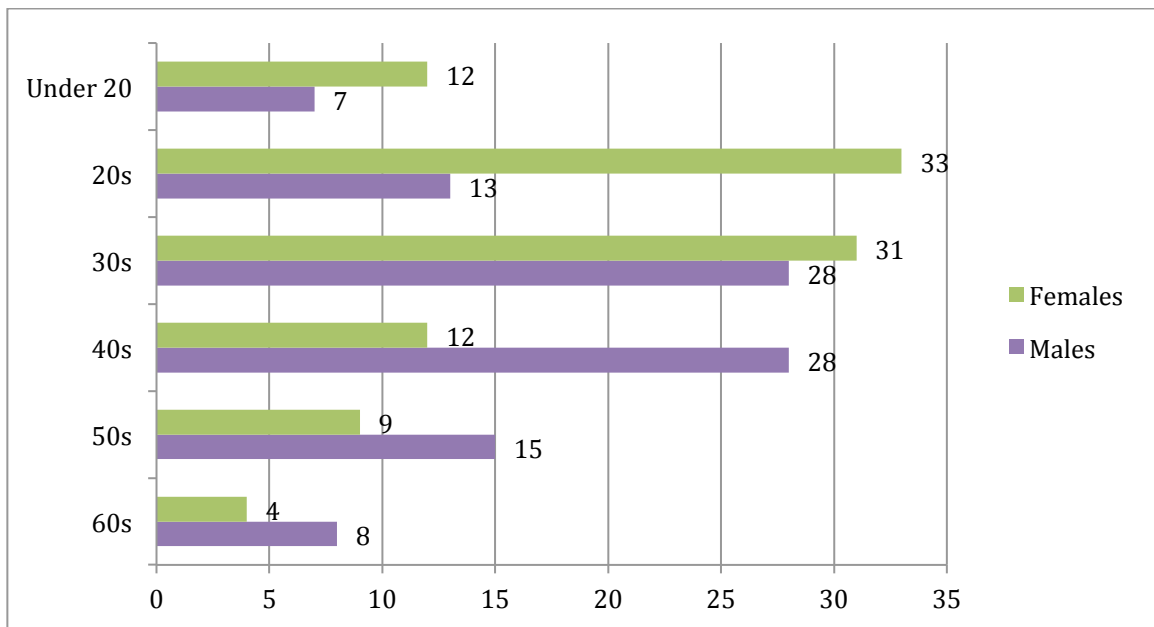
The majority of female characters were in their 20s and 30s (60%), while the majority of male characters were in their 30s and 40s (56%). Streaming programs featured more male characters than female characters 60 or older (8% vs. 4%).

For *major characters* only, 12% (11.6%) of females were children or teens, 33% (32.5%) were in their 20s, 31% (30.6%) were in their 30s, 12% (12.0%) were in their 40s, 9% (9.1%) were in their 50s, and 4% (4.1%) were 60 and older.

For *major characters* only, 7% (7.3%) of males were children or teens, 13% (13.3%) were in their 20s, 28% (28.1%) were in their 30s, 28% (28.1%) were in their 40s, 15% (14.8%) were in their 50s, and 8% (8.3%) were in their 60s (see Figure 14).

Figure 14.

Comparison of Ages of Major Female and Male Characters on Streaming Programs

For *major characters only*, 100% (100.0%) of nonbinary characters were in their 20s.   50% of transgender characters were in their 20s and 50% were in their 30s.

The majority of *major female characters* were in their 20s and 30s (63%), but the majority of major male characters were in their 30s and 40s (56%).

Overall, 25% of *major female characters* but 51% of *major male characters* were 40 and older. Streaming programs featured more major male characters than female characters 60 or older (8% vs. 4%).

Women Behind the Scenes

Women comprised 34% (33.6%) of creators, directors, writers, producers, executive producers, editors, and directors of photography working on streaming programs in 2023-24. This represents no change from 34% in 2022-23 (see Figure 15).   Men accounted for 66% (66.3%) of those working in the behind-the-scenes roles considered.

Figure 15.

Historical Comparison of Percentages of Women Working Behind the Scenes on Streaming Programs
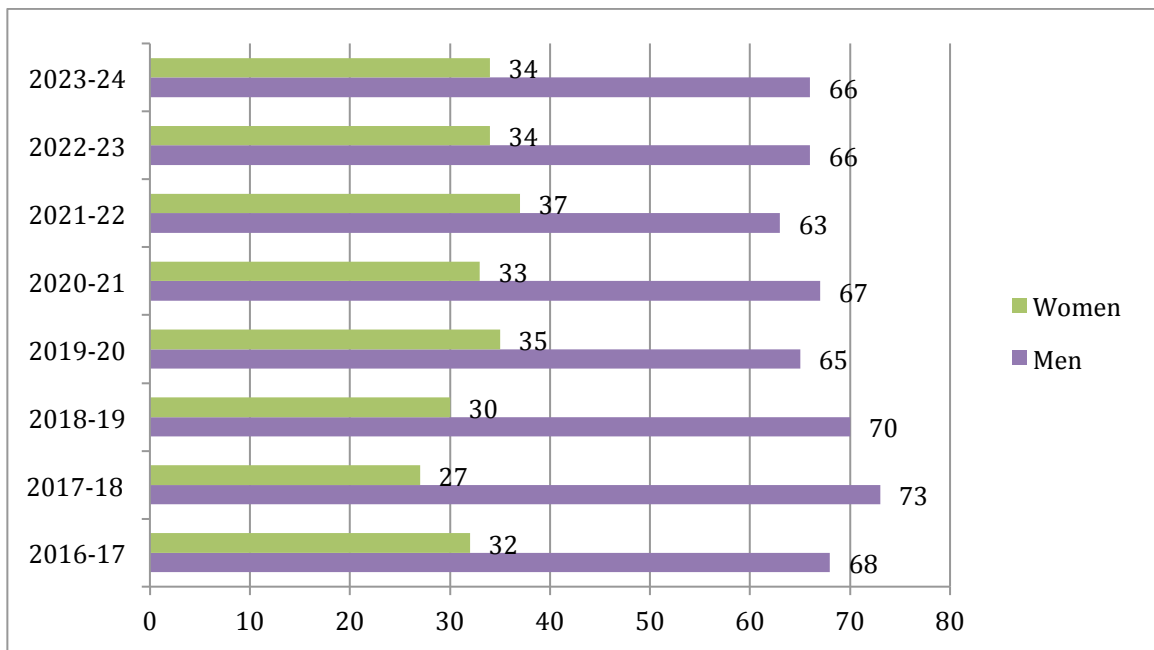
Women fared best as producers (46%), followed by executive producers (34%), writers (32%), creators (27%), editors (25%), directors (23%), and directors of photography (9%) (see Figure 16).

Historical Comparison of Percentages of Women Working in Key Behind-the-Scenes Roles on Streaming Programs
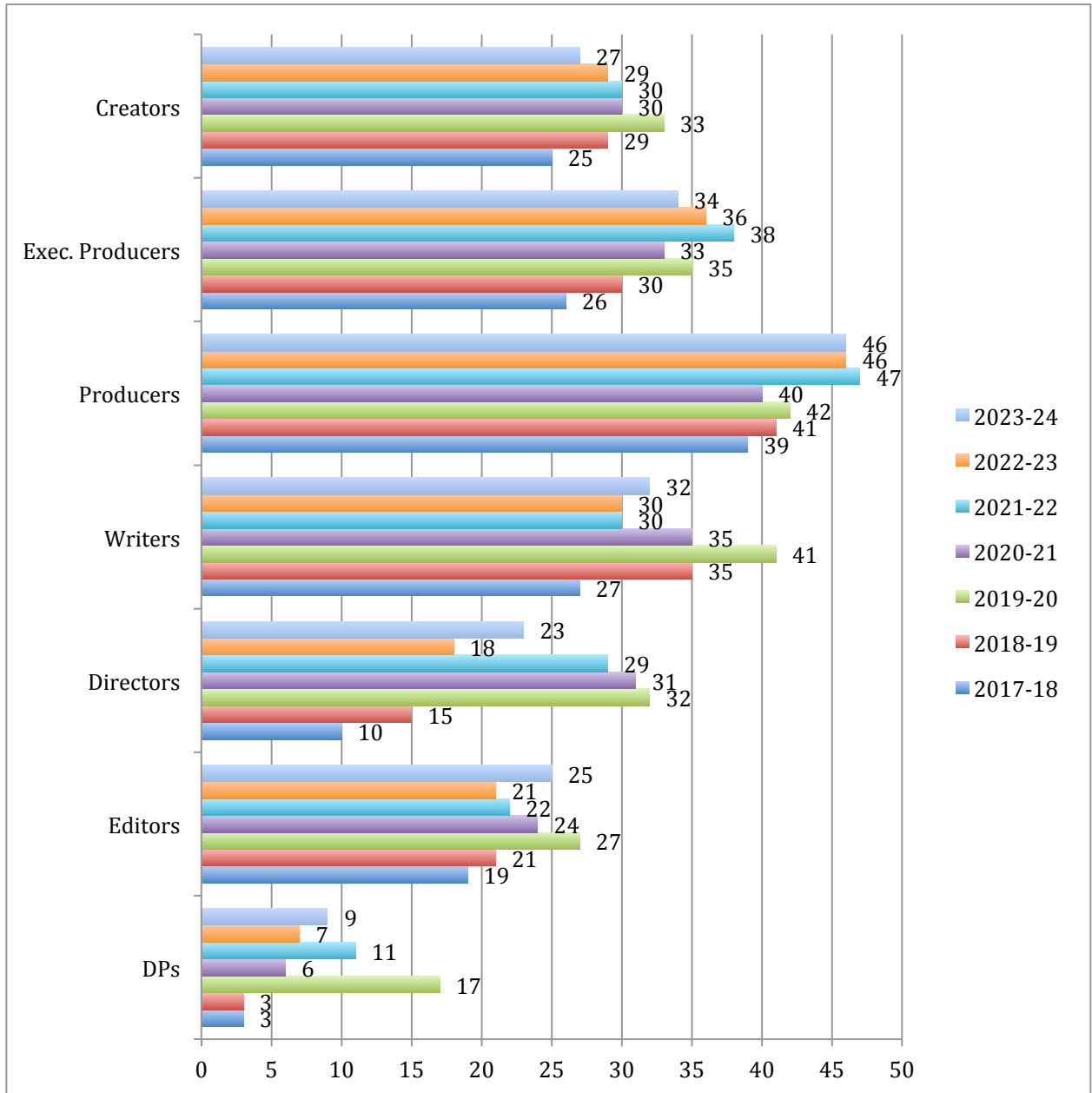
Women comprised 27% (27.3%) of creators working on streaming programs in 2023-24. This represents a decline of 2 percentage points from 29% in 2022-23, and 3 points from 30% in 2021-22.

Women accounted for 34% (33.6%) of executive producers working on streaming programs in 2023-24. This represents a decline of 2 percentage points from 36% in 2022-23.

Women comprised 46% (45.7%) of producers working on streaming programs in 2023-24, even with the percentage in 2022-23.

Women accounted for 32% (32.0%) of writers working on streaming programs in 2023-24, up 2 percentage points from 30% in 2022-23.

Women comprised 23% (23.1%) of directors working on streaming programs in 2023-24, an increase of 5 percentage points from 18% in 2022-23.

Women accounted for 25% (24.8%) of editors working on streaming programs in 2023-24, an increase of 4 percentage points from 21% in 2022-23.

Women comprised 9% (9.3%) of directors of photography working on streaming programs in 2023-24, an increase of 2 percentage points from 7% in 2022-23.

92% (91.7%) of streaming programs had no women directors of photography, 80% (80.2%) had no women directors, 74% (74.0%) had no women writers, 72% (71.9%) had no women creators, and 59% (59.4%) had no women editors.

## Findings for Broadcast Networks and Streaming Services
Females On Screen

<u>Representation</u>

In 2023-24, females accounted for 43% (43.4%) of *all speaking characters* on broadcast network and streaming programs. This represents a decline of 1 percentage point from 44% in 2022-2023, and 3 points from 46% in 2021-22. Males comprised 56% (56.3%), non-binary characters less than 1% (0.1%), and transgender characters less than 1% (0.2%) of speaking characters (see Figure 17).

Figure 17.

Gender of All Speaking Characters on Broadcast and Streaming Programs
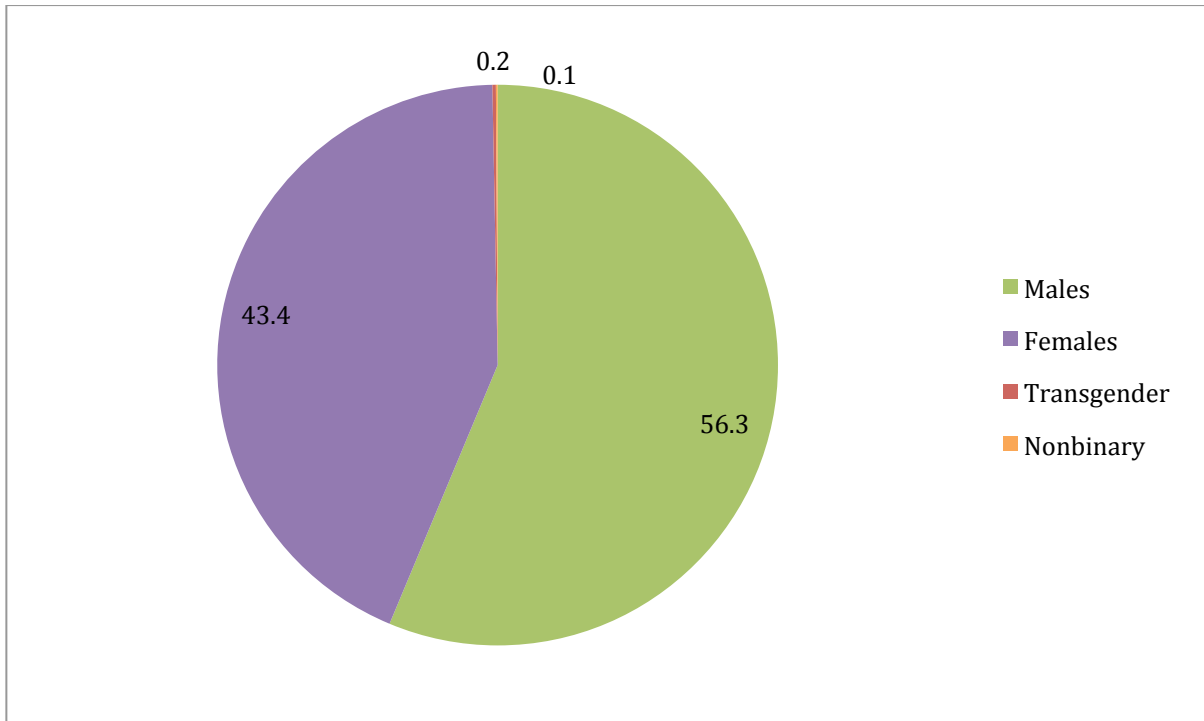
Females accounted for 45% (44.6%) of *major characters* on broadcast network and streaming programs. This represents a decline of 3 percentage points from 48% in 2022-23, and 4 points from 49% in 2021-22. For the purposes of this study, major characters appear in more than one scene and are instrumental to the narrative of the story. Males comprised 55% (55.2%), transgender characters less than 1% (0.1%), and nonbinary characters less than 1% (0.1%) of major characters (see Figure 18).

Figure 18.

Gender of Major Characters on Broadcast and Streaming Programs
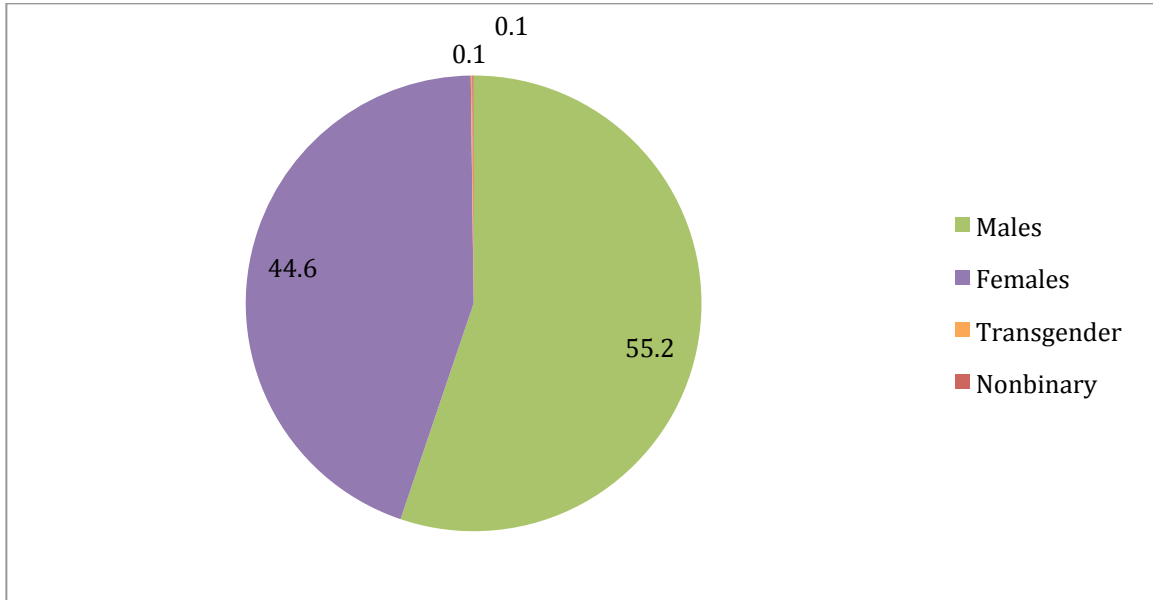
Race and Ethnicity

Regarding the race and ethnicity of female characters in *speaking roles*, 62% (61.9%) of females were White (up from 59% in 2022-23), 21% (20.5%) were Black (down from 24% in 2022-23), 9% (9.0%) were Asian or Asian American (even with the percentage in 2022-23), 7% (6.6%) were Latina (up from 6% in 2022-23), 1% (1.1%) were Native American (even with percentage in 2022-23), less than 1% (0.4%) were MENA (down slightly from 2022-23), and less than 1% (0.4%) were multiracial/multiethnic (even with the percentage in 2022-23) (see Figure 19).

Figure 19.

Race/Ethnicity of Female Characters in Speaking Roles

*on Broadcast and Streaming Programs*
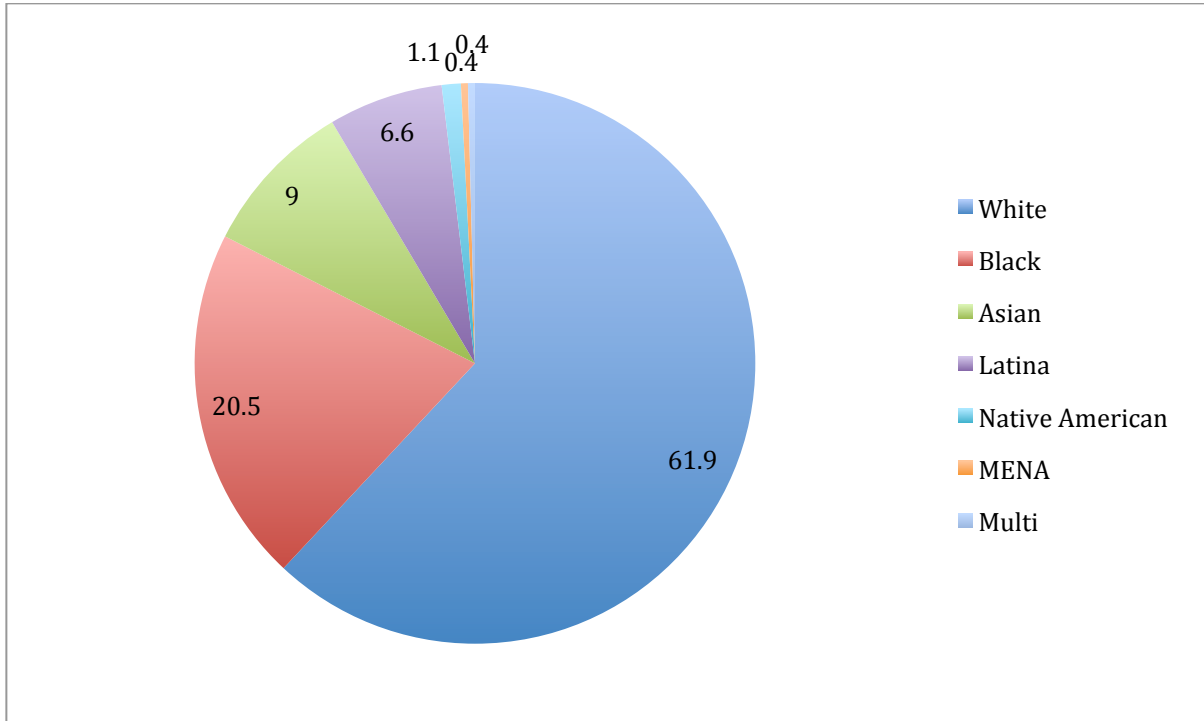
For *male characters in speaking roles*, 64% (63.5%) were White, 22% (22.2%) were Black, 8% (7.6%) were Asian or Asian American, 5% (4.9%) were Latino, 1% (1.2%) were MENA, and 1% (0.7%) were Native American.

For nonbinary characters in speaking roles, 100% were White.   For transgender characters, 71% (71.4%) were White, and 29% (28.6%) were Black.

In *major roles* only, 61% (61.3%) of females were White (up from 59% in 2022-23), 23% (23.3%) were Black (down from 24% in 2022-23), 8% (8.1%) were Latina (up from 7% in 2022-23), 6% (5.5%) were Asian or Asian American (down from 9% in 2022-23), 1% (0.7%) were Native American (approximately even with 2022-23), 1% (0.5%) were multiracial/multiethnic (even with 2022-23), and 1% (0.7%) were MENA (slightly up from 2022-23) (see Figure 20).

Figure 20.

Race/Ethnicity of Female Characters in Major Roles

on Broadcast and Streaming Programs
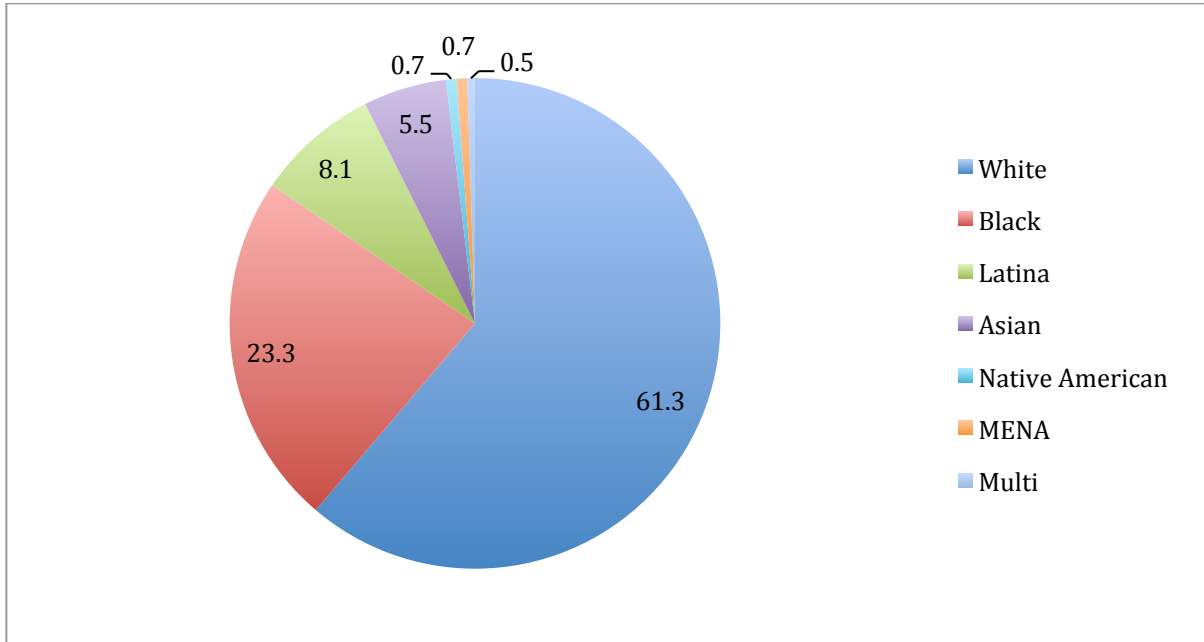
In *major roles* only, 64% (63.8%) of males were White, 23% (22.5%) were Black, 7% (7.4%) were Asian or Asian American, 5% (5.0%) were Latino, 1% (1.2%) were MENA, and less than 1% (0.2%) were Native American.

In *major roles* only, 50% (50.0%) of transgender characters were White, and 50% (50.0%) were Black. 100% of nonbinary characters were White.

Age

By age cohort, 11% (10.7%) of *all females in speaking roles* were children or teens, 24% (23.9%) were in their 20s, 37% (36.5%) were in their 30s, 15% (14.5%) were in their 40s, 10% (10.2%) were in their 50s, and 5% (4.5%) were 60 or older.

8% (7.5%) of *all males in speaking roles* were children or teens, 13% (12.5%) were in their 20s, 29% (29.4%) were in their 30s, 29% (29.0%) were in their 40s, 14% (14.4%) were in their 50s, and 7% (7.2%) were in their 60s or older.

50% (50.0%) of *all nonbinary characters in speaking roles* were in their 20s and 50% (50.0%) were in their 30s. 14% (14.3%) of *transgender characters* were under 20, 29% (28.6%) were in their 20s, and 57% (57.1%) were in their 30s.

The majority of female characters were in their 20s and 30s (60%), whereas the majority of male characters were in their 30s and 40s (58%).

Female characters experienced a precipitous decline from their 30s to their 40s. 37% of females were in their 30s but 15% were in their 40s. The percentage of male characters in their 30s and 40s remained stable at 29%.

There were more male characters than females 60 or older (7% vs. 5%).

For *major roles* only, 8% (7.8%) of females were children or teens, 26% (25.6%) were in their 20s, 36% (36.1%) were in their 30s, 15% (14.6%) were in their 40s, 11% (10.7%) were in their 50s, and 5% (5.3%) were 60 or older (see Figure 21).

Figure 21.

Comparison of Ages of Major Female and Male Characters on Broadcast and Streaming Programs
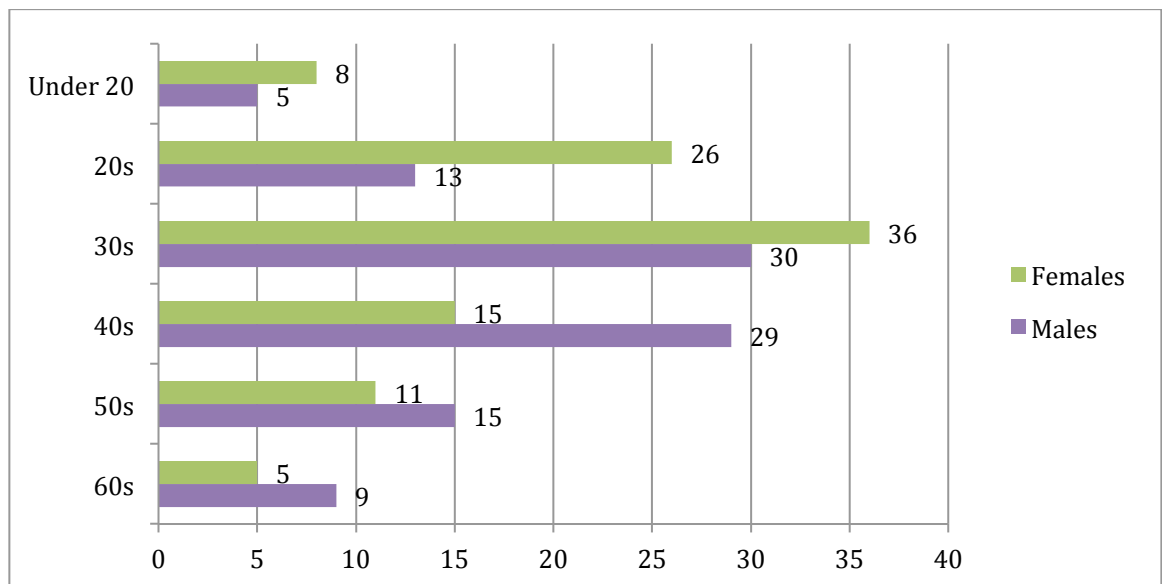
For *major roles* only, 5% (5.4%) of males were children or teens, 13% (13.1%) were in their 20s, 30% (29.7%) were in their 30s, 29% (28.5%) were in their 40s, 15% (14.5%) were in their 50s, and 9% (8.9%) were 60 or older.

For *major roles* only, 50% (50.0%) of transgender characters were in their 20s, and 50% (50.0%) were in their 30s. 100% of nonbinary characters were in their 20s.

Overall, the majority of *major female characters* were in their 20s and 30s (62%), whereas the majority of *major male characters* were in their 30s and 40s (58%). The percentage of major female characters dropped precipitously from their 30s (36%) to their 40s (15%).

31% of *major female characters* but 52% of *major male characters* were 40 and older. There were more *major male characters* than *major female characters* 60 and older (9% vs. 5%).

Occupational Status and Work

Viewers were more likely to know the occupational status of male characters than female characters. While 76% of male characters had a known occupation, 65% of female characters had a known occupation.

Viewers were more likely to see male characters at work, actually working, than female characters (64% vs. 52%).

Women Behind the Scenes

Overall, women comprised 32% (32.4%) of creators, directors, writers, executive producers, producers, editors, and directors of photography working on broadcast network and streaming programs in 2023-24. This is even with the percentage from 2022-23. Men accounted for 68% (67.5%) of those working in the behind-the-scenes roles considered.

When considering broadcast and streaming programs, women fared best as producers (45%), followed by executive producers (34%), writers (33%), creators (23%), editors (19%), directors (19%), and directors of photography (8%) (see Figure 22).

Women comprised 23% (23.3%) of creators working on all of the programs considered in 2023-24. This represents a decline of 3 percentage points from 26% in 2022-23, and 7 points from 30% in 2021-22. It is the second consecutive year of decline for women working as creators.

Figure 22.

Historical Percentages of Behind-the-Scenes Women by Role

on Broadcast and Streaming Programs
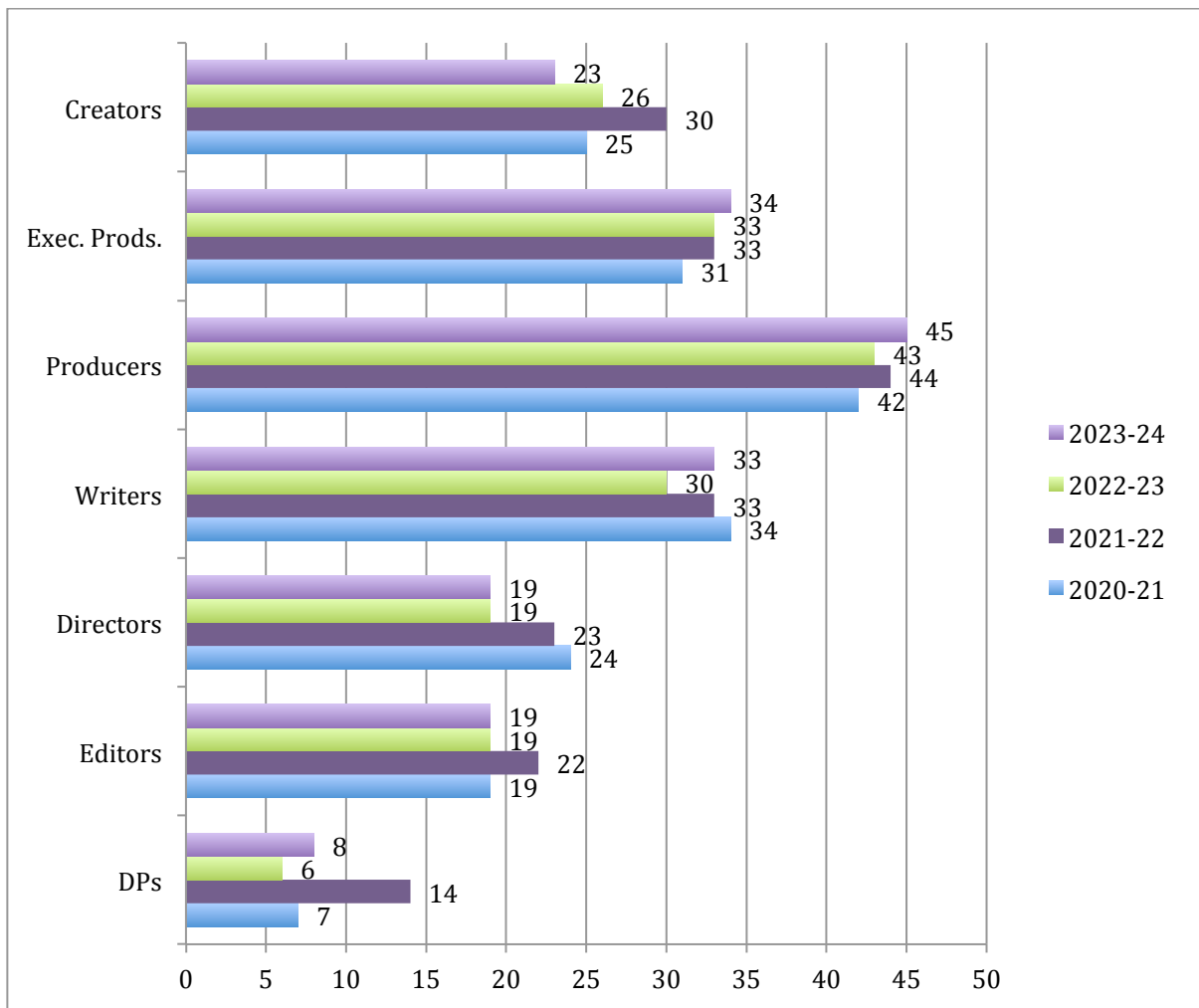
Women accounted for 34% (33.8%) of executive producers working on the programs considered. This represents an increase of 1 percentage point from 33% in 2022-23, and a recent historic high.

Women comprised 45% (45.0%) of producers working on the programs considered in 2023-24. This represents an increase of 2 percentage points from 43% in 2022-23, and a recent historic high.

Women accounted for 33% (33.3%) of writers working on the programs considered in 2023-24. This represents an increase of 3 percentage points from 30% in 2022-23.

Women comprised 19% (18.7%) of directors working on the programs considered in 2023-24. This is even with the percentage in 2022-23.

Women comprised 19% (18.6%) of editors working on the programs considered in 2023-24. This is even with the percentage achieved in 2022-23.

Women made up 8% (7.6%) of directors of photography working on all of the programs considered in 2023-24. This represents an increase of 2 percentage points from 6% in 2022-23.

When comparing the employment of women on shows by platform, streaming programs employed higher percentages of women than broadcast network programs in the following roles: creators (27% streaming, 20% broadcast), directors (23% streaming, 15% broadcast), producers (46% streaming, 44% broadcast), editors (25% streaming, 15% broadcast), and directors of photography (9% streaming, 7% broadcast).   However, broadcast programs employed more women writers than streaming (35% broadcast, 32% streaming). Women comprised 34% of executive producers on both broadcast and streaming programs (see Figure 23).

In 2023-24, 93% (93.0%) of broadcast and streaming programs had no women directors of photography, 84% (83.5%) had no women directors, 76% (75.5%) had no women creators, 73% (72.5%) had no women writers, and 63% (62.5%) had no women editors.

Figure 23.

Comparison of Percentages of Behind-the-Scenes Women by Role
on Broadcast and Streaming Programs
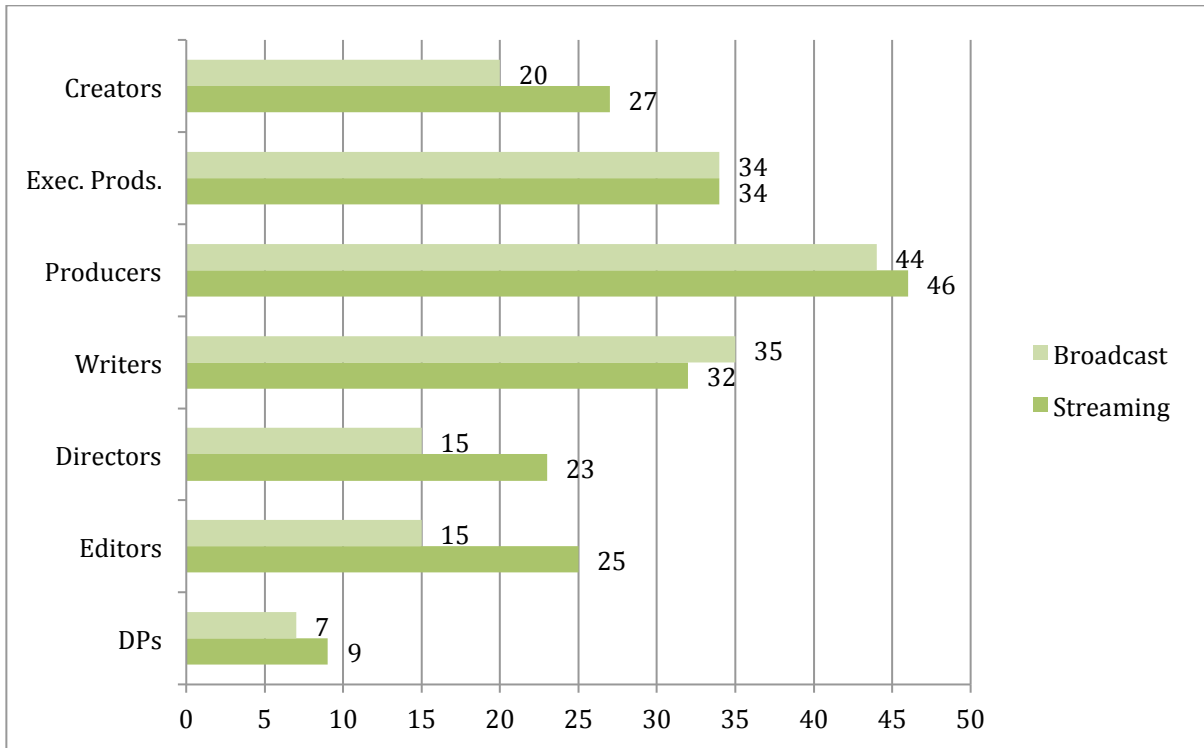
Important Relationships

Broadcast and streaming programs with at least 1 woman *creator* employed higher percentages of women as directors, writers, and editors than programs with exclusively men working as creators. These programs were also much more likely to feature female protagonists.

On programs with at least 1 woman creator, women comprised 30% of directors. On programs with exclusively male creators, women accounted for 15% of directors.

On programs with at least 1 woman creator, women made up 60% of writers. On programs with exclusively male creators, women accounted for 17% of writers.

On programs with at least 1 woman creator, women comprised 26% of editors. On programs with exclusively male creators, women made up 17% of editors.

On programs with at least 1 woman creator, females comprised 48% of major characters. On programs with exclusively male creators, females accounted for 44% of major characters.

On programs with at least 1 woman creator, females accounted for 50% of protagonists, but only 26% on programs with male creators.

Endnotes

1 Latina characters are of Latin American descent and do not include Spaniards.

2 MENA or Middle Eastern/North African characters are from the following countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.