

GENDER INEQUALITY AND SCREENWRITERS

A study of the impact of gender on equality of
opportunity for screenwriters and key creatives in
the UK film and television industries

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with

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ALCS



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Introduction

Foreword

The facts uncovered by this independent report into gender representation among writers in the film and TV industries make stark reading. Only 16% of all working screenwriters in film are female. Female writers in TV, while comparatively better represented, remain in the minority – the percentage of television episodes written by women stands at only 28%.

Evidence gathered here also shows that women are being discriminated against in terms of the writing projects to which they are gaining access – women in TV, for example, are being pigeon-holed by genre and are unable to move from continuing drama or children’s programming to prime-time drama, comedy or light-entertainment. In film, startling evidence shows female-written films are leading at the box office and receiving a more positive critical and audience reception than their male equivalents, so why are women being denied opportunities to write for higher budget or more prestigious productions? Why do women writers find it harder to break into these industries in the first place and suffer from a glass ceiling as they try to progress their careers?

This is not a snapshot. The report, commissioned by WGGB and funded by ALCS, encompasses a whole decade and shines a light on two industries in which bias and systemic problems are creating what the authors describe as a “self-sustaining loop” of inequality. Bias among hirers, lack of formal or open hiring systems, inadequate equality data collection and ineffective regulatory systems form a complex web, which becomes further entangled with strands unique to the film and television industries themselves.

Film is not, as is popularly believed, driven by the motive to make profit. If it were, women writers would be doing better. While the short-term nature of film productions is having its own impact on gender equality, in TV, conversely, the longevity and size of the centralised bodies involved allows negative practices to develop and become normalised over time.

Both industries are straightjacketed by the risky nature of their products – stellar hits are rare; many projects disappear without trace or fail to generate profit. As the authors point out, this makes failure hard to define, spot, prevent or hold people accountable for, leads to limited accountability for decision-making, difficulty in recognising unfair or even discriminatory practices and an over-reliance on what the authors refer to as the vague notion of “expertise”. Gender inequality in film and TV is not limited solely to writers, and this report offers salutary findings here, too – key creative roles on film productions are held predominantly by men, and this is influencing female representation on screen. Gender representation among film producers is particularly problematic.

We must ask ourselves what effect this is having on audiences and our culture and look to what it must tell us about other forms of inequality. If women writers are faring so badly in film and TV, surely the situation must be worse for BAME writers, or for writers with disabilities? The report rightly concludes that further concerted action is required to address this problem.

The creative industries are by their very nature collaborative and we hope that this independent report and the launch of the new WGGB *Equality Writes* campaign will open a new dialogue between us and all those in the industry who can work with us to bring about positive change.

Ellie Peers
WGGB General Secretary

Introduction

About the Commissioners

The Writers' Guild of Great Britain

The Writers' Guild of Great Britain (WGGB) is a trade union representing screenwriters, playwrights, authors, radio dramatists and videogames writers.

WGGB negotiates national agreements with industry bodies that commission writers. These establish minimum terms for freelance writers. In sectors where WGGB does not have agreements, for example books and videogames, we set best-practice guidelines for those working with writers.

WGGB has achieved significant wins for writers over the past six decades, and examples of some recent achievements include the Writers Digital Payments and Locked Box schemes, plus new pension rights for children's animation writers at the BBC.

We lobby on behalf of writers, both in the UK and abroad, and campaign to improve the working lives of all UK writers. Recent campaigns include *Free is NOT an Option* (challenging unpaid development work in film and TV) and *Creating Without Conflict*, a joint initiative with the other media and entertainment unions to combat bullying and harassment in the creative industries.

Democratically elected members play a vital role in the running of the WGGB – getting involved in negotiations, campaigns, events and setting policy. Find out more about WGGB at www.writersguild.org.uk

The Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society

Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) is a not-for-profit organisation for the benefit of all types of writers.

Owned by its members, the ALCS collects money due for secondary uses of writers' work. It is designed to support authors and their creativity, ensure they receive fair payment, and see their rights are respected. It promotes and teaches the principles of copyright and campaigns for a fair deal. Today we represent around 95,000 members, and since 1977 have paid over £450 million to writers.

ALCS is delighted to sponsor this research which is so important to all creators. It is imperative that we have this type of evidence to show all involved the inequality of opportunity in this profession.

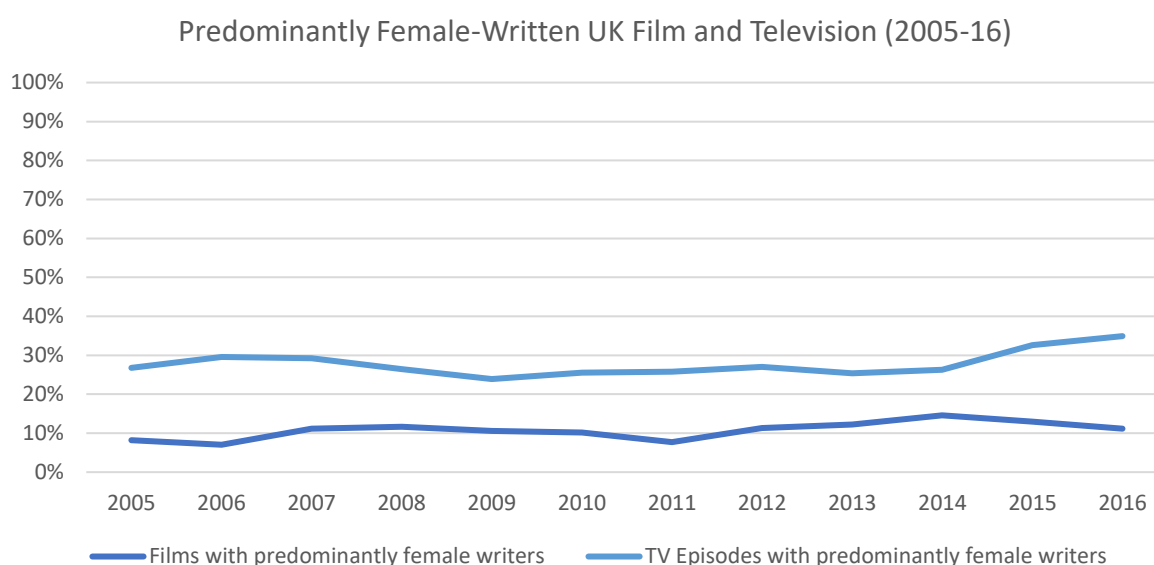
It is unacceptable that all writers do not have the same avenues open to them and we fervently hope that this evidence and the potential solutions outlined will change this situation for the better in the future.

Executive Summary

Introduction from the Authors

Over the last decade, the percentage of UK film and television written by female writers has remained remarkably consistent. There has been little change to either the ratio of female-written to male-written films and television programmes; or to the relative career trajectories of male and female writers.

Although awareness of female-underrepresentation in the film and television industries appears to be increasing, this has not yet had a meaningful impact on the actual levels of representation.



Over the last decade, just 11% of all UK feature films and 28% of all television episodes were predominantly female-written. However, such broad averages of female representation will always struggle to adequately capture the complex issue of equality of opportunity, as certain types of film and programme are far more desirable, better compensated and hotly-competed for than others.

Assessing equality of opportunity requires developing a detailed understanding of the relative difficulty writers of each gender face in pursuing the opportunities they wish to, and are qualified for.

A lack of comprehensive data and analysis of the UK film and television industries has made it difficult to assess the validity of concerns about equality of opportunity in this way; and, as a result, have struggled to accurately quantify the extent of any disparities or fully explain why they exist and how they might be sustained. The aim of this report is address this need for UK writers, by providing as complete an understanding of the current career paths of both male and female screenwriters, as the data available allows.

Our hope is that this research will, first and foremost, demonstrate how severe disparities between male and female writers can be. But also that the issue extends beyond these headline figures and is far more complicated than it might first appear.

Executive Summary

There are clear disparities between male and female writers, both in overall levels of representation and in respect to individual career progression. And, as a result, predominantly female-written films and television programming are comparatively rare.

However, there are also notable differences in the genres, budgets, size and prestige of films and programmes depending on writer gender, as well as the average number of films and episodes written by female writers, when compared to their male counterparts.

After providing as complete an encapsulation of female representation amongst writers as we believe is currently possible, this report will focus on elucidating these more nuanced differences. Our belief is that this analysis enables the fullest possible explanation of how any inequality of opportunity emerges, and how it might be sustained. Finally, a range of solutions are outlined and examined.

Data and Report Structure

Data from over thirty sources has been used to create a database covering all feature film writer credits listed on IMDb or on BFI records, for all films shot, at least in part, in the UK (2005-2016) and all television writer credits registered with ALCS¹ (2001-2016). It includes data on film types, genres and budgets; TV timeslot, programme type and broadcaster; as well as gender data for the vast majority of credited UK writers. As part of the research, we also polled all current UK writers with Writer's Guild of Great Britain (WGGB) memberships.

Collectively, this dataset suggested consistent evidence of the underemployment of female writers in both film and television, and female cast, crew and creatives in the film industry. Additionally, it revealed a number of trends in industry decision-making and structures which help sustain, and even promote, unfair workplace and hiring practices.

The report consists of five sections:

1. The Film Industry
2. The Television Industry
3. Writer Career Progression
4. Analysis and Explanation
5. Potential Solutions

The first three sections consist solely of data, descriptions of data-distributions and the findings summarising them. They contain no additional analysis or any suppositions regarding causes. This provides sound premises for the analysis conducted in Section Four, which in turn creates a secure evidence base and understanding from which to design solutions in Section Five.

This logical progression allows a clear separation of the premises (Sections One to Three) and the analysis (Sections Four to Five). Although we firmly believe our analysis provides the best explanation of the data, this structure is intended to enable the reader to review the soundness of the findings independently, without our influence, before separately assessing the explanations and solutions provided.

The findings summarised at the end of each section are collected below without any additions or further inferences. As such the content of the executive summary, for the first three sections, exactly matches the conclusions drawn from the data, again keeping empirical descriptions and analysis of

¹ For full data descriptions and methodologies please see *Appendix One: Methodology*

causes separate and distinct. The corresponding data for each finding can be found in the sections indicated.

Part One – Film

1.1 Film: Top Level Stats

1. Looking at the film industry as a whole, female writers are comparatively rare, comprising only 16% of all working screenwriters (1.1a)
2. Few films have credited female writers (15%). Whilst an even smaller percentage of films (11%) are written predominantly by women (1.1a).
3. Although there have been occasional increases in female representation amongst feature film writers over the last decade, they have been modest and unsustainable (1.1b).

1.2 The Film Industry

4. Budgets (1.2a)
 - a. On average, the budgets for male-written films are higher than the budgets for female-written films.
 - b. Female-written films are comparatively more likely to be mid-budget than low-budget features. But least likely to be big-budget features.
5. Genre (1.2b)
 - a. Female writers are comparatively far less likely to write certain genres than others.
 - b. These differences are not justified by pre-existing preference differences amongst audiences or solely a result of the correlation of genre and budget (although the two are connected).
6. Reviews and Audiences (1.2c)
 - a. Female-written films are, in general, more positively received by audiences, than those written by their male counterparts.
 - b. Female-written films are, in general, better reviewed by critics, than those written by their male counterparts.
7. Box Office Revenue (1.2d)
 - a. Female-written films have, in general, higher gross revenues than those written by their male counterparts.
8. Public Funding (1.2e)
 - a. Films receiving UK public funding are, in general, more likely to be female-written, than films not receiving public funding.
 - b. However, only two UK-based public funding bodies (Film London and Creative England) have notably higher representation than non-publicly-funded films.

1.3 Other Creatives, Crew and Cast

9. Most key creative roles on film productions are held predominantly by men. (1.3a)
 - a. The central creative team (Director, Editor, Cinematographer and Writer) has particularly low levels of female representation.
10. There is a clear correlation between the seniority of a role and the likelihood it is held by a male employee. Department heads are comparatively less likely to be female than their crew, in all but two departments. (1.3c)
 - a. The problem is particularly stark for producers and the production department.
11. The impact of predominantly male control over the central creative team can be seen in the films produced by the industry. (1.3e)
 - a. Female cast members, and hence female characters on screen, remain notably rarer than their male counterparts (in film).

12. There has been a subtle improvement over the last decade in the percentage of female crew, however this has not been matched by an improvement in female representation in key creative roles. (1.3d)

Part Two - Television

2.1 TV Top Level Stats

13. Female representation amongst writers is better in the television industry than in the film industry, however, female writers remain in the minority (2.1a)
14. As a result, the percentage of television episodes written predominantly by women is higher than the percentage of films, but still only 28% (2.1a)
15. The percentage of television programmes with a predominantly female writing staff is just 18% (2.1a).
16. There has been little overall change in female representation amongst writers, with a modest increase only in the last two years (2.1b).

2.2 The Television Industry

17. The percentage of programmes predominantly written by women declines through the day, with prime-time programming having the greatest disparity between male and female-written shows (2.2a).
 - a. The likelihood of a writer of a given show being female, negatively correlates with the expected advertising revenue for the episode timeslot.
18. Longer running shows (CDS), comprised of more total episodes, tend to have more equal representation (2.2b).
 - a. As a result, the higher proportion of female writers in continuing drama is affecting broader averages, particularly for primetime programming.
19. As with film genre, disparities between male and female writers affects certain types of programming more than others (2.2c).
 - a. Female writers are particularly rare in comedy and light-entertainment programming.
20. Female representation amongst writers of children's television is higher than any other dataset examined in this report (2.2d).
 - a. However, female writers remain in the minority among children's TV writers, and appear to be underemployed compared to their male counterparts.
 - b. Higher female representation on Children's TV programming has a notable impact on broader averages for the television industry.

2.3 Broadcasters

21. Top-level findings are similar across the main broadcasters (2.3a).
 - a. Between 63% and 66% of all episodes, for each of the three main broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4), were predominantly male-written, since 2000.
 - b. In general, female representation is better on larger channels than on smaller, newer channels.
22. Although the three main broadcasters appear to have similar ratios of female to male-written programming, closer examination does reveal differences between them (2.3b-c).
 - a. ITV has little difference between primetime and daytime female writer representation, but has a particularly high percentage of female writers working on CDS, obscuring lower representation elsewhere.
 - b. Channel 4 has particularly low early-peak representation, but more predominantly female-written episodes during late-peak than other broadcasters

Executive Summary

- c. Channel 4 is also an outlier in having better representation outside of CDS
 - d. Higher percentages of female writers on CBBC and CBeebies mean the impact of children's TV figures is particularly notable for BBC averages
23. A greater percentage of writers on episodes broadcast on both Channel 5 and S4C are female than for any of the larger broadcasters (2.3b-c).
- a. Outside of CDS programming Channel 5 has similar representation to other channels.

Part Three – Career Progression

3.1 Career Trajectories in Film

24. Across the course of their careers, female writers average fewer films than their male counterparts (3.1a).
- a. There is a consistent negative correlation between the number of films written and the chance that a writer is female.
25. The discrepancy between male and female career trajectories is not uniform (3.1b).
- a. The greatest relative difficulty in progressing to further films occurs at the start of female writers' careers.
 - b. As female writers gain experience, their relative likelihood of progressing to further projects improves (but they remain less likely to write further projects than equally credited male counterparts, regardless of the number of previous credits).
 - c. The likelihood a given writer is female decreases again amongst the most prolific writers.
26. In general, female writers are less likely than their male counterparts to progress to bigger budget features (3.1b).
- a. Particularly few female writers appear able to sustain a career in low-budget film.
 - b. Regardless of experience, female writers are consistently less likely to progress to the biggest budget bands.
27. Collectively, evidence on career trajectories in film point to a lower average ceiling for female writers' careers, and greater career instability, particularly earlier in careers.

3.2 Career Trajectories in Television

28. Female television writers average fewer episode and programme credits across the course of their careers than their male counterparts (3.2a)
- a. The percentage difference between the number of programmes written for across the studied period, between male and female writers, is greater than that seen in film.
 - b. However, over the course of their careers female writers average only slightly fewer episodes than their male counterparts (although this is not consistent across all types of programming).
 - c. There is a consistent negative correlation between the number of programmes written and the likelihood the writer is female, but this is not the case in respect to episodes.
29. Female writers are comparatively less likely to progress to more widely-viewed, prestigious and lucrative programming (3.2b)
- a. Female writer career progression negatively correlates with advertising revenue (unlike male writer career progression).
 - b. Female writers do not face a universal limitation of access in TV, but the data suggests significant restrictions, particularly related to primetime programming.

30. Collectively, evidence on career trajectories in TV point to a lower average ceiling for female writers' careers and greater difficulty earlier in careers, but reduced career instability when compared to film (3.2b)

3.3 The Writer's Journey

31. Polling of active UK screenwriters suggested there is no typical path to becoming a TV or film screenwriter, with a wide range of opportunities and roles pursued by potential writers, and no single career development step being a necessity (3.3a)
 - a. Film-related courses (particularly screenwriting) at universities or designated film schools; and writing experience on short-form projects or for different mediums were the most commonly indicated career steps.
32. Overall, the ratio of men to women both at UCAS accredited, film-related courses and entering the industry, is relatively even (3.3a)
 - a. Women are rarer on screenwriting degrees than men, but the ratio of men to women on such courses remains significantly more even than averages for either television or film (substantially for the latter).
33. In general, although female applicants to UK film-related courses were less likely to be accepted than their male counterparts, for the majority of course categories this difference was not significant (3.3a).
 - a. However, writing courses have been one of the few exceptions, with a consistent discrepancy for much of the studied period between the percentage of female applications and the eventual ratio of students.
34. Across all studied metrics for early career progression (shorts, radio and additional credits), a greater percentage of writers are female than on fully fledged film and television productions (3.3b)
 - a. However, the ratio is still more uneven than on film or writing-related courses, or averages for new entrants to the industry.
35. Film budget and television time-slot suggest a glass ceiling effect on female writers' careers (when compared to their male counterparts) (3.3c-d).
 - a. As they gain experience, female writers do not consistently move to bigger budget films, rather, on average, the budget-level of their films stagnates and then decreases.
 - b. Similarly, female representation amongst writers of programmes negatively correlates with advertising rates by timeslot.
 - c. Gaining greater experience in daytime television aids female writers in closing the career trajectory differences with male daytime writers, but the same effect is not seen as clearly for primetime.

3.4 The Difference between Film and Television

36. In absolute terms, the ratio of male writers to female writers is less uneven in television than in film (3.4).
37. However, career trajectories appear similarly restricted in both industries (3.4).
 - a. The percentage difference between male and female writers in terms of average programmes written across the course of their career is extremely close to that seen for average films written.
 - b. Primetime programming (particularly outside of CDS), has very similar representation for female writers to the film industry.
 - c. Polling suggests writers do not believe there is a significant difference between the film and television industries in terms of equality of opportunity for writers.

38. The problem in the television industry appears to be better characterised as a restriction of opportunities, whilst the film industry appears to suffer from more universal limitation of access (3.4).

3.5 Polling

39. The majority of respondents (53%) suggested they had seen evidence of discrimination, of some form, over the course of their careers (3.5).
- a. 42% suggested that discrimination, of some form, had a negative impact on their own career progression.
40. Respondents generally disagreed that the hiring and commissioning processes in both industries are functioning efficiently or fairly (3.5).
- a. Respondents have a low opinion of the industries' ability to meritocratically hire writers.
 - b. Respondents were sceptical of the current structure's ability to produce high quality/in demand products.
 - c. 79% of all respondents disagreed with the statement that "the way writers are hired, and scripts are commissioned, is fair and free from discrimination".

Summary

Collectively, the weight of evidence provided in the first three sections makes it highly unlikely that there is not a problem with equality of opportunity in the film and television industries.

The consistency and widespread nature of disparities strongly suggest that there are features of the industries and how they function which are disadvantaging female writers, and likely female employees and freelancers more generally.

Furthermore, in no aspect studied in this report, was any marked improvement in female representation shown over the last decade. Fluctuations and subtle improvements could be seen in certain areas, but the general rate of increase would not produce real equality in the near future. This suggests, regardless of the causes of the disparity, if we would like to see more films and programmes written by female writers, concerted action is required.

The scale of the overall disparity is particularly concerning due to its potential impact on the films and television audiences consume. Film and television can have sizeable effects on broader culture, and writers, along with other key creatives (positions which also tend to have low levels of female representation) have the greatest influence over its content.

As such, the disproportionate influence of one gender or one sector of society over the content produced, is likely to influence media content, and as a result, broader culture.

Part Four – Analysis and Explanations

The analysis of these findings led to the examination of three potential explanations:

- Personal Preference – The findings can be explained by differences in career preferences between male and female writers (Section 4.3)
- Unconscious Bias – The findings are best explained by preferences of hirers, rather than preferences of writers (Section 4.4)
- Systemic Issues – The findings suggest the hiring and commissioning structures and methodologies in place, in both industries, allow, and potentially promote, inequality of opportunity (Section 4.5)

The evidence summarised above, and detailed throughout Sections One to Three, provides greater justification for the latter two explanations, although personal preference is likely to play a part in the overall disparities. Although collectively these explanations appear adequate to explain the scope and nature of the findings, it should be acknowledged that there are other potential explanations whose validity could not be assessed using the data available (Section 4.1).

Polling suggested clear patterns in how writers find work. The vast majority of writers, both male and female, are hired through pre-existing industry contacts, and through agents. More formal and open systems are comparatively rare. As such, individual contacts are, in essence, the gatekeepers to career progression and success in the film and television industries. Hence, regardless of structural problems, it is through this system of individual contacts that disparities are realised; and either the preferences of the writer or hirer must be directly involved (Section 4.2).

Personal preference is initially plausible as an explanation. Film course applications suggest a slightly higher initial interest in screenwriting amongst men. Equally it is possible differences in writer preference based on gender could explain elements of the disparities, such as a greater preference to work on a single programme for longer, or greater interest in CDS or children's TV (Section 4.3).

However, this explanation faces two distinct problems:

First, the weight of evidence and the similarity of findings across different aspects of the data, suggest that it is highly unlikely to account for all the elements of the imbalance seen in the first three sections. Additionally, it directly contradicts the views expressed by writers (and particularly female writers), as indicated by polling (Section 4.3a).

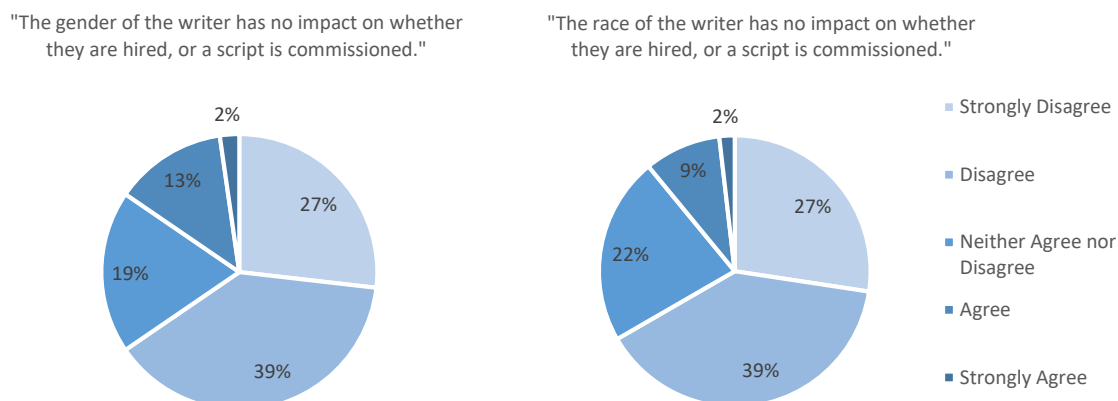
Second, it is unclear whether it resolves the issue in such a way as to absolve the industries of the obligation to take further action, either to protect equality of opportunity or to guarantee the best films and programmes get made (Section 4.3b-c).

In summary, personal preference is best viewed as a linked, but separate issue. It does likely account for some of the disparity seen, and, if the aim is to reduce this overall inequality it would be useful to tackle this aspect as well. However, causally, the disparity is highly unlikely to depend counterfactually on differences in writer preference.

Bias is more plausible as a broad explanation. Analysis of the relation of department head gender and the gender ratio of their crew, suggested gender-based preferences do appear to impact hiring decisions, in most departments. Female departments heads were more likely to hire female crew than their male counterparts, across all departments (Sections 1.3c & 4.4a).

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Similarly, most polling respondents believed the gender, and other protected characteristics, do have an impact on hiring and commissioning decisions.



The specific distribution of female writer credits also provides evidence for this explanation: the pattern of programme against episode credits; the difference in timeslot and budget trajectories; the correlation of film and television data; and genre and programme type discrepancies all support this analysis. Finally, it best explains the pattern of a higher initial bar of entry for female writers and a glass ceiling effect later in their careers, as emerged from analysis of career progression (Section 4.4a).

These hiring preferences are not justified (there is no evidence that female written films are either less profitable or highly regarded by audiences or critics), nor do we have adequate evidence to suggest that the inequalities are the result of any organised, conscious, or deliberate effort to keep women out of the film and television industries. Hence, they have been classified as unconscious bias (Section 4.4c).

This bias does however appear to function through more legitimate selection criteria, such as valuing and assessing prior experience. Bias operates not by simply deselecting potential female employees, but rather by undervaluing the experience they have when compared to male counterparts or viewing female writers as “higher risk” than their male counterparts (Section 4.4b).

This intersection of bias and legitimate hiring techniques, is a product of the relation of systemic issues to individual hiring approaches.

The two principle systemic issues are as follows:

- The lack of an effective regulatory system to protect and encourage gender equality (Section 4.5a).
- The lack of adequate metrics or structure to guide decision making (Section 4.5b).

Collectively, these two related systemic issues promote and protect certain forms of decision-making, and hiring and commissioning practices, which allow for, or even rely on, biases.

Examination of hiring patterns, particularly in the film industry, revealed how industry methodologies make it inherently difficult to effectively regulate hiring decisions (Section 4.5a). As a result, the light regulation currently governing the industry (The Equality Act 2010, BBFC and Ofcom broadcast regulations, and UK Film Tax Relief), appears to have had little impact on hiring and commissioning practices.

Executive Summary

Although legislation should seek to avoid mandating artificial equality, its role is to provide a natural countermeasure to practices which negatively impact equality of opportunity (in this case “unconscious bias”) and to break any vicious employment cycles. Without adequate regulatory systems to limit the impact of biases there remains the potential for discriminatory practices to continue unchecked. It appears that any employment systems in place in either film or television are failing to provide this regulating influence (Section 4.5a).

The impact of this lack of a regulatory framework is made more problematic by the limited impact of profitability on decision-making and hiring practices, and the absence of clear metrics for success. This is then compounded in the film industry by short-termism (Section 4.5b).

Previous BFI research has revealed the limited profitability of most UK feature films, a finding reinforced by budget and revenue data in our film database. Often the profit motive creates an informal regulatory framework for decision-making, as inefficient practices (such as hiring less qualified male writers over more qualified female writers), are deselected because they generate less average profit. However, the limited commercial viability of film limits any governing influence from market forces (Section 4.5b).

The profit-motive also functions atypically for television broadcasters, although it is somewhat dependent on the broadcaster. The crucial difference in television is the longevity and size of the of the centralised institutional structures which characterise the industry. This allows methodologies and practices to develop over time, and even be codified in company practices, without a dependence on market forces (Section 4.5c). Here structural differences again appear to account for differences in representation between film and television (Section 3.4).

Without clear financial success-metrics to guide decision-making, the individual methodologies of hirers and commissioners becomes crucial. There remains a fundamental lack of an adequate methodology to relate the hiring of writers to the success of projects. In the absence of clear metrics, bias instead becomes central to decision making (Sections 4.4 & 4.5a).

To fully elucidate this problem, the relation of systemic issues to individual decision-making was examined in greater detail (Section 4.5c).

Both film and television projects are inherently risky for producers and for other key creatives, tasked with developing them. Breakout hits are similarly elusive in both film and television, and far more projects quickly disappear than reach syndication, or generate profits.

Uncertainty and inherent risk, makes failures hard to define, spot, prevent or hold people accountable for. Hence, little development of methodologies is necessitated. As a result, there is limited accountability for decision-making, and often difficulty in recognising unfair or even discriminatory practices (Section 4.5c).

Extant institutional structures and methods also discourage innovation. Going against the conventional practices is one of the few easily recognisable differentiators for a failed project. This incentivises individuals to use traditional methods of finding and selecting writers. Gradually, the absence of alternative methodologies results in a reliance on a vague notion of “expertise” on the part of development producers. Such methodologies tend toward heuristic decision-making, while metric-based systems remain unexplored and underutilised (Section 4.5c).

Finally, in film, these tendencies are exacerbated by the brevity of film productions. Uncertainty combined with the limited longevity of productions disincentives putting effort into production-level systems to limit inequality. Limited time also results in a reliance on “on the job” training and

Executive Summary

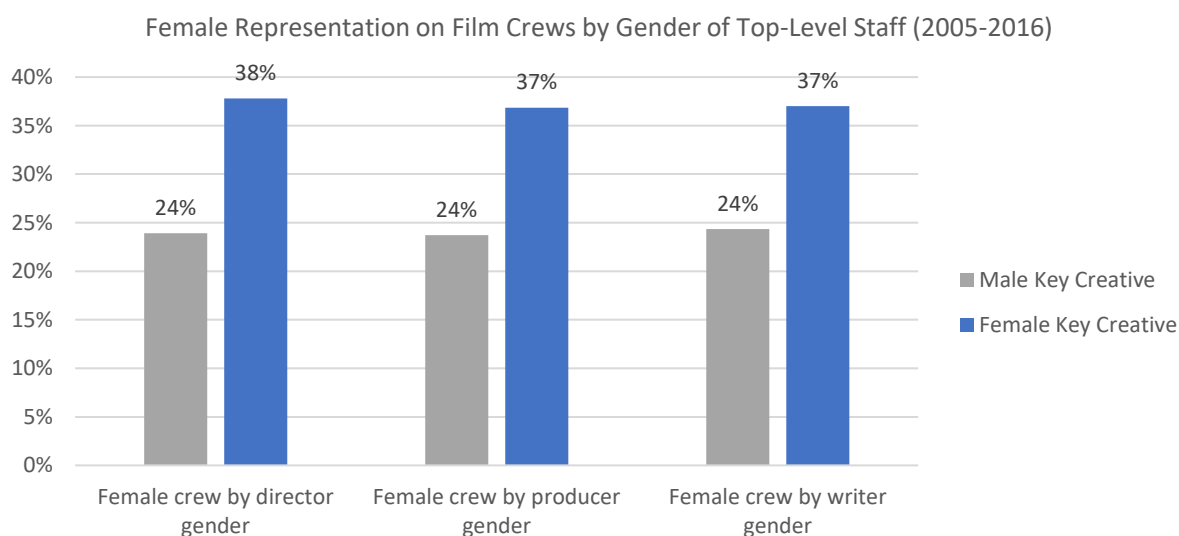
development for new entrants. This pragmatic attitude to training focusses on the continuation of methodologies, as there is little time to redevelop them. When combined with high risk and limited metrics, such an approach means there is little incentive to ask why a conventional decision has been taken; and tradition becomes the relevant guide (Sections 4.5b & 4.5c).

In summary, the pervasive uncertainty of industry projects and the predisposition of many hirers to employ people with similar backgrounds (or the same gender) to themselves, is compounded by a lack of regulation and market principles. As a result, hiring and commissioning decisions have come to rely on preconceived notions of archetypal employees. Such decisions rely only in part on demonstrated talent or experience, opening a door to other preferences, such as gender.

The cumulative effect of bias, combined with historical differences in overall representation and a lack of systemic barriers to unfair hiring practices, is the creation of a self-sustaining loop which is extremely difficult, and takes concerted action, to break (Section 4.4d).

A predominantly male senior staff tend to hire a predominantly male crew, particularly in key roles. This process may then be perpetuated, with new, but still predominantly male, senior staff, who, in their turn, make similar hiring choices.

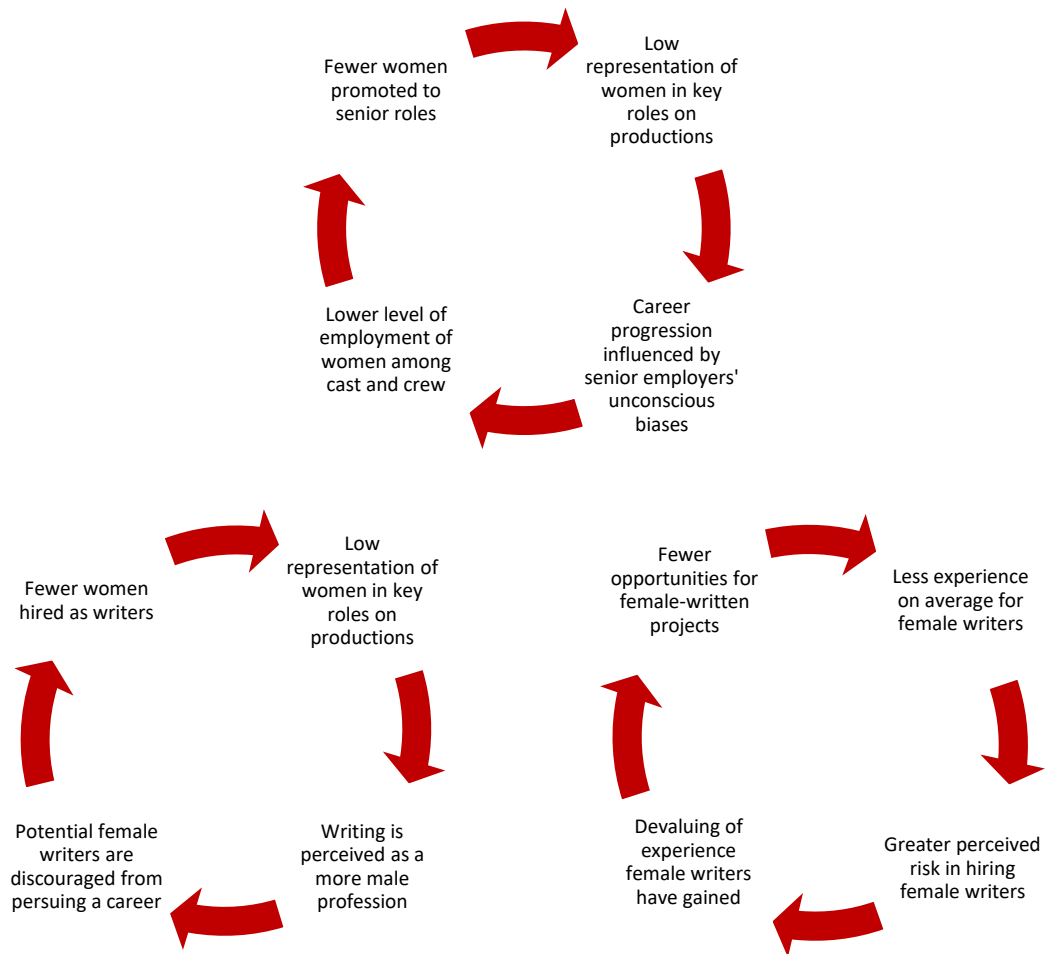
Hence, differences in the gender of writers and top-level creatives can have notable impacts on the gender of the production crew as a whole (Section 4.4d).



Personal preference adds an additional element to this self-sustaining inequality, as future applicants are discouraged by the current status quo from pursuing roles which might help to rectify the imbalance. This self-sustaining inequality explains the lack of notable improvement in representation over the last decade.

Executive Summary

In essence, the various elements of inequality reinforce and facilitate each other. This symbiosis can be characterised as three vicious cycles: one created by the process of promotion and career progression; another by the effect of visibility and perception; and the last capturing the vicious cycle as it effects individual female writers (Section 4.4d).



Part Five – Potential Solutions

The final section of this report provides a range of potential avenues to increase the quantity of female-written content, and to make hiring and commissioning more meritocratic. As most require detailed explanation, they will only be briefly summarised here.

Potential solutions fall into three broad categories, each with several aspects:

1. Data collection and publishing – Adequately tackling inequality of opportunity requires better data collection, and fuller data publication, than the industries have traditionally managed (Section 5.2a)
 - a. Previous reports into equality of opportunity in the film industry, have found data-collection on protected characteristics by industry bodies to be inconsistent at best. However, nearly all freedom of information requests submitted to the BFI and to regional screen agencies for this report were responded to and data was provided. It remains the case that data on writer gender and other protected characteristics is sometimes limited, however, there appears to be clear improvements among these bodies in the desire to collect such data, and the willingness to share it in its entirety.
 - b. Analysis has included consideration of Creative Diversity Network’s Project Diamond, and data-comparisons between their *First Cut Report 2017* and the data published in this report. Although Project Diamond has enormous potential to help understand and solve issues of inequality of opportunity in the television industry, there is a range of potential problems with the current Diamond methodology and, in particular, with the form in which data were published in the *First Cut Report* (5.2a)
 - c. From the analysis of Project Diamond and the First Cut Report, a number of recommendations for future releases are detailed, focussed particularly on rigorous data collection methods; on adequate assessment of those methods; and on the necessity of segmentation in data publications on this issue (Section 5.2a).
2. Systemic solutions – Targets and other methods could be used to reduce the impact of unconscious bias on decision-making (Section 5.2b-d)
 - a. Crucial changes to the BFI’s Film Fund’s guidelines, including a series of targets to improve representations are to be put into place from April 1, 2018. The targets aim for a 50-50 gender balance in supported filmmakers (as well as targets for other protected characteristics). This is an important step in redressing historical imbalances in the film industry.
 - b. Similar targets implemented by the major broadcasters would likely be adequate, in and of themselves, to eliminate gender inequality in hiring practices in television. These targets would also need to take into account the type and size of programming to be fully effective, but the centralised control of the broadcasters would allow easier implementation in television than film (Section 5.2b).
 - c. Given the particularly stark gender-based hiring trends amongst producers for their own departments, the notable disparity between the percentage of female production crew and female senior producers, and the central role played by key producers in hiring across a production, collective industry pressure and a focus on producers may be necessary to redress what appears to be a powerful self-perpetuating system at the heart of the unconscious bias problem. Greater awareness of the potential impact of producer biases, could have immense short-term impact (Section 5.2b).

- d. Private financiers could also be incentivised to support a greater percentage of female-led productions. Two potential benefits could be emphasized: the financial benefit of backing overlooked female creatives; and the ideological appeal of connecting an investor's desire to improve the industry and create positive change with the investment decisions they make in film (Section 5.2d).
 - e. The report also examines the possibility of amending the Film Tax Relief scheme (FTR), by adding a diversity component to the pre-existing cultural test films must pass to receive tax relief. This is likely to be a controversial proposal as the FTR in its current form is crucial to much film production. However, there are few other schemes which have such broad impact on the film industry and which have the potential to influence decision-making at the industry level, and combat discrimination and bias (Section 5.2c).
3. Tackling preferences – Both unconscious bias and personal preference can be addressed through campaigns to actively combat inaccurate beliefs and keep gender equality a focus across the sector (Section 5.3a)
- a. Tackling unconscious biases directly is inherently difficult. However, by keeping the industries focussed on the issues, the awareness campaign that has developed over the last few years has managed to do exactly this. Some positive results are already being seen. The final section of this report offers a series of suggestions for areas in particular need of action, on which this campaign could be focussed, for maximum effect (Section 5.3a).

Finally, the issue of self-reinforcing inequality is re-examined, revealing that, if additional action is taken, there is good reason to believe that the industry, even as currently structured, could not only sustain such equality, but begin to drive itself towards it.

Because female creatives are more likely to work on female-written and female-directed projects, and female creatives are more likely to hire female crew, increasing the percentage of films and television written by female writers would lead to improvements in representation across the industries.

Greater equality at the genesis of a project filters through the whole of that production. As such, a concerted effort to improve the quantity and exposure of female-written scripts, could have a compounding positive effect as improved representation amongst writers results in greater opportunities for other female key creatives, and in turn for their crew; allowing a more equal hiring system to gradually emerge. This in turn could generate further positive effects: addressing the issue of personal preference, by creating more female role models in key creative roles; and unconscious bias, by reducing the perceived risk associated with hiring female creatives.

In essence, the aim would be to turn the current vicious cycles in employment into virtuous cycles, resulting in further improvements in female representation, both for writers and other film and television professionals (Section 5.3b).

Part One – Film

1.1 Top-Level Stats

This section will outline the relative representation of male and female writers in the UK film industry over the last decade.

1.1a The Gender of UK Film Writers

Key Stats:

16% of all writers credited on at least one UK feature film between 2005 and 2016 were female.

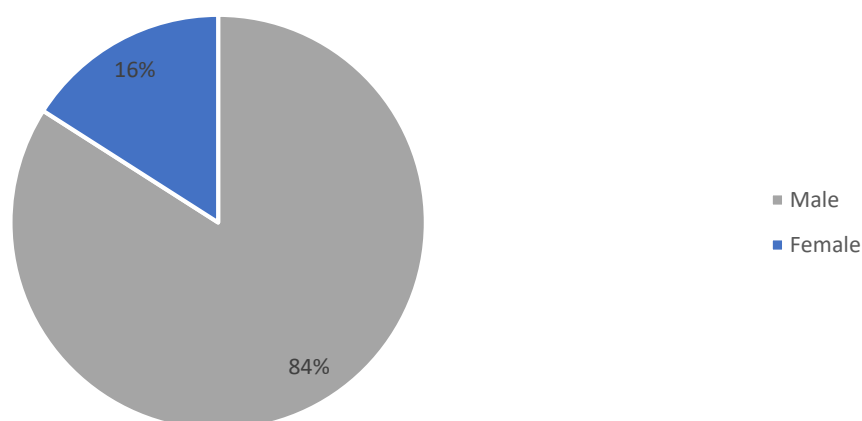
15% of writer credits on UK feature films (2005-2016) went to female writers.

11% of films were predominantly female-written. 21% had at least one female writer.

Female feature film writers are comparatively rare, as *Figure 1* illustrates.

Figure 1: Writer Gender (film)

Credited UK Feature Film Writers by Gender (2005-16)



Of the 3,310 writers with at least one credit on a UK feature film² between 2005 and 2016, only 526 (16%) were female³.

Because multiple writers will often work on a single project, and many writers progress to further projects during the studied period, the relation of writers to credits is not 1:1. On average, each screenwriter had 1.27 feature film credits between 2005-16.

As a result, there are multiple methods of capturing female representation amongst writers.

² UK feature films are defined as any film shot, at least in part, in the United Kingdom. For more detail on terminology see *Appendix One – Methodology*.

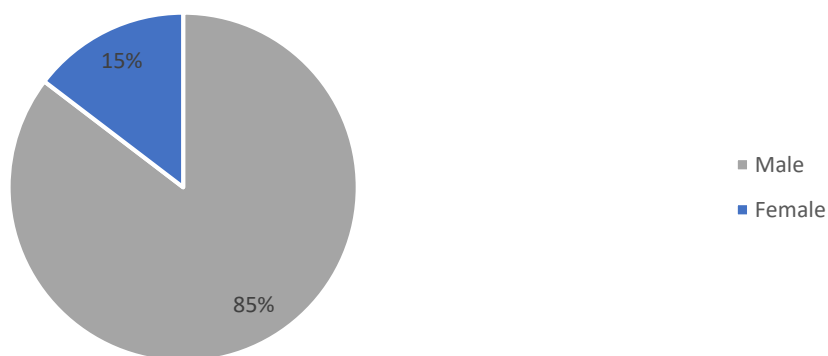
³ There were 14 writers across the dataset whose gender could not be determined. They have been excluded from all findings. For more detail on datasets and methodology, see *Appendix One – Methodology*. Any data methodology decisions which could plausibly affect findings, or notable outliers, will be highlighted in footnotes for clarity.

Part One – Film

Firstly, any disparities can be assessed in terms of the percentage of all writer credits on UK feature films. The percentage of credits going to female writers is broadly consistent with the gender ratio of writers, as 15% of credits on films from 2005-16 went to female writers⁴.

Figure 2: UK Writer Credits (film)

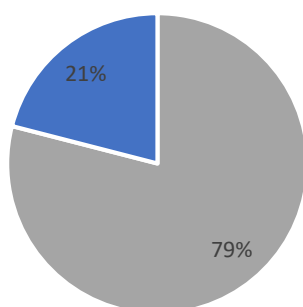
Writer Credits on UK Feature Films by Gender (2005-16)



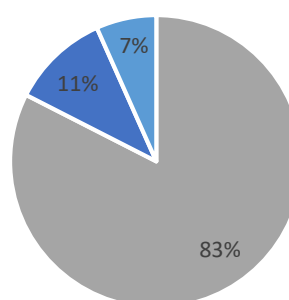
Secondly, the composition of writing teams on UK feature films provides an outline of the impact of the overall disparity in the number of female and male writers on the films the industry produces.

Figure 3: UK Feature Films

UK Feature Films with/without Female Writer(s) (2005-16)



Feature Film Writing Teams by Gender (2005-16)



As would be expected, a slightly higher percentage of films had at least one female writer (21%)⁵. However, only 11% of films were written solely by female writers or writing teams comprised primarily of women.

⁴ Female writers average fewer total films than their male counterparts during the studied period, hence the slight decline from the percentage of female writers to the percentage of credits going to those female writers. For more detail see *Part Three – Career Progression*.

⁵ There are more writers than films across the studied period due to the prevalence of writing teams. And a film has better odds of having at least one female writer if it has multiple writers. Hence, it's reasonable to see a slightly higher percentage of films with at least one

1.1b Representation over Time

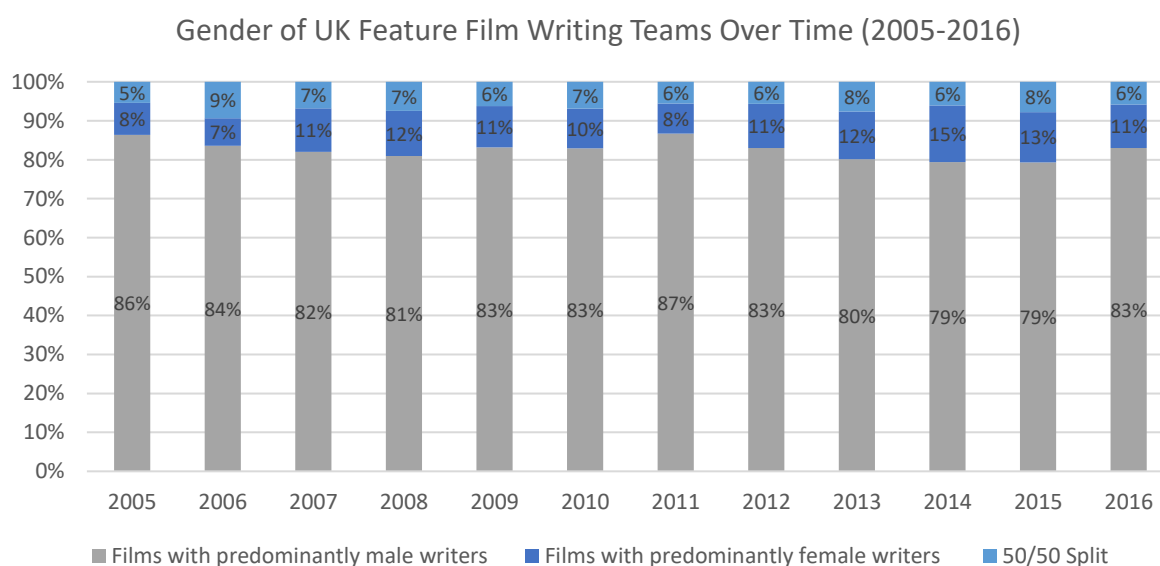
Key Stats

In the last decade there has been little increase in the number of female writers. In 2006, 21% of UK feature films had at least one female writer. In 2016, 22% of UK feature films had a female writer.

There is no year in the last decade in which more than 15% of UK feature films were predominantly female-written.

Female representation amongst UK screenwriters fluctuated over the last decade, but without producing a clear trend towards either higher or lower representation.

Figure 4: Gender over time (Film)



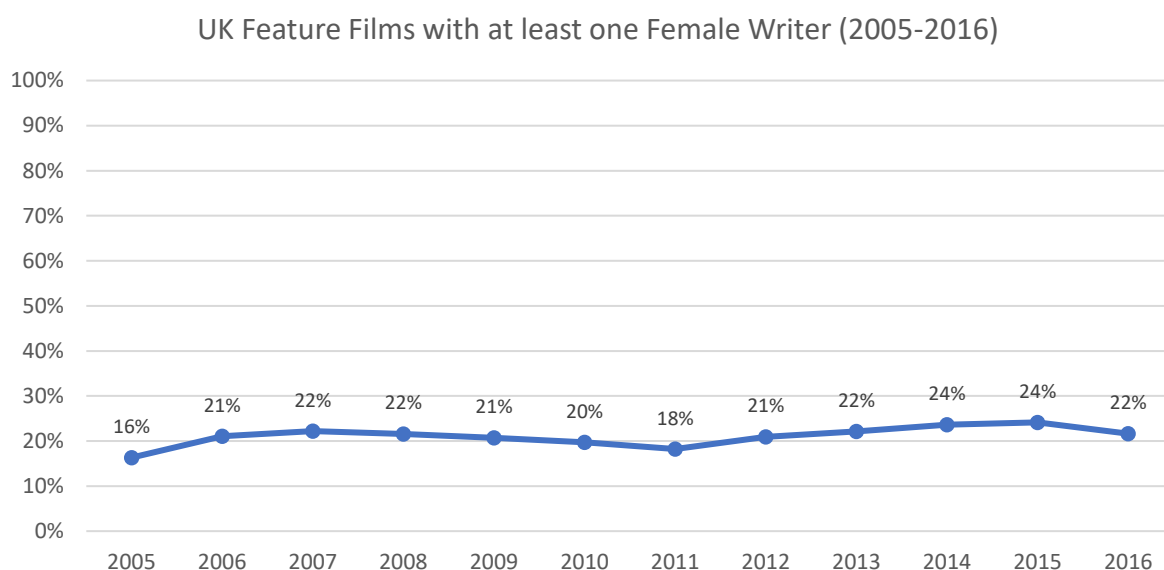
There are two periods of subtly increasing representation after lows in 2005-6 (7-8%) and 2011 (8%). However, in both cases this improvement was neither substantial nor sustained, with decreases in female representation in 2008-11 and 2014-2016.

2014 and 2015 had the highest proportion of films written predominantly by women or in evenly split writing teams, which does point to limited improvement over 2005, when over 86% of films were written predominantly by male writers.

female writer than the total percentage of writers. At this stage, there is little statistical significance to this broad difference. See *Part Three: Career Progression* for a more detailed breakdown of the relation of female writers to female writer credits.

However, as the graph below illustrates, this overall improvement is negligible given the scale of the broader disparity.

Figure 5: Simplified Gender over Time (Film)



Summary of Findings

The initial survey of the film industry revealed the following⁶:

1. Looking at the film industry as a whole, female writers are comparatively rare, comprising only 16% of all working screenwriters (1.1a)
2. Few films have credited female writers (15%). Whilst an even smaller percentage of films (11%) are written predominantly by women (1.1a).
3. Although there have been occasional increases in female representation amongst feature film writers over the last decade, they have been modest and unsustainable (1.1b).

⁶ As stressed in the executive summary, these findings do not aim to capture the causes or solutions to the disparity, they merely summarise the conclusions that have been justified by the data in the preceding section.

1.2 The Film Industry

This section will look in detail at the size, type and success of films in respect of the gender of the writer, providing more detail on the exact nature of the broad disparity seen in the previous section.

1.2a Budgets

Key Stats

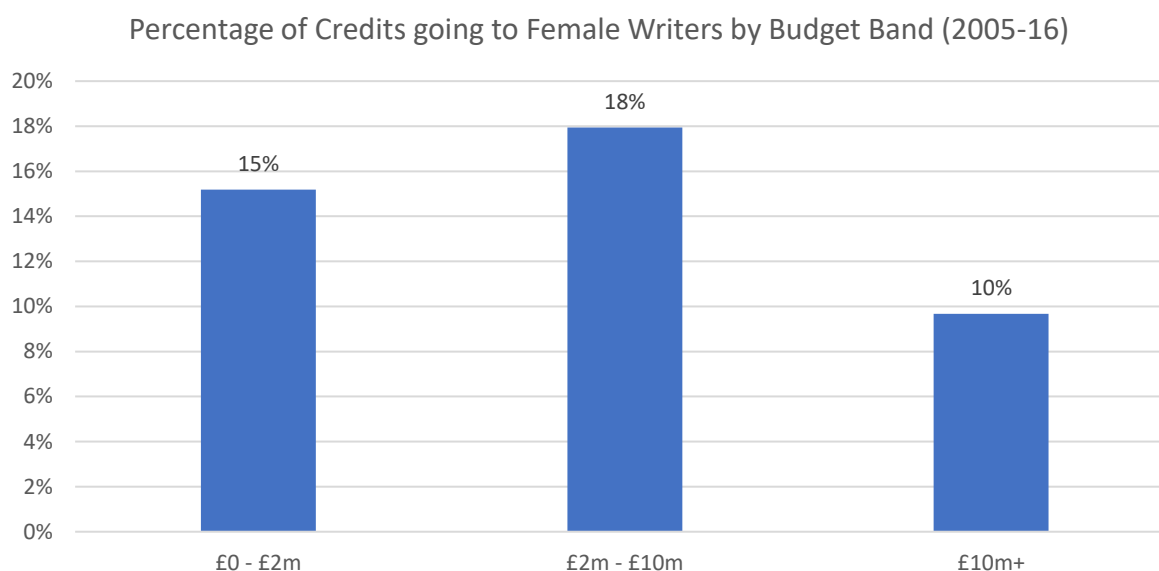
15% of low-budget writing credits and 18% of mid-budget writing credits go to female writers.

10% of big-budget credits go to female writers.

Fewer than 7% of films with a budget greater than £10m are predominantly female-written.

The budget of a feature film provides a reasonable indicator of the size of the production. Previous research⁷ has shown that female directors consistently find it harder to progress to larger projects with bigger budgets than their male counterparts. However, the trend is less clear for writers.

Figure 6: Female Credits by Budget Band



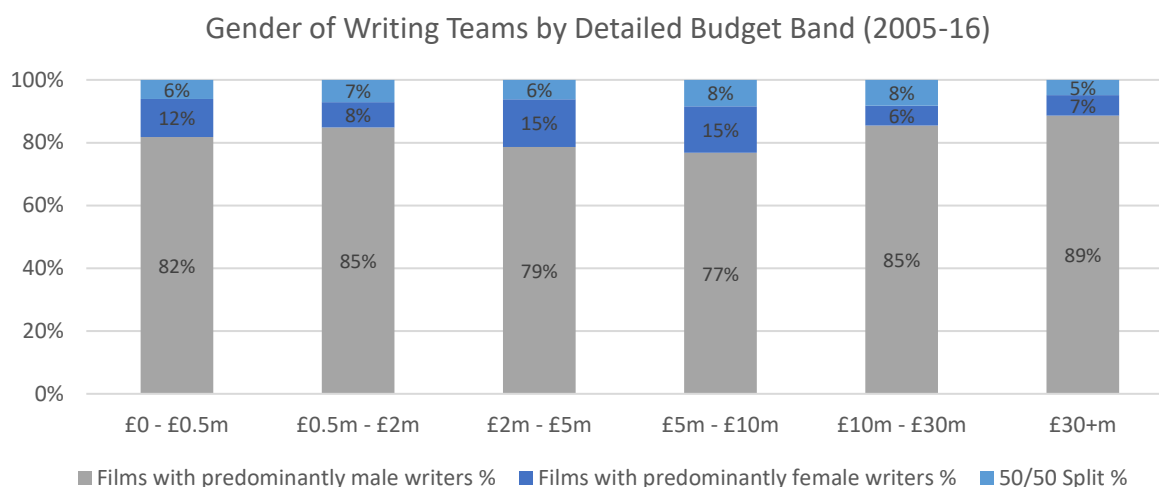
Although there is an overall decline in female representation as the budget increases, it is not an entirely consistent trend. Female writers are least likely to be credited on big-budget features (£10m+) but are slightly more likely to write mid-budget (£2m - £10m) than low-budget (£0 - £2m) films.

⁷ *Cut out of the Picture: A study of gender inequality amongst film directors in the UK Film Industry*, May 2016. Commissioned by Directors UK

Part One – Film

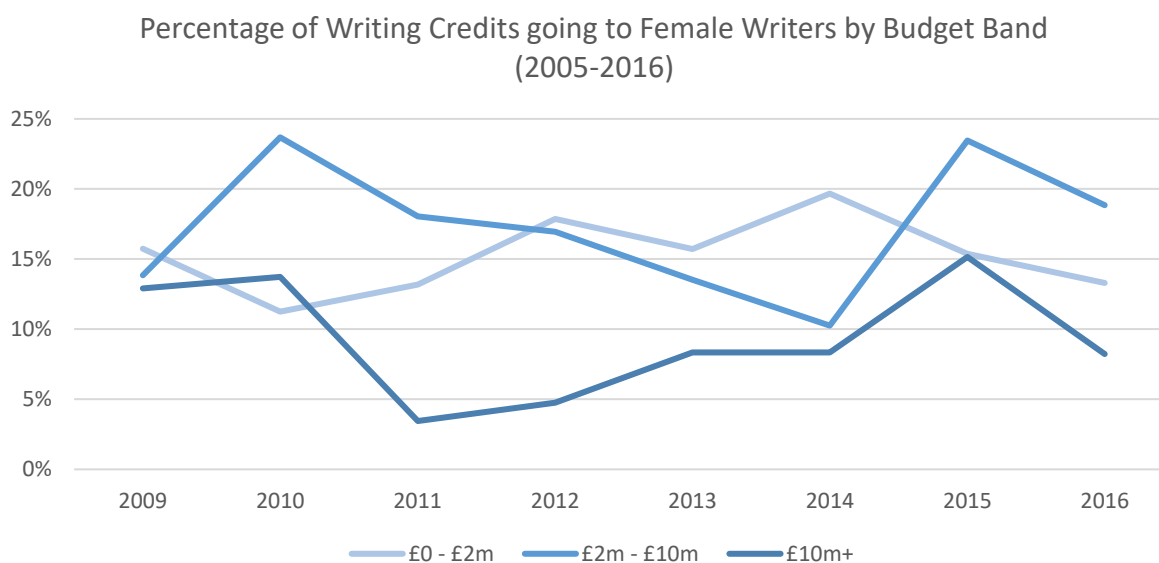
This trend holds for more detailed budget bands.

Figure 7: Budget by Gender (detailed)



Examining the relation of budgets and female writers over time produces no strong trends.

Figure 8: Female Credits over time (by budget)



As with films as a whole, the individual data for each budget band suggests fluctuating in female representation. But again, no clear or consistent trend is apparent.

The least overall improvement has been seen amongst big-budget films, whilst female representation amongst writers of low-budget features has fluctuated the least (although in part this will be due to the high volume of low-budget films in comparison to big-budget features)⁸.

⁸ There is some correlation in the last three years, between mid and big-budget films. However, female representation amongst writers of low-budget films fluctuates independently of any changes in representation amongst larger budget films. This is unsurprising as the low-budget and mid/big-budget film industries mostly operate in different ways and tend to be distinct.

1.2b Genres

Key Stats

The gender of writers does appear to correlate with film genres.

Sci-fi, fantasy, horror and action genre films are most likely to be male-written.

Mystery, animated, romantic and drama genre films are most likely to be female-written.

Female writers are far more common on documentaries than on fiction films.

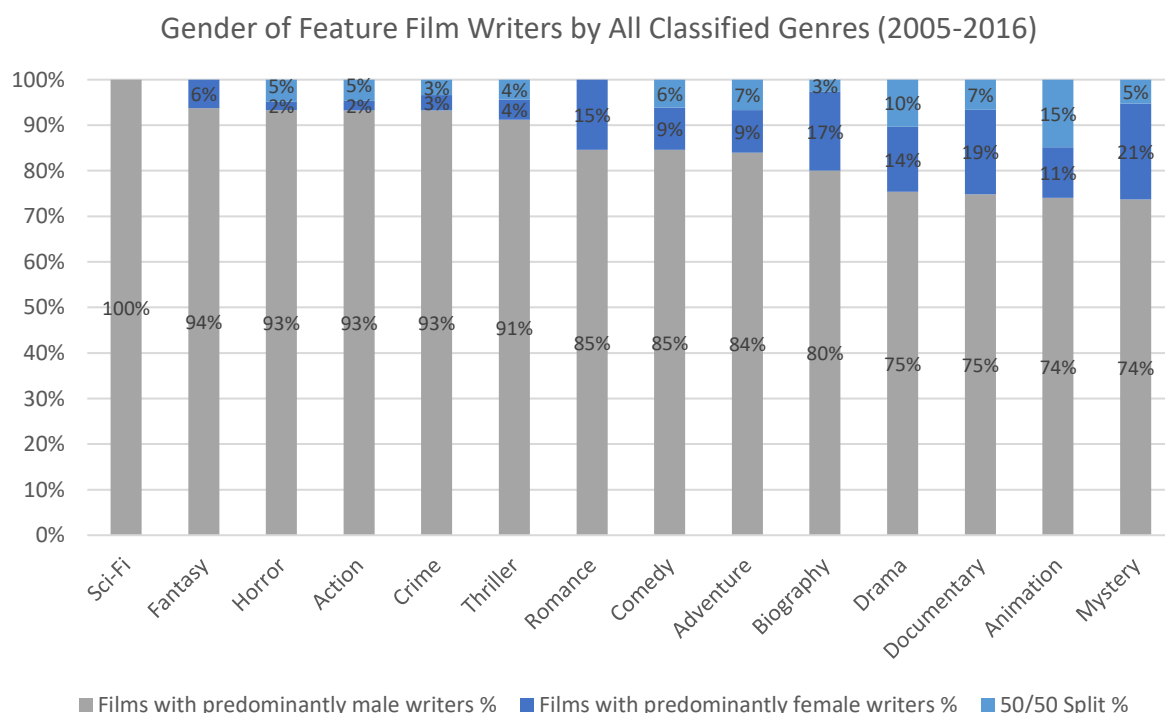
Restrictions on equality of opportunity tend to comprise not only limitations on quantitative access (number of feature films written), but also qualitative access (types, size or prestige of feature films written).

Dividing writing credits by the genre of the films reveals that female writers are better represented within certain genres than others.

Predominantly female-written films are most likely to be in the mystery and romantic genres, or animated films. Female writers are also comparatively more likely to write for biography and drama productions. The most male-dominated genres are action, horror, fantasy, crime and science fiction⁹.

Female writers are more common on documentaries than any fiction genre other than mystery, with 19% of all documentaries written predominantly by women, and a further 7% on evenly-split writing teams.

Figure 9: Writer Gender by Genre

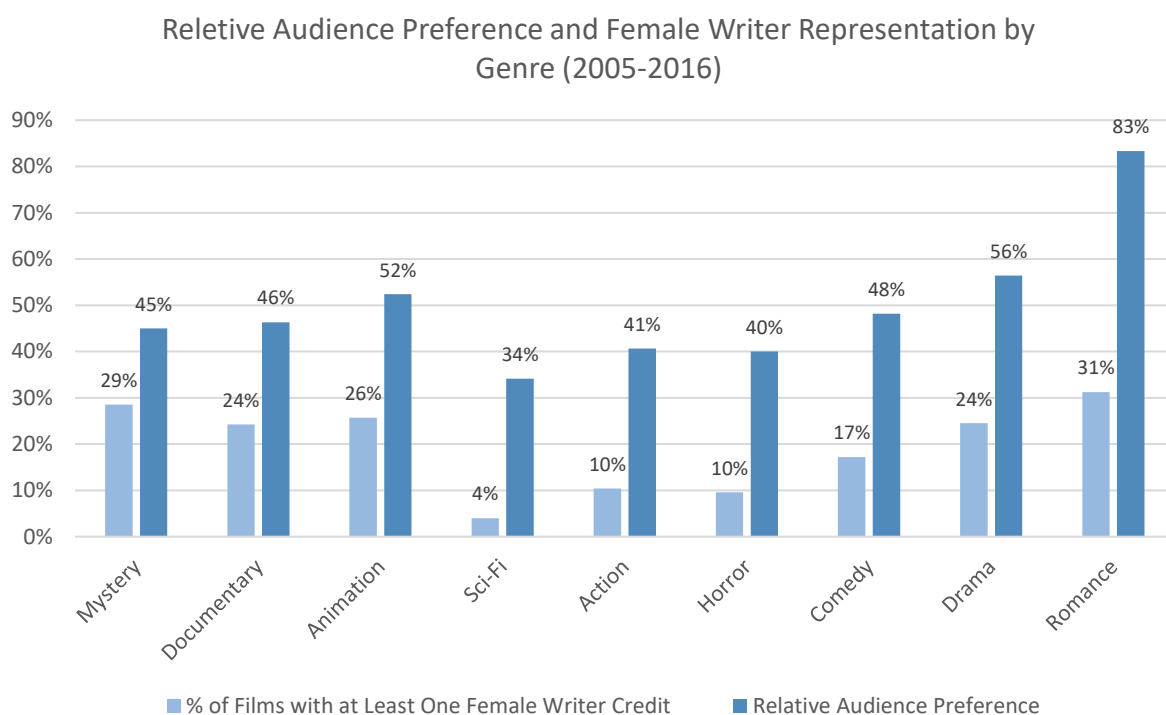


⁹ There were multiple female Sci-Fi writing credits, however all were on writing teams with more male writers, meaning there were no UK Sci-Fi films written predominantly by women released during the studied period.

There does appear to be some significant correlation between film genre and the gender of writers. In general, male and female writers are more likely to write films in genres traditionally associated with their gender. Such differences may be the product of preferences of producers, hirers and commissioners, but could equally be accounted for through writer and audience preference.

To gain a better understanding of audience preferences by gender, the data on writers and genre can be combined with a measure of the relative interest in each genre in the wider UK population¹⁰.

Figure 10: Gender of Writers and Relative Audience Preference



Relative audience preference is an imperfect measure of total audience interest relative to gender. However, it produced a particularly clear trend: across all genres female representation amongst writers falls well below relative female audience interest.

Mystery and documentary have the smallest discrepancies, whilst genres traditionally viewed as more “male”, such as action, horror and sci-fi, are comparatively more unlikely to employ female writers, relative to audience preference. Additionally, genres which have high levels of interest from both genders, such as comedy and drama, also score poorly.

This suggests that, at the very least, commissioners and hirers are underestimating female audience interest in genres traditionally viewed as “male”.¹¹

¹⁰ 2011 Ipsos Mori Poll. Relative audience preference is a ratio of male interest to female interest (i.e. what proportion of those indicating an interest in each genre are women). For example, 45% of respondents who indicated an interest in mystery films were female. For more information on this graph see *Appendix One – Methodology*

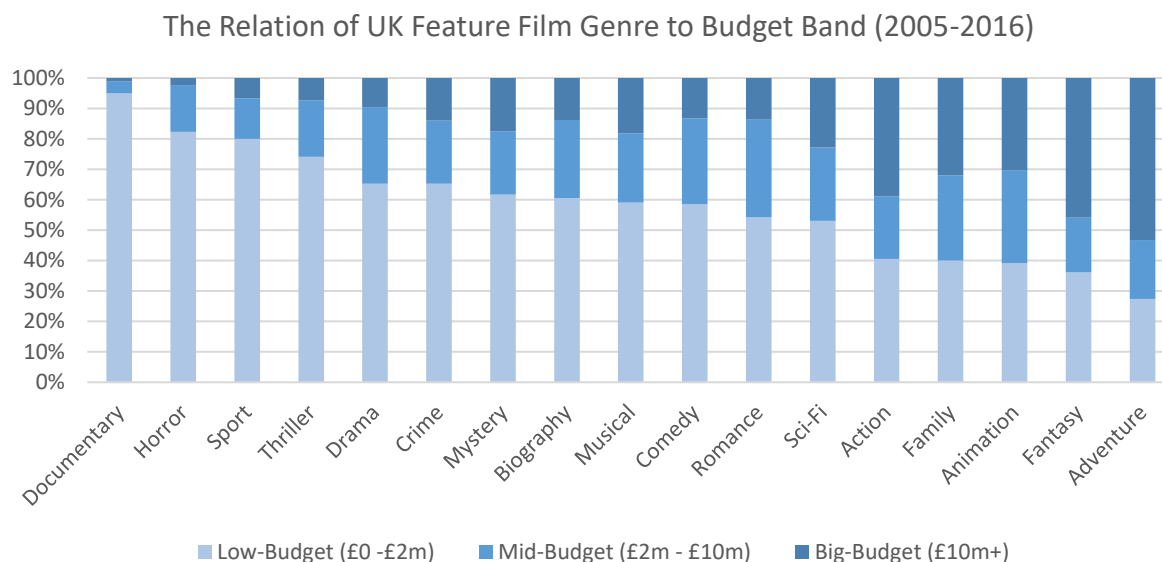
¹¹ Although it’s notable that given the low male interest and high female interest in romantic films there is actually the greatest discrepancy here (-52%). However, given the overall low numbers of female writers and the high relative demand here, this is not as significant a problem as any limitation of writers to specific genres based on their gender (particularly as there is far better female representation amongst writers in this genre than others).

1.2c The Link between Budget and Genre

There is a correlation between the results seen in *Sections 1.2a* and *1.2b*. To some extent this should be expected, as a film’s budget and genre are often linked.

Figure 11 displays the percentage of films in each genre that fall into three broad budget bands. It shows the notable differences in the average budgets of different genres.

Figure 11: Genre and Budget



This clarifies the connection between bigger-budgets, certain genres and a dearth of female writers; as bigger budget genres, such as fantasy, action, sci-fi and adventure all have fewer female writers compared to other genres.

Similarly, the prevalence of horror, sport, thriller and crime films amongst lower budget ranges, correlates with the higher percentage of male writers in those areas. Finally, the genres with the best levels of female representation, such as drama, mystery, biography and romance are comparatively most likely to fall into the mid-budget range.

However, although this correlation is relatively consistent, there are notable outliers. Animation and documentary, both genres with production methodologies which differ from most live-action features, represent exceptions to the relation of genre, budget and female representation. Documentary is an almost entirely low budget genre, but also has amongst the highest levels of female representation, whilst the same is true for traditionally bigger-budget animated films¹².

Comedies tend to be low to mid-budget features, yet had one of the greatest disparities between relative female audience interest and female writer representation.

As such the correlation between budget and genre is linked to differences in writer representation, but, just like audience preference, does not appear an adequate explanation for the discrepancies across the entire dataset.

¹² The lack of correlation also holds for Family films, but there are far fewer films classified in this way, so the figures on gender have limited statistical significance. This could be notable however as it is often perceived as a more “female” genre, and female representation on children’s TV (see *Section 2.2d: Children’s TV*) is a similar outlier.

1.2d Reviews and Audience

Key Stats

Female-written films have an average IMDb Score of 6.17, whilst male-written films average 5.87
Female-written films have an average Metacritic Score of 58.1, whilst male-written films average 56.0

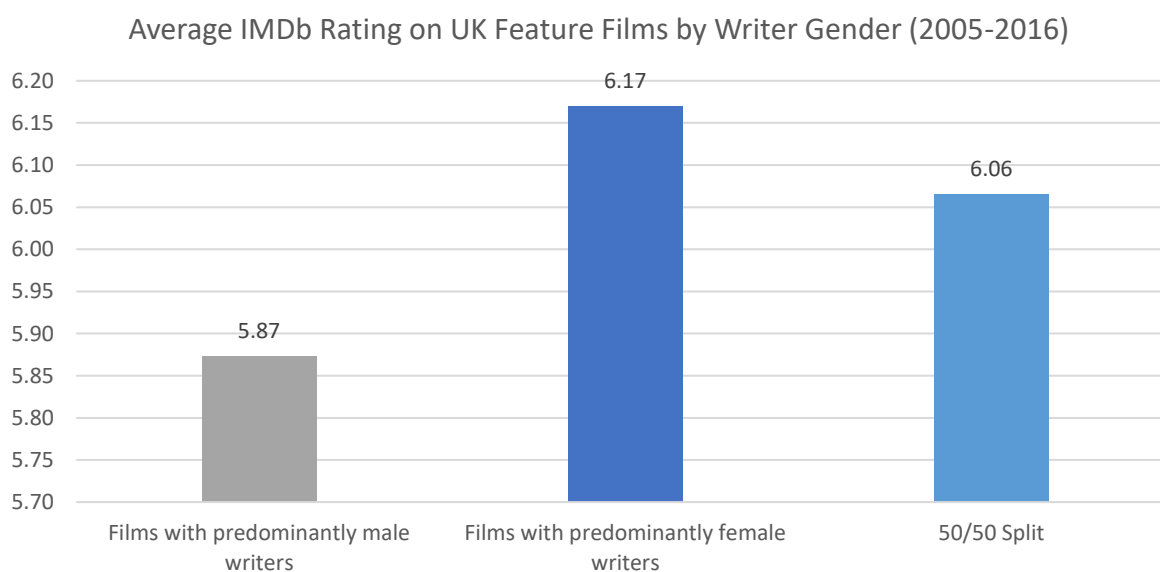
The quality of a film is a highly subjective topic. However, it is possible to use datasets of aggregates of audience or film critic opinions, to provide a picture of how viewers feel about films written by male and female writers.

This report will use ratings given to each film by IMDb users (out of 10)¹³ as a measure of quality according to film audiences; and Metacritic scores (out of 100) as a measure of critical reception.

Audiences

Films in the dataset had an average IMDb rating of 5.99. However, films predominantly written by female writers (6.17) and those with evenly split writing teams (6.06) had a notably higher average rating than those written predominantly by male writers (5.87).

Figure 12: IMDb Ratings



On average, predominantly female written films receive 5% higher IMDb ratings than those written by their male counterparts.

This is a small but significant difference, as can be seen in more detail in Figure 13 and Figure 14¹⁴ below:

¹³ Excluding films with fewer than 100 total votes. IMDb's open rating system allows microbudget films to artificially increase their ratings by submitting reviews themselves or through family, friends and other employees working on the film. This can be seen in the range and distribution of scores on such films.

¹⁴ The dataset for the scatter plot is smaller than that used for overall averages, as it requires specific budget information which could not be provided for all films.

Part One – Film

Figure 13: IMDb Ratings (Scatter)

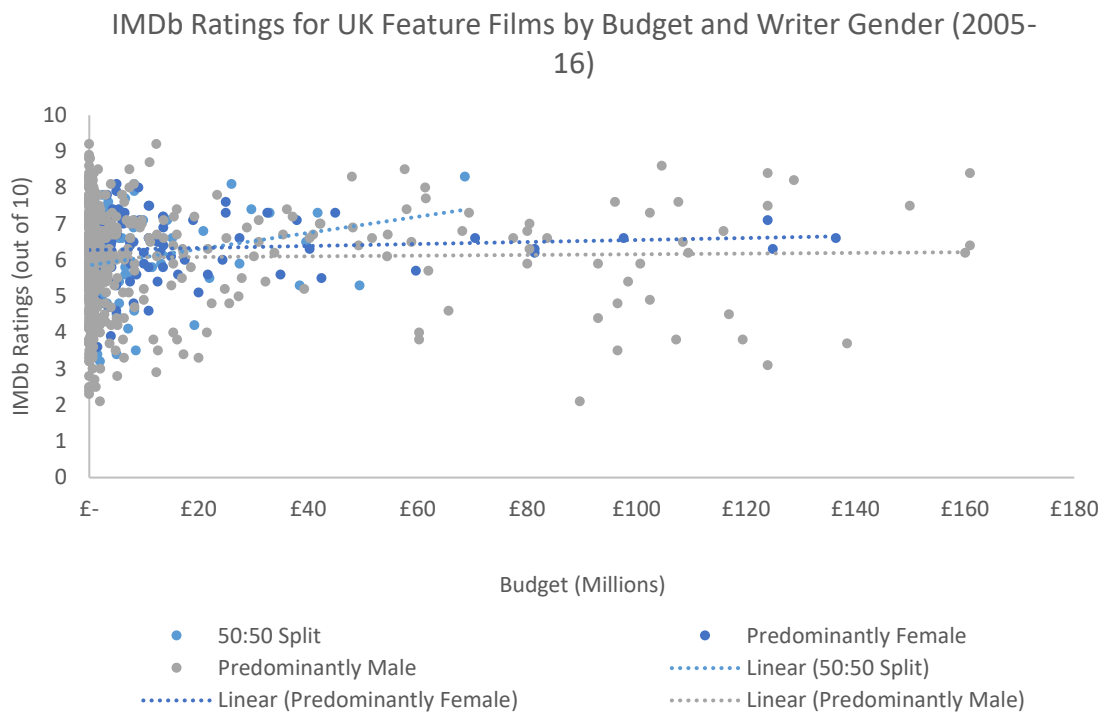
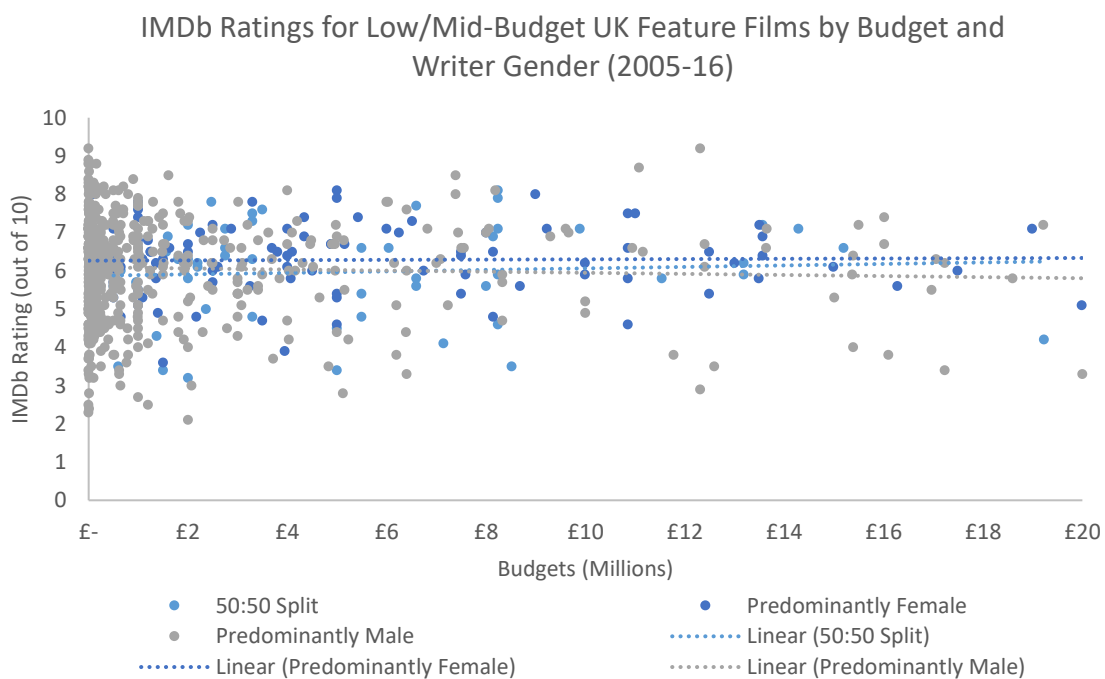


Figure 13 helps reveal that the vast majority of films made are low-budget features, with comparatively very few larger budget productions. Second, it demonstrates the scarcity of female-written, big-budget features. Finally, it shows that regardless of budget level, female-written films are more favourably received by audiences than those written by their male counterparts.

Reducing the budget range demonstrates this trend is consistent for lower-budget features:

Figure 14: IMDb Ratings (Scatter – low/mid-budget)

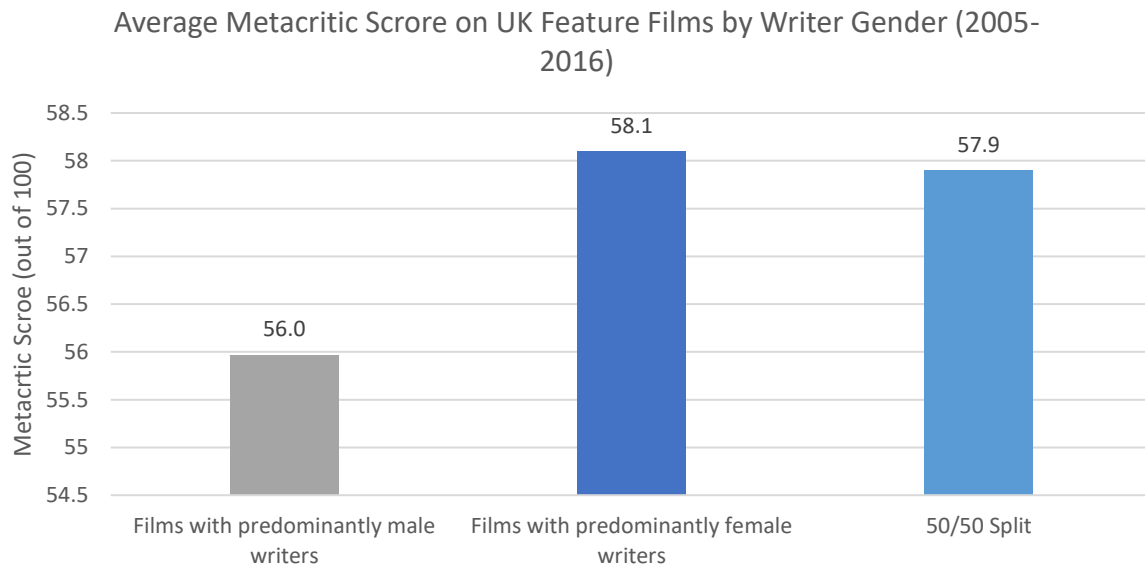


Critics

The trend seen in *Figure 13* and *Figure 14* for audiences is mirrored in average Metacritic scores. Metacritic is a weighted average of reviews from top critics and publications¹⁵. Films in the dataset had an average Metacritic score of 56.8.

Feature films predominantly written by male writers had an average score of 56.0, those written by predominantly female writers and evenly split writing teams had average scores of 58.1 and 57.9 respectively.

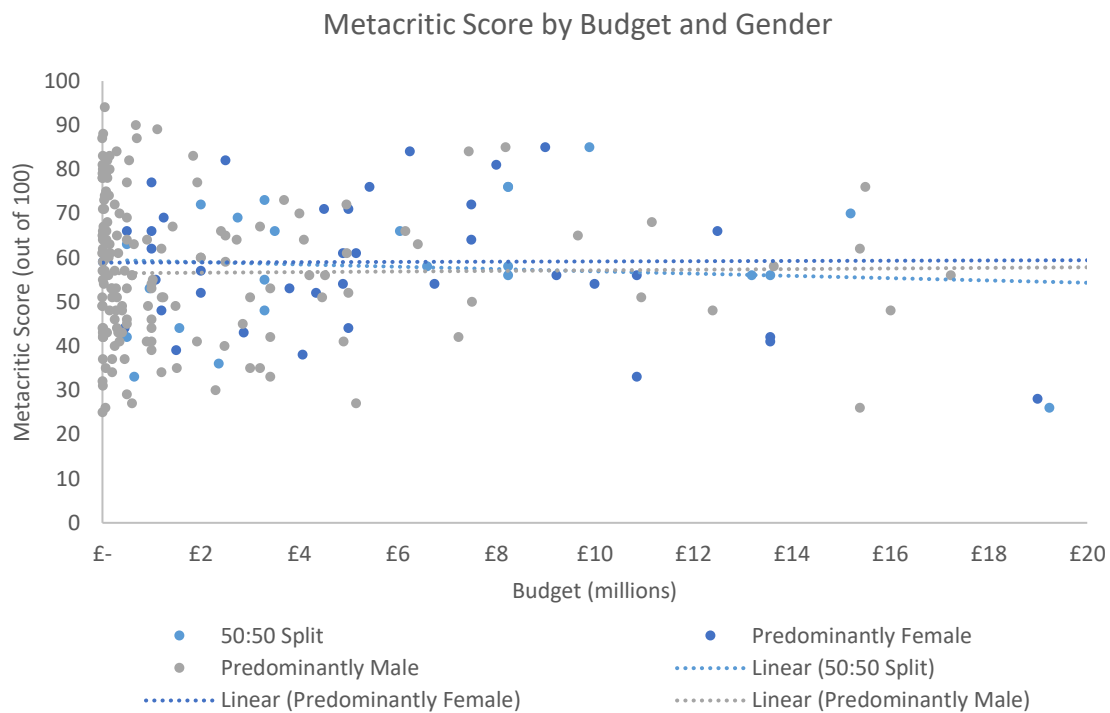
Figure 15: Metacritic Scores



¹⁵ Of the films in our dataset 28% had a Metacritic Score. This is because not all films make it to cinemas and the minority are reviewed by “top critics” according to Metacritic’s criteria.

As with audience ratings, critics tend to prefer female written films. However, as *Figure 16* demonstrates, this trend is subtler than for audiences¹⁶.

Figure 16: Metacritic Scores (Scatter)



The overall correlation of audience and critic ratings reinforces the finding that viewers tend to have more positive responses to female-written films.

Due to the inherent difficulty of making objective aesthetic claims, this evidence does not demonstrate that films written by women are better in any decisive sense. However, it should dispel any suggestion that female-written films are either less highly regarded or less popular with audiences.

¹⁶ Male-written films receive marginally higher critical ratings for big-budget films, however, there are too few female-written or 50:50-written films with exact budgets to draw any serious conclusions from this data.

1.2e Box Office Revenue

Key Stats

Female-written films had higher average UK box office revenue than films written by their male counterparts, in five of six studied budget bands.

Female-written films had higher average worldwide box office revenue than films written by their male counterparts, in four of five studied budget bands.

Capturing the full profitability of features is difficult due to limitations in available data. The majority of costs and expenditure are often hidden from public view, and there is little pressure on productions to fully report their eventual revenue.

However, it is again possible to use various datasets to produce a weight of evidence from which meaningful inferences can be drawn regarding the relative revenue (if not profitability) of male and female-written films.

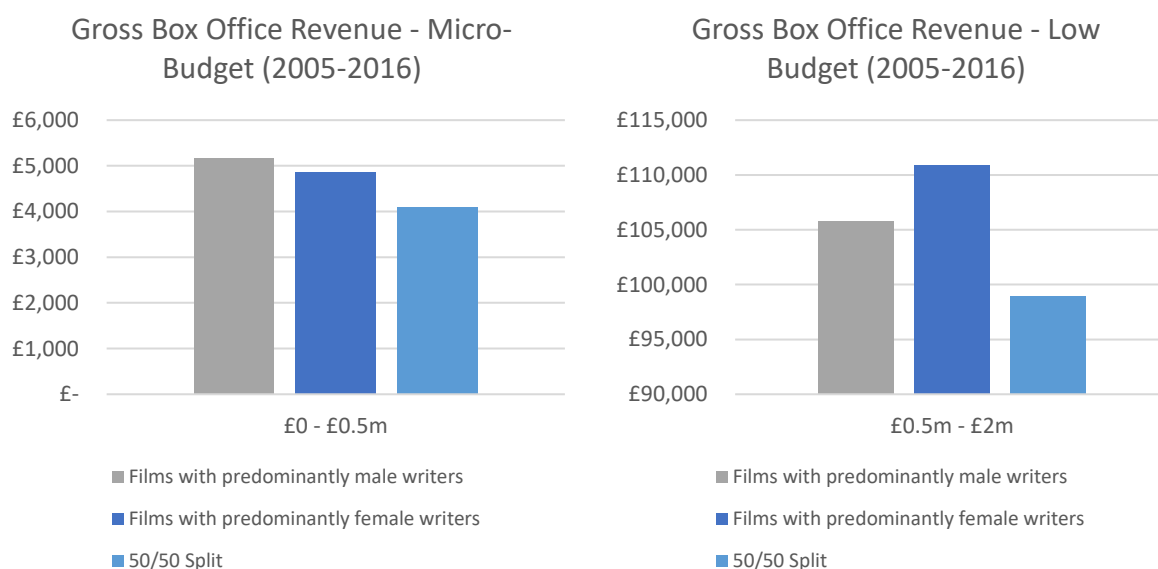
The findings below combine budget data with UK box office gross and worldwide box office gross. This provides two separate measures of the average return on UK Feature Films, which can then be divided by the gender of writing teams.

This methodology¹⁷ produces a remarkably consistent finding: films written predominantly by female writers tend to have higher revenues, both domestically and internationally, and across most budget bands, than those written predominantly by their male counterparts¹⁸.

UK Box Office Revenue

Microbudget (£0 - £0.5m) is the only budget band in which predominantly male-written films have the highest average UK box office return. Averaging 6% more than films written predominantly by women.

Figure 17: UK Box Office (Micro-Low)



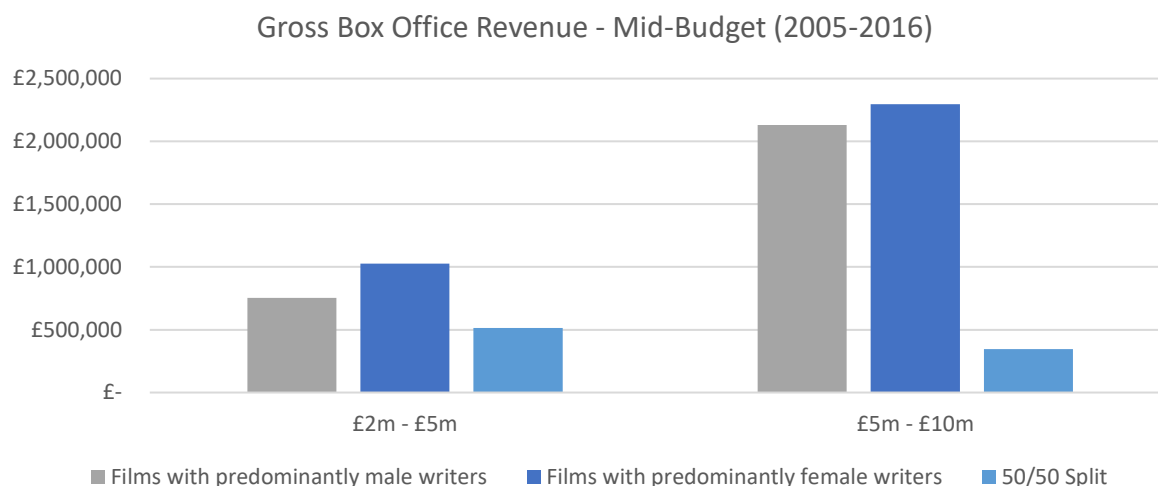
¹⁷ The limitation of this methodology is in the inexact relation of revenue and profitability. Even within budget bands the former does not provide a reliable measure for the latter, due to the complexity of costs and recoupment in feature film making.

¹⁸ The relative rarity of evenly-split writing teams means that findings regarding the profitability of 50/50 written films have limited statistical significance, and higher variance in results is expected.

Part One – Film

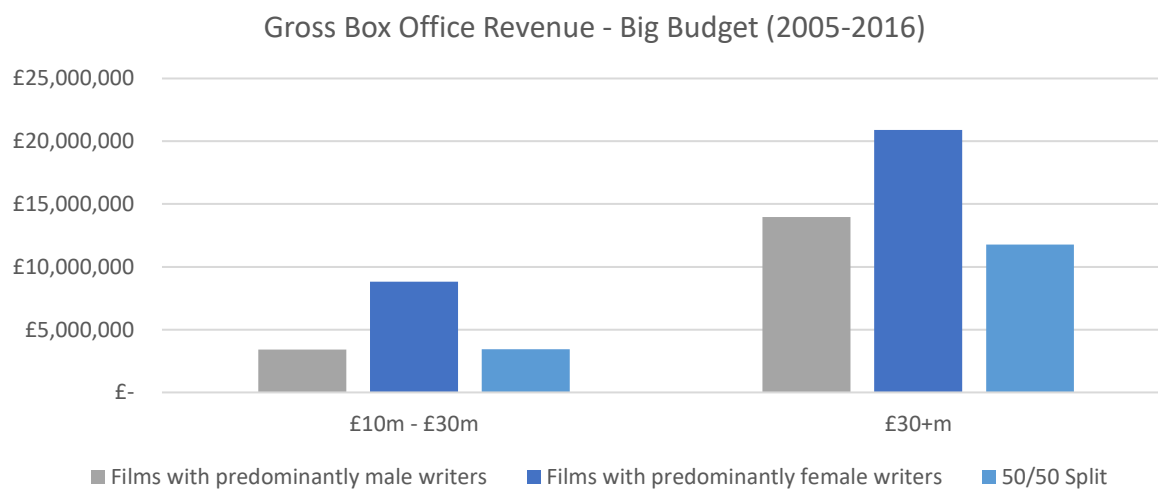
Low/Mid Budget Features (£0.5m - £2m) written predominantly by women are 5% more profitable, Mid Budget Films (£2m - £5m) are 27% more profitable at the UK Box Office, and Mid/High Budget Features (£5m - £10m) are 7% more profitable on average at the UK Box Office, when written predominantly by women¹⁹.

Figure 18: UK Box Office (mid)



Due to the small total number of films falling into the highest budget bands, findings regarding their profitability should be viewed more modestly, and greater variance is to be expected. However, in both bands female-written films continued to be significantly more profitable at the UK Box Office (61% and 33% on average).

Figure 19: UK Box Office (big)



Films written by evenly split writing teams tend to average less at the UK Box Office than either predominantly male or predominantly female written features.

¹⁹ This could plausibly be another product of data-limitations. Given female films are more likely to fall into mid-budget ranges than low-budget, it is plausible a greater number of female films in lower budget bands fall into the upper echelons within that range (as the ranges remain large). As such the greater revenue could result from this greater initial budget, and this might influence eventual profitability (although the consistency of the findings at bigger-budgets mitigates this concern).

Part One – Film

Worldwide Box Office Revenue

Worldwide Box Office Gross provides a separate dataset on the revenue for feature films. However, the findings match those from the UK Box Office closely.

Although predominantly male-written films average higher gross revenue at the micro-budget level, across all other budget bands predominantly female written films had higher average worldwide gross box office returns (by relative averages ranging from 21% to 61%)²⁰.

Figure 20: Worldwide Box Office (Micro-Low)

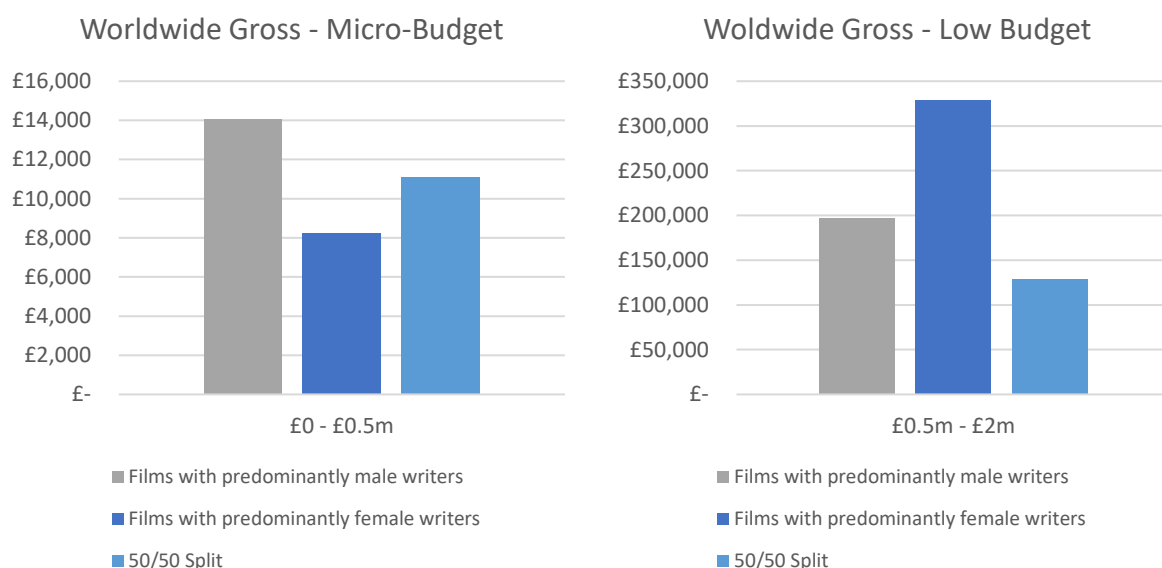
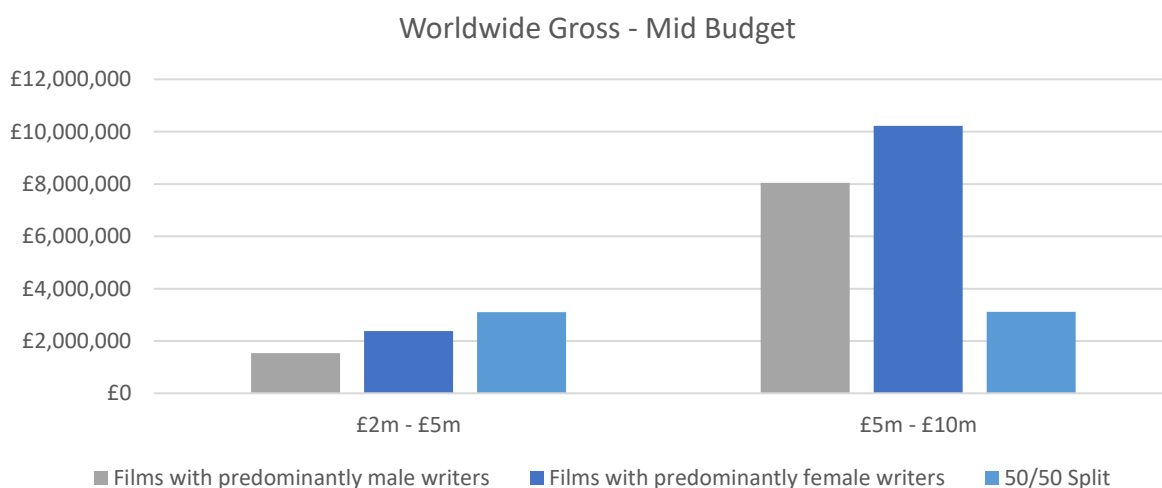
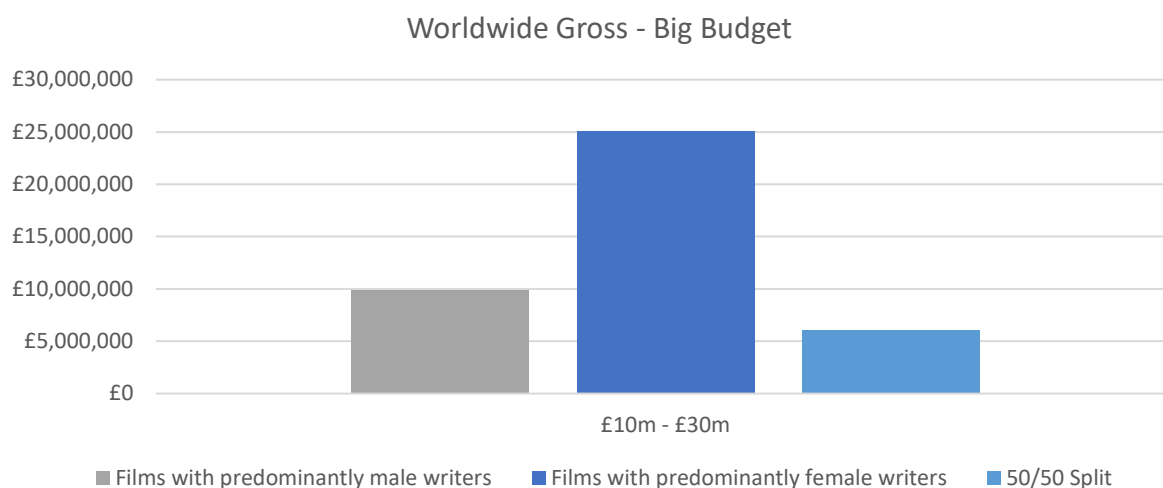


Figure 21: Worldwide Box Office (Mid)



²⁰ As with data on 50/50 writing teams, limitations in the quantity of worldwide box office data means caution should be taken in drawing strong conclusions regarding the global profitability of bigger budget films, as there are a few films in these datasets.

Figure 22: Worldwide Gross (big)



There is some divergence from UK box office findings in respect to evenly split writing teams²¹. Although they continue to perform slightly worse than those written primarily by male writers, they are more profitable at the worldwide box office for films budgeted at £2m - £5m, than any other type. Across the other budget bands, the findings on these evenly split teams are consistent.

Despite the limitations of this data as an absolute measure of profitability, it does provide a broad indication of the relative financial success of male and female written films.

The consistency with which predominantly female-written films outperform others at the box office, both domestically and internationally, does suggest that there is currently a meaningful correlation between the gender of writing teams and their relative box office returns.

²¹ Again, this is likely to be a product of the smaller dataset allowing greater variance.

1.2f Public Funding

Key Stats

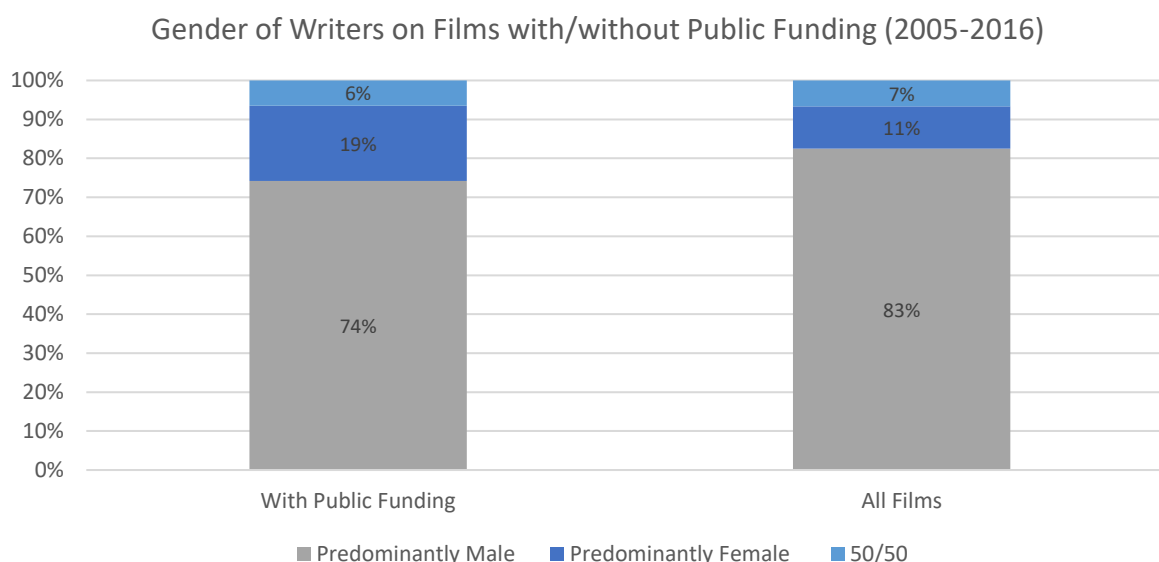
27% of films backed by a UK-based funding body had at least one female writer (compared to 21% for the industry as a whole)

The collection and availability of gender data on applicants and recipients to Regional Screen Agency Funds, appears to have improved notably in the last five years.

Over 100 different public funding bodies²² helped finance UK feature films, at least in part²³, between 2005-16. The results below are limited to those that provided at least some funding for a minimum of 10 total films shot in the UK. In total, more than 25% of all UK feature films in the dataset received at least some public funding.

In general, films receiving at least part of their funding from public bodies are more likely to have female writers.

Figure 23: Public Funding



²² Our definition of “public funding body” is intentionally broad, including dedicated film-funding bodies (e.g. the BFI), other arts bodies (e.g. the Arts Council), regional film funding bodies (e.g. Film London), local councils, foreign governmental organisations and charitable film funding bodies (e.g. the Bertha Foundation), as long as they have provided at least some financial support to feature films shot in the UK between (2005-2016). This support could have occurred in either development or production stages. Hence, the Irish Film Board, despite not being UK-based is included in general findings, as it has provided financial support for a large number of films shot at least in part in the UK.

²³ In most cases, public funding makes up a relatively small percentage of a feature film’s total funding. However, support from public funding bodies is often key in securing further financing.

Part One – Film

The table below shows the top twelve UK-based public funding bodies²⁴ who backed at least ten UK feature films between 2008-16, ranked according to the percentage of UK films backed.

Figure 24: Public Funding (Table)

UK Based Public Funding Body	Total Films Backed	% of Public-Funded UK Films	With Female Writer	Without Female Writer
<i>BFI / UKFC</i>	268	32%	26%	74%
<i>BBC</i>	99	12%	26%	74%
<i>BBC Films</i>	85	10%	22%	78%
<i>Creative Scotland</i>	67	8%	23%	77%
<i>Ffilm Cymru Wales</i>	46	5%	23%	77%
<i>Northern Irish Screen</i>	38	4%	32%	68%
<i>Creative England</i> ²⁵	33	4%	55%	45%
<i>EM Media</i>	31	4%	15%	85%
<i>Northern Film & Media</i>	30	4%	29%	71%
<i>Screen Yorkshire</i>	26	3%	11%	89%
<i>The BRITDOC Foundation</i> ²⁶	23	3%	44%	56%
<i>Film London</i>	14	2%	50%	50%

Over the studied period, 27% of films backed by a UK based funding body had at least one female writer (compared to 21% for the industry as a whole). However, there were significant differences in representation between the various public funding bodies.

The BFI (and UK Film Council prior to 2011) directly funds (at least in part) over 30% of all UK Films with public funding, but are also responsible for funding the national and regional screen agencies. A higher percentage of BFI funding has consistently gone to female-written projects than the UK Industry as a whole, but by 5%, less than the average for public funding bodies. Data provided by the BFI through freedom of information requests does however suggest an increasing number of female-led projects supported over the last three years.

Other bodies, most notably Film London (50%) and Creative England (55%), have higher levels of female representation amongst the writing teams of the films they support, than the BFI.

²⁴ As the dataset extends from 2005-16 there are a number of bodies included which are no longer operational. These are EM Media, Northern Film and Media and Screen Yorkshire. The Irish Film Board has been excluded from this table as they are not UK based.

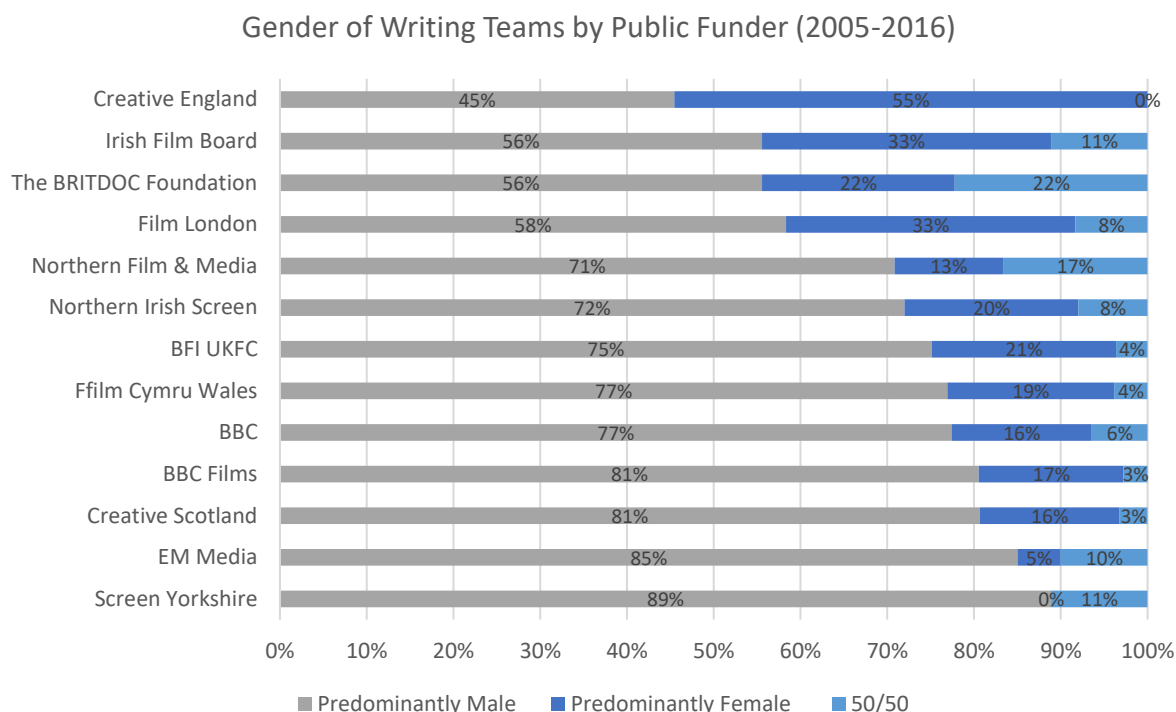
²⁵ Creative England's programmes focus on entry level roles, so the higher representation on the projects they support may be notable, as it suggests the possibility of differing relative levels of employment for male and female writers at different career stages. For more detail See Section X.

²⁶ The BRITDOC Foundation is unique on this list, being a non-profit funded primarily by Channel 4 and NGOs, as well as some commercial partnerships.

Part One – Film

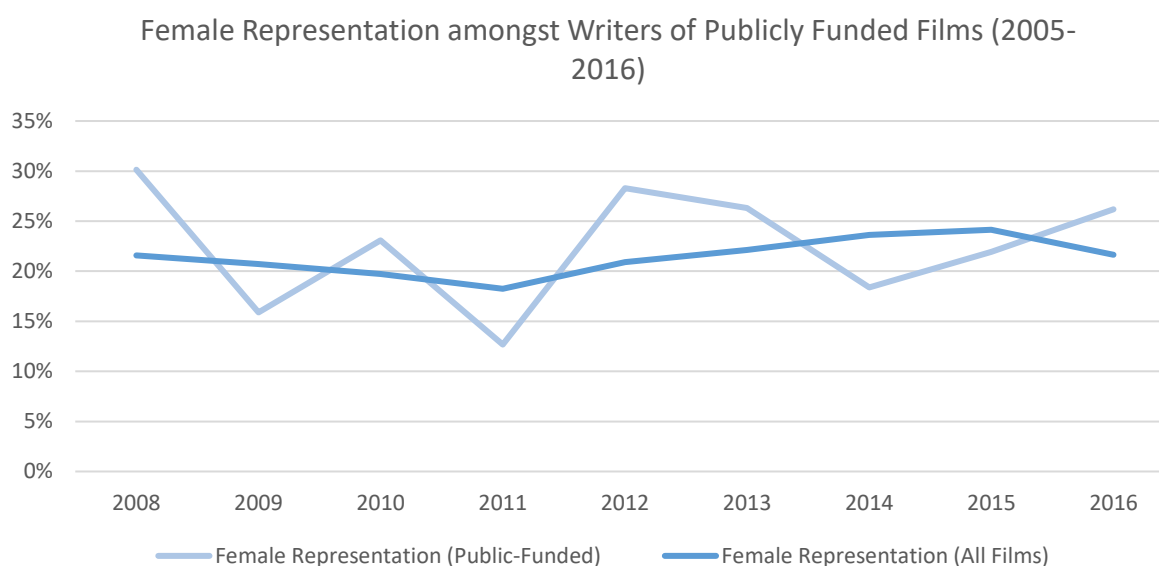
Figure 25 provides an overview of the gender of writers on UK feature films receiving at least some public funding. It is notable that only Creative England and Film London are the only UK-based, public funding bodies with significantly higher representation than UK film industry averages.

Figure 25: Public Funding (Full)



The percentage of publicly funded films with a female writer has not improved markedly across the studied period²⁷:

Figure 26: Public Funding (over time)



²⁷ Representation amongst publicly funded films does fluctuate markedly. From over 30% in 2008 to less than 15% in 2011, whilst there are multiple points at which industry representation as a whole actually passes films with public funding. Again, this greater variance should be expected, due to the relative number of films receiving public funding. But the level of fluctuation in this case does remain notable.

Data Collection and Disclosure

As part of the research for this report, Freedom of Information (FOI) requests on the gender of applicants to and recipients of public funding, were sent to the six largest UK-based public funding bodies currently operating. This was primarily to allow an additional layer of data validation, but also allows an assessment of the data currently being collected by the bodies, and their willingness to provide the available data.

During previous research into female directors conducted for Directors UK and published in *Cut out of the Picture*, similar FOI requests were also made. However, responses were limited. Northern Irish Screen and Creative England were able to provide data, but Creative Scotland, Film London, Ffilm Cymru and the BFI were not able to. However, data collection and the willingness of public bodies to share it has, it appears, improved in the two years since these requests.

Figure 27 details both the responses in 2016 for the *Cut out of the Picture Report* and those for FOI requests submitted as part of this research:

Figure 27: FOI Requests

Public Funding Body	2015/16	2017/18
<i>BFI</i>	Could not provide data	Provided top-level data from 2011 onwards
<i>Creative England</i>	Provided Top-level data from 2011 onwards	Provided top-level data from 2011 onwards
<i>Creative Scotland</i>	Could not provide data	Did not provide data
<i>Ffilm Cymru</i>	Provided top-level data for 2014-2015	Provided full data from 2014 onwards
<i>Film London</i>	Could not provide data	Provided detailed data from 2014 onwards
<i>Northern Irish Screen</i>	Provided full data 2007-2015	Provided full data 2010-2016 and additional data covering 2004-10
<i>BBC</i>	Could not provide data	The BBC has announced a new data collection and publication process under Project Diamond. Please see <i>Section 5.2a</i> for more details.

Multiple follow-ups were sent to Creative Scotland and we were assured data would be provided. However, it was never forthcoming (the original FOI request was sent and acknowledged over four months prior to the publication of this report).

New BFI Policy announcements and actions have begun to more concertedly address the disparities seen so far. For more detail see *Section 5.2b*.

Summary of Findings

This section has looked at a range of facets of the film industry and their connection to the gender of writers. In summary, each section found the following:

4. Budgets (1.2a)
 - a. On average, the budgets for male-written films are higher than the budgets for female-written films.
 - b. Female-written films are comparatively more likely to be mid-budget than low-budget features. But least likely to be big-budget features.
5. Genre (1.2b)
 - a. Female writers are comparatively far less likely to write certain genres than others.
 - b. These differences are not justified by pre-existing preference differences amongst audiences or solely a result of the correlation of genre and budget (although the two are connected).
6. Reviews and Audiences (1.2c)
 - a. Female-written films are, in general, more positively received by audiences, than those written by their male counterparts.
 - b. Female-written films are, in general, better reviewed by critics, than those written by their male counterparts.
7. Box Office Revenue (1.2d)
 - a. Female-written films have, in general, higher gross revenues than those written by their male counterparts.
8. Public Funding (1.2e)
 - a. Films receiving UK public funding are, in general, more likely to be female-written, than films not receiving public funding.
 - b. However, only two UK-based public funding bodies (Film London and Creative England) have notably higher representation than non-publicly-funded films.

1.3 Other Creatives, Crew and Cast

This chapter examines gender equality across the film industry. It reveals that the trend seen in respect to writers is symptomatic of a broader disparity between men and women in the film industry.

1.3a Key Creatives

Key Stats

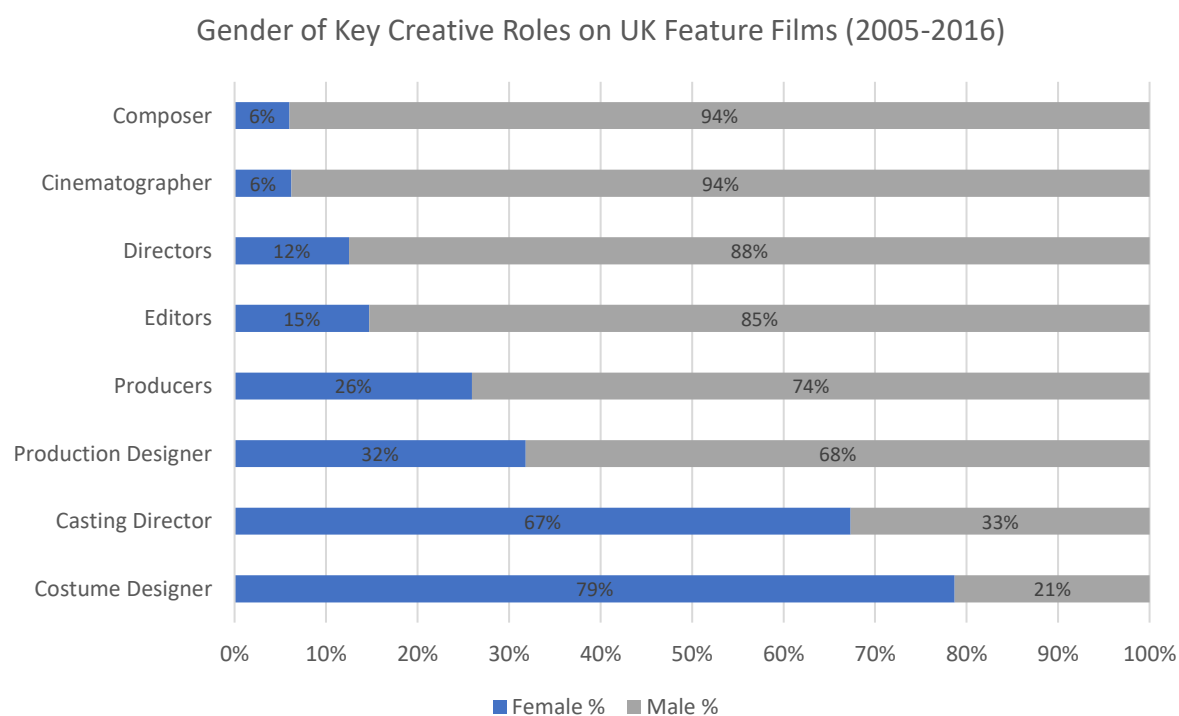
12% of all directors credited on a UK feature film between 2005 and 2016 were female.

15% of editors, 6% of cinematographers and 26% of senior producers are female.

The only key creative roles with female majorities over the last decade are costume designer and casting director.

Of the major creative roles on film productions, only two have a female majority: casting director (67%) and costume designer (79%). Including writers, seven of the nine key creative roles are therefore predominantly held by men.

Figure 28: Key Creatives Gender



The central creative team²⁸, with the greatest influence over film content and the eventual product viewed by audiences, have only 6% to 15% female representation.

As such, the disparity seen between male and female writers appears to also affect key creatives across the film industry.

²⁸ Here defined as directors, cinematographers and editors, in addition to writers. As will be addressed in detail *Section 4.5: Systemic Issues*, producers have additional influence on broader hiring patterns across a production and female representation amongst producers has a distinct pattern, this warrants examining producers separately to the other key creative roles.

1.3b Crew

Key Stats

Over half of all film crew departments have less than 30% female employees.

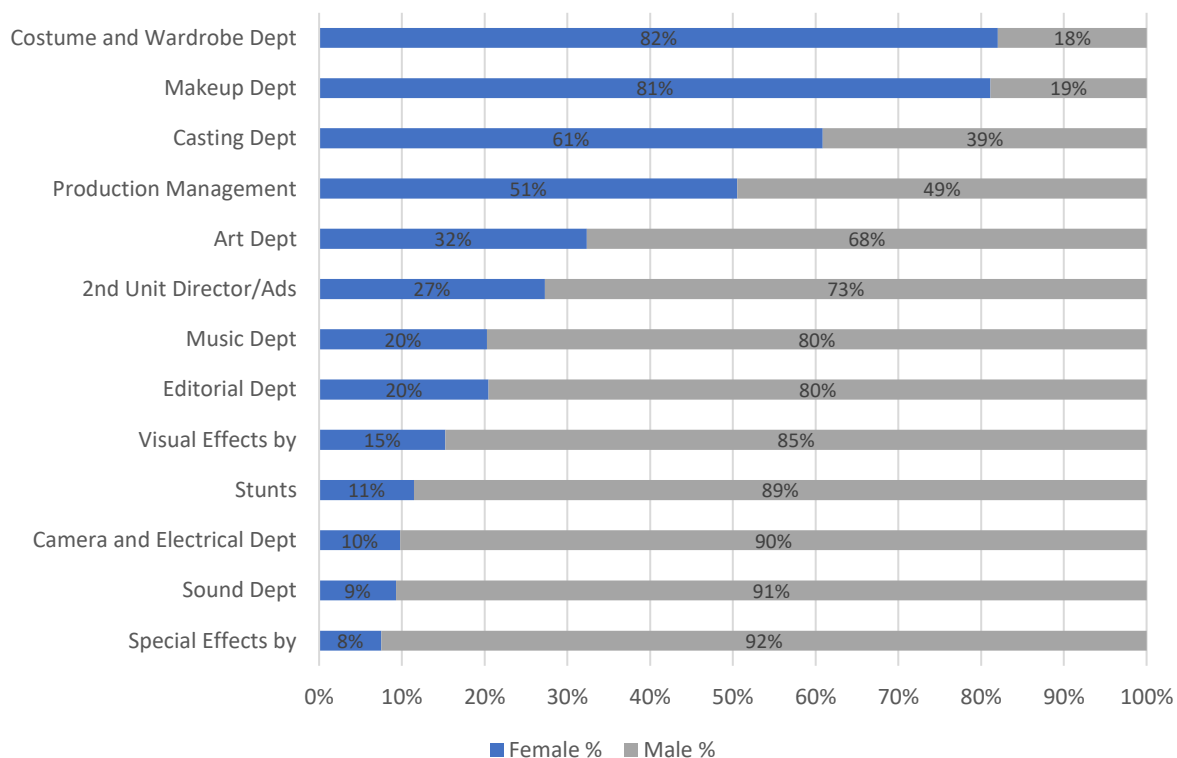
Female representation is particularly low on technical crew departments (electrical, camera, SFX, VFX, editing).

The composition of film crews broadly resembles the gender ratios seen in key creative roles.

Roles traditionally perceived as “female” (costume, makeup and casting), have departments primarily staffed by female employees. However, of the thirteen crew categories, nine are male dominated and eight have female representation below 30%.

Figure 29: Crew Gender

The Gender of Crew in Major Departments on UK Feature Films (2005-2016)



Technical crew roles, such the camera and electrical department (10%), special effects (8%), sound department (9%), visual effects (15%), editorial department (20%) and stunts (11%) have notably low levels of female employment.

1.3c The Relation of Department Heads and their Crew

Key Stats

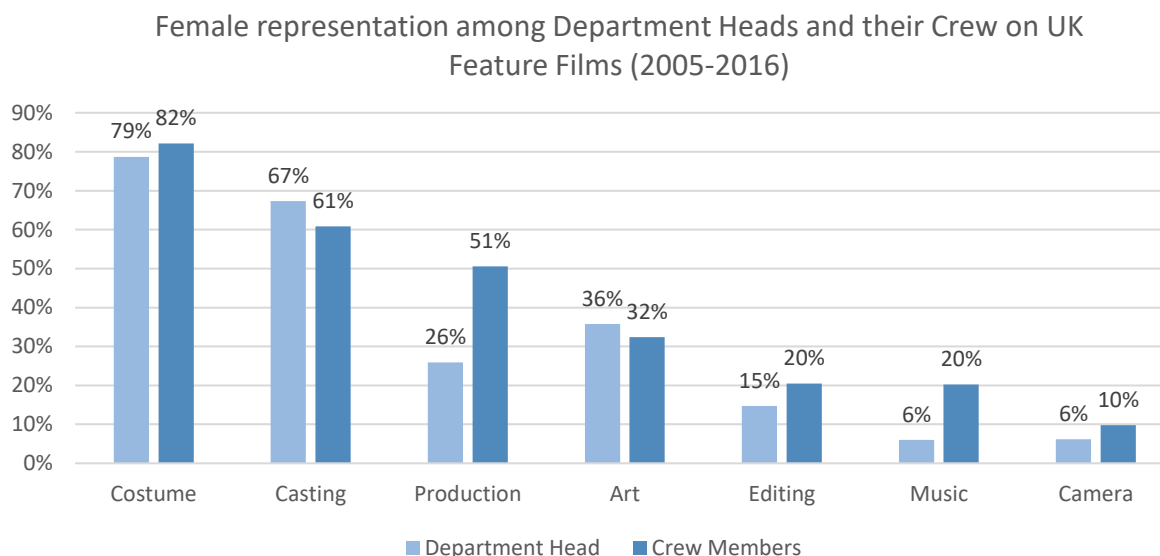
Only two of seven departments are more likely to have a female head than their average crew makeup (Casting and Art).

Over 50% of crew members in the production department are female, yet only 26% of senior producers are. This is the largest single disparity across any film department.

Part Three: Career Progression will look at the trajectory of male and female writers in more detail. But across the industry there is an inverse correlation between the seniority of a given role and the likelihood that it is held by a female employee, with those roles with the greatest influence over the final product of the film, comparatively more likely to be held by men.

In only two of seven departments is the head of department more likely to be female than a given crew member (Casting and Art).

Figure 30: Relation of Key Creatives and Crew



The differences are particularly stark for producers. Whilst over 50% of crew members in the production department are female, only 26% of fully credited producers²⁹ are. This level of disparity should draw particular concern – it is consistent over the last decade and the scale of the difference points to a problem that is highly unlikely to be a product simply of the individual preferences of employees. Furthermore, given producers are at the centre of film hiring decisions, it is possible the trend of limited career progression for female producers is a contributory factor to other gender disparities in the film industry.

The differences in the music, camera and editing departments also suggest some issue with relative career progressions. Conversely, the art and casting departments show a moderate preference for female employees in senior roles³⁰.

²⁹ There are a wide range of types of producer credit. Fully credited producers are those receiving either “Executive Producer” or “Producer” credits, all other credits (production manager, production assistant etc.) are classified as production crew.

³⁰ Any specific conclusion as to the cause of these difference should be viewed sceptically at this stage. Career progression within the film industry is complex, with individuals often moving between roles, particularly early in their career.

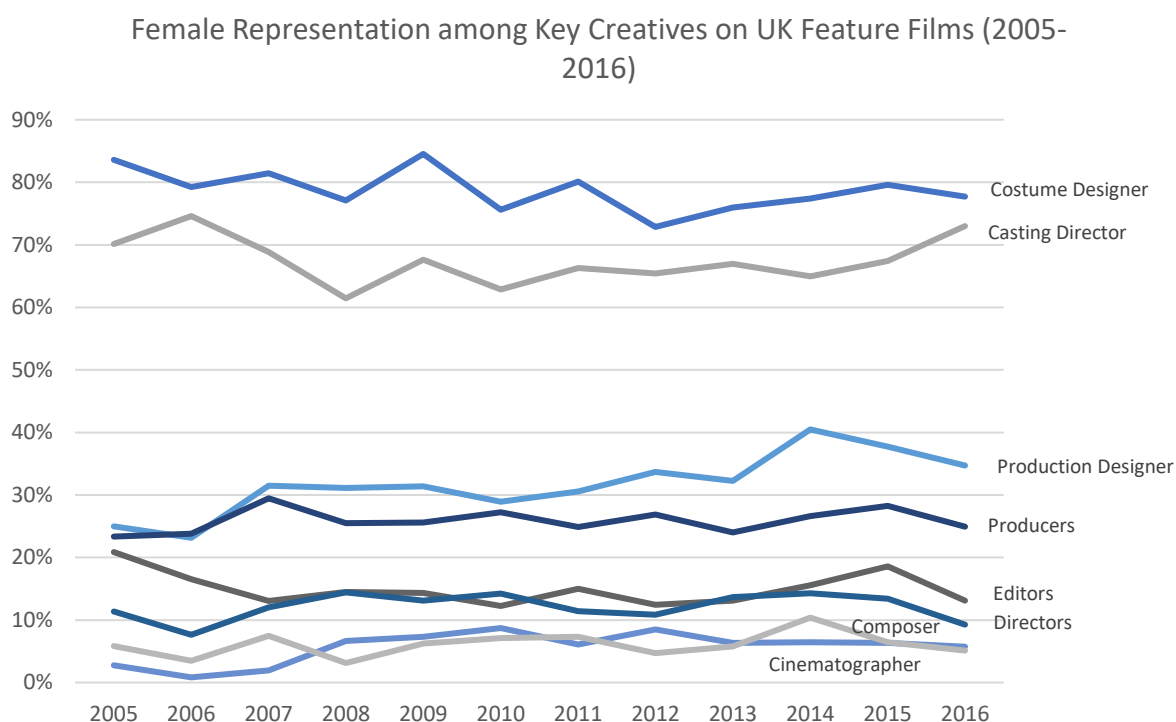
1.3d Representation over Time

Key Stats

There has been little overall change to the levels of female representation in key creative roles. There has been a modest increase in the number of female employees in certain crew departments.

Figure 31 demonstrates that, although there has been some limited fluctuation, female representation across both key creative roles was remarkably stable between 2005 and 2016.

Figure 31: Key Creatives (over time)



With the exception of production designers, there has been little overall increase in female representation in the key creative roles on film productions. And although there have been small fluctuations in levels of representation, overall the percentage of women in key roles has remained consistent across disciplines.

However, there has been a subtle overall improvement in female representation across crews as a whole. Of the thirteen departments in the dataset, twelve had more female crew members in 2016 than in 2005 (the editorial department was the exception with a decrease of 0.5%). Particular improvement was seen in production, art and casting departments, with sound, editorial, SFX and VFX departments showing the least improvement³¹.

It is notable that overall increases in female crew representation are more significant than any seen amongst key creative roles, directors or writers. Although the effect of this greater pool of female talent may be seen in more senior roles over the next decade, it is notable that so far it has had little impact on more senior roles in the industry.

³¹ See Appendix Three: Additional Data for a full breakdown of crew representation over the last decade.

1.3e Cast

Key Stats

32% of all cast credits on UK feature films (2005-2016) went to actresses.

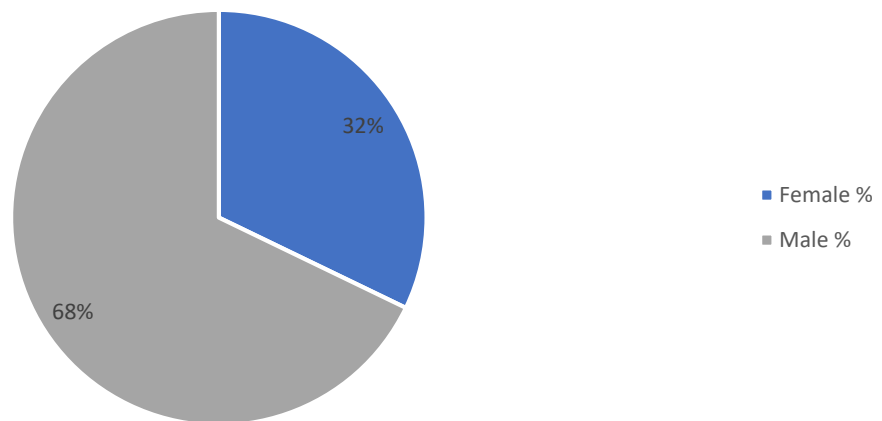
There has been little overall fluctuation in female representation amongst casts.

The cast of a film composes the final central aspect of its production. One of the main concerns with gender inequality in the film industry, and particularly amongst screenwriters, is that it could potentially impact representation on screen and the depictions of each gender in feature films.

Between 2005-16 a significant majority of credited roles went to male actors (68%).

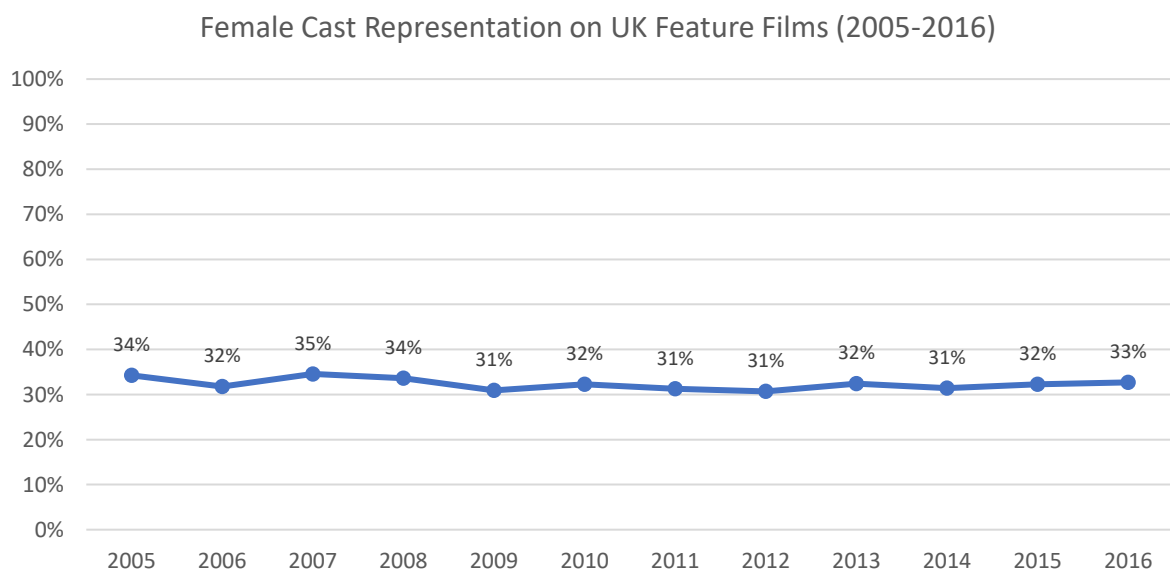
Figure 32: Cast Gender

Gender of All Cast Credits on UK Feature Films (2005-2016)



Furthermore, there has been little overall change to female representation amongst cast members:

Figure 33: Cast (over time)



Summary of Findings

This section has found evidence of similar disparities across other roles on film productions, as were shown for female writers:

9. Most key creative roles on film productions are held predominantly by men. (1.3a)
 - b. The central creative team (Director, Editor, Cinematographer and Writer) has particularly low levels of female representation.
10. There is a clear correlation between the seniority of a role and the likelihood it is held by a male employee. Department heads are comparatively less likely to be female than their crew, in all but two departments. (1.3c)
 - b. The problem is particularly stark for producers and the production department.
11. The impact of predominantly male control over the central creative team can be seen in the films produced by the industry. (1.3e)
 - b. Female cast members, and hence female characters on screen, remain notably rarer than their male counterparts (in film).
12. There has been a subtle improvement over the last decade in the percentage of female crew, however this has not been matched by an improvement in female representation in key creative roles. (1.3d)

Part Two – Television

2.1 Top Level Stats

This section will outline difference between male and female writers in the UK Television Industry. As well as examining trends in representation over the last decade.

Television data was provided by the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) and covers all broadcasts from 2001-2016, and also contains data for long-running shows from before 2000, broadcast on BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sianel 4 Cymru (S4C) channels.

2.1a Gender of UK Television Writers

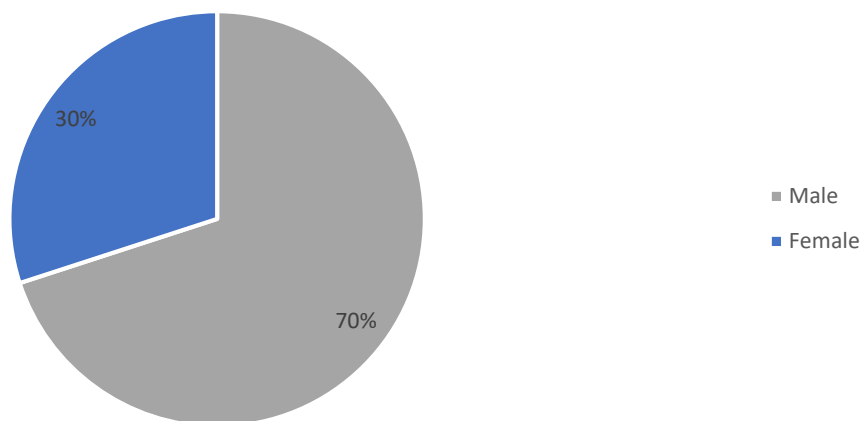
Key Stats

30% of all writers credited on at least one UK TV episode, between 2001 and 2016, were female. 28% of all UK TV episodes were predominantly female-written. 18% of all UK TV programmes were predominantly female-written.

A greater percentage of credited TV writers are female than credited film writers. However, the broader imbalance remains, as 30% of the 7,469 UK TV writers across the studied period were female, whilst 70% were male³².

Figure 34: Writer Gender (TV)

Gender of Credited UK TV Writers (2001-2016)



³² These figures exclude those writers for whom gender data could not be provided. These writers have also been excluded from all following findings. Additionally, certain types of broadcasts (like rebroadcasts of films and one-off documentaries) have been removed from the dataset. For more detail on data methodologies see *Appendix One – Methodology*

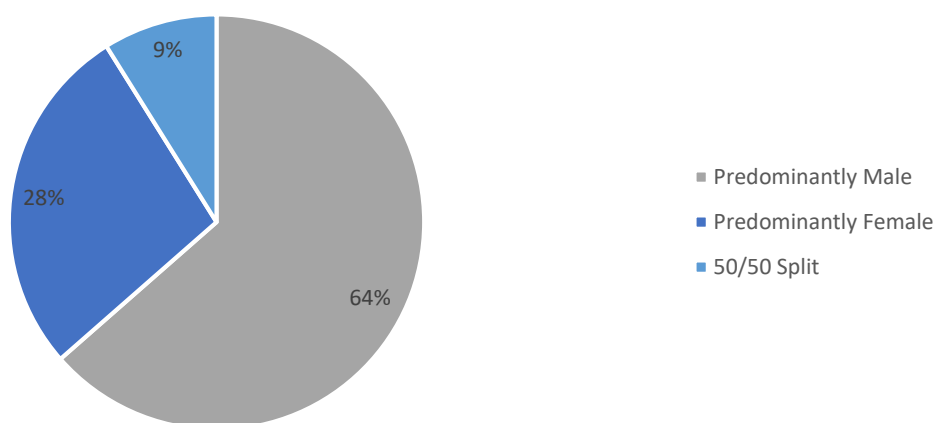
Part Two – Television

Female representation amongst writing teams on television episodes is consistent with the total number of female writers working in the television industry.

28% of all episodes (64,673 in total) were written predominantly by female writers, with a further 9% on evenly split teams.

Figure 35: UK TV Episodes

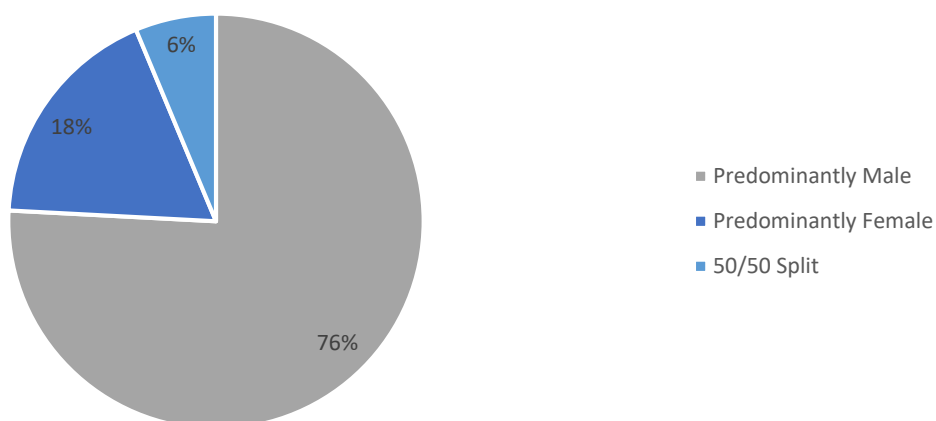
Gender of Writers of UK TV Episodes (2001-2016)



The overall disparity among writers does however have an impact on the number of programmes (3,906 in total) written primarily by female writers. Only 18% of all UK TV programmes are predominantly written by women³³.

Figure 36: UK TV Programmes

Gender of Writers of UK TV Programmes (2001-2016)



³³ Given the average number of episodes per programme, and the lack of predominantly female-written episodes, this compounding effect is to be expected.

2.1b Representation over time

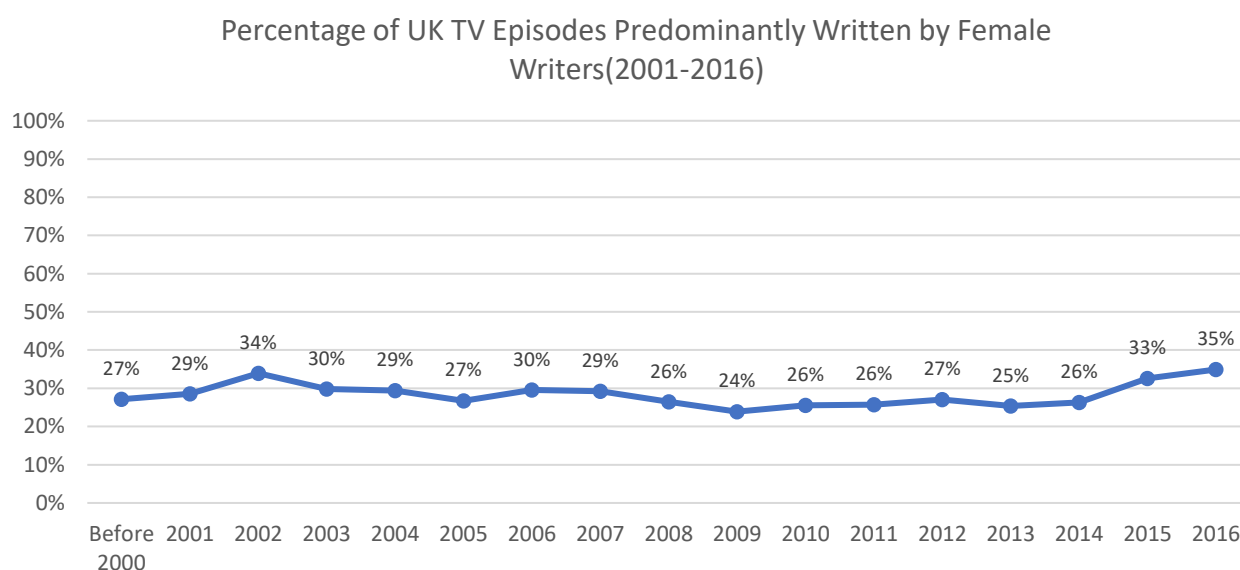
Key Stats

Female representation among female TV writers has increased since 2001.

The average year to year improvement in episodes predominantly written by female writers is still only 0.41%.

Much like the film industry, any overall trend towards improved female representation in the UK Television Industry is very limited.

Figure 37: UK TV (over time)



Between 2001 and 2016, there was a total improvement of 6%. However, there were fewer episodes written predominantly by female writers in every year from 2008 to 2014 than there were before 2000 and between 2001 and 2007.

Additionally, evenly split writing teams are becoming rarer, declining from 15% prior to 2000 and 11% in 2001 to 6% in 2015 and 5% in 2016.

Although this decline accounts for a part of the increase in primarily female written episodes in the last two years, there has still been marked improvement since 2014. However, this should be viewed sceptically, as overall, the average year to year improvement in episodes predominantly written by female writers is just 0.41%.

Summary of Findings

13. Female representation amongst writers is better in the television industry than in the film industry, however, female writers remain in the minority (2.1a)
14. As a result, the percentage of television episodes written predominantly by women is higher than the percentage of films, but still only 28% (2.1a)
15. The percentage of television programmes with a predominantly female writing staff is just 18% (2.1a).
16. There has been little overall change in female representation amongst writers, with a modest increase only in the last two years (2.1b).

2.2 The Television Industry

This section will look in detail at the size and type of television episodes and programmes in respect of the gender of the writer, providing more detail on the exact nature of the broad disparity seen in *Section 2.1*.

2.2a Time Slot

Key Stats

The likelihood a writer of a given show is female, negatively correlates with the expected advertising revenue for that programme's timeslot.

27% of morning programming is predominantly female-written. 14% of primetime programming is predominantly female-written.

Segmentation for the television data is more limited than for the film dataset. Information on programmes budgets and genre are unavailable at the time of this research. Instead, the total number of episodes for programmes and the original broadcast time slot will be used to provide an indication of the size, prestige and target audience of the programmes.

The dataset has been divided into four timeslots: early-morning, morning, daytime and primetime³⁴. Each timeslot has a generally defined period of the TV broadcasting day, as well as typical programme types and genres.

The table below provides a brief summary of the quintessential content for each timeslot:

Figure 38: Time Slot (descriptions)

Timeslot	Name	Description	Examples	Key Demographics
11pm – 6am	Early Morning	Majority of digital channels off the air, terrestrial channels primarily using reruns, films, news programming or nightscreens.	<i>BBC News, ITV Nightscreen</i>	Low levels of viewership across demographics
6am – 12pm	Morning	Infotainment (Breakfast television and news programming, usually live) and children's TV.	<i>Good Morning Britain, BBC Breakfast, Horrid Henry, Tinga Tinga Tales</i>	People getting ready for work or school, and stay-at-home adults/parents, children
12am – 6pm	Day-Time	Mixed-programming, including day-time soaps, light-entertainment and reruns. Children's TV in the mid-afternoon.	<i>Doctors, Bargain Hunt, Jeremy Kyle Show, Come dine with me, Loose Women</i>	Retirees, stay-at-home parents, students, children
6pm – 11pm	Prime-Time (Peak-time)	Tentpole programming including premiere dramas, continuing drama series, comedies and entertainment shows.	<i>Eastenders, Coronation Street, The Night Manager, I'm a Celebrity, Miranda, Utopia</i>	Most demographics catered for (viewing hours coincide with the end of the work day). Early-Peak focusses on family programming; late-peak on drama/comedy.

³⁴ There is no consistent definition of UK Timeslots, applied by all broadcasters. As such these definitions attempt to combine or average the time periods indicated for each timeslot by each broadcaster.

Part Two – Television

Much like the film industry, despite the large number of productions, the majority of premiere content is focussed on a relatively small number of programmes. Big-budget films account for the majority of audience views, whilst in television the same is true of prime-time viewing hours. This is particularly true for scripted and semi-scripted programming, which is crucial for writers.

The correlation of primetime programming and broadcaster revenue is apparent from the advertising rates charged by the major broadcasters³⁵:

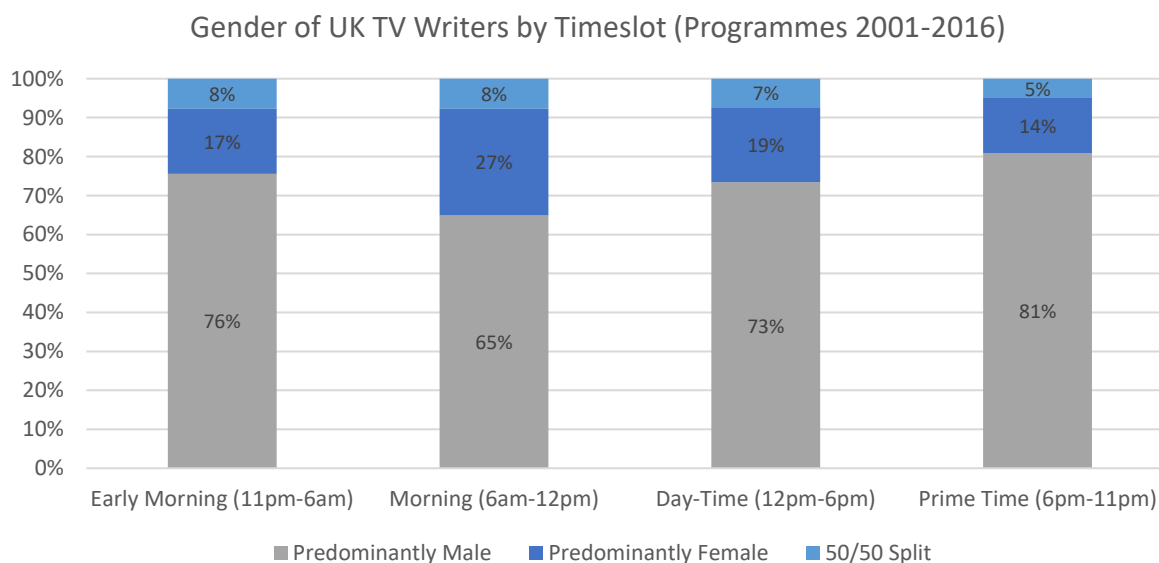
Figure 39: Time Slot (advertising rates for 30 Second Slot)

Name	ITV Rates	Channel 4 Rates	Channel 5 Rates	Sky 1
Early Morning/ Morning	£3,000 - £4,000	NA	NA	NA
Day-Time	£3,500 - £4,500	£1,000 - £2,000	£800 - £1,600	£150 - £250
Prime-Time (Peak-time)	£10,000 - £30,000	£10,000 - £20,000	£2,500 - £4,500	£650 - £1,150

This pattern also holds for smaller channels. For example, slots on the Horror Channel have a reported daytime rate of roughly £50-£150, but this rises to £150-300 for peak programming.

Female representation is best among writers of morning programming (27% predominantly female written). However, representation declines during day-time programming, and representations is worst during early peak (17:30 to 20:00) and late peak (20:00 to 23:00).

Figure 40: Timeslot (gender)



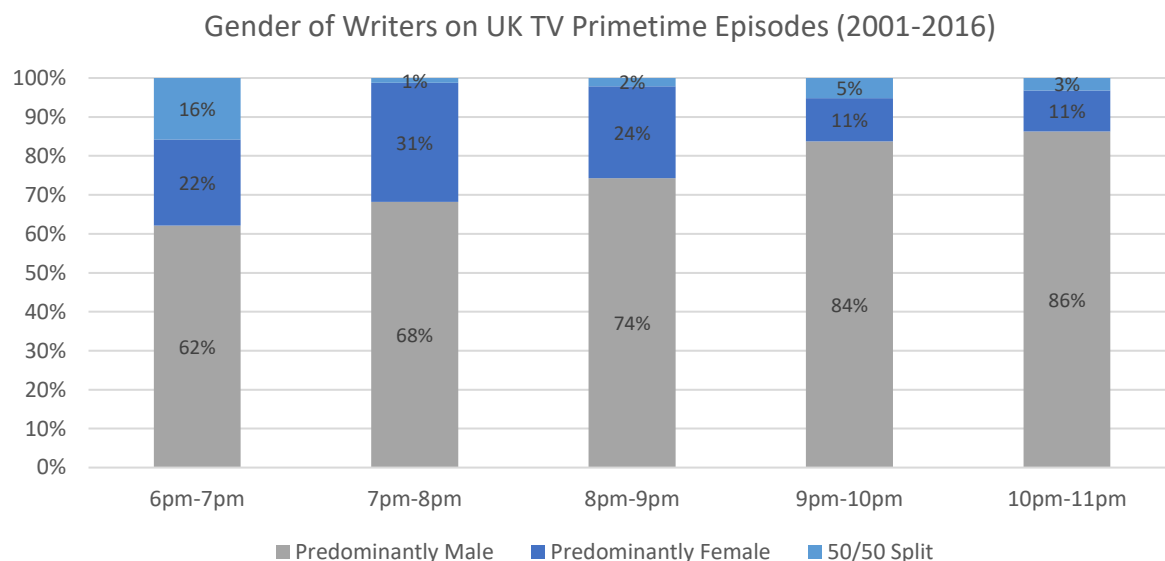
In total, 14% of primetime shows are written by predominantly female writing teams, with 5% by evenly divided writing times. Hence, although representation for female writers is better in the television industry than the film industry overall, representation during the crucial primetime period is only marginally higher than on feature films.

³⁵ 2017 Research conducted by The Drum, from information provided by the Broadcasters. These rates fluctuate throughout the year and dependent on programming (ITV suggest by +/-20%).

Part Two – Television

This trend can be seen in more detail during the different timeslots within primetime.

Figure 41: Primetime (Episodes)



Female writing teams are relatively common between 18:00 and 19:00, but as we move into early peak, and scripted drama and primetime programming take over, we see a rapid decline, with representation particularly low between 20:00 and 22:00.

The trend is a concerning one – the TV Licensing Telescope Report 2011 paints a clear picture of UK Television audience viewing habits using BARB data³⁶. It shows low levels of viewership during the morning and daytime slots, increasing from around 16:00 and peaking from 19:00 to 22:00, hence the rapid increase of advertising costs during those times.

The fact that the decline in female representation across timeslots negatively correlates with the size of expected audience, suggests that, much like in the film industry, female writers find it comparatively harder to access more prestigious roles.

³⁶ [TV Licensing Telescope Report 2011](#)

2.2b Episode Quantity and Continuing Drama Series

Key Stats

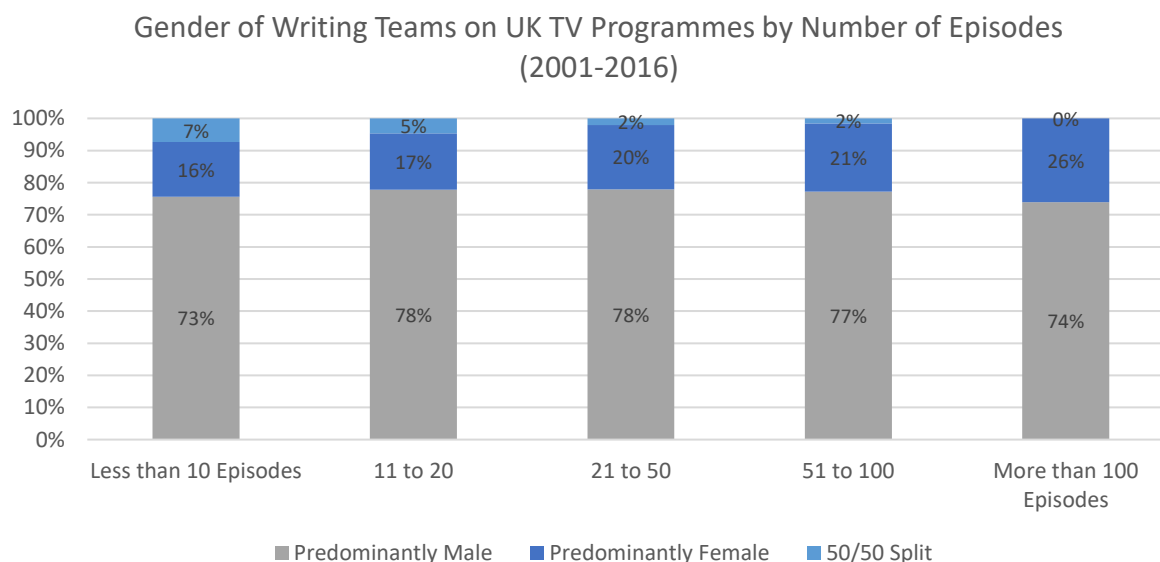
Female writers are comparatively more common on long-running series.

The higher proportion of female writers in continuing drama is impacting broader averages, particularly for primetime programming.

An alternative way to classify TV programming is by the longevity of series. UK television encompasses both limited-run programming (mini-series, one-off programming) to long-running soap dramas and high-volume television production. Segmenting the data by the total number of episodes a given programme has, produces an additional set of trends.

The greater the total number of episodes the programme has broadcast, the better female representation on writing teams tends to be; whilst the percentage of evenly-split writing teams gradually declines. In other words, relatively, female writers are more likely to write for longer running programmes.

Figure 42: Programmes by Number of Episodes



The best female representation can be found on series with over 100 episodes. These are primarily continuing drama series (CDS), including the major soaps and serials (such as *Doctors*, *Eastenders*, *Coronation Street* or *Hollyoaks*), and short form children’s television.

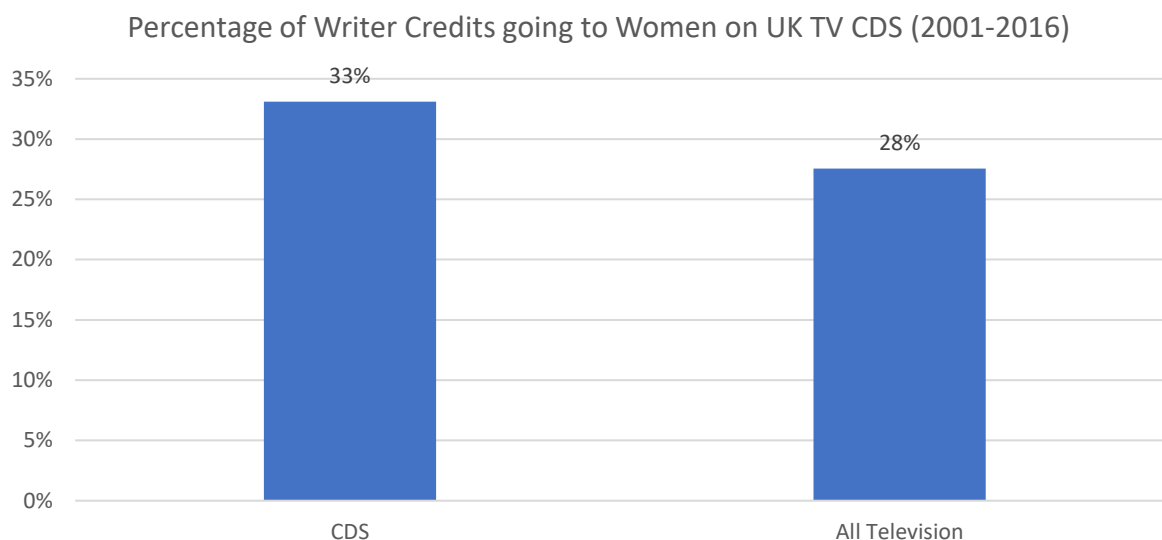
CDS are comparatively rare as a percentage of all programmes. They are predominantly male-written, and clustered during the mid-afternoon for daytime soaps and children’s programming, and early-peak for the prime-time soaps.

Despite their scarcity, the importance of CDS programmes is difficult to overstate. In total there were only 67 programmes classified as CDS (20 daytime and 47 primetime) over the studied period, but these accounted for 52% of all episodes broadcast during this period and 49% of all writing credits. Particularly important are Primetime CDS programmes, which are almost exclusively major soaps or serials. These alone make up 27% of all episodes and 26% of all writer credits during the studied period.

Part Two – Television

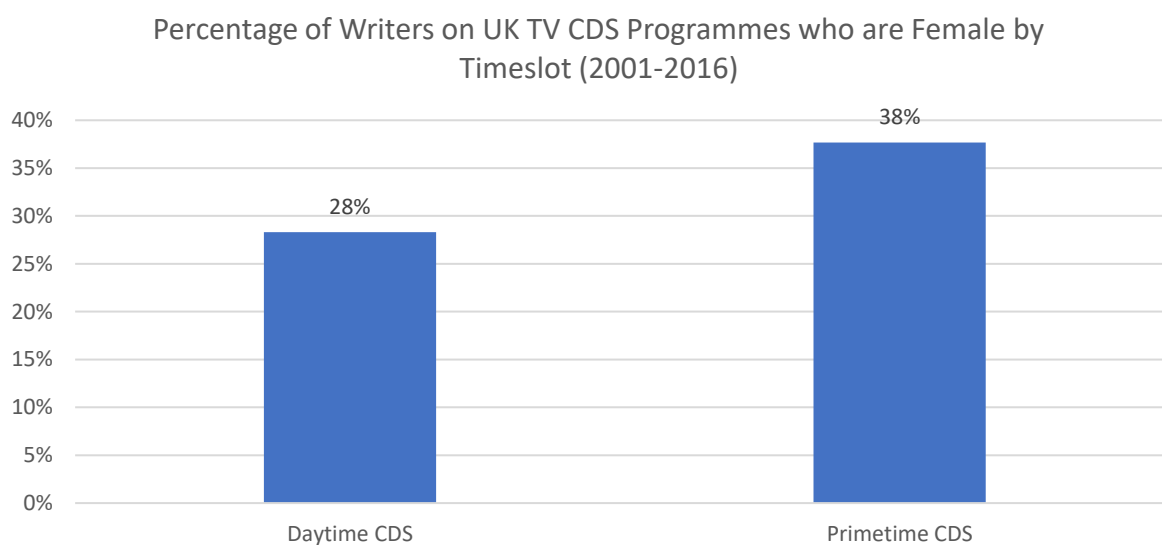
Although, as with other types of programmes, there is a dearth of predominantly female-written CDS programmes, this actually hides a trend of stronger representation in this area. As can be seen from the overall division of credits.

Figure 43: CDS Representation



Furthermore, a larger percentage of Primetime CDS credits go to female writers, than Daytime CDS.

Figure 44: CDS Representation (timeslot)

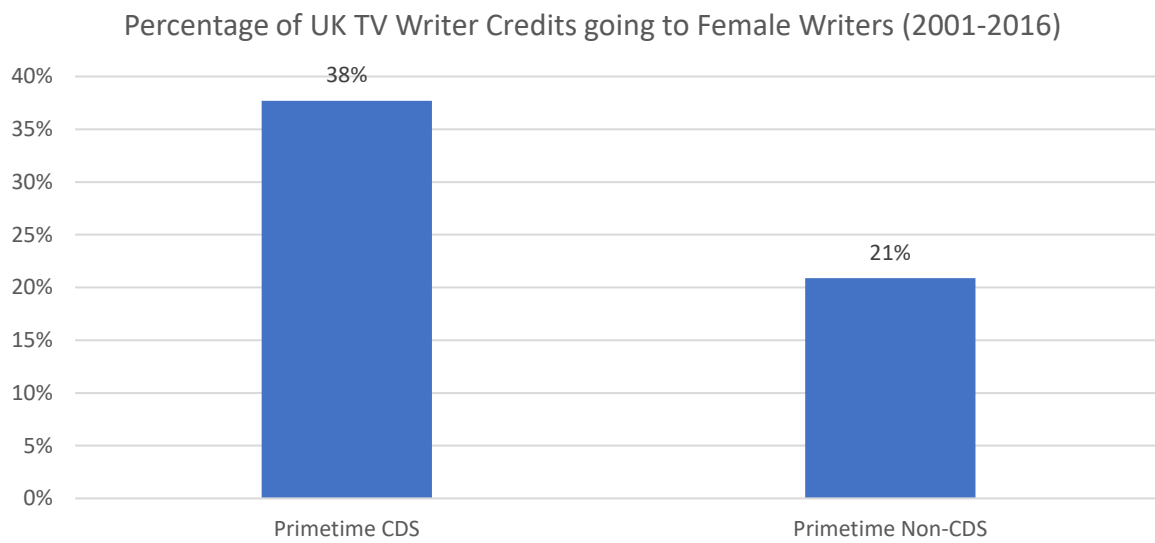


This is particularly problematic for other forms of primetime TV, as it suggests representation on original scripted drama and tentpole entertainment programming, in other words the shows with the highest budgets, greatest creative control and largest audiences are even less likely to be female-written.

Part Two – Television

Examining the relation of CDS programmes to other primetime programmes confirms this:

Figure 45: Primetime Representation (CDS)



In summary, CDS programming is more likely to be female-written than shorter-running programming. This higher representation for CDS is increasing the overall averages, and this effect appears particularly notable for primetime programming.

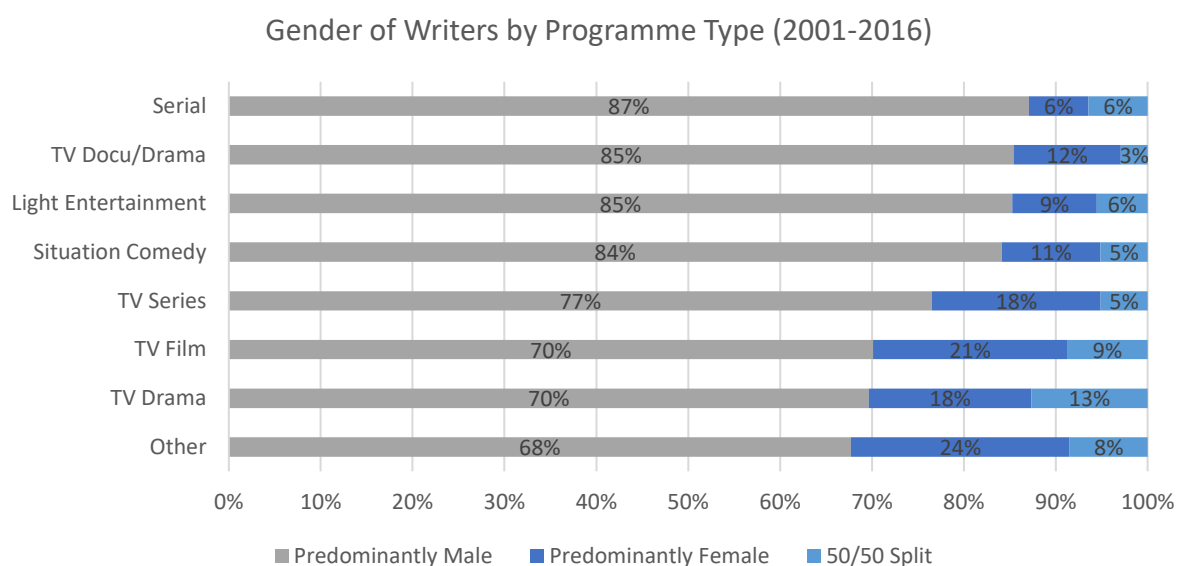
Part Two – Television

2.2c Programme Types

The segmentation of television data by programme type is more limited than the genre data available for films³⁷.

The dataset is categorised into broad types, but these are neither clearly distinct, nor do they adequately capture all programme types (see *Appendix One - Methodology*). As such, inference from programme type will be limited. However, it does reinforce the findings seen above.

Figure 46: Programme Type



Representation is highest in semi-scripted and non-traditional types of programming (here defined as “other”³⁸), and female writers are rarest in traditional programming, drama and mini-series.

It also reveals that female representation is particularly low in comedy (11%) and light entertainment (9%). This is similar to film, where comedy had notably low levels of representation when compared to other mid-budget features.

³⁷ Due to its data limitations, key stats have been omitted from this section, as they have the potential to be misleading.

³⁸ The prevalence of programming categorised as “other” in the original ALCS database further limits the significance of this data.

2.2d Children’s TV

Key Stats

36% of all credited children’s TV writers are female.

34% of all children’s TV credits got to female writers. Compared to 28% for non-children’s TV.

CBeebies is the only UK channel studied which had fewer than 50% of its episodes written predominantly by men.

Children’s TV programming has higher female representation than the UK TV industry as a whole. However, predominantly female-written programming remains a minority.

Figure 48: Children’s TV

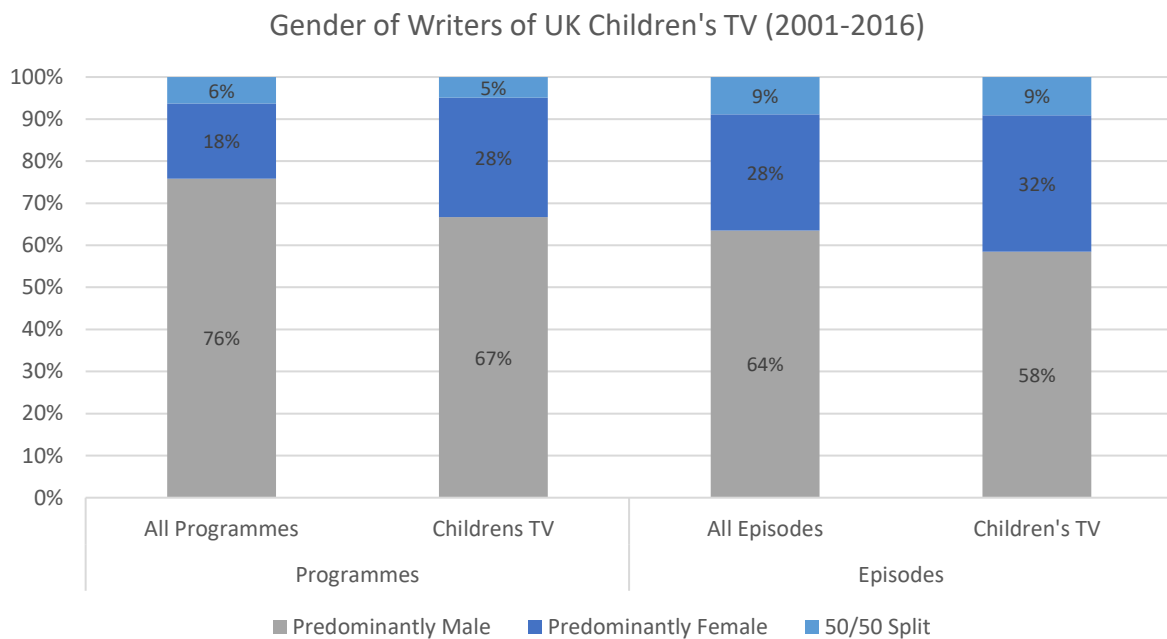
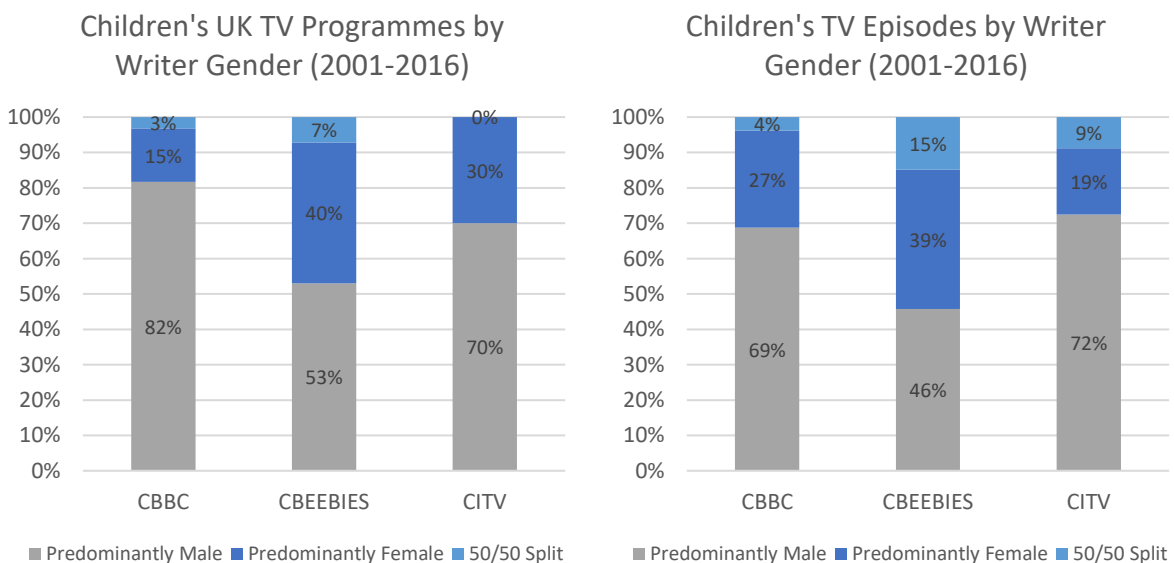


Figure 47: Children’s TV (Channels)

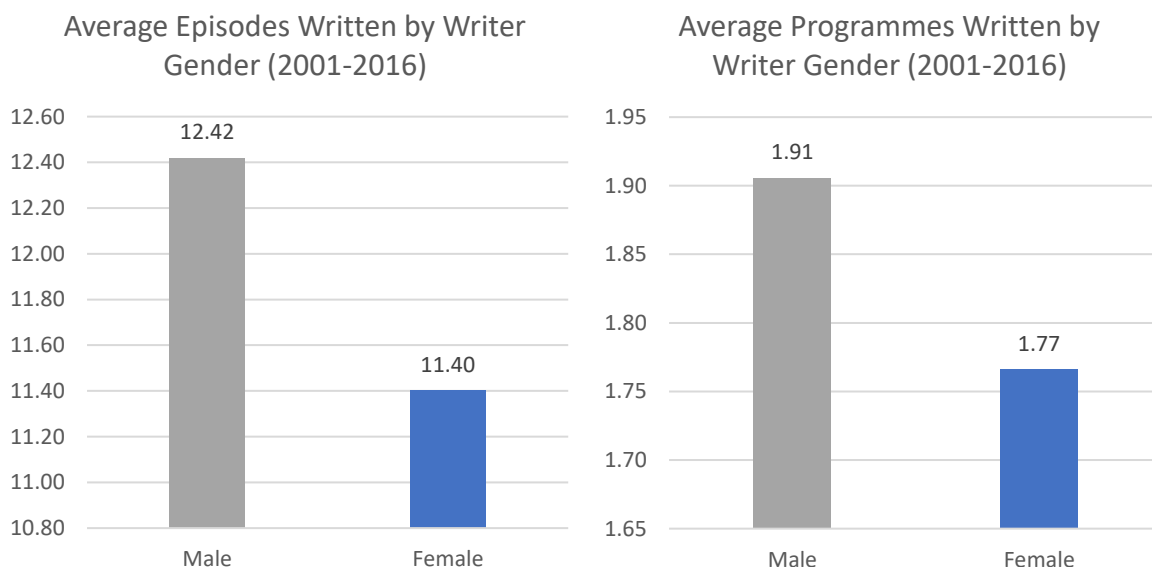


Part Two – Television

Representation is highest on CBeebies, the BBC channel for pre-school children. In fact, CBeebies is the only UK television channel which had fewer than 50% of its episodes written predominantly by men (although just over 50% of all their programmes were).

Additionally, female writers of Children’s Television write fewer episodes and for fewer programmes than their male counterparts.

Figure 49: Children’s TV (career progression)



As a result, the number of female writers of Children’s TV is actually larger than the number of Female writer credits or female written episodes would suggest.

36% of Children’s Television writers are female (Figure 50), but only 30% of all writers are. This suggests the higher percentage of female writers working in Children’s TV is likely to be affecting the overall averages for the television industry (as with CDS broadcasts).

The breakdown of writer credits on UK Television Episodes without Children’s TV reinforces this conclusion (Figure 51).

Figure 50: Children’s TV Writers

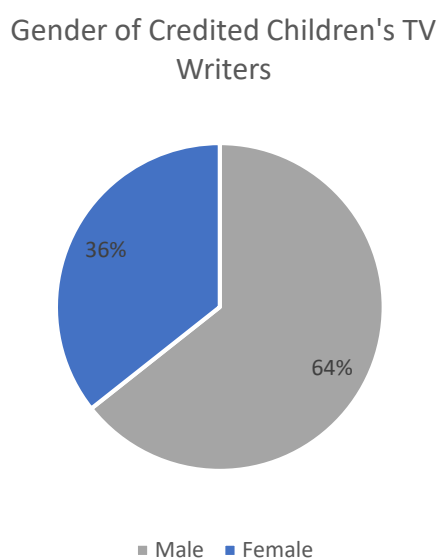
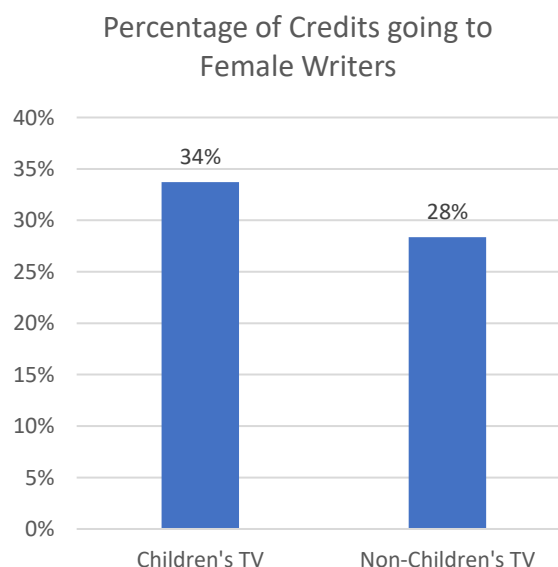


Figure 51: Children’s TV Comparison



Summary of Findings

17. The percentage of programmes predominantly written by women declines through the day, with prime-time programming having the greatest disparity between male and female-written shows (2.2a).
 - b. The likelihood of a writer of a given show being female, negatively correlates with the expected advertising revenue for the episode timeslot.
18. Longer running shows (CDS), comprised of more total episodes, tend to have more equal representation (2.2b).
 - b. As a result, the higher proportion of female writers in continuing drama is affecting broader averages, particularly for primetime programming.
19. As with film genre, disparities between male and female writers affects certain types of programming more than others (2.2c).
 - b. Female writers are particularly rare in comedy and light-entertainment programming.
20. Female representation amongst writers of children’s television is higher than any other dataset examined in this report (2.2d).
 - c. However, female writers remain in the minority among children’s TV writers, and appear to be underemployed compared to their male counterparts.
 - d. Higher female representation on Children’s TV programming has a notable impact on broader averages for the television industry.

2.3 Broadcasters

The UK television industry is reasonably centralised, with considerable control concentrated around a relatively small number of large broadcasters. This section will look at the differences in female representation among writers between broadcasters.

2.3a Top Level Findings

Key Findings

There are limited differences in the number of female-written episodes between the BBC, ITV and Channel 4.

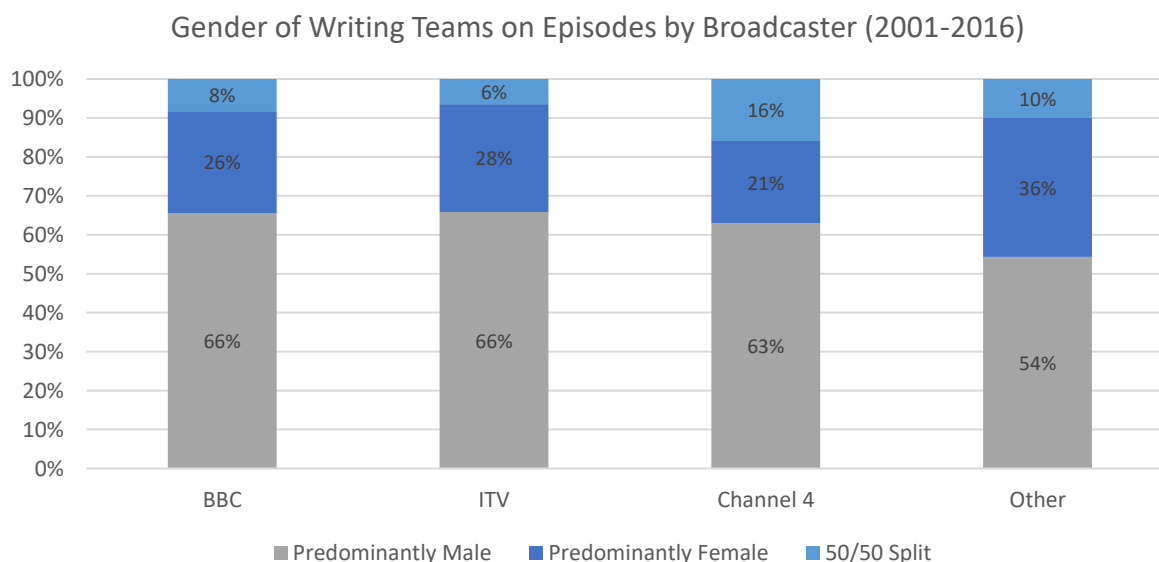
Between 63% and 66% of all episodes, for each of the three main broadcasters, were predominantly male-written.

A greater percentage of writers on episodes broadcast for both Channel 5 and S4C are female, than for any of the larger broadcasters.

The television dataset included the original broadcast channel for every series and episode. Excluding radio, there were 20 total channels, across the three major terrestrial broadcasters with additional information on Channel 5 and S4C programming.

Overall female representation is relatively consistent across the three major broadcasters. All three have between 34% and 37% of episodes written by predominantly female or evenly-split writing teams. However, Channel 4 is unique in having a larger percentage of episodes written by 50/50 writing teams.

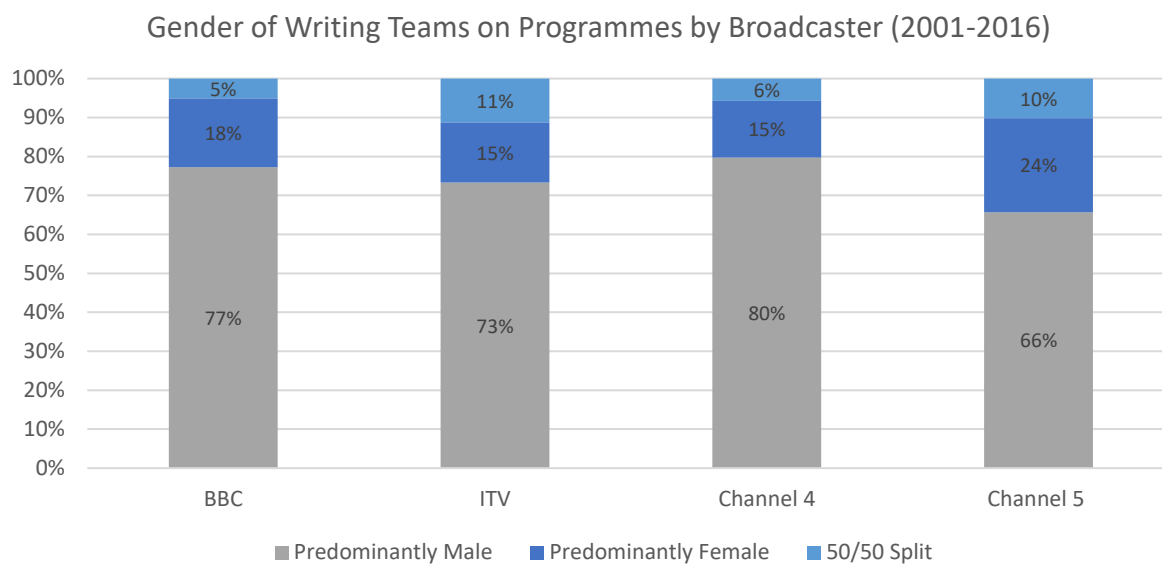
Figure 52: Broadcasters (episodes)



Part Two – Television

The ratios are mostly consistent at programme level. However, the effect of a larger number of evenly-split writing teams on Channel 4 episodes is seen here, as programmes are most likely to be predominantly male-written.

Figure 53: Broadcasters (programmes)



It is also notable that, across both episodes and programmes, other channels (Channel 5 and Sianel 4 Cymru) have a higher percentage of female writers than the major broadcasters.

2.3b By Channel

Key Stats

A greater percentage of episodes and programmes on BBC 1 (24%) and BBC 2 (22%), and ITV 1 (31%) and ITV 2 (33%) are predominantly female written, than on other BBC and ITV channels. As in 2.3a, the three major broadcasters had relatively consistent levels of female representation amongst writers across channels.

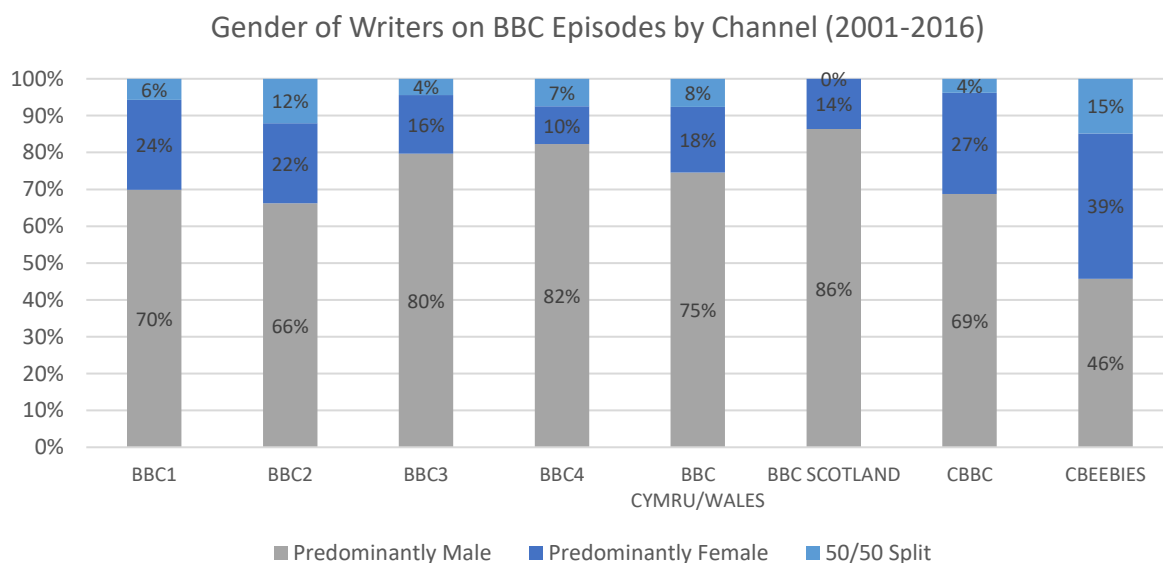
Across all UK channels; CBeebies, More4 and Channel5 had the greatest percentage of female written programming.

There are further fluctuations in female representation across single broadcasters, as certain channels tend to have higher average representation than others.

For both the BBC and ITV, representation is best on their main channels (BBC 1/BBC 2 and ITV 1/ITV 2). The main ITV channels are most likely to have female-written episodes, having over 30% of programmes written predominantly by women, with over 5% written by evenly split writing teams³⁹.

BBC 3 and BBC 4 both have lower representation, as does ITV 3 and ITV 4. However, the effect of CDS on the traditional terrestrial BBC and ITV channels likely explains part of this difference.

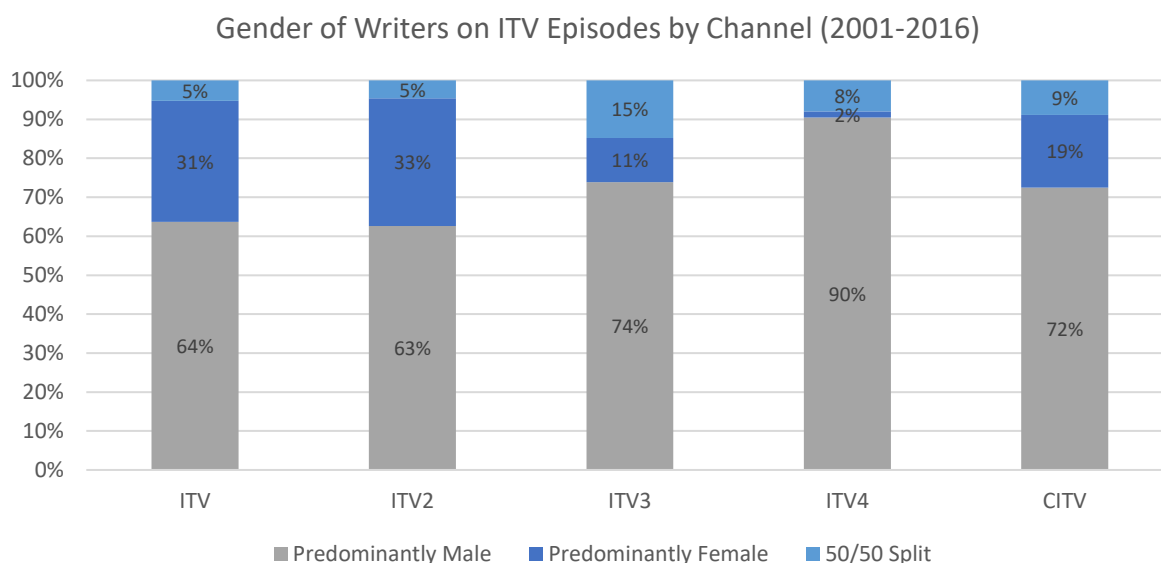
Figure 54: BBC (episodes)



³⁹ Data for BBC3 refers almost exclusively to programming prior to the online transition. Data after the 16th February 2016 is too sparse to draw any conclusions regarding the impact of the switchover. To avoid complication the small number of programmes with writing credits broadcast by BBC3 Online (BBCi!) have been included in the BBC3 statistics.

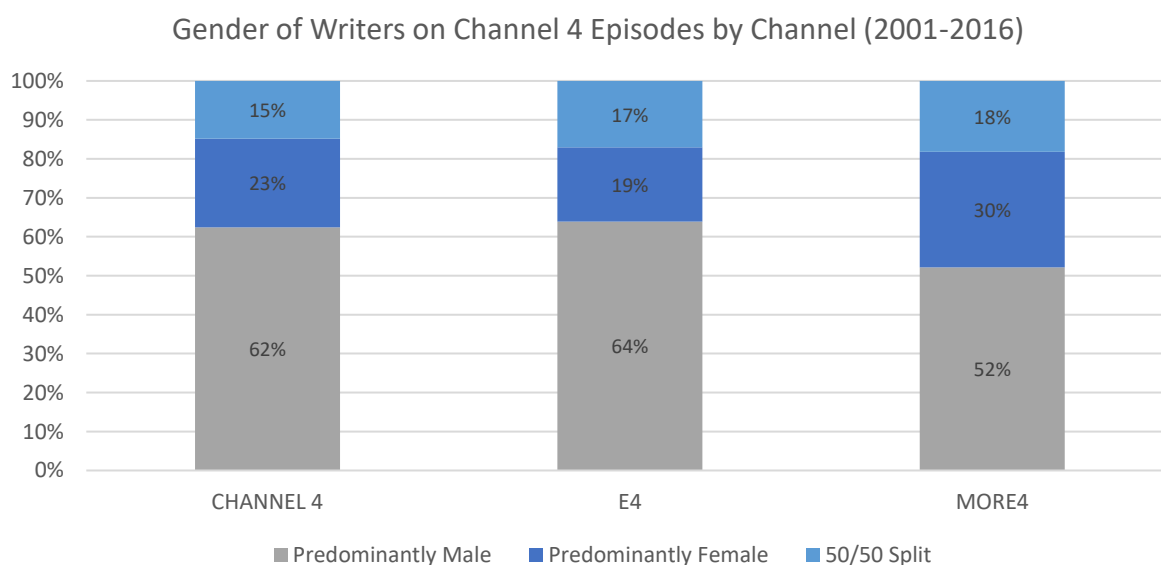
Part Two – Television

Figure 55: ITV (episodes)



The pattern is slightly less clear on Channel 4 episodes. Representation is consistent with other broadcasters on the primary channel, and slightly worse on E4. More4 has the highest percentage of partially female-written content, with over 30% of episodes written by predominantly female writing teams and a further 18% have evenly split writing teams⁴⁰.

Figure 56: Channel 4 (episodes)

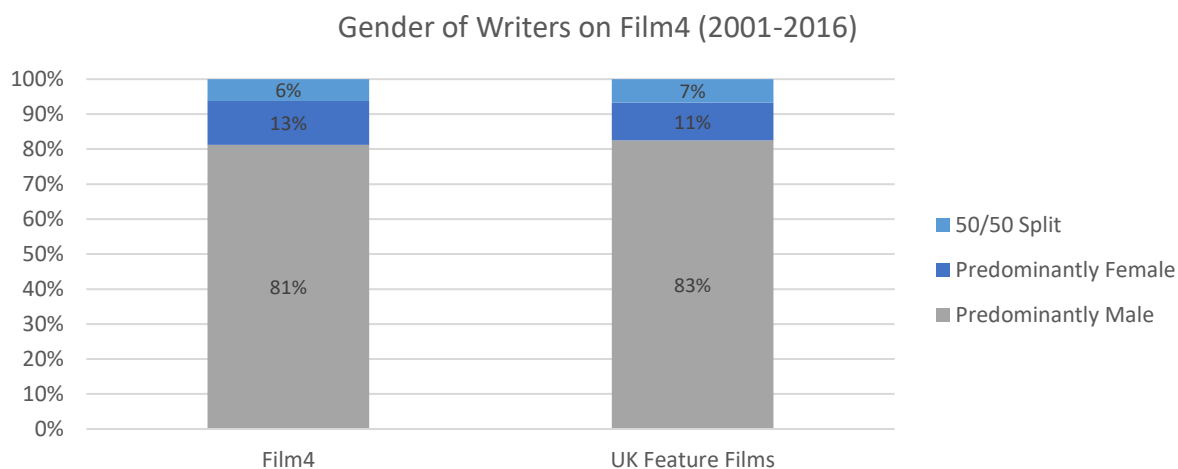


⁴⁰ Film4 data consists primarily of rebroadcasts of films over which Channel 4 had limited influence. As such little should be taken from this data. These films have been excluded from other television findings, as the focus of the section is television programming not films (except where it is explicitly stated that it has been included).

Part Two – Television

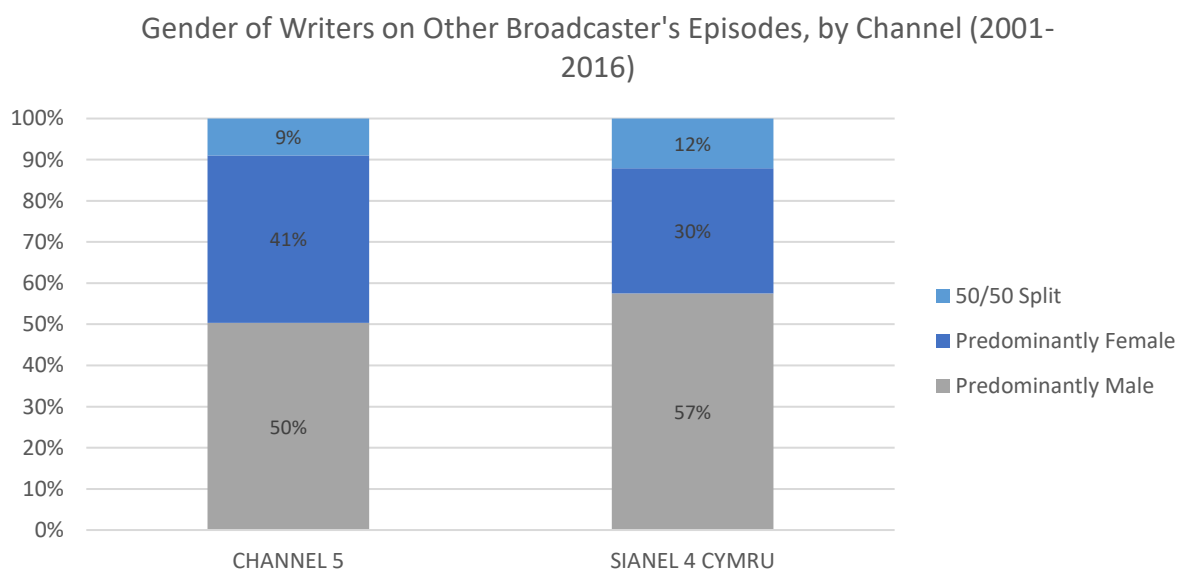
Film4, Channel 4's film-specific digital channel, has similar representation to the UK Film Industry more broadly⁴¹.

Figure 57: Film4



The individual statistics for the other channels reveal notably better female representation. 41% of all programming on Channel 5 was written predominantly by female writers, with a further 9% on evenly split writing teams⁴².

Figure 58: Other Channels (episodes)



⁴¹ Data on Film4 productions (as opposed to Film4 broadcasts) is too limited to draw any conclusions from.

⁴² However, a large proportion of Channel 5's Female Writers work on just one show – *Home and Away*. Produced by Australian Production Company and Broadcaster 7 Network, this show has 58% female writer credits and has produced well over 1,000 total credits for Channel 5 (more than Channel 5's own production department), and, as such, has a sizeable impact on Channel 5's broad averages.

2.3c Broadcasters in Detail

Key Stats

There are notable declines in female-written episodes during primetime on the BBC and Channel 4 (although Channel 4 has a greater number of female-written episodes during late-peak than other broadcasters).

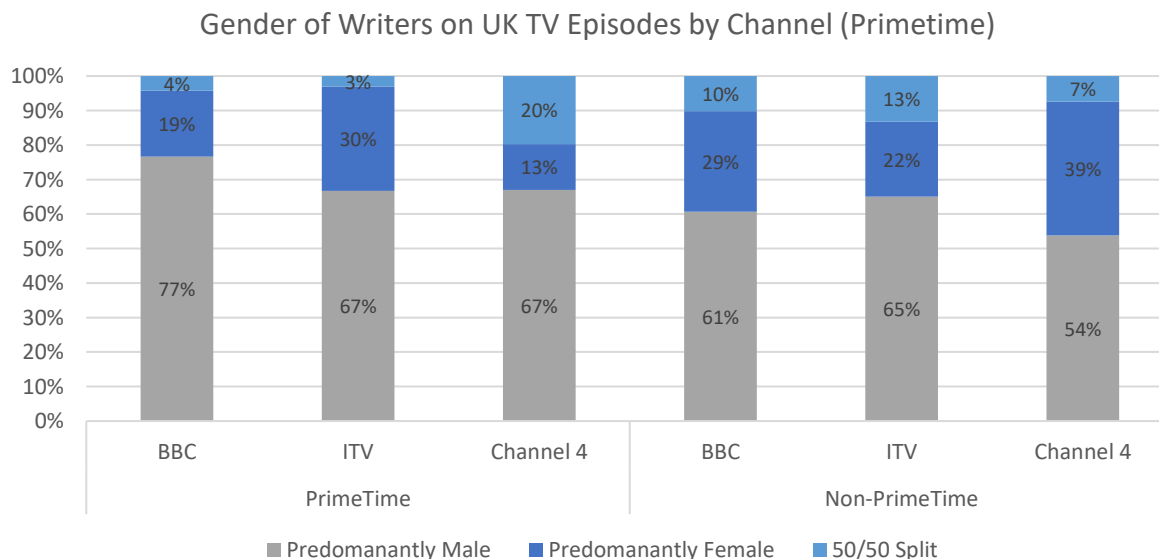
Primetime representation is consistent with daytime representation on ITV, primarily due to the high proportion of continuing drama writing credits going to female writers (37% compared to 14% for non-CDS).

The impact of continuing drama representation is even more notable on Channel 5. With 50% of CDS episodes predominantly female-written, compared to 22% for non-CDS.

The previous section has noted how female representation is affected by time-slot and the total number of episodes of a given programme. It found that female writers were comparatively rarer during primetime or peak viewing hours, and broad averages are being raised by higher representation on continuing drama.

Analysis of the episodes and programmes by broadcaster reinforces this conclusion, but shows it applies differently to the various networks. Whilst BBC and Channel 4 channels show clearly improved representation outside of primetime, ITV's representation is relatively consistent between the two types of timeslot. This is likely a product of the high proportion of ITV Primetime programming classified as CDS.

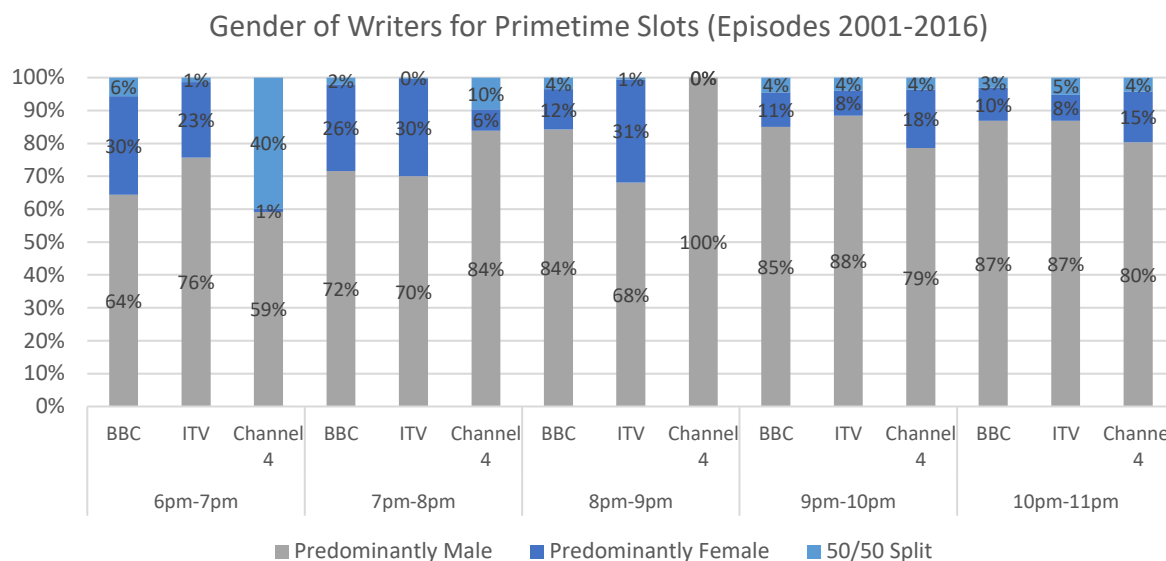
Figure 59: Broadcasters (primetime)



Part Two – Television

Dividing Primetime Episodes by timeslot shows a continued decline during peak-viewing hours⁴³:

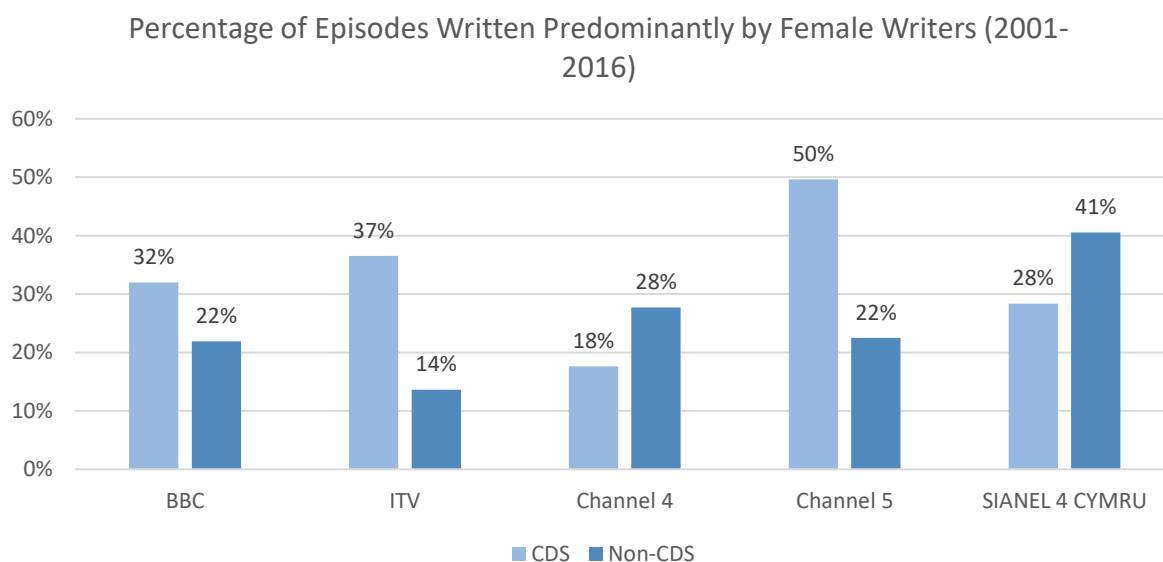
Figure 60: Broadcasters (primetime – detailed)



Female representation among writers is similar to the overall averages between 6pm-7pm⁴⁴, but by late-peak hours (9pm-11pm), the crucial time for new drama, comedy and mini-series, female representation is consistently much lower.

ITV's higher overall representation is limited to programmes beginning between 6pm-8pm. As *Figure 61* shows, this is a product of ITV's extreme variance in female writer representation between CDS and non-CDS Programming.

Figure 61: Broadcasters (CDS)



⁴³ There are fewer than twenty total episodes broadcast between 8pm-9pm on Channel 4, for which writers were credited. This will be because programmes broadcast during that time period do not have writer credits registered with ALCS, no further conclusions should be drawn from this figure.

⁴⁴ A high percentage of Channel 4 writing teams are evenly split, at least in part this is a product of the writer dynamics on continuing drama.

Both Channel 4 and S4C are notable in bucking the CDS trend. However, the vast majority of CDS episodes broadcast in the UK, particularly for those also produced here, are broadcast by the BBC and ITV. BBC CDS Programming has, on average, 10% more female-written episodes, whilst for ITV the figure more than doubles.

In conjunction with *Figure 60* and *Figure 61*, it appears reasonable to assume that there is some notable difference in the structures and methods of Channel 4 and BBC/ITV. Whilst representation is quite consistent between the BBC and ITV, both in raw figures and more nuanced differences in data, Channel 4 employs more evenly-split writing teams, has better representation outside of CDS and, whilst their representation is, overall, slightly lower than other broadcasters, they have the best representation during the key late-peak period⁴⁵.

This graph also demonstrates the clear impact of high female representation on *Home and Away* on Channel 5's total levels of representation.

Summary of Findings

There is some difference in the levels and distribution of female-written programming between broadcasters, but certain broad trends do also emerge:

21. Top-level findings are similar across the main broadcasters (2.3a).
 - c. Between 63% and 66% of all episodes, for each of the three main broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4), were predominantly male-written, since 2000.
 - d. In general, female representation is better on larger channels than on smaller, newer channels.
22. Although the three main broadcasters appear to have similar ratios of female to male-written programming, closer examination does reveal differences between them (2.3b-c).
 - e. ITV has little difference between primetime and daytime female writer representation, but has a particularly high percentage of female writers working on CDS, obscuring lower representation elsewhere.
 - f. Channel 4 has particularly low early-peak representation, but more predominantly female-written episodes during late-peak than other broadcasters
 - g. Channel 4 is also an outlier in having better representation outside of CDS
 - h. Higher percentages of female writers on CBBC and CBeebies mean the impact of children's TV figures is particularly notable for BBC averages
23. A greater percentage of writers on episodes broadcast on both Channel 5 and S4C are female than for any of the larger broadcasters (2.3b-c).
 - b. Outside of CDS programming Channel 5 has similar representation to other channels.

⁴⁵ At least in part this must be attributed to the smaller dataset available on Channel 4 programming, and the smaller number of writers hired by them in comparison to the other broadcasters.

Part Three – Career Progression

3.1 Career Trajectories in Film

So far, this report has focussed on the film and television industries as a whole; and the relation of writer gender to films and television content. However, this industry-wide data understates the influence of gender on the careers of the writers themselves. In both the film and television industries, there is consistent evidence that female writers find it harder to progress in their careers than their male counterparts. However, this trend is more pronounced in the film industry.

Key Stats

Female writers averaged 11% fewer films than their male counterparts, between 2005-2016.

17% of the writers who are credited on only one film are female compared to just 8% of those with credits on four or more films.

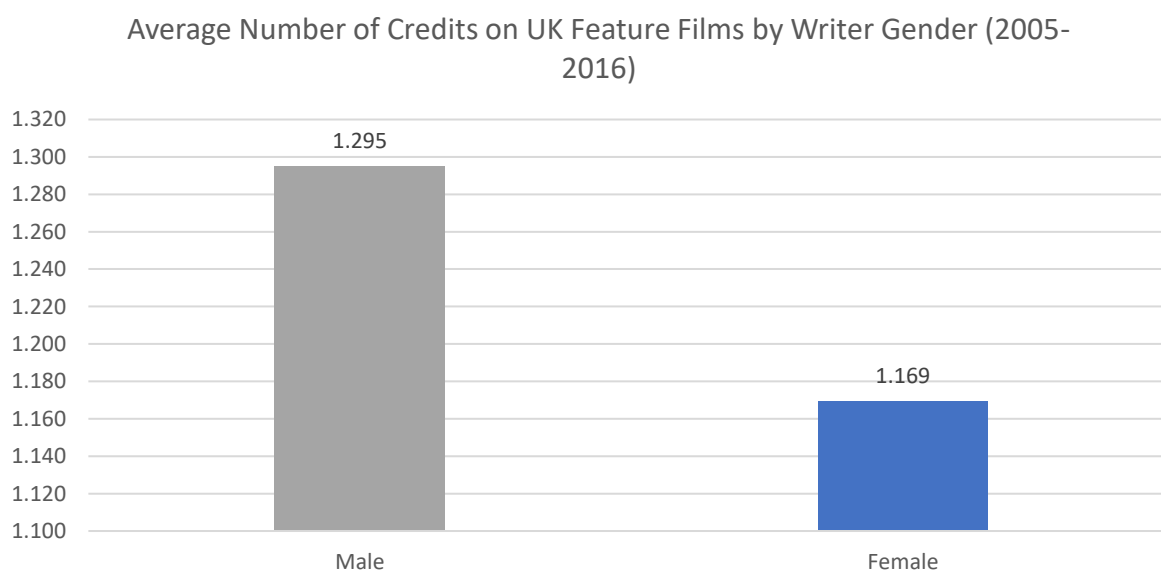
18% of male writers who wrote one feature in our dataset also wrote a second, but just 11% of female writers with at least one credit did the same.

After writing two films the disparity decreases (a male writer is only 7% more likely to write a third film having already written a second, than a female counterpart), however, female writers continue to be less likely to progress to a fourth or fifth film.

3.1a Career Progression for Writers

Career progression for writers in the UK film industry is limited for all writers. It is relatively rare for a writer to have written multiple produced films across the last decade. Screenwriters in the dataset wrote an average of 1.27 films between 2005 and 2016, and just 16% of all writers had more than one writing credit across that period. However, career progression was not the same for men and women. Female writers average nearly 11% fewer films than their male counterparts, during the same period⁴⁶.

Figure 62: Career Progression (film)

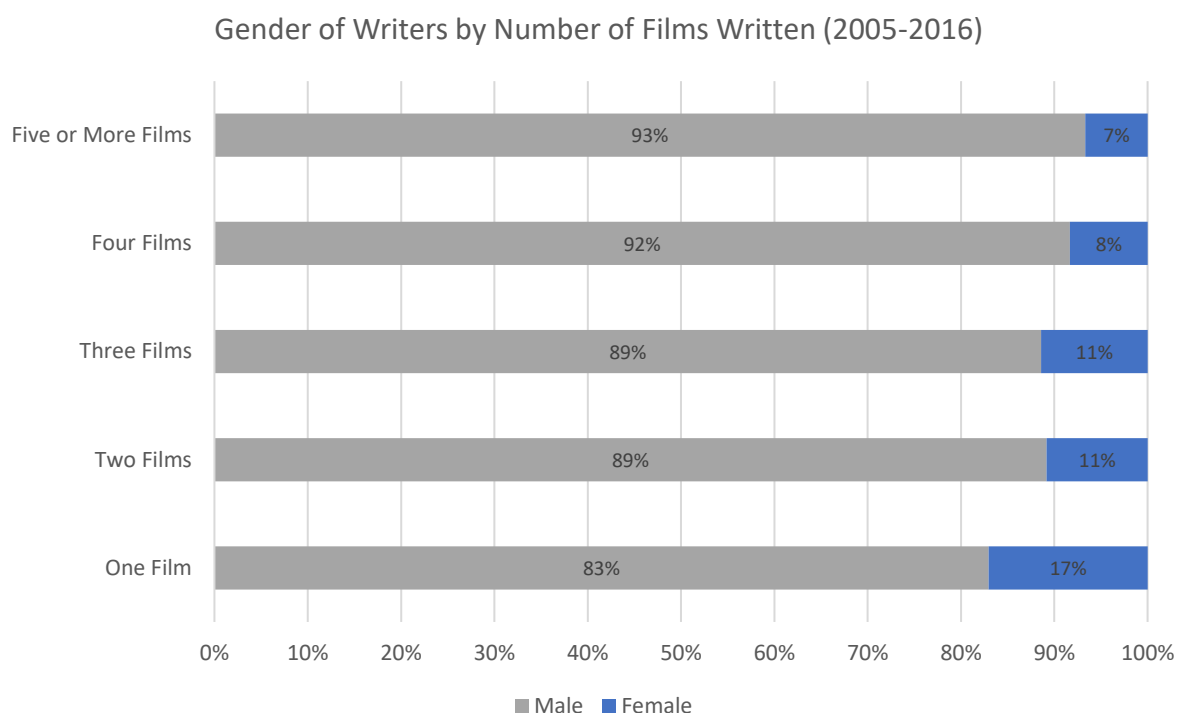


⁴⁶ Figures in this chapter do not capture the total number of films or programmes written by a given writer. Rather they express the number of films written by a given writer across the time period the datasets cover. For film this is 2005-2016, for TV it is primarily 2001-2016, but additional credits on soaps prior to this date are included.

Part Three – Career Progression

The disparity here can be captured in greater detail by examining the percentage of writers of varying levels of experience (number of writer credits) of each gender (between 2005-2016).

Figure 63: Detailed Career Progression (film)



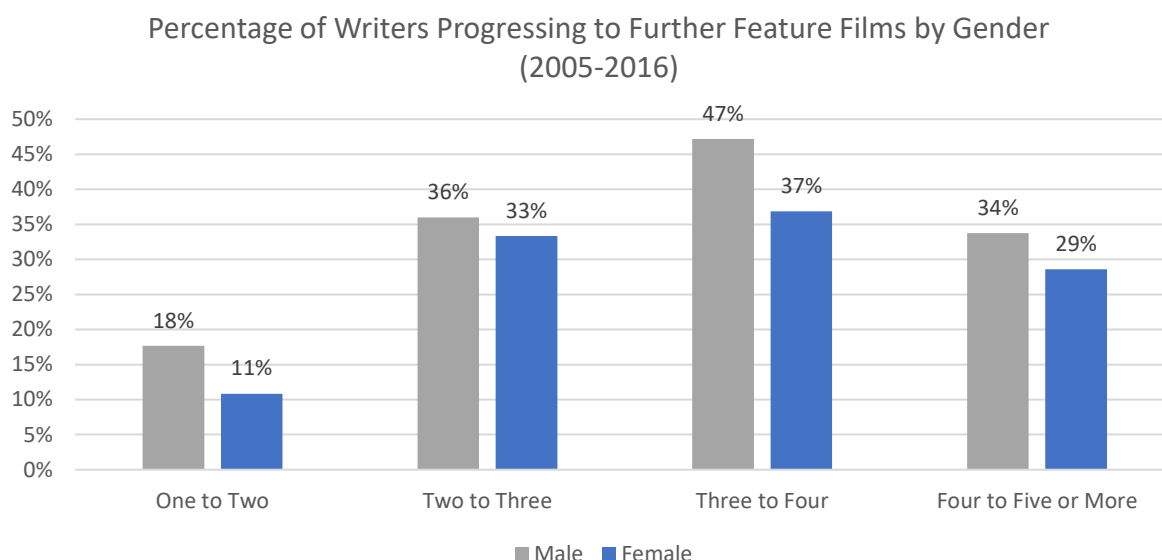
This shows a steady decline in female representation the more often the writer has been hired. Although 17% of the writers who are credited on only one film are female, just 8% of those with four or more films are⁴⁷.

Furthermore, the decline is relatively consistent suggesting that throughout their career female writers remain less likely to progress to another film, regardless of prior experience.

⁴⁷ There are a total of 90 writers who have written four or more films (and 30 who had written five or more). In comparison there are 2764 who have written just one, and 351 who have written two. Findings regarding the most prolific writers should therefore be treated with some caution, as the small size of the datasets reduces its statistical significance.

Figure 64 provides the best encapsulation of the relative career progression of male and female writers. It displays the percentage of male or female writers that progressed to a further film having already written a certain number. In other words, it shows the percentage of male/female writers who manage to write a second film having already written one; a third film having already written two; a fourth having written three; and a fifth having written a fourth.

Figure 64: Relative Career Progression (film)



This way of capturing the data provides a model for writer career progression in film, regardless of gender: there is a low chance of progressing to a second film, and then a decreasing level of difficulty the more experience is gained (with a natural cap provided by the limited period of the data⁴⁸). It also demonstrates that at every stage of their career female writers are less likely than their male counterparts to progress to an additional film. However, this discrepancy is not uniform.

Career progression for male writers is consistent: at each stage of their career, the more experience they have the easier they find it to write an additional feature (the decline to five or more is a product of the limited period studied).

However, for female writers the trend is more complex. While 18% of male writers succeed in writing a second feature just 11% of female writers do. This means any given male writer is 39% more likely to write a second feature than a female writer is, having written their first.

However, a male writer is only 7% more likely to write a third film having already written a second, than a female counterpart. This suggests that, as we saw in *Section 2.c: Budgets*, female writers find it comparatively hardest to establish themselves in the film industry but, if they gain adequate career momentum, their odds of continuing further do improve.

This improvement never results in true equity however, as female writers continue to be less likely to progress to a fourth or fifth film.

⁴⁸ The dataset spans more than a decade, but even working constantly, few screenwriters would complete more than 3-4 features during this period. This is particularly true of larger budget features.

3.1b Career Progression for Writers by Film Types

Key Stats

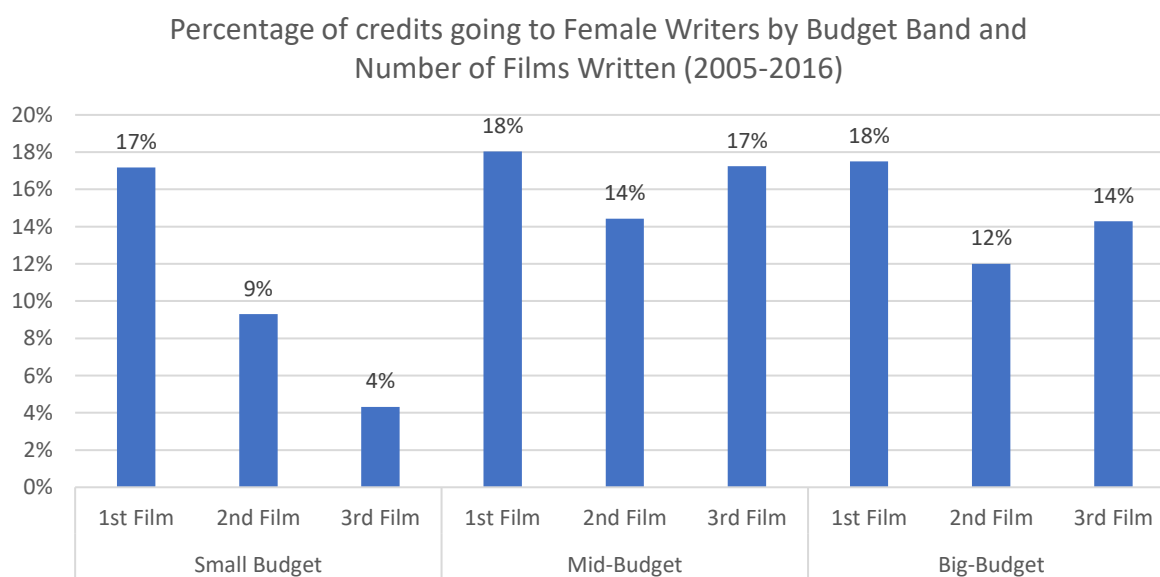
*The more previous credits a male writer has, the higher the average budget of their films.
The average budget for female writers for their second film is higher than the average for their first film. However, the average budgets for their third and fourth film are closer to the average for their first than their second.
It is particularly rare for a female writer to write multiple low-budget features.*

As well as writing additional films, writers often wish to progress to larger and more prestigious projects, as this provides greater compensation and career sustainability.

These projects are likely to have larger budgets, meaning budget data should provide a way to further examine the differences between the career progressions of male and female writers⁴⁹.

Figure 65 displays the budget of films combined with data on how many previous films the screenwriter has written. In other words, it shows the percentage of writer credits that go to female writers for 1st, 2nd and 3rd films, in each budget band⁵⁰.

Figure 65: Career Progression (film type)



The overall decline in female writer credits mirrors the findings for budgets (1.2a) and the number of films (3.1a). However, this reveals some additional nuance to this general trend.

Female writers become extremely rare in comparison to their male counterparts in micro and low-budget bands, suggesting few women sustain a low-budget feature writing career, when compared to men.

⁴⁹ As with previous sections, the caveat that data on the budgets of films is scarcer than other datasets, particularly for specific figures, should be noted. There is no reason to believe this limitation would disproportionately affect either male or female-written films, however, it does allow for greater fluctuation in the data.

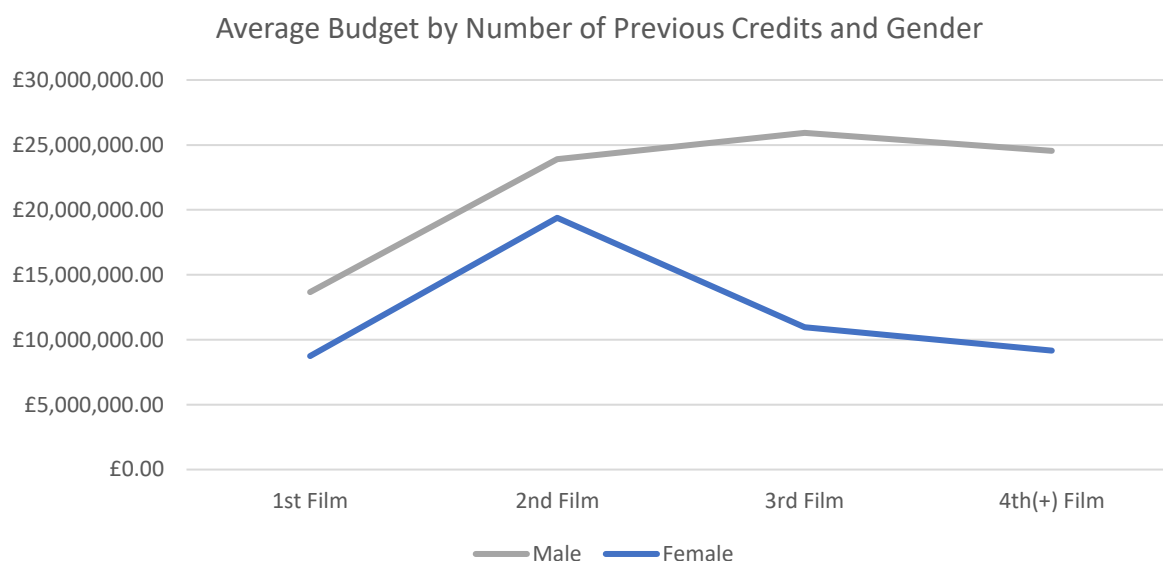
⁵⁰ It should be noted this is not an exact analogue for career progression. It does not take into account the budget for each project relative to the previous writer credit, simply what budget it fell into and whether it was a writer's 1st, 2nd or 3rd project.

Part Three – Career Progression

The lack of improvement among big-budget features regardless of writer experience is likely a product of a low total number of big-budget features in combination with the relative frequency of female writers on predominantly male-written features in this budget range. However, it may also point to a broader difficulty for female writers in progressing to the largest budgets, regardless of their experience.

The relation of writer gender to the average of exact reported budgets⁵¹ of their films at each career stage, supports the suggestion that there is a restriction for more experienced female writers (a glass ceiling effect).

Figure 66: Career Progression (film budget)



Both male and female writers see a notable and almost identical rise in average budget from their first film to their second. But after this they diverge, with male writers seeing a slight rise in budgets to a third film, and then a stabilising of the average. Whilst the average budget for female writers declines steeply after their second film, and then less steeply to their fourth feature.

It is difficult to draw specific conclusions as to the cause of this difference at this stage, but it does suggest that those female writers who do manage to produce a number of films during the studied period, and so sustain a career in the film industry, do so at lower average budgets than their male counterparts.

In conjunction, these findings suggest both a lower average ceiling for female writers' careers, and greater career instability, particularly earlier in careers, in the film industry.

⁵¹ Exact budget data is comparatively rare for lower budget features. As such any findings drawn from such data should pertain to the higher-budget sectors of the industry and the most advanced stages of career development. As this is examining the potential of an artificial ceiling to female writers' career, the data should be robust enough to allow reasonable inference, particularly where reinforced by other findings.

Summary of Findings

24. Across the course of their careers, female writers average fewer films than their male counterparts (3.1a).
 - a. There is a consistent negative correlation between the number of films written and the chance that a writer is female.
25. The discrepancy between male and female career trajectories is not uniform (3.1b).
 - a. The greatest relative difficulty in progressing to further films occurs at the start of female writers' careers.
 - b. As female writers gain experience, their relative likelihood of progressing to further projects improves (but they remain less likely to write further projects than equally credited male counterparts, regardless of the number of previous credits).
 - c. The likelihood a given writer is female decreases again amongst the most prolific writers.
26. In general, female writers are less likely than their male counterparts to progress to bigger budget features (3.1b).
 - a. Particularly few female writers appear able to sustain a career in low-budget film.
 - b. Regardless of experience, female writers are consistently less likely to progress to the biggest budget bands.
27. Collectively, evidence on career trajectories in film point to a lower average ceiling for female writers' careers, and greater career instability, particularly earlier in careers

3.2 Career Trajectories in Television

The picture is similar in the Television Industry, where female writers also tend to write fewer episodes and programmes than their male counterparts. However, the difference in career trajectory is, in a number of ways, subtler.

3.2a Career Progression for Writers

Key Stats

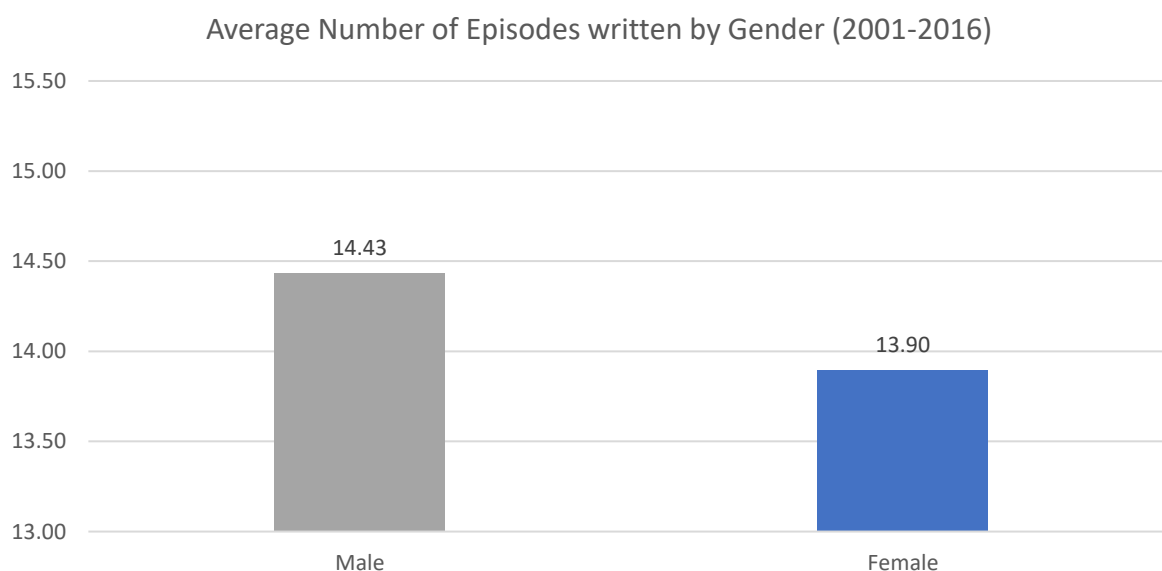
The average female writer wrote 4% fewer UK TV episodes (between 2001 and 2016) than the average male writer.

The average female writer wrote for 12% fewer programmes (2001-2016) than the average male writer.

Whilst 31% of writers who have only worked on one programme are female, just 22% of those who have written for ten or more are.

Over the course of their careers male writers average 14.43 episodes, whilst female writers average only 13.9. This is a percentage decrease of less than 4%.

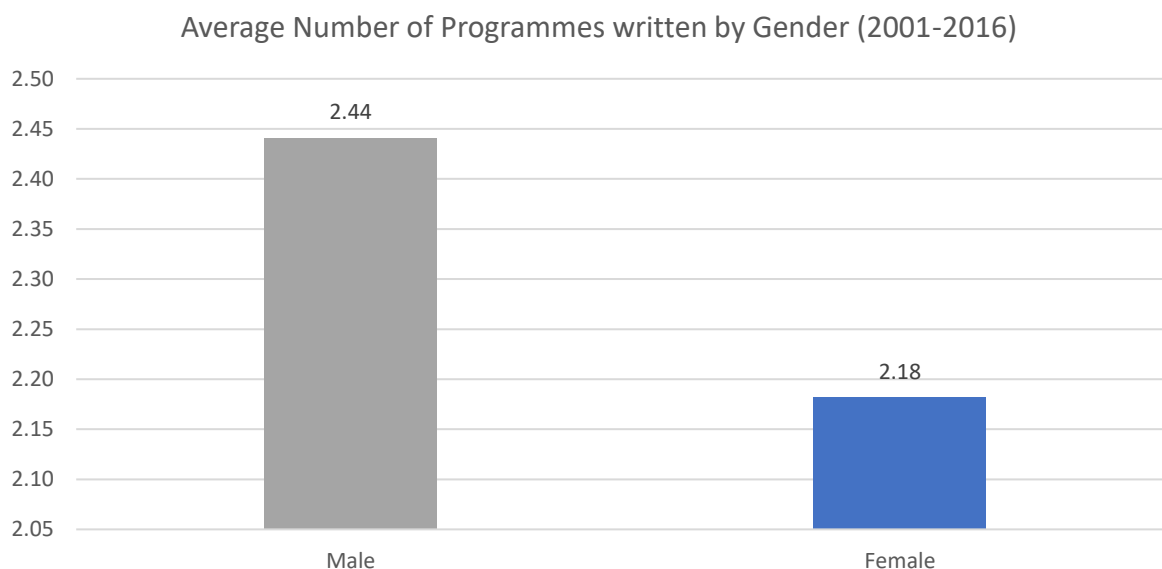
Figure 67: Average Career Progression (TV episodes)



Part Three – Career Progression

However, the difference is far starker in respect to the number of different programmes each gender of writer progresses to. Male writers average 2.44 different programmes across the dataset, whilst female writers average 2.18. A percentage decrease of nearly 12%.

Figure 68: Average Career Progression (TV programmes)



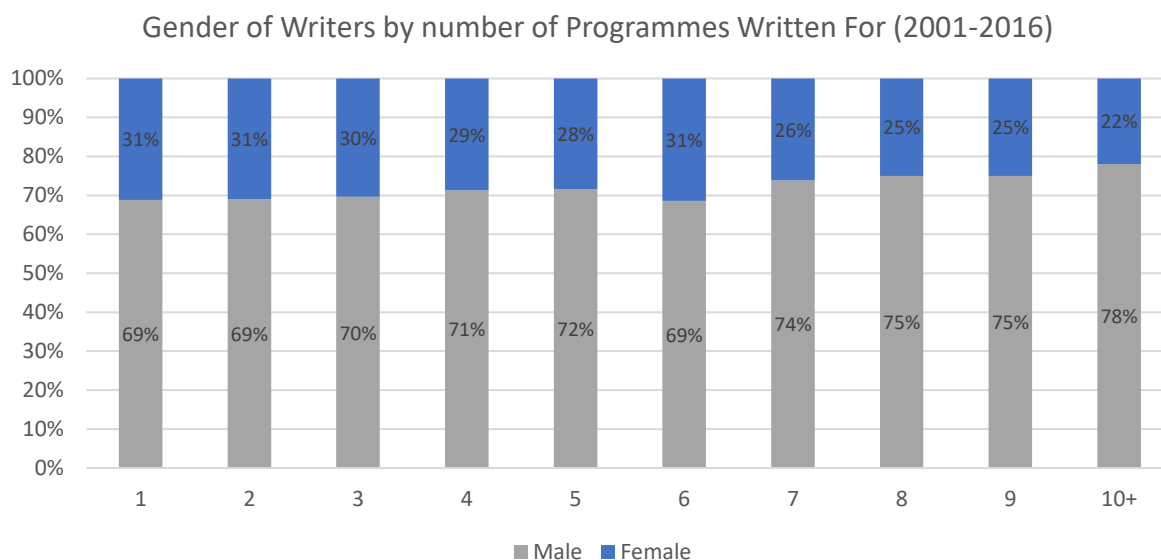
As such, the percentage difference in the average number of programmes written by female writers when compared to their male counterparts (11.9%) closely matches that for the average number of films written over their respective careers (10.8%), but differs markedly from the percentage decrease for episodes (3.8%).

This difference between the number of programmes and episodes written is notable. Female writers are more likely to have a greater proportion of their episodes across fewer programmes than their male counterparts.

A closer examination of the different stages of career progression in television further demonstrates this trend (Figure 69). Much like the averages for the total number of films written, there is a consistent inverse correlation between the number of programmes written and the likelihood that the writer is female. In other words, the greater range of programmes a writer has written for over their career, the less likely they are to be female. Whilst 31% of writers who have only worked on one programme are female, just 22% of those who have written for ten or more are.

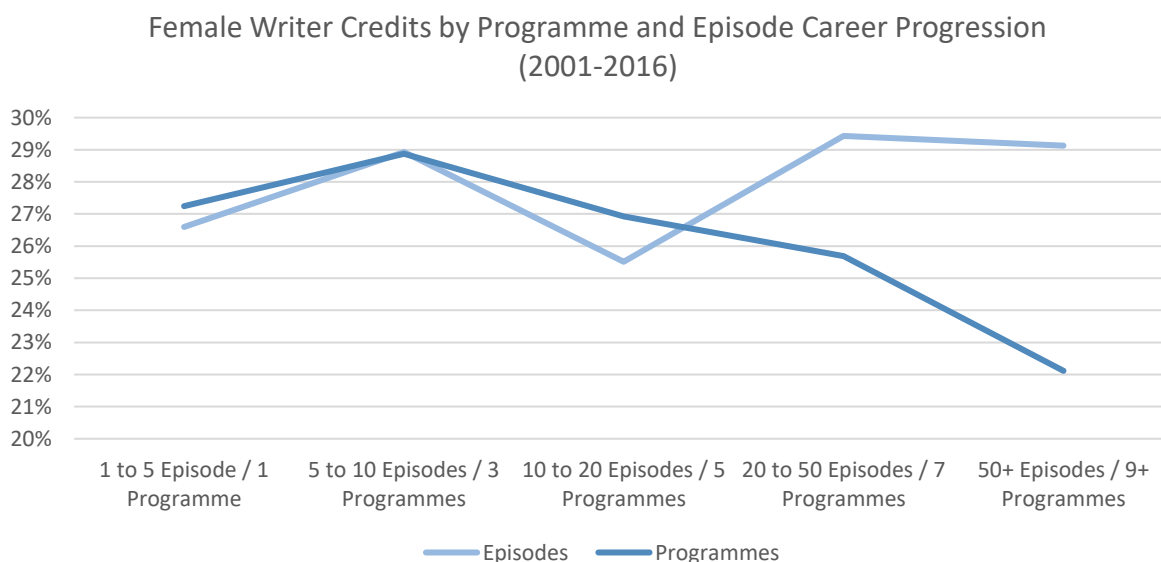
Part Three – Career Progression

Figure 69: Detailed Career Progression (TV programmes)



However, the same trend is not seen as clearly if the focus is placed on the number of episodes written. The likelihood of a writer being female does fluctuate slightly depending on how many episodes they have written, but writers with more episode credits are not notably more or less likely to be a particular gender than those with fewer episode credits.

Figure 70: Career Progression (TV episode/programmes comparison)



This suggests that once they have established themselves on a programme, female writers do not tend to write any fewer episodes for that programme. However, they may be encountering greater difficulty in moving between programmes, which would mirror the restrictions seen in the film industry.

3.2b Career Progression for Writers by Programme Types

Key Stats

The greater the number of credits a male writer has, the more likely those episodes are to be later in the day.

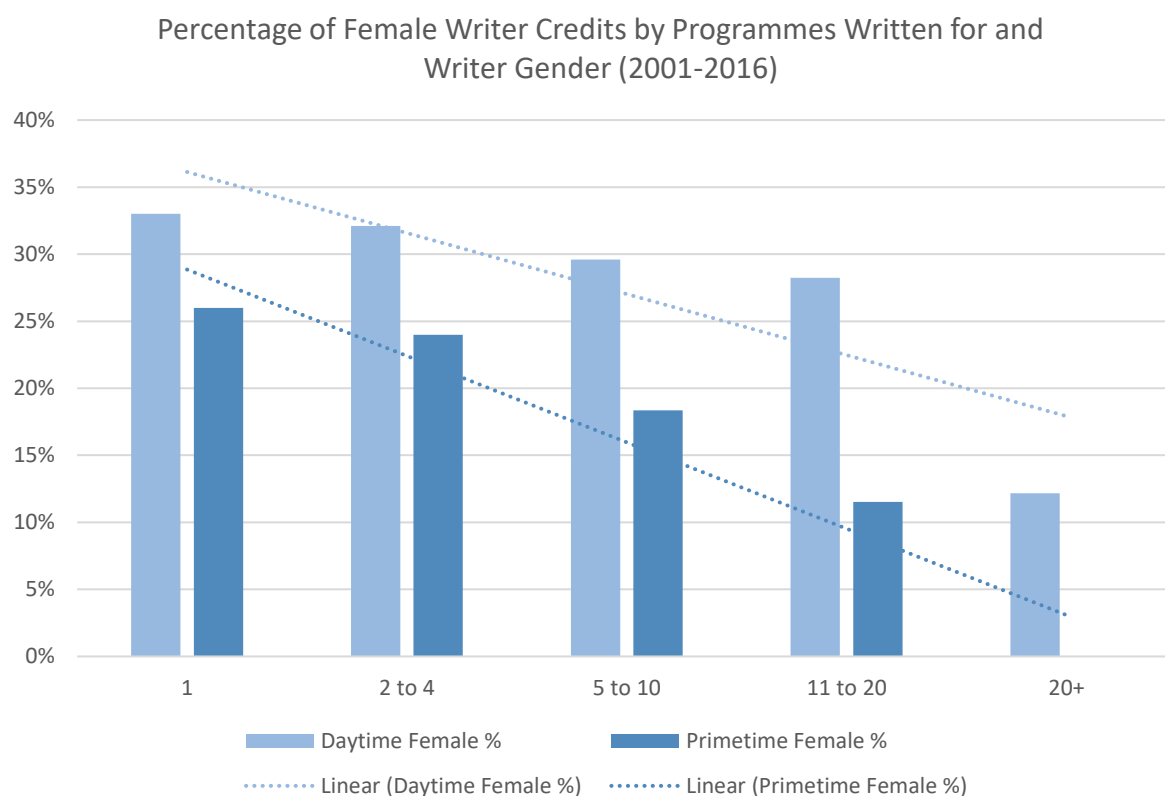
The inverse is true for female writers, who are more likely to be writing daytime and morning programming the more total episodes they have written.

Television writers also often wish to progress to more widely-viewed, highly-regarded and personally-lucrative programming.

Sections 2.2a has already noted that there is reduced female representation amongst writers of primetime content. However, to examine this overall disparity in terms of career progression it is necessary to examine whether female writers can progress to primetime programming having gained adequate experience on other programming.

Figure 71 shows the percentage of writers at each level of experience (1 programme written, 2-4 programmes written, etc.) who are female, for primetime and daytime credits. This illustrates the relative representation for women for both daytime and primetime credits, depending on the number of programmes they have already written for.

Figure 71: Career Progression (TV daytime/primetime comparison)

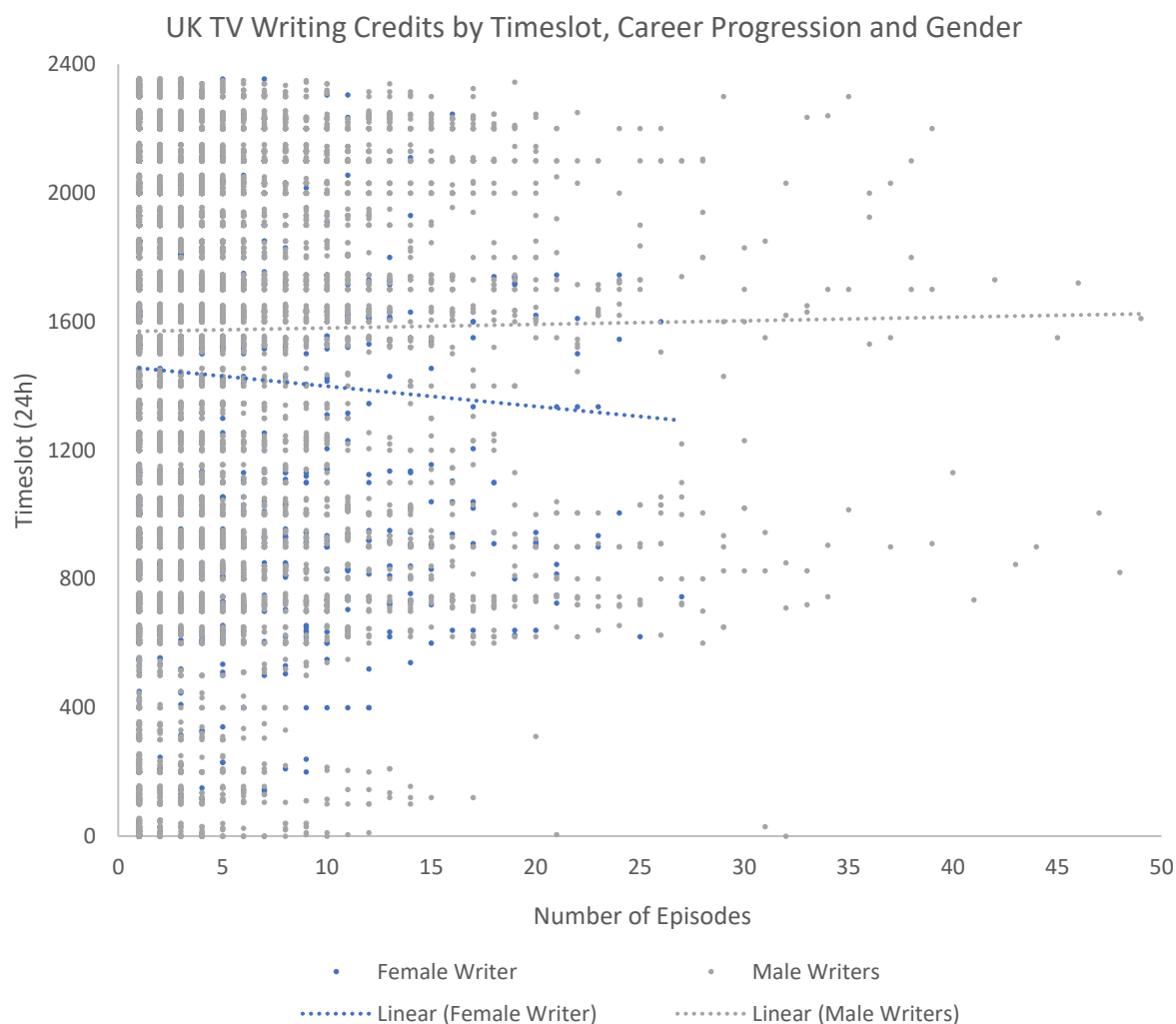


In both cases, the percentage of credits going to female writers declines, again indicating a broader trend of more limited career progression seen in the previous section. However, the rate of the decrease in primetime representation is greater. In other words, writing further episodes is less useful in terms of career progression for female writers in primetime television, than it is in daytime television.

Part Three – Career Progression

Figure 72 displays all unique credits on UK TV episodes, with the timeslot on the Y-Axis and the number of programmes the writer had written for at the time. As such, it illustrates the relation of career credits and timeslot for writers of each genders.

Figure 72: Career Progression (TV scatter)



Due to the broad relation of timeslot, and particularly primetime programming, to prestige and therefore writer experience, a slight increase in the timeslot over the course of a writer’s career should be expected, as can be seen for male writers.

The more episodes a male writer had written, the more likely those episodes were to be later in the day. However, female writers are more likely to be writing daytime and morning programming the more total episodes they have written. This suggests female writers sustaining a career in television are more likely to do so by writing for daytime and children’s television, whilst male television writing careers are more likely to progress towards primetime programming.

Part Three – Career Progression

Just as a greater number of credits broadly correlated with larger budgets for male feature film writers, a greater number of episode credits for male television writers, increases the likelihood they are writing primetime programming.

Similarly, just as greater experience failed to consistently lead to higher budgets for female writers, greater experience in television has a negative impact on the likelihood of the writer creating primetime programming.

Regardless of the reason, this is a particularly clear indication of structural differences in male and female career progression in this sector. Particularly as the trends already seen in respect to primetime continuing drama suggest this trend is likely to be more severe than it appears here.

Summary of Findings

28. Female television writers average fewer episode and programme credits across the course of their careers than their male counterparts (3.2a)
 - d. The percentage difference between the number of programmes written for across the studied period, between male and female writers, is greater than that seen in film.
 - e. However, over the course of their careers female writers average only slightly fewer episodes than their male counterparts (although this is not consistent across all types of programming).
 - f. There is a consistent negative correlation between the number of programmes written and the likelihood the writer is female, but this is not the case in respect to episodes.
29. Female writers are comparatively less likely to progress to more widely-viewed, prestigious and lucrative programming (3.2b)
 - c. Female writer career progression negatively correlates with advertising revenue (unlike male writer career progression).
 - d. Female writers do not face a universal limitation of access in TV, but the data suggests significant restrictions, particularly related to primetime programming.
30. Collectively, evidence on career trajectories in TV point to a lower average ceiling for female writers' careers and greater difficulty earlier in careers, but reduced career instability when compared to film (3.2b)

3.3 The Writer’s Journey

The first section of this analysis of career progression has focussed on the differences that occur after writing a first feature, episode or programme. However, much of a writer’s career development occurs prior to this first feature project, or in industries parallel to film and television.

Section 3.3 will flesh out the writer’s journey seen in *Sections 3.1* and *3.2*, by examining the education and early career progression of writers, as well as looking at the most-advanced stages in greater detail.

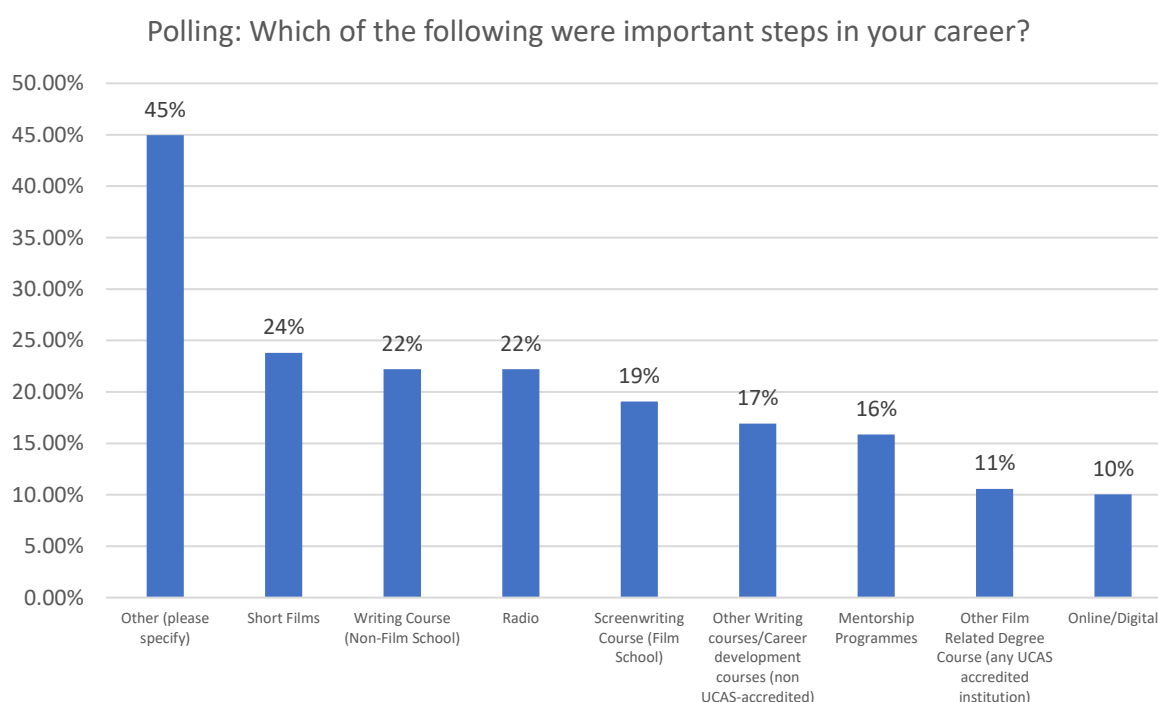
Introduction

It is difficult to find a typical route taken by writers in their careers: their trajectories are varied and often unique to the individual and their skills and interests.

This natural variation can make it difficult to identify necessary steps in a writer’s journey. No single stage is a requirement for any writer, but certain types of project and developmental routes are more common than others.

Polling of UK Film and Television writers⁵² confirmed this; with no single career step being important to more than 1 in 4 respondents.

Figure 73: Polling (career progression)



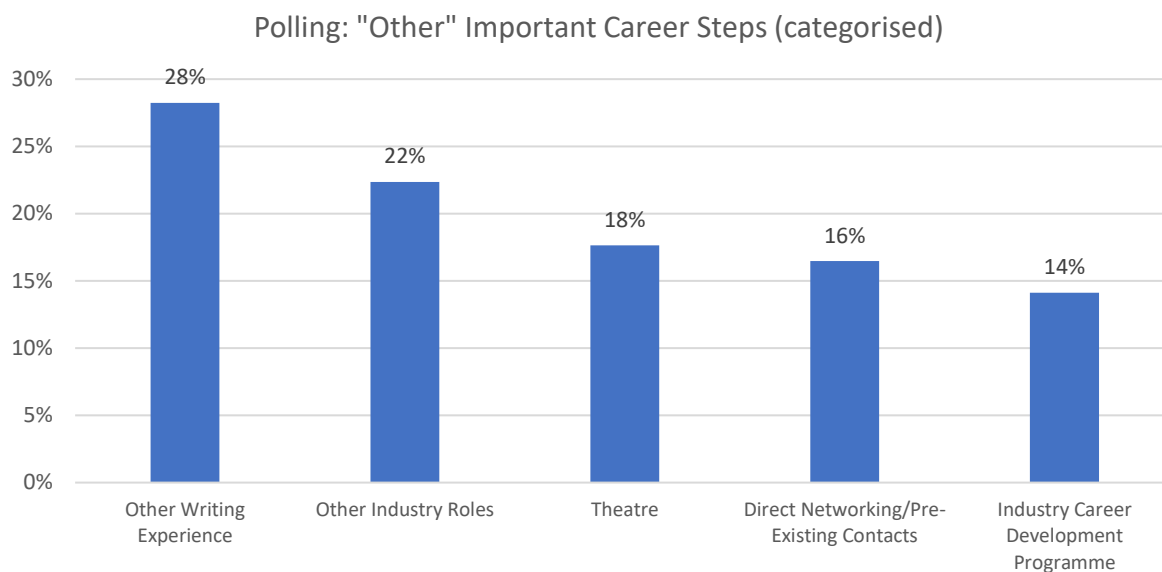
However, polling reveals the early stages of writer’s careers will often include a film or writing related degree (both at film schools and other universities), followed by an entry level role on productions, followed by other writing experience on radio, shorts and digital projects, sometimes aided through career development programmes.

⁵² For more detail on Polling, including methodology and response rates, see *Section 3.5*

Part Three – Career Progression

Segmentation of the individual answers for respondents selecting “other” reveals a number of additional entry routes, but again, none is particularly common.

Figure 74: Polling (career progression – additional responses)



These additional responses do however reveal the relatively high percentage of writers who move into film and television writing from theatre or other writing roles and experience (such as prose, journalism and other shorter form or unproduced writing) and the likelihood that writers will progress through other lower-level roles on productions.

This section will examine film and writing education through UCAS and film school data; radio and short film data from ALCS; and data on new entrants and early career roles; to more clearly capture these early stages of career development.

These findings can then be combined with the later career development analysis, to paint a complete picture of the relative difference in the journeys of male and female writers.

3.3a Entering the Industry

Key Stats

Across all-film related, UCAS accredited UK courses, 51.6% of applicants and 50.1% of accepted students were female.

39% of all students on screenwriting courses were female, and 43% of applicants were.

Before 2012, a higher percentage of screenwriting course applicants were female, compared to the percentage of accepted students, by a consistent margin.

The first stage of many writers' careers is a degree in film, TV, screenwriting or a related discipline.

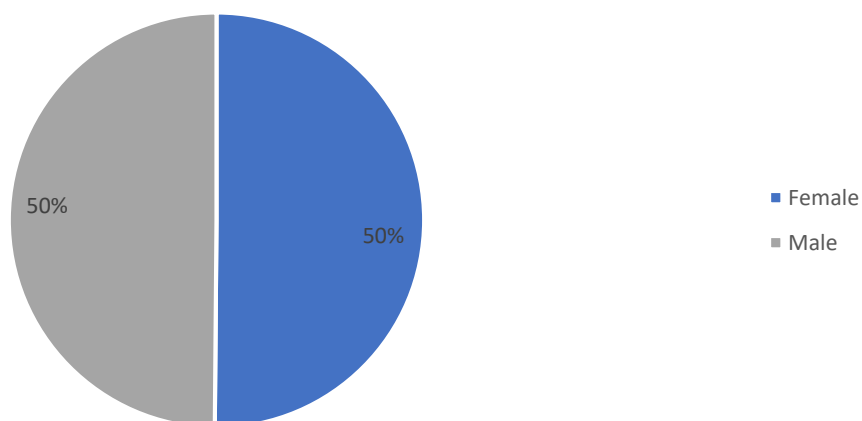
It is plausible the differences seen in representation between genders in *Part One* and *Part Two*, are primarily due to a lack of interest in pursuing screenwriting careers among women. One way of assessing the plausibility of this explanation is to examine applications for and students on UK film-related courses (as a measure of interest in the industry as a whole) and on UK screenwriting courses (as a measure of interest specifically in screenwriting).

Using data from the *Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)*, a database of 1,874 different degree programmes related to film⁵³ was created. These degrees were then divided into sub-categories depending on their declared focus⁵⁴.

Across all UK film-related courses 51.6% of applicants and 50.1% of accepted students were female.

Figure 75: Gender of Students on UK Film Courses

Gender of Students on All Film-Related UCAS Courses (2007-2014)



⁵³ This database only includes students who applied for degree via the UCAS system between 2007-14. This means it does not contain non-accredited courses at some private film schools. Film-related courses were defined using UCAS' own system, including all P3 (media studies) and W6 (cinematics and photography) categories, as well as all those with film in the title.

⁵⁴ Some courses are included in multiple sub-categories due to combined honours. The average course appeared in 1.47 categories.

Part Three – Career Progression

The table below displays the 20 most common sub-categories, and the percentage of their application and acceptances that went to female students.

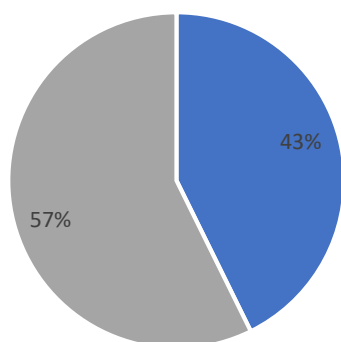
Figure 76: Film Education (table)

Course Categories	Degree Programmes	% of Applicants who are Female	% of Accepted Student who are female	Acceptance rate	% Difference between female applications and acceptances)
Games	15	15%	14%	0.23	-12%
Visual effects	19	23%	18%	0.24	-20%
Post inc Editing	20	29%	26%	0.29	-10%
Music	74	36%	34%	0.21	-5%
Animation	78	36%	37%	0.21	1%
Production	305	38%	37%	0.20	-2%
Writing	65	43%	39%	0.22	-8%
Documentary	5	42%	42%	0.28	0%
Radio	78	45%	43%	0.22	-5%
Television inc Broadcast	413	46%	45%	0.19	-3%
Film Studies	401	50%	49%	0.16	-2%
All Film-Related UCAS Courses	1874	52%	50%	0.20	-3%
Special effects	11	56%	57%	0.28	1%
Video Art	2	63%	61%	0.22	-3%
English/Literature	106	61%	62%	0.17	-2%
Photography	165	68%	66%	0.20	-2%
Communications	99	70%	69%	0.19	-2%
Make-up	9	98%	99%	0.13	1%
Costume	2	100%	100%	0.33	0%
Production Design	5	81%	100%	0.05	24%

Although over 50% of both applicants and students were female on UK film-related courses, it is notable that female representation is comparatively lower on UK screenwriting courses. Although female representation on such courses is still better than among writers in the industries, this does suggest that personal preference does have some impact on the disparity.

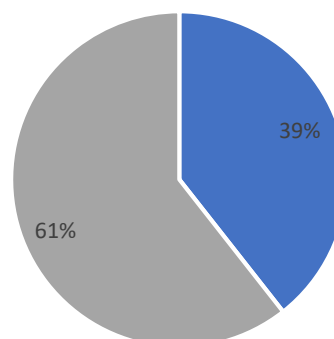
Figure 77: Film Education (writing degrees)

Gender of Applicants to UCAS Screenwriting Courses (2007-2014)



■ Female ■ Male

Gender of Screenwriting Students on All Film-Related UCAS Courses (2007-2014)



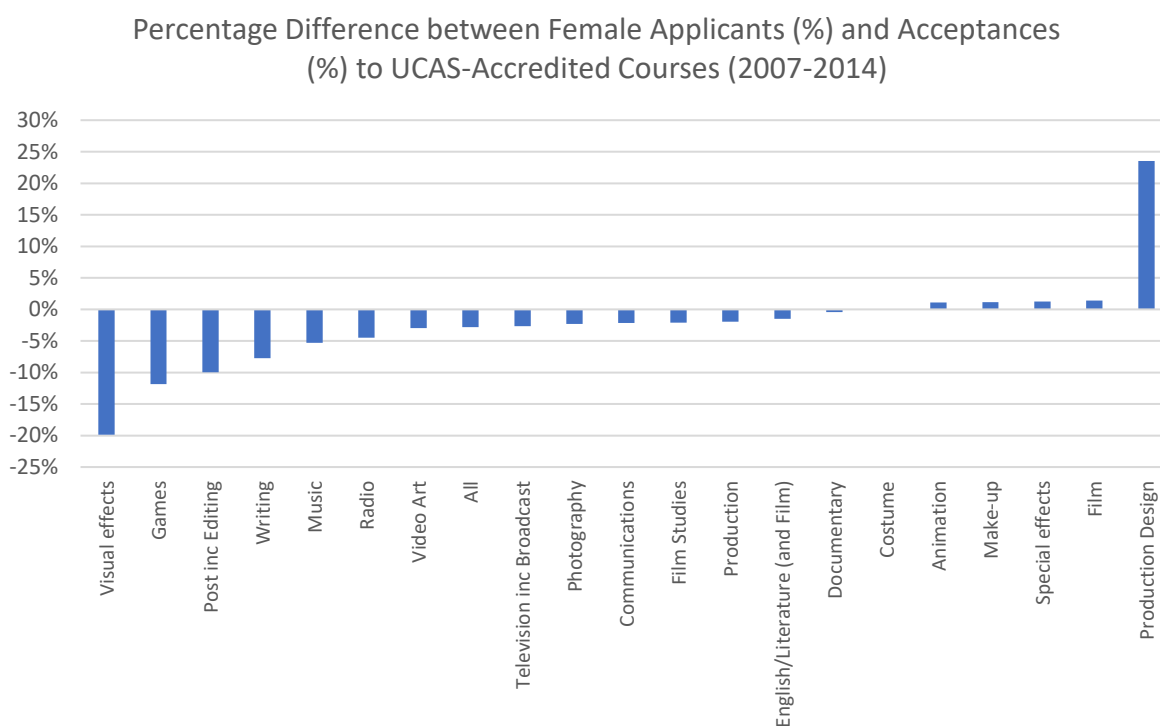
■ Female ■ Male

Part Three – Career Progression

In general, there is some difference between the percentage of female applicants and the percentage of female students. Across all UCAS-accredited film-related courses, a given applicant was 3% more likely to be female than a given accepted student.

However, as can be seen from *Figure 78*, across the studied-period, writing courses consistently had one of the largest discrepancies between the number of female applicants and the number of women admitted onto courses.

Figure 78: Film Education (differences between applications and acceptances)

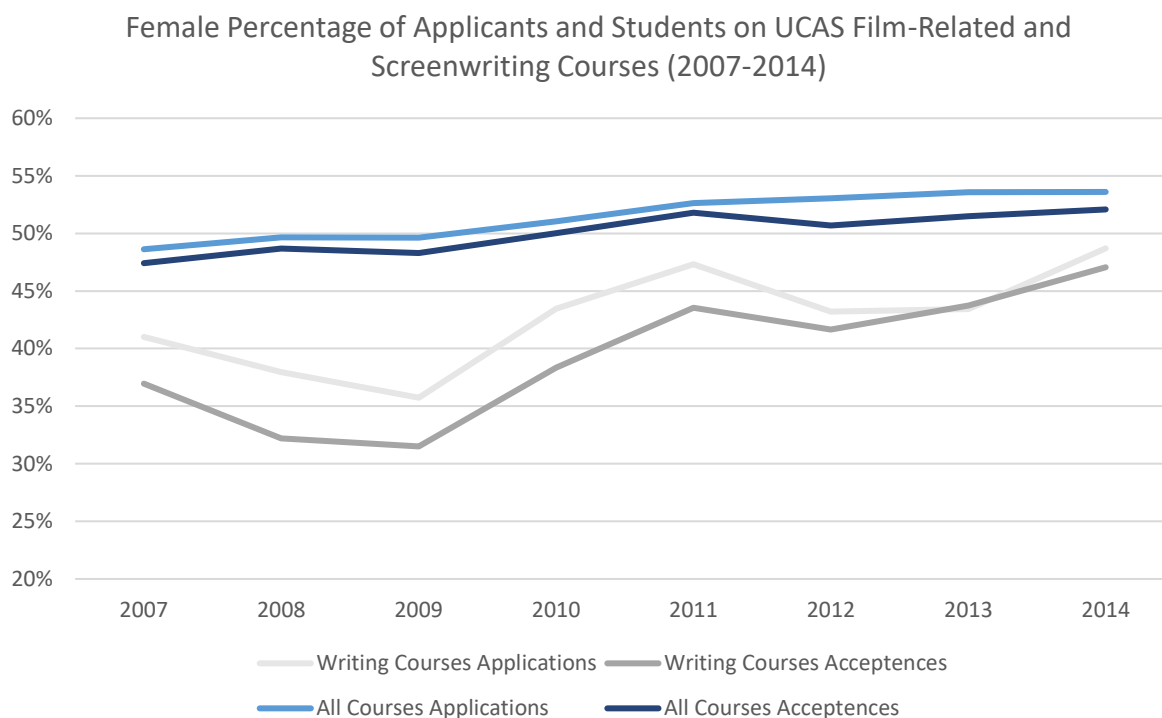


In general courses with the greatest discrepancies between applicants and acceptances, tended to be those with high percentages of students of one gender (such as gaming and VFX for men, or production design for women⁵⁵). Writing courses were a further outlier in having relatively equal overall applications, but still a larger disparity in acceptance rates.

⁵⁵ As is evident from the table above, there are a number of course specialisms which are rare. Video Art, Make-Up, Costume, Production Design and Documentary, all had fewer than ten total classified degree programmes, and hence any conclusions drawn from these smaller sample must be mitigated. However, outside of production design, those courses with notable differences in acceptance rates – Writing, and visual effects/editing/post/games – all have statistical significance.

Figure 79 examines the relation of female accepted students to female applications (as percentages) across the studied period.

Figure 79: Film Education (over time)



In both cases, as would be expected, acceptances track applications. However, although there is a small, consistent discrepancy for film courses overall, there is stronger evidence for a long-standing, and consistent preference shown for male applicants over their female counterparts for writing courses.

However, since 2010-2011, there has been a gradual elimination of the disparity between female applicants and acceptances. However, this trend is not yet prolonged enough to be relied upon.

As part of this research, data requests were submitted to the NFTS, Met Film School, Goldsmiths, London Film School, Brighton Film School and London Film Academy. As with the public funding bodies, this provides a gauge for the availability of gender data on students and applicants, and the willingness of the organisations to support a better understanding of it.

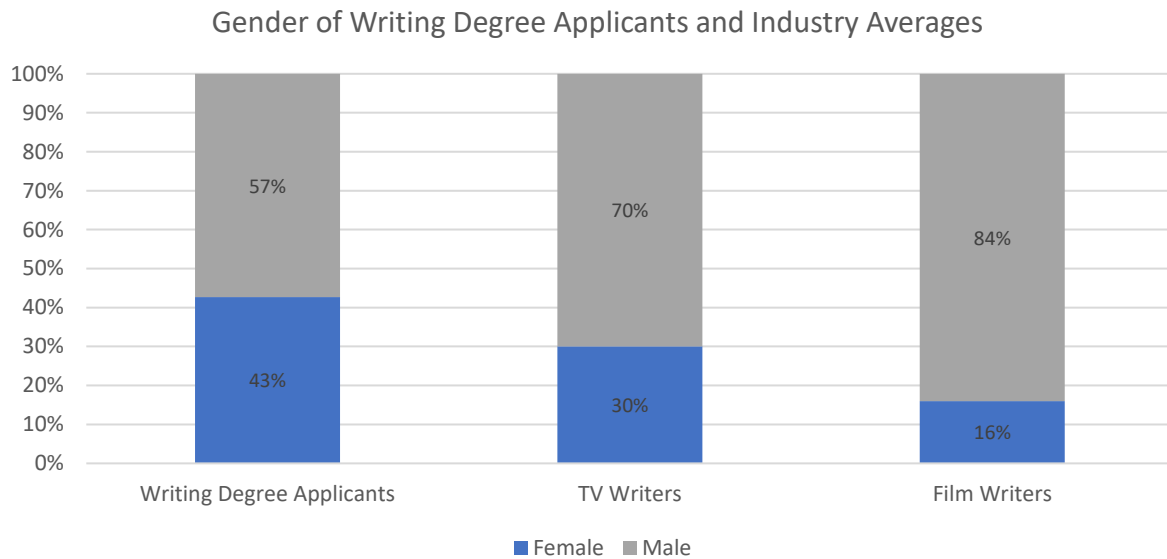
The NFTS provided full data for their Screenwriting MA between 2012-2017 which fluctuated, but had more female writing students or an even split on their course in 6 of 7 years (for full data please see *Appendix Three: Additional Data*). The LFA provided data just on their current year, which has a similarly equal gender ratio.

The other schools contacted were either unable to provide data, or failed to respond to the requests entirely. Unwillingness to share data, or the potential that such data is simply not being collected at all, in combination with evidence of historical differences between applicant and acceptant ratios, means it remains very plausible that university and film school applications processes may be contributory factors in the overall differences seen in both industries. Equally the NFTS and LFA should be commended for their willingness to provide data.

Part Three – Career Progression

In summary, it seems plausible from education data that personal preference of potential writers has some causal relevance to the findings seen so far. However, as the graph below shows, any disparity remains far smaller than those seen at the professional level⁵⁶.

Figure 80: Film Education (industry comparison)



Nonetheless, some examination of lower female interest in writing is necessary to fully explain any disparities later in careers.

⁵⁶ The two datasets included in the table cover slightly different periods. UCAS data covers 2007-14, film data covers 2005-2016.

3.3b Career Development

Key Stats

A greater percentage of the writers of short films are female, than writers of feature films.

A greater percentage of writers receiving partial credits on films are female, than those receiving full feature film credits.

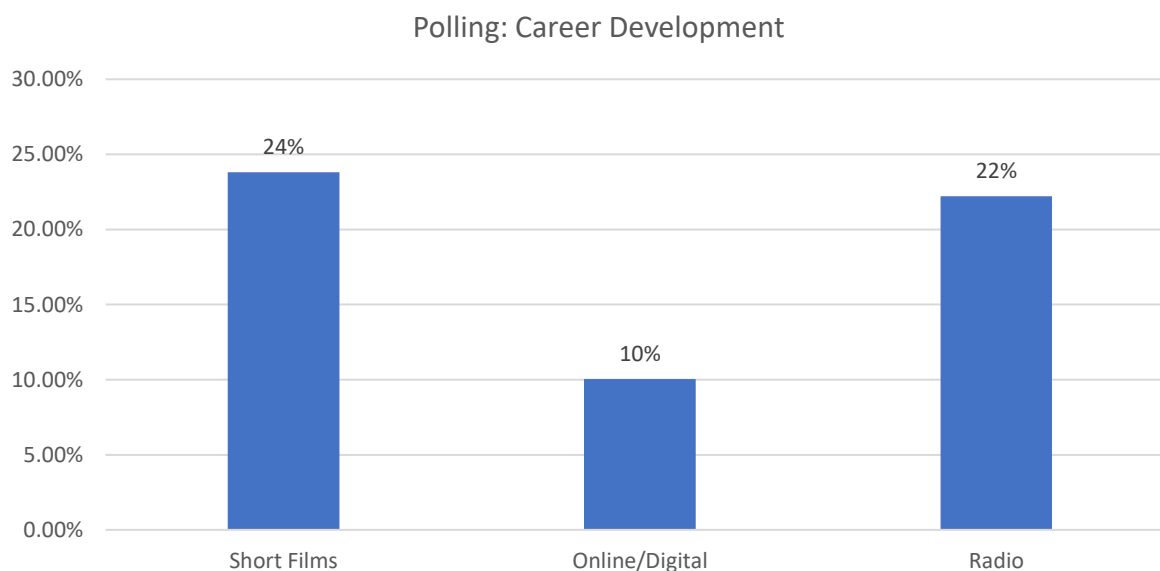
Radio episodes are more likely to be female-written than television episodes.

The percentage of short film, radio and additional credit writers who are female is smaller than the percentage of students on screenwriting courses who are female.

After entering the industry, future writers tend to be employed in a range of roles prior to writing their first feature project or TV episode.

Polling indicates common projects in this early stage of career development include short films, radio and online/digital content. Detailed responses also suggested the importance of mentoring and development programmes and other writing work outside of film.

Figure 81: Polling (career development)



Female representation amongst writers of short films and radio programming appears consistently higher than on television programmes and feature films. Additional credits⁵⁷ provide a further metric for early career development.

⁵⁷ Additional Credits are defined as all non-full writing credits, that aren't for a prior version of the work (e.g. a book on which the script is based). The vast majority of these are classified as "assistant writer", "writer's assistant", "additional dialogue/content". They usually come with less financial compensation and rarely include the option of royalties.

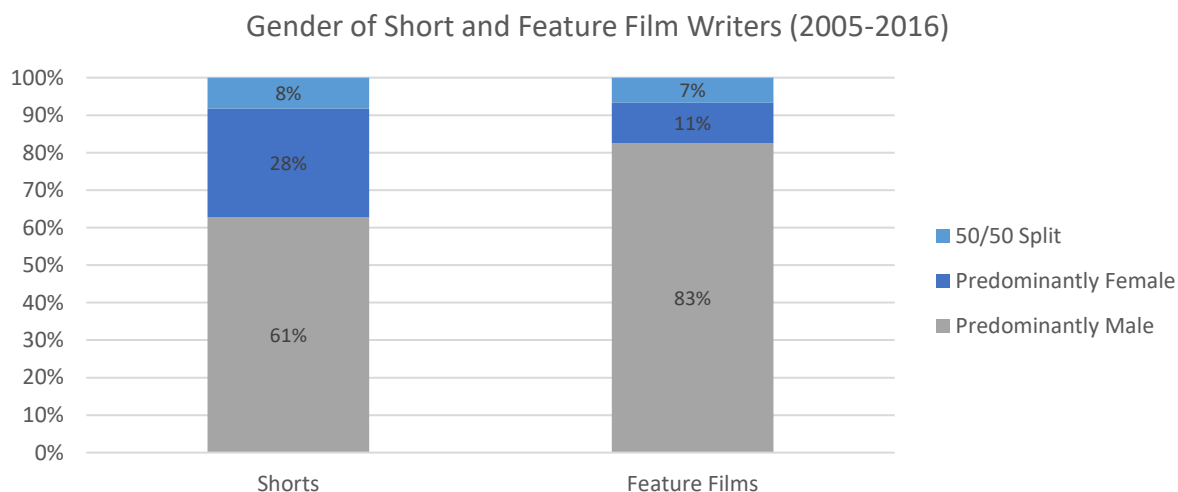
Part Three – Career Progression

Short Films and Additional Credits

Included in the television dataset was data on the short films shown by UK broadcasters during the studied period. In total 485 shorts were broadcast during that period. This represents a small percentage of all UK produced shorts, however, it includes many of the larger and more successful short films and should provide a picture of this early stage of career development.

Short films are consistently more likely to have a female writer than UK feature films (*Figure 82*). A short film broadcast on UK TV is more than twice as likely to be written by a predominantly female writing team than any given feature film produced during the same period.

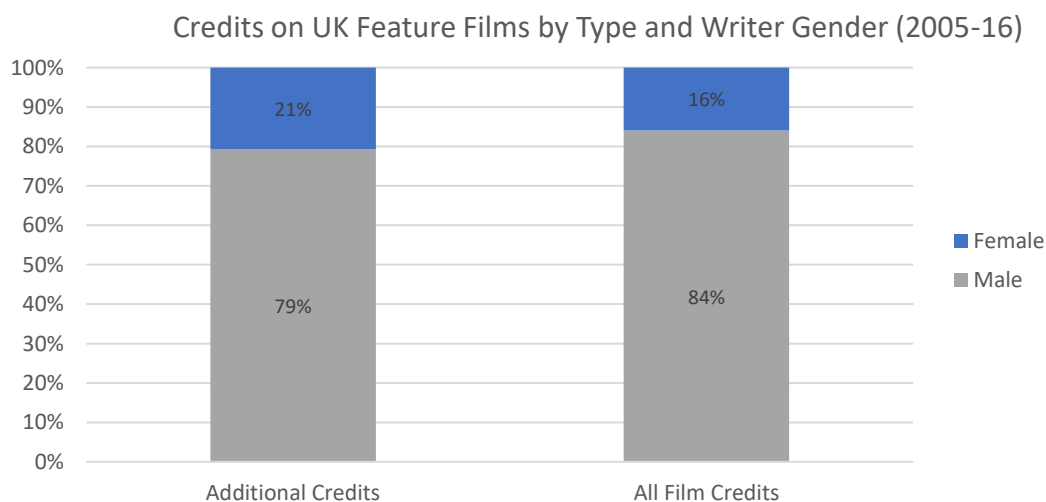
Figure 82: Short Films



Previous research has similarly shown consistently better female representation on creative roles on UK shorts than on feature projects, according to British Film Directory/British Council data⁵⁸.

A similar pattern can be seen for additional credits which paint a similar picture of better female representation in the earlier career stages. Writers receiving additional credits rather than full writing credits are more likely to be female. With 21% of all additional writing credits going to female writers.

Figure 83: Additional Credits



⁵⁸ *Cut out of the Picture: A Study of Female Directors in the UK Film Industry*

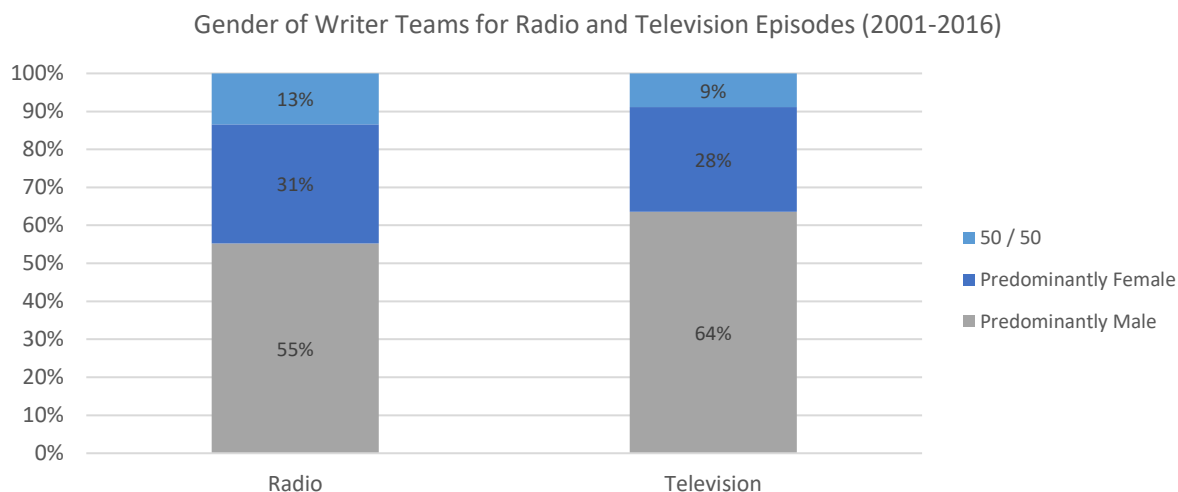
Part Three – Career Progression

Radio

Polling suggested radio programming often serves as a stepping-stone in development toward a TV writing career⁵⁹.

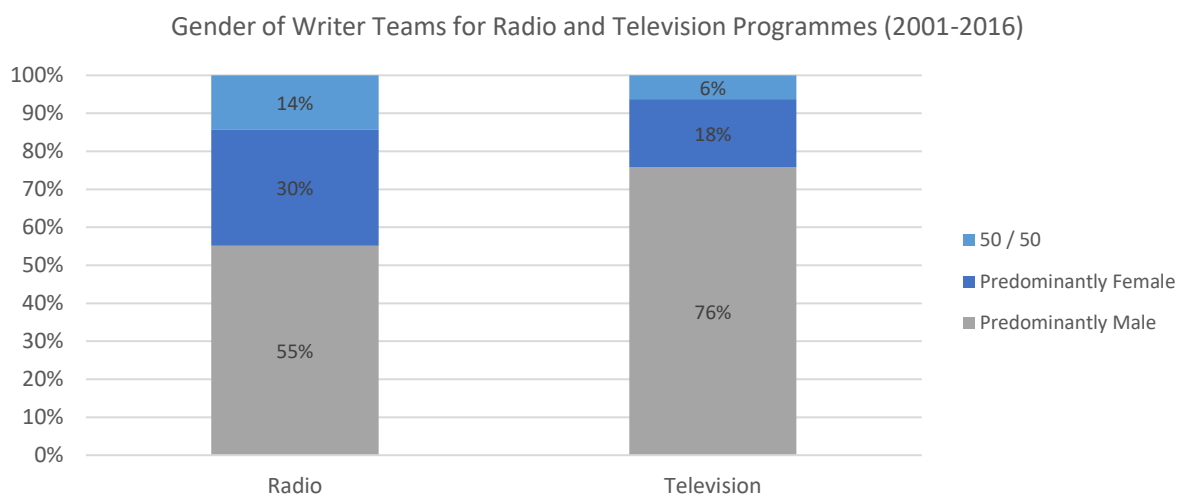
Just like short films and additional writing credits, female representation is better amongst writers for radio than for television.

Figure 84: Radio (episodes)



This trend is consistent both in the writing teams for individual episodes and programmes as a whole, although more pronounced for the latter.

Figure 85: Radio (programmes)



Across all three of the metrics for early career progression female representation is worse than it is at the university/entry level but better than representation on feature films and television programming.

⁵⁹ It is however an inexact measure for career progression, as many writers do choose to work predominantly in radio, rather than necessarily progressing to television.

3.3c Advanced Career Progression

Key Stats

In both film and television industries, female writers are rarest among the most prolific writers.

The likelihood a writer is female correlates negatively with both expected budget in film and expected advertising revenue in television.

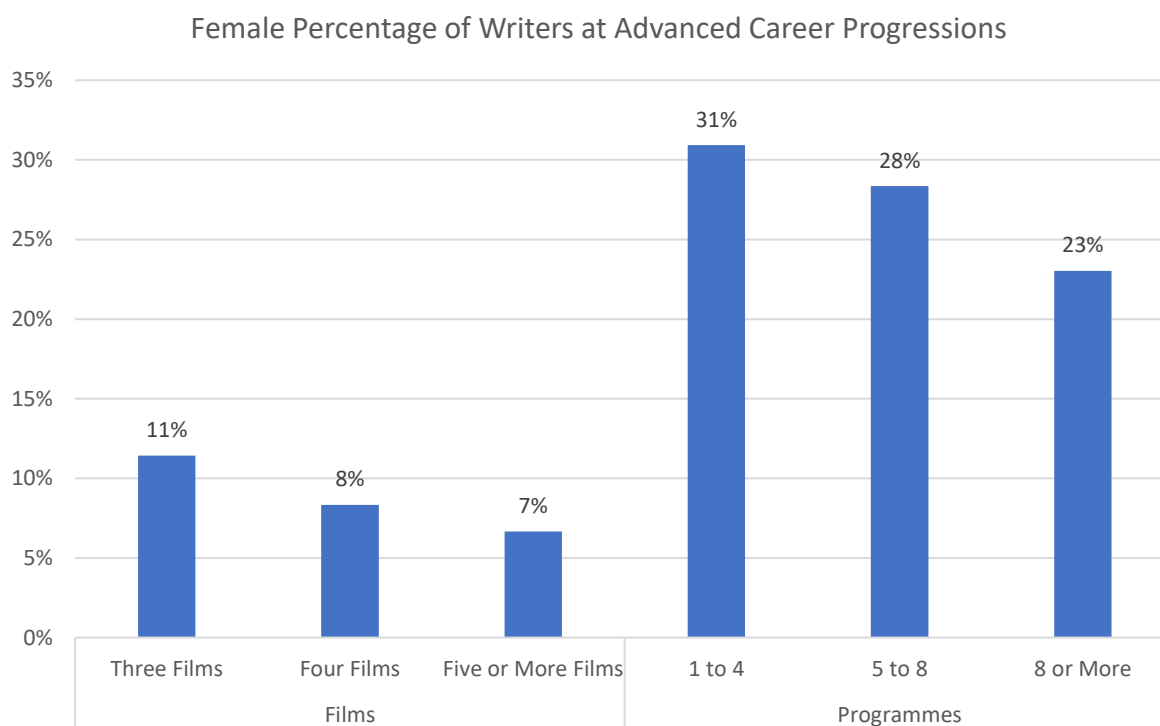
Gaining further experience seems to have little impact on this trend for female writers.

As Sections 3.1a and 3.2a outlined, even once they have written their first film, episode or programme, female writers continue to be less likely to write further or bigger-budgeted/more-prestigious films than their male counterparts.

This section will summarise the differences in the later-career trajectories of male and female writers.

Looking solely at writers who have written three or more films or five or more television programmes, it remains the case that the percentage chance a given writer is female continues to decline the more films or programmes that writer has written.

Figure 86: Career Progression (advanced career)

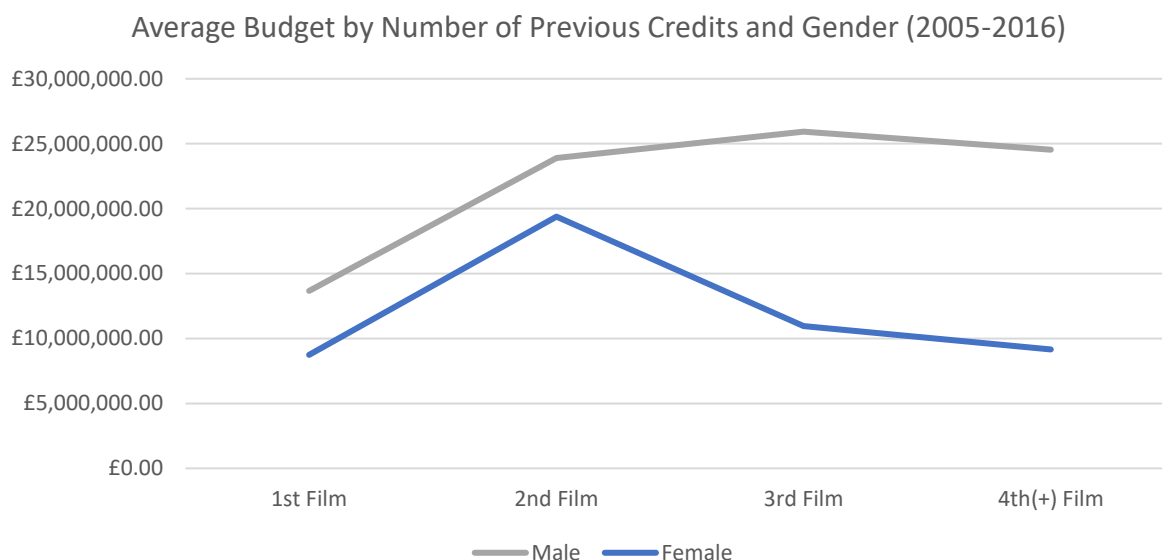


This same trend is visible not just in the quantity of programmes and films writers work for, but also in the types and level of prestige of more frequently female-written content.

Part Three – Career Progression

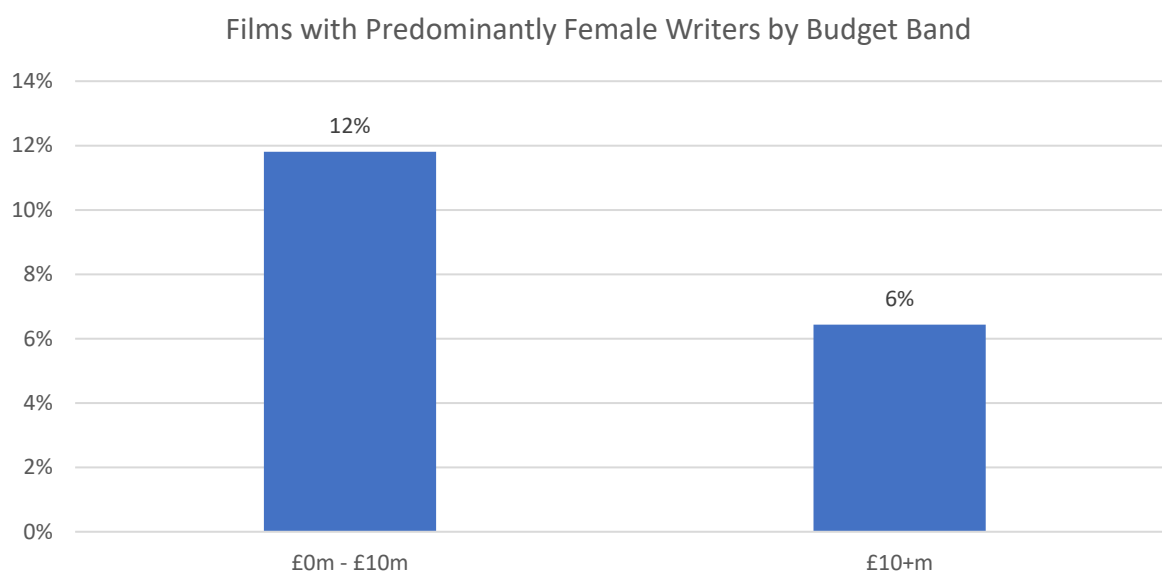
Specific budget data, which primarily refers to higher-budget features, suggested not just a stagnation for female writers with respect to the budgets of the films they write, but a decline after the 2nd film.

Figure 87: Career Progression (budget averages)



This means that, just as there are fewer female writers among those writers with the greatest numbers of credits, female writers are also comparatively less likely to direct the biggest budget features.

Figure 88: Female Representation (bigger-budgets)

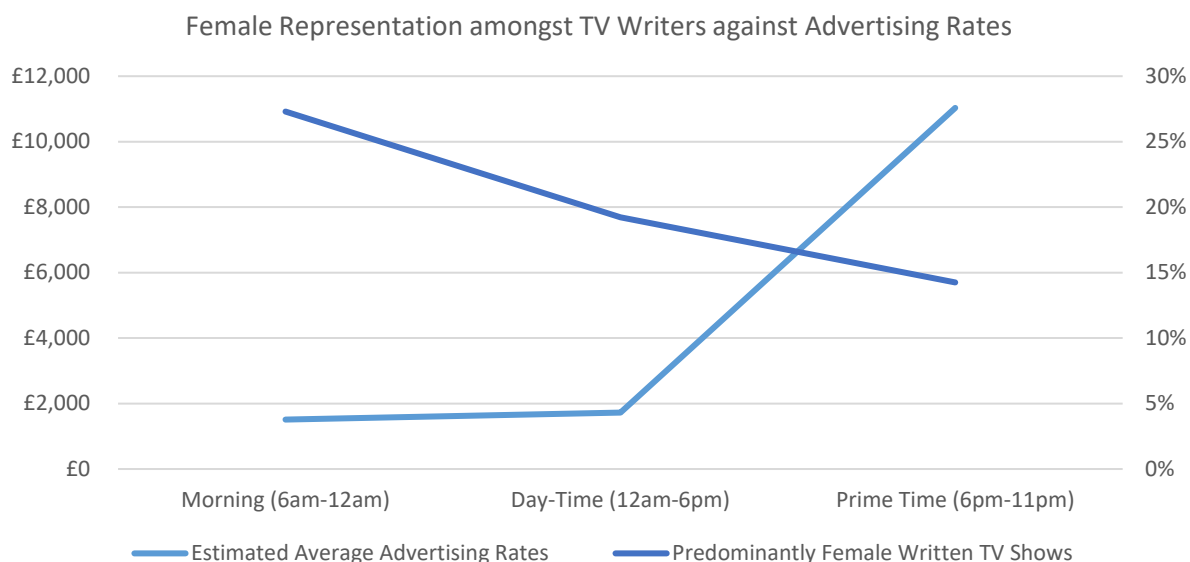


Although there are fluctuations in respect to budget-bands, with a higher percentage of female writers working in the mid-budget range (and a notable restriction on low-budget career longevity), female writers tend to write for smaller films as well as writing fewer films in total.

Part Three – Career Progression

Television data suggests a similar trend in career progression in respect to primetime programming. The percentage chance an episode is predominantly female-written negatively correlates with estimated advertising revenue for that time.

Figure 89: Female Representation (advertising rates)



Furthermore, as noted in *Section 2.2b*, the primetime figures for female writer credits are notably skewed by comparatively good representation on continuing drama programming. Just as overall representation is improved by higher representation amongst children’s TV writers.

Again, the issue here appears not just to consist of an overall dearth of female writers for primetime programming, but also a restriction on female writers’ ability to access the most highly-regarded and personally-lucrative roles.

In summary, at each successive career progression stage, both by qualitative and quantitative measures, a smaller percentage of writers are likely to be female, both in the film and television industries. Although this trend is consistent, it is not uniform, with greater declines in female representation at the outset of their careers and in the final stages of career development.

3.3d Summary of Career Progression

Film		Television	
Phase One - Entering the Industry			
50%	UK Film Courses		50%
49%	New Entrants to Film		49%
43%	Screenwriting Applicants		43%
39%	Screenwriting Students		39%
Phase Two - Early Career			
28%	Short Films	Radio	31%
21%	Additional Credits (film)	1 to 10 Episodes	29%
17%	One Film	One Programme	31%
16%	All UK Film Writers	All UK TV Writers	30%
Phase Three - Career Development			
15%	Low Budget Feature	CDS/Children's TV	33%
11%	Second Film	2 to 4 Programmes	30%
11%	Third Film	10 to 50 Episodes	28%
18%	Mid-Budget Feature	5 to 8 Programmes	28%
Phase Four - Advanced Career			
8%	Four (or more) films	Eight (or more) Programmes	23%
6%	Film in "male" Genre	Primetime	14%
6%	Big-Budget Feature	Primetime (non-CDS)	11%

The table above provides an outline of career progression for female writers in both film and television⁶⁰.

Although film and television both see a gradual decline in female representation amongst writers through the stages of career progression, the disparities appear to manifest in different ways. *Section 3.4* will clarify these differences in more detail.

⁶⁰ It does however combine multiple datasets and ways of capturing disparities (raw demographics, raw credits and predominantly-written type datapoints are all used), so comparisons between them will be inexact. This table should not be substituted in any way for the more detailed findings in Part Three (which are summarised below). It does however mirror and condense the broad trends of the last chapter, without appearing to produce new findings.

Summary of Findings

31. Polling of active UK screenwriters suggested there is no typical path to becoming a TV or film screenwriter, with a wide range of opportunities and roles pursued by potential writers, and no single career development step being a necessity (3.3a)
 - a. Film-related courses (particularly screenwriting) at universities or designated film schools; and writing experience on short-form projects or for different mediums were the most commonly indicated career steps.
32. Overall, the ratio of men to women both at UCAS accredited, film-related courses and entering the industry, is relatively even (3.3a)
 - a. Women are rarer on screenwriting degrees than men, but the ratio of men to women on such courses remains significantly more even than averages for either television or film (substantially for the latter).
33. In general, although female applicants to UK film-related courses were less likely to be accepted than their male counterparts, for the majority of course categories this difference was not significant (3.3a).
 - a. However, writing courses have been one of the few exceptions, with a consistent discrepancy for much of the studied period between the percentage of female applications and the eventual ratio of students.
34. Across all studied metrics for early career progression (shorts, radio and additional credits), a greater percentage of writers are female than on fully fledged film and television productions (3.3b)
 - a. However, the ratio is still more uneven than on film or writing-related courses, or averages for new entrants to the industry.
35. Film budget and television time-slot suggest a glass ceiling effect on female writers' careers (when compared to their male counterparts) (3.3c-d).
 - a. As they gain experience, female writers do not consistently move to bigger budget films, rather, on average, the budget-level of their films stagnates and then decreases.
 - b. Similarly, female representation amongst writers of programmes negatively correlates with advertising rates by timeslot.
 - c. Gaining greater experience in daytime television aids female writers in closing the career trajectory differences with male daytime writers, but the same effect is not seen as clearly for primetime.

3.4 The difference between Film and Television

Key Stats

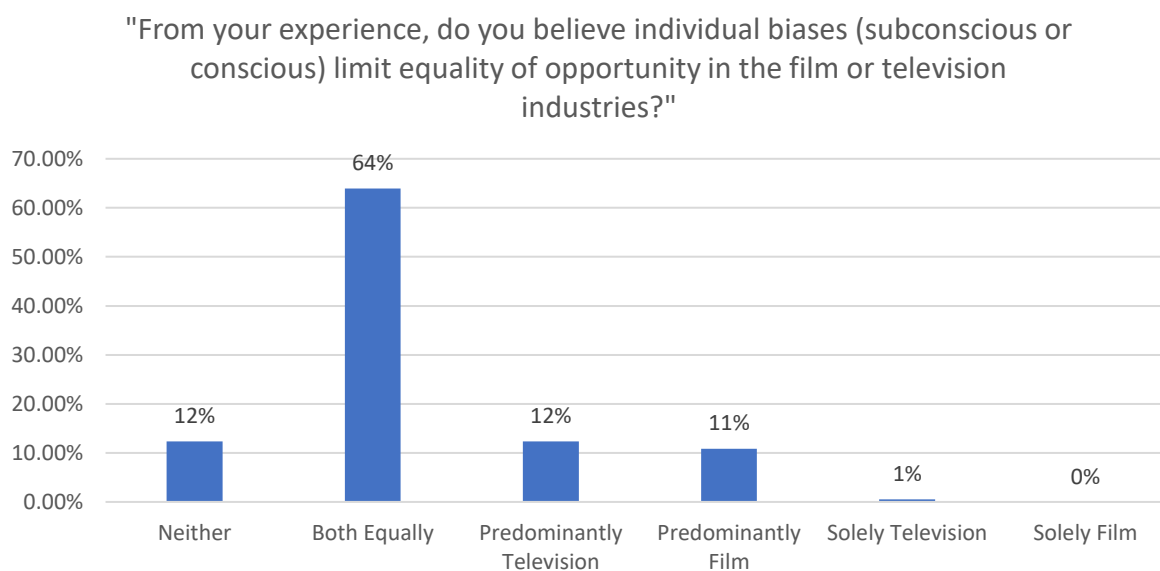
In absolute terms, there are a greater number of female writers and female-written episodes and programmes in the TV industry, than there are female writers and female-written features in the film industry.

However, in terms of female writer career progression and for certain types of television (primetime, non-CDS, non-children's), there are limited differences between the film industry and in the TV industry

Throughout this report the film and television industries have been treated as mostly separate entities. However, there are notable similarities between the findings in both sectors.

Writers themselves do not appear to believe that there are significant differences between film and television in respect to limitations on equality of opportunity⁶¹.

Figure 90: Polling (film and television)

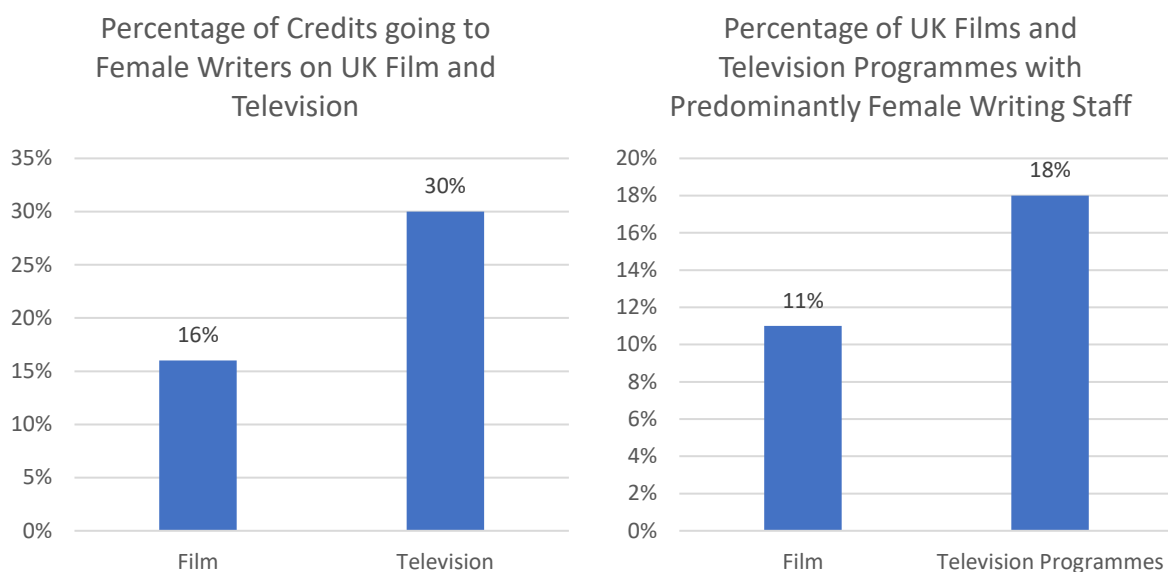


⁶¹ The raw findings of this polling question should be mitigated as the question assumes some limitation to equality of opportunity to begin with. It is intended not of an objective measure of either industry but rather a gauge of how they are perceived relative to each other, by those who believe equality of opportunity is restricted.

Part Three – Career Progression

However, although the trends seen in film and television so far are similar, they also contain notable differences. In absolute terms, the disparity is far smaller in the television industry.

Figure 91: Summary of Film/TV Representation

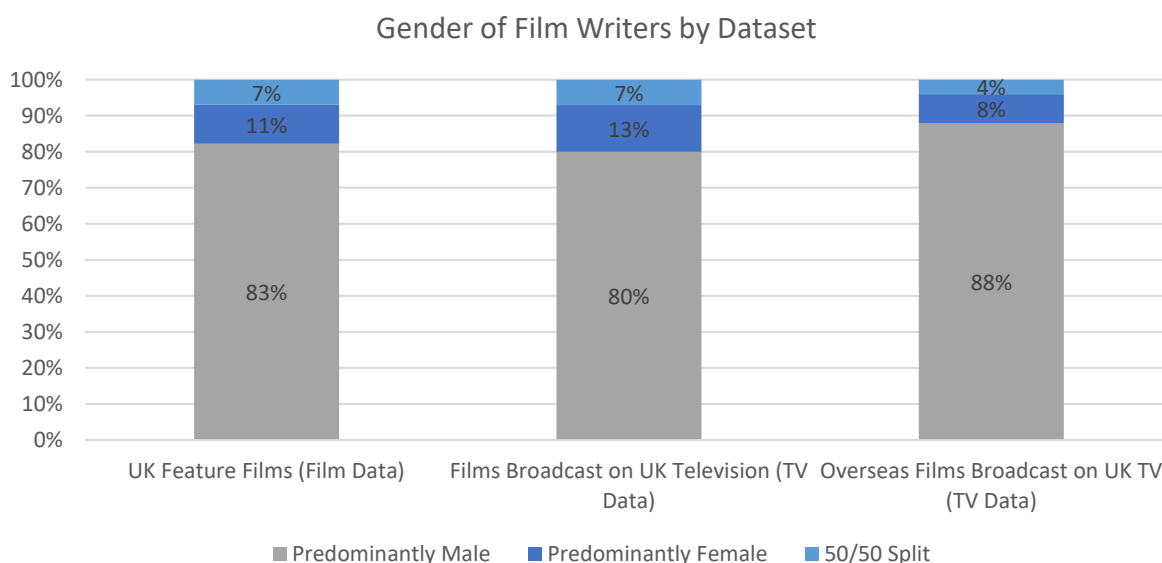


This puts female representation amongst television writers closer to the percentage of female screenwriting students, (although still some distance from the averages in film and television education as a whole; new entrants to the industry; and the national population).

As a result, TV episodes and programmes are more likely to be written predominantly by female writers, than feature films. In both cases, predominantly female-written content is comparatively rare, but the severity of the imbalance is greater in absolute terms in the film industry.

It is plausible that this difference could be a result of differences in data collection methods and segmentation between the TV and film datasets that might be influencing the overall averages. However, data on broadcast films from the TV dataset does closely match the findings from the film dataset, suggesting this is unlikely to be the cause.

Figure 92: Database Comparison



Part Three – Career Progression

A more plausible explanation is the high volume of television episodes produced compared to the total number of feature films. In total, the TV dataset included 65,886 episodes, whilst the film database found 2,624 feature films produced, at least in part, in the UK (the TV database also covers five more years). This suggests there are a greater number of distinct opportunities to write in TV, as opposed to film.

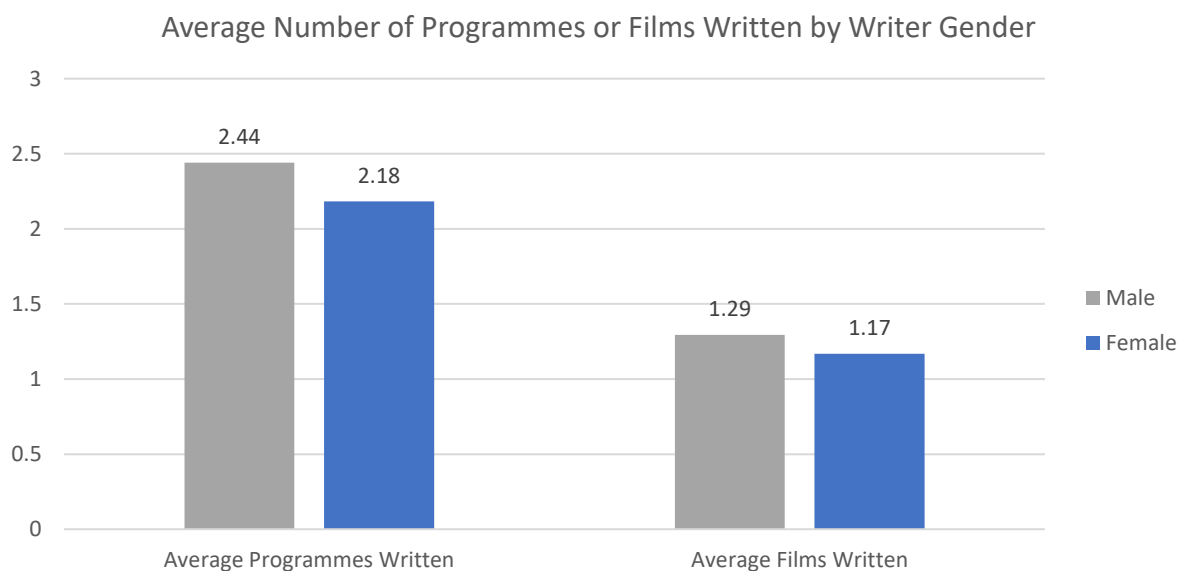
As a result, the television industry supports a greater total number of unique writers (8,285 to 3,310), and therefore gets far closer to employing all potential writers, both male and female. Assuming female writers do face reduced equality of opportunity in film and television industries, this greater number of roles would be more beneficial to women than men, resulting in better representation overall in TV than in film.

However, under these conditions it would be likely that female writers in television, despite their greater overall numbers, would still struggle just as much to reach the most prestigious, and hotly competed for, timeslots.

The previous section on career development found a number of similarities in subtler ways that inequity can emerge. Taking into account the initial, overall difference in female representation, the career trajectories of female writers in film and television appear similarly restricted.

In both cases, female writers are less likely to write further projects than their male counterparts. Although female writers do not find it notably more difficult to write further episodes for a single show, they are less likely to write for further shows (at a very similar relative rate to that seen in film). This process of moving to an entirely different programme more closely mirrors the process in film, suggesting the structure of the television industry may help limit any causes of a disparity (See *Section 4.5: Systemic Issues*).

Figure 93: Career Progression Comparison

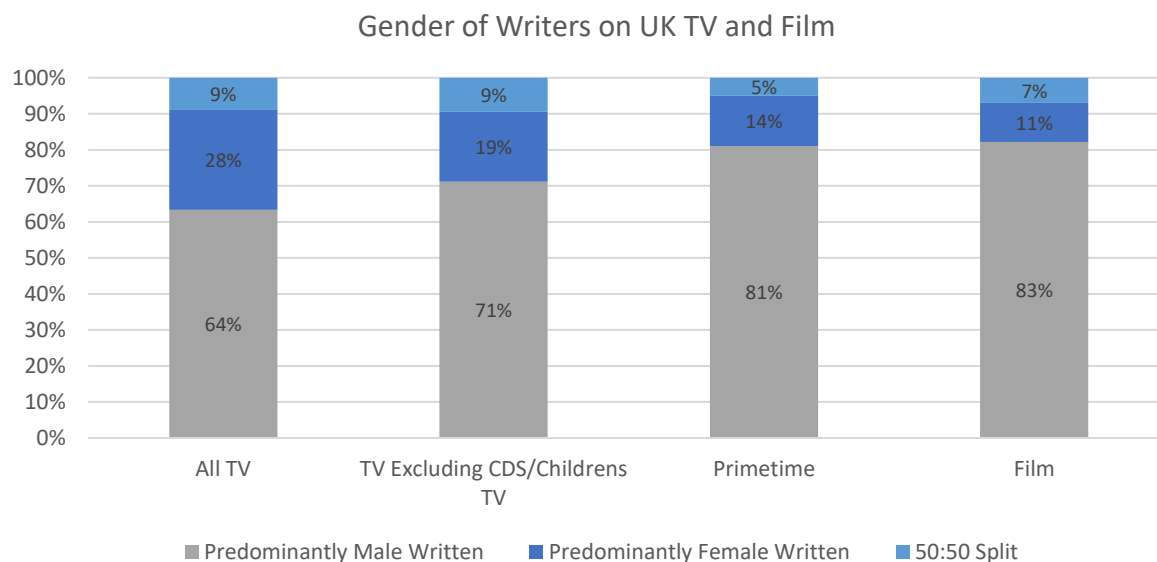


Part Three – Career Progression

Similarly, female television writers are less likely to write certain types of television and for prestigious, primetime productions. A trend which closely mirrors patterns in the film industry on genre and budget.

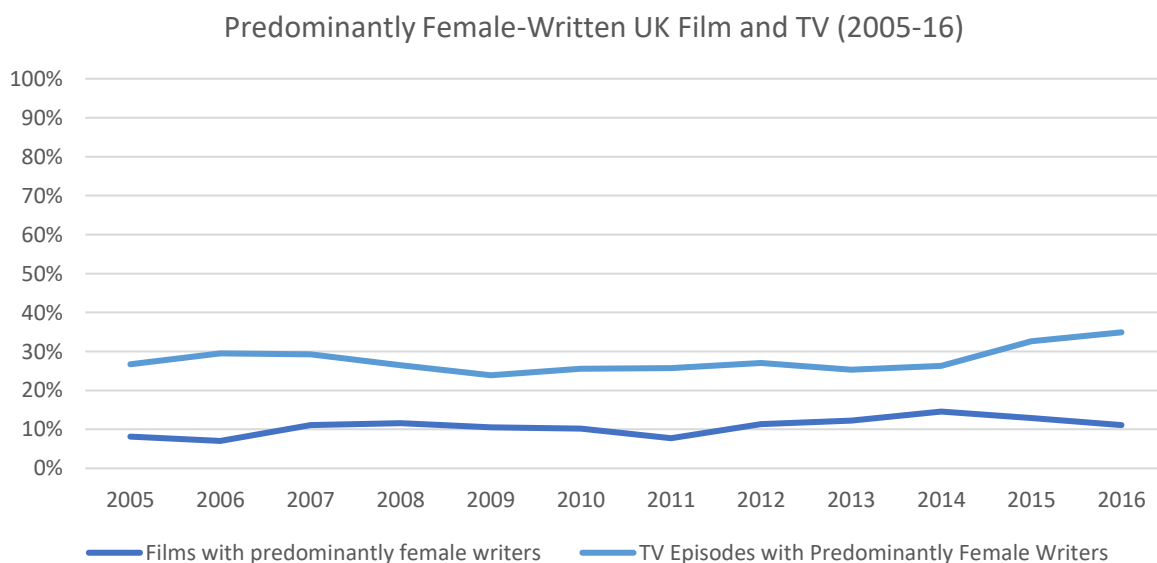
Furthermore, as seen in *Sections 2.2a* and *2.2b*, the overall averages for television rely heavily on higher female representation on less-viewed (morning/daytime) television, primetime continuing drama and children’s TV. Outside of these areas, female representation amongst writers of television episodes looks far more similar to representation in film.

Figure 94: Comparison of TV Types and Film



Furthermore, although the overall disparity is smaller in television, it appears equally entrenched. As noted in *Sections 1.1b* and *2.1b*, until recently⁶², there has been little overall improvement in the percentage of female writers in either industry.

Figure 95: Female Representation over Time (comparison)



⁶² In comparing the two trajectories, it is notable the increase in female representation amongst television writers over the last two years, coincides with a decrease in the percentage of female writers working in film. Outside of this however, both have limited fluctuations.

In summary, the problem in the television industry appears to be better characterised as a restriction of opportunities, rather than a universal limitation of access.

Under certain conditions and with the right set of preferences, female writers in television might plausibly never find their opportunities restricted. However, if they have different goals, particularly towards the most prestigious programming, then it appears they will find their opportunities curtailed.

Summary of Findings

31. In absolute terms, the ratio of male writers to female writers is notably more even in television than in film (3.4).
32. However, career trajectories appear similarly restricted in both industries (3.4).
 - a. The percentage difference between male and female writers in terms of average programmes written across the course of their career is extremely close to that seen for average films written.
 - b. Primetime programming (particularly outside of CDS), has very similar representation for female writers to the film industry.
 - c. Polling suggests writers do not believe there is a significant difference between the film and television industries in terms of equality of opportunity for writers.
33. The problem in the television industry appears to be better characterised as a restriction of opportunities, whilst the film industry appears to suffer from more universal limitation of access (3.4).

3.5 Polling

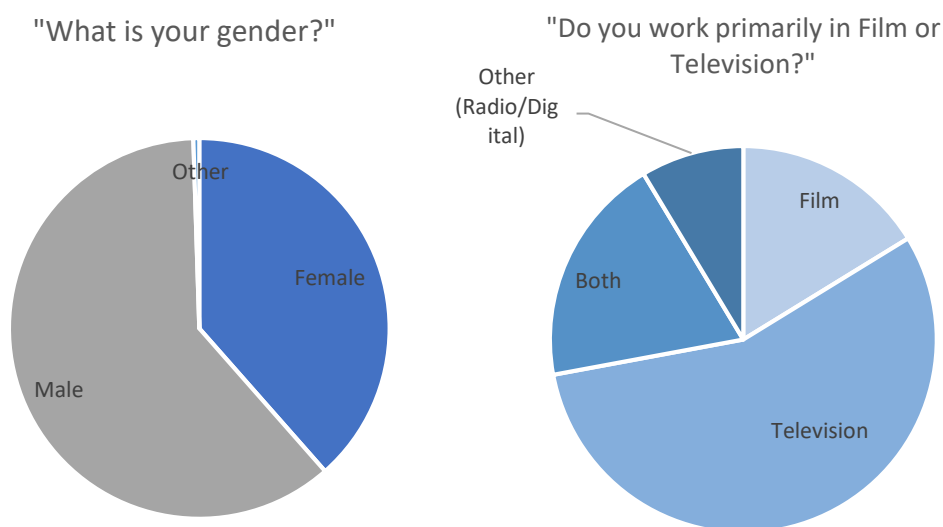
As part of this research, a questionnaire was sent to all current TV and Film writers with full WGGB membership. Questions primarily related to writers’ own experiences and opinions on the film and television industries⁶³.

In total 223 writers were polled. Response rates are outlined in the table to the right, for more details see *Appendix One – Methodology*.

	Totals	Action Rate
Sent	1291	NA
Delivered	1259	98%
Opened	774	60%
Responded	223	17%

The majority of respondents were writers holding full WGGB membership. All respondents have worked in film or television (although some worked primarily in radio or digital).

Figure 96: Polling (basic demographics)



The average respondent had worked as a writer for 14.6 years, with a wide range of experience levels included in the sample.

A higher percentage of respondents were female than would be expected from industry averages. 38.5% of respondents were female, compared to 30% of credited TV writers and 16% of credited film writers.

Given the questions posed to respondents it is likely this difference has some effect on the content of responses. Findings listed in this section refer not to the beliefs of the industry as a whole, but specifically of those writers who responded to the survey.

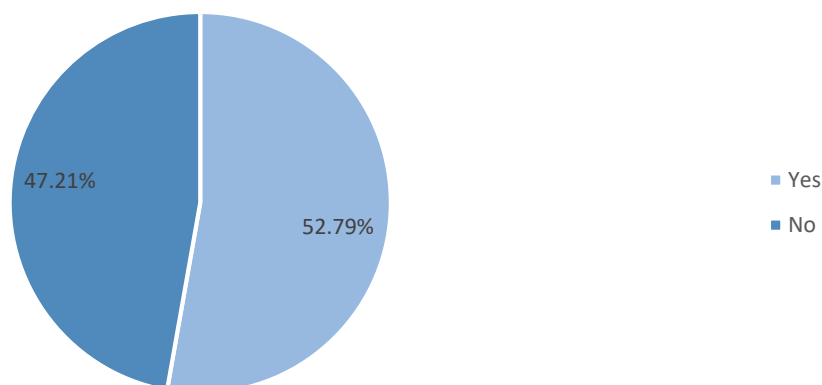
⁶³ Key stats have again been omitted from this section, as it captures writers’ opinions, and not the actual state of affair.

Part Three – Career Progression

The majority of respondents (53%) suggested they have seen evidence of discrimination over the course of their careers.

Figure 97: Polling (evidence of discrimination)

Have you seen any evidence of discrimination during your career as a writer?

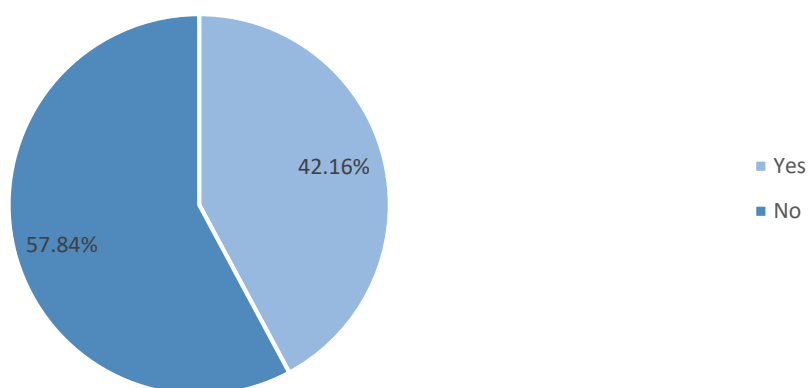


Specific responses were most likely to reference gender discrimination, but multiple respondents also referenced evidence of discrimination based on race, class and age, as well as concerns related to positive discrimination⁶⁴.

Furthermore, 42% of respondents believed that discrimination, of some form, had had a negative impact on their own career progression⁶⁵.

Figure 98: Polling (experience of discrimination)

Has discrimination of any form had a negative impact on your own career progression?



⁶⁴ As prior questions related to gender but not other protected characteristics, detailed analysis of the types of discrimination experienced or seen is possible but unlikely to be representative or reliable. However, respondents were asked to provide details, evidence and opinions based on their answers to these two questions. These are outlined in full in *Appendix Two: Writer Opinions*. These, unedited, responses allow the reader to draw their own inferences regarding the experiences of individual writers.

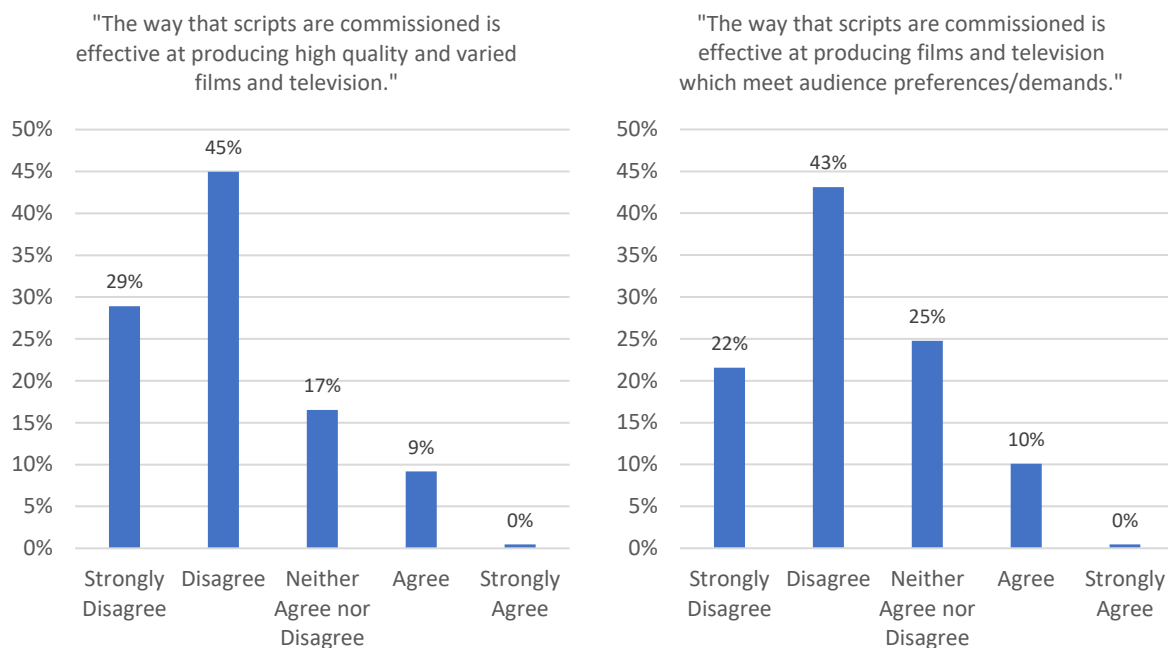
⁶⁵ Discrimination based on gender was most frequently identified in individual responses. However, discrimination based on race, age and class were also common, with a number of respondents also indicating concern with the effects of positive discrimination more recently.

Part Three – Career Progression

Polling also revealed a much broader dissatisfaction amongst writers in respect to the way the industry functions and treats its key creatives.

In gauging writers' opinions on the industries they work for, it became clear that respondents have a low opinion of the industries' ability to meritocratically hire writers; produce high quality/in demand products; and treat employees and freelances with a reasonable level of fairness and respect.

Figure 99: Opinion Polling (end products)



Firstly, respondents overwhelmingly disagreed that the commissioning process was effective at producing either “high quality and varied films and television” or content “which meets audience preferences/demands”.

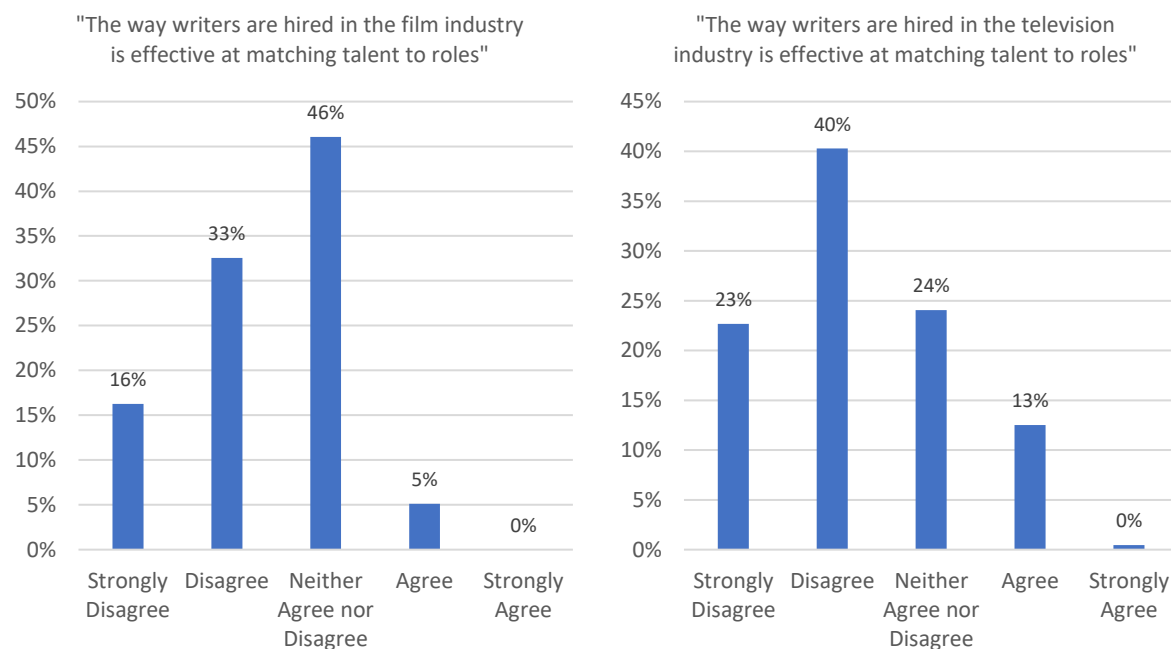
Less than 10% of currently working writers would agree that the current script commissioning process is producing quality film and television which meets audiences' demands.

Given the central position writers hold in the creative process and direct experience of commissioning mechanism, particular weight should be given to their opinion on the relation of these systems to the quality of the eventual products.

Part Three – Career Progression

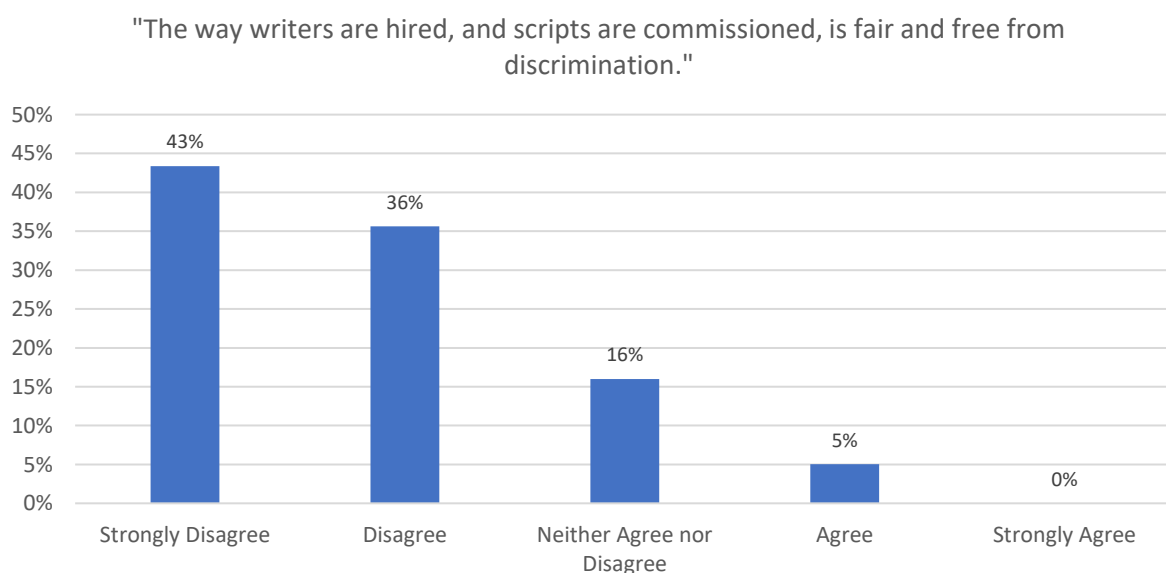
Respondents opinions point to further dissatisfaction with those mechanisms themselves. The majority of respondents were explicitly dissatisfied with the current industry hiring structures' ability to effectively match talent to roles. In other words, there is little belief that the hiring of writers functions in a way that respects the principle of equality of opportunity⁶⁶.

Figure 100: Opinion Polling (efficacy of hiring)



The result, as has been seen in the findings so far, is an industry hiring structure which, at least according to the majority of writers (79%), fails to hire people and commission scripts in a way which is fair and free from discrimination:

Figure 101: Opinion Polling (discrimination)



⁶⁶ The higher number of respondents selecting "Neither Agree nor Disagree" for matching talent to roles in Film is likely a product of the larger number of respondents working primarily in television (and with little direct experience of the film industry).

Summary of Findings

34. The majority of respondents (53%) suggested they had seen evidence of discrimination, of some form, over the course of their careers (3.5).
 - a. 42% suggested that discrimination, of some form, had a negative impact on their own career progression.
35. Respondents generally disagreed that the hiring and commissioning processes in both industries are functioning efficiently or fairly (3.5).
 - a. Respondents have a low opinion of the industries' ability to meritocratically hire writers.
 - b. Respondents were sceptical of the current structure's ability to produce high quality/in demand products.
 - c. 79% of all respondents disagreed with the statement that "the way writers are hired, and scripts are commissioned, is fair and free from discrimination".

Part Four - Analysis and Explanations

4.1 Introduction

This section will focus on three potential causes that produce or sustain the disparities seen in Parts One to Three, and help explain the differences in career trajectories:

1. **Personal Preference** – The argument that the findings can be explained, to a certain extent, by differences in career preferences between men and women, has some validity. However, it is unable to provide an explanation for the entirety of the findings and raises additional problems.
2. **Unconscious Bias** – The structure of the film and television industries, like many others, places the burden of responsibility for hiring firmly on individuals, with little direct oversight. The scale and scope of the disparity suggests that the gender imbalance is, at least in part, due to the personal preferences not of the writer, but of the hirer.
3. **Systemic Issues** – The lack of any marked improvement in female representation over time suggests that certain systemic issues help to sustain the disparity. Furthermore, the structure of the film industry in particular allows, and potentially promotes, unconscious bias in hiring decisions.

It should be acknowledged that our methodology, and the data available, meant there are certain potential explanations we were unable to analyse in detail. These explanations include:

1. **Commissioning vs. Production** – Our datasets contain only the credited writers on produced programming. As such it excludes commissions for films which never exited development, and television episodes and programmes that were not aired. It is plausible female representation on commissioned but unproduced programming is notably different to that on fully-credited programming.
2. **Agents** – A number of polling respondents specifically cited bias amongst agents as well as producers and commissioners (regarding age, class and race, as well as gender). Without data on agent representation it is not possible to fully assess this concern or its impact.
3. **Industry Culture** – Although the following section will examine measurable effects of broader industry culture. Many detailed responses from female writers to polling indicated differences in basic treatment of female employees. However, it is exceedingly difficult to quantify these findings⁶⁷ or their impact (particularly on Personal Preference).
4. **Conscious Bias** - Bias, as detailed below, is defined as “unconscious” for the purposes of this report. Our belief is that standards of justification for claims regarding “conscious bias” and “unconscious bias” are different, as the former is generally regarded as placing greater responsibility (and blame) on the relevant individual. However, it should be acknowledged that there certainly is circumstantial evidence for the stronger claim. The use of “unconscious” is reflective of an unwillingness to make inferences regarding which actions individuals take consciously, not a product of proof that those making hiring decisions are entirely unconscious of the biases driving decision-making.

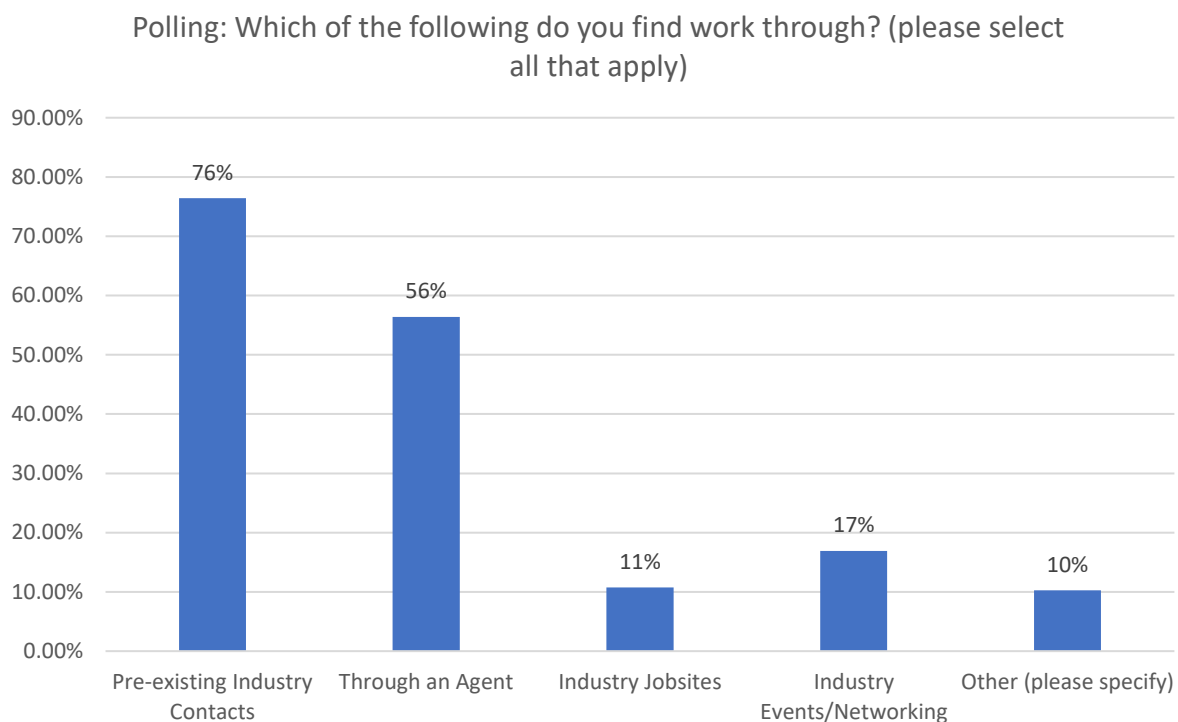
⁶⁷ *Appendix Two: Writer Opinions* contains all individual responses to polling, ordered by type. For more detail on additional concerns voiced by currently-working writers, see this section.

4.2 How Writers are Hired

To understand the differences in outcomes between male and female writers it is necessary to examine the processes by which they are hired, and by which scripts are commissioned.

Unlike for early-career steps, there were clear trends in polling responses on how writers tend to find work:

Figure 102: Polling (finding work)



The vast majority of writers find work through pre-existing industry contacts and through agents. The third most common source of work was industry events and networking; the process by which those contacts are made. Furthermore, agents are generally found through referral from pre-existing industry contacts.

More formal (and open) systems, such as jobsites, company application programmes, social media and recruitment agencies are either rare or non-existent. As such, individual contacts are, in essence, the gatekeepers to career progression and success in the film and television industries.

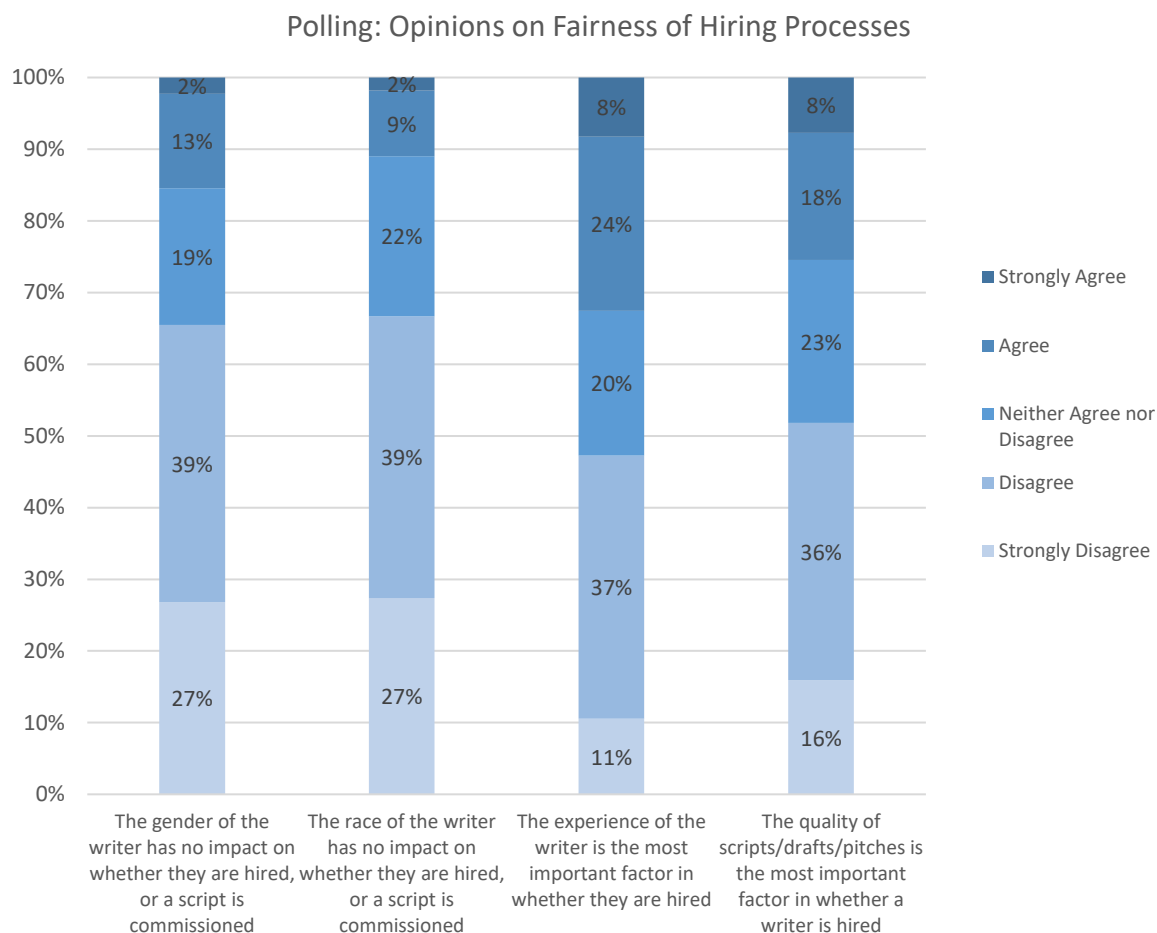
This structure is not necessary problematic, as long as it still produces egalitarian outcomes. However, polling has consistently suggested dissatisfaction in the hiring and commissioning process and the way it relates to the film and television produced by both industries.

Regardless of its efficacy, any disparities that emerge between male and female writers, are likely to be a product of practices by individuals on either side of this informal hiring structure. In other words, it is either the preferences of writers, or of commissioners/hirers, that is directly responsible for differences in representation based on gender, although they may be sustained and facilitated by industry structures.

Part Four - Analysis and Explanations

Further polling gauged writer opinion on the overall fairness of the hiring process in relation to: gender and race of applicants; the experience of the writer; and the quality of scripts/drafts/pitches.

Figure 103: Polling (fairness)



In each case, respondents tended to disagree that the hiring and commissioning processes were meritocratic, with particularly low opinions of the industries' ability to limit discrimination.

Polling conducted in 2016 for *Cut out of the Picture*, revealed similar opinions amongst directors, in regard to how they were hired and projects developed.

Collectively, polling suggests two clear trends in how writers find work:

1. Writers are hired and scripts are commissioned primarily through pre-existing contacts within the industry and more informal networking and contact development
2. This hiring process is not regarded as wholly meritocratic, in respect to various factors, by the majority of those whose careers are governed by it

Given this, it seems most plausible that there are two distinct, but linked, problems. Firstly, difference in preference between those on either side of the informal hiring structure, and second, a lack of structure (or other systemic issues) that allows these preferences to impact employment trends.

The next three parts of this section will examine these potential explanations in greater detail.

4.3 Explanation One: Personal Preference

It is conceivable that fewer women than men want to become professional writers in film and television. Clearly, it's very difficult to exactly measure the influence of this personal preference but there is some evidence to suggest it plays a part in the overall lack of female writers.

Although 50.1% of all students on film courses were female, just 39% of students on writing courses were (although 43% of applicants were). Although this figure is still notably higher than the overall percentage of writers in the TV industry (and substantially more than in film), it remains below the percentage of women in film education or entering the industry more generally.

It is plausible that differences in personal preference could also explain aspects of the disparity later in careers. In the television industry, female writers were only marginally disadvantaged in the number of episodes they wrote, whilst the disparity was broader for the number of programmes. This might point to a preference among female writers to work on a single programme for longer. Similarly, differences in representation on genre (and therefore budget given the connection of the two) could be accounted for by this personal preference.

However, this explanation faces two distinct problems:

First, the weight of evidence and the similarity of findings across different aspects of the data suggests that it is highly unlikely to account for all the elements of the imbalance seen in the first two sections.

Second, it is unclear whether it resolves the issue in such a way that does not require the industries to take further action, either to protect equality of opportunity or to guarantee the best films and television is made.

4.3a The Empirical Issue

The central problem with the explanation based on personal preference is the consistency and extent of the findings amassed in the first half of this report.

The data limits the plausibility of this explanation in eight main ways:

1. The Scale of the Findings – The extent of the disparity requires significant and broad differences in personal preference to exist. For example, in the film industry, it would require the assumption that, in an equal opportunity system, women are more than five times less interested in becoming feature film writers than men.
2. The Scope of the Findings – The widespread nature of the disparity would require female personal preference to be widespread in a similar way. Data suggests female writers are disadvantaged across many aspects of both industries, and provided evidence of further inequality of opportunity for women in other production roles. The more widely and universally the personal preference explanation has to be applied the weaker it is, as it has to overlook an increasing range in individuals' preferences.
3. Entrenched disparities – The lack of overall change across the studied period provides a similar reason to be sceptical. Improvement in female representation among writers is lower than the industry as a whole, although both were limited particularly in more important roles. If personal preference were solely responsible, a greater increase would be more plausible, both to match the interest of the general public, and improvement in other low-level crew roles across the same period.

4. Film Education Data – Even if writing courses are taken as a direct indicator of relative interest in screenwriting as a career, there remains a significant difference between the percentage of female screenwriting applicants and female writers in either industry.
5. The relation of film and television data – The better representation in the television industry, as compared with the film industry, suggests that, at least in the latter, the preferences of female writers are not being met. Furthermore, although there are significant differences in the structures of the two industries, they also share notable similarities in both their employees and hiring practices. It seems more plausible the issue is simply worse in one of the two, not that it is a sole product of an aspect of only one industry.
6. Limited evidence of changing preferences – *Part Three: Career Progression* provided a second way to see the depth and breadth of the imbalance between male and female writers. Although the imbalance is alleviated somewhat during the middle of their careers, female writers were less likely to progress throughout their careers in film and television. Again, personal preference would need to explain how it remains consistent, even as the pool of writers, along with their preferences, changes.
7. The structure of restricted access – The exact structure of the disparity in career progression also draws reason for scepticism of this explanation. It is particularly damaging that even those female writers who do gain experience, and demonstrate a desire to become and progress as writers, continue to find the opportunities diminished. Furthermore, the pattern of a high initial bar of entry and lower ceilings for female writers’ careers, more readily suggests a problem with the perception of female writers rather than being a result of their own preferences. The two issues are at opposite ends of career trajectories, and yet both suggest limitations are placed on writers based on preconceptions of their abilities.
8. The inverse correlation with prestige – Personal preference would also have to be applied to the other imbalances seen. It is plausible as an explanation for genre, budget, timeslot and programme type discrepancies in isolation, but for it to be so widely the case that female writers are less interested in those projects generally seen as more prestigious, and comparatively much more likely to want to write projects in areas traditionally viewed as more “female”, again seems highly unlikely. This problem is compounded by the gradual decline from more entry level writing roles to full feature and TV credits.
9. Polling – Polling directly contradicts this explanation. The majority of respondents indicated they had seen evidence of discrimination themselves, and 42% had experienced it directly⁶⁸. Respondents also believe there is a lack of meritocracy in hiring processes more broadly and that hiring and commissioning is being influenced by factors not relevant to the final product of industries, as well as indicating they believe this is having a detrimental effect on the film and television produced.

Despite these empirical limitations, personal preference could still reasonably be viewed as a contributory factor in explaining the imbalance between male and female writers on an industry-wide level. However, it is not adequate as an explanation of the entirety of the data presented in this report and in particular, struggles to explain or justify the individual disadvantages faced by female writers across their career.

⁶⁸ It is worth acknowledging here that 77% of female respondents indicated they had seen evidence of discrimination, and 71% indicated they had direct experience of discrimination. For reasons outlined in *Appendix One: Methodology* data-points produced by polling have been given limited statistical significance, particularly where segmentation notably effected sample sizes. Responses to questions regarding experience or evidence of discrimination sorted by respondent gender are published in *Appendix One* for clarity; and all individual detailed responses to these questions are published in *Appendix Two: Writers’ Opinions and Experiences*.

Beyond the lack of adequate evidence supporting it, there is a further reason this explanation should be treated warily. As it raises a number of additional concerns and may point more to the difficulties faced in solving these issues than to any reason to mitigate our concern with them. These are discussed in the next two sections.

4.3b The Perception Problem

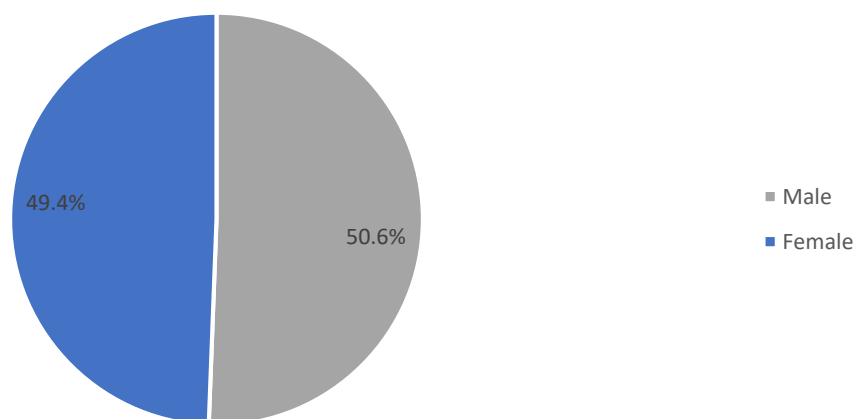
Polling suggests a lack of clear or consistent entry routes into the industries for writers. University courses were most common, but still the minority of writers came to film and television through that route. Writing-specific courses were even rarer and no single step in a writer's early career trajectory appears to be a necessity.

As a result, the early stages of a writer's career are inherently risk-laden, and progression is uncertain (a low percentage of both male and female writers wrote more than one feature). Furthermore, writers often hold other crew roles, or work in other industries, before becoming a writer in film and television at a later stage.

The 2016 DUK *Cut out of the Picture Report* looked at the gender of the lowest level position on film productions between 2005-14⁶⁹. The gender ratio is similar to film courses as a whole: 49.4% of all new entrants to the UK Film Industry are women suggesting that, although comparatively there appears to be lower female interest in screenwriting courses, this is not matched by a lower overall interest in film or television.

Figure 104: New Entrants (2005-14)

Gender of New Entrants to the UK Film Industry (2005-14)



A new entrant to any industry, with limited knowledge of it, has their ambitions shaped by the expectations of individuals around them and the opportunities they are afforded. If female entrants to the industry are not viewed as readily as potential writers, they are unlikely to be afforded the same opportunities, and their expectations and goals will be correspondingly diminished.

⁶⁹ *Cut out of the Picture: A Study of Female Directors in the UK Film Industry*. This data refers to runners and production assistants on UK Feature Films from 2005-14.

This problem is often classified as stereotype threat. Shown to be contributory factor in long-standing racial and gender gaps in academic performance⁷⁰, stereotype threat posits that if achieving a certain goal is perceived as particularly difficult for a certain group, members of that group might justifiably be less inclined to take the greater risks involved with pursuing that goal.

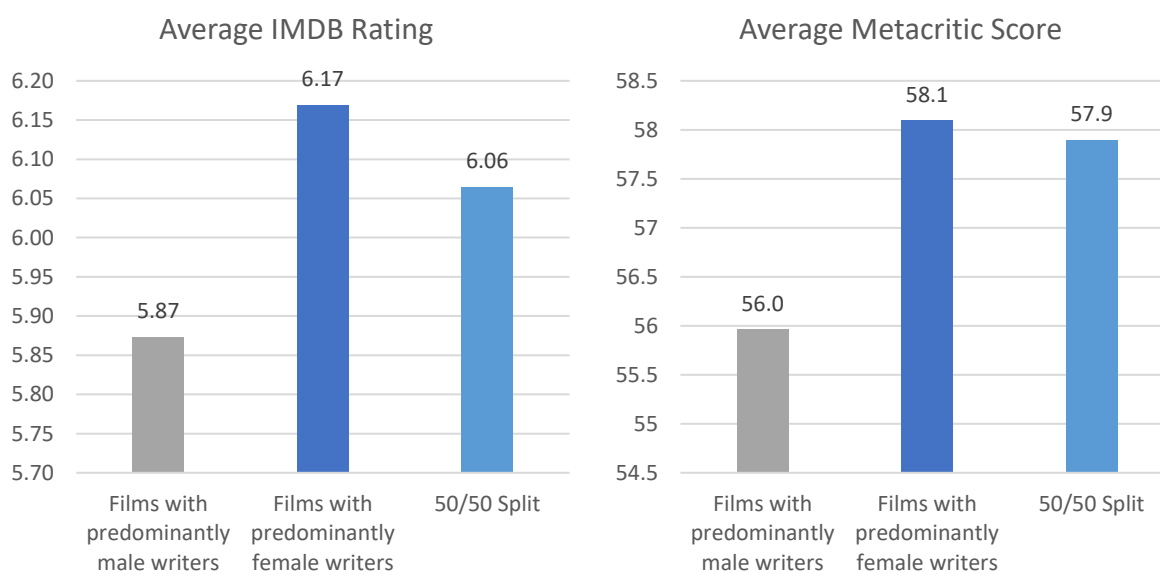
Potential female writers learning they need to put in significant effort and work to succeed, and yet still face lower odds of success based on their gender rather than talent, might reasonably gravitate to different roles that are more achievable or exit the industry entirely. Equally, the expectations and goals of potential female writers are set, at least in part, by the opportunities afforded them, and the expectations placed on them.

Regardless of the exact extent of the influence of stereotype threat, it does suggest that the personal preference explanation cannot be viewed as operating in a closed system.

4.3c The Broader Problem with Inequality

As *Section 1.2d* showed, female written films are, in general, preferred by both critics and audiences:

Figure 105: Audience Opinion Summary



Similarly, they tended to perform better at the box office at almost all budget levels. This is plausibly a product of one group being unfairly disadvantaged and so requiring a greater level of talent and work to succeed. Hence, female writers who do succeed would tend to be more talented or harder working on average, because they have a higher bar for entry in the first place.

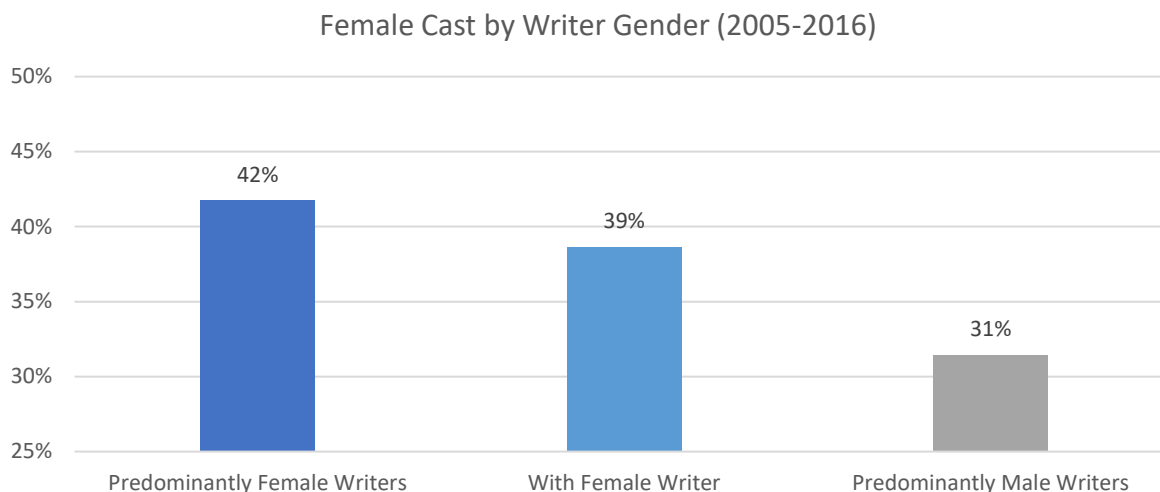
This is symptomatic of a broader problem. The issue of equality of opportunity is only part of what makes the overall disparity problematic. Concern is also drawn by the potential impact of a disproportionately male writing sector on the content produced, and the effect those products can ultimately have on audiences (genre trends add a further element to this concern).

⁷⁰ Over 300 experiments and studies on Stereotype Threat have been published in peer-reviewed journals. Overviews of current literature can be accessed through the following links:
diversity.arizona.edu/sites/diversity/files/stereotype_threat_overview.pdf
www.engr.psu.edu/awe/misc/arps/arp_stereotypethreat_overview_31909.pdf

Writers, along with directors⁷¹, have the greatest influence on the content of films, and particularly the themes and characters. Consequently, the uneven distribution of writing credits will necessarily influence the films and television audiences get to see.

For example, the table below shows the gender of casts of male and female-written films. Female-written films have substantially more female characters in them.

Figure 106: Cast by Writer Gender



The film and television industries have built up an enormous influence on our society and culture as a whole⁷².

The Broadcasters' Audience Research Board set total TV Set Viewing minutes per week in the UK at 90-95 billion⁷³. Ofcom's *Box Set Britain 2017*⁷⁴ report found nine in ten people in the UK watch live TV every week. Thinkbox's 2016 report on audience viewing habits found the average UK viewer watches 3 hours, 51 minutes of content each day.

According to the BFI's *Statistical Yearbook 2017*, there were 168.3 million cinema admissions in 2016, and UK backed or based projects accounted for over 35% of the total box office revenue. Whilst films shown on UK television had a cumulative film audience of over 2.7 billion⁷⁵.

The problem with gender equality is particularly important in media industries and among those with the greatest control over the content of the vast quantities of media we consume. The personal preference explanation does not mitigate the need for more equality amongst writers to more adequately serve audiences, nor suggest that the imbalance is one that need not be redressed.

The personal preference explanation is best viewed as a linked, but separate, issue. It does likely account for some of the disparity seen and, if the aim is to reduce this overall inequality, it would be useful to tackle this aspect as well. As such, suggested solutions to the disparity should also take into account ways to improve interest amongst female entrants in writing films and television.

⁷¹ This report has briefly noted that female representation among directors is similar to that seen with writers. *Cut out of the Picture: A study of Female Directors in The UK Film Industry* found extensive disparities between male and female directors across the film industry.

⁷² <http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-opening-our-eyes-2011-07.pdf>

⁷³ www.barb.co.uk/download/?file=/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Barb-Viewing-Report-2017.pdf

⁷⁴ www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/multi-sector-research/cmr/cmr-2017

⁷⁵ www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-statistical-yearbook-2017.pdf

4.4 Explanation Two: Unconscious Bias

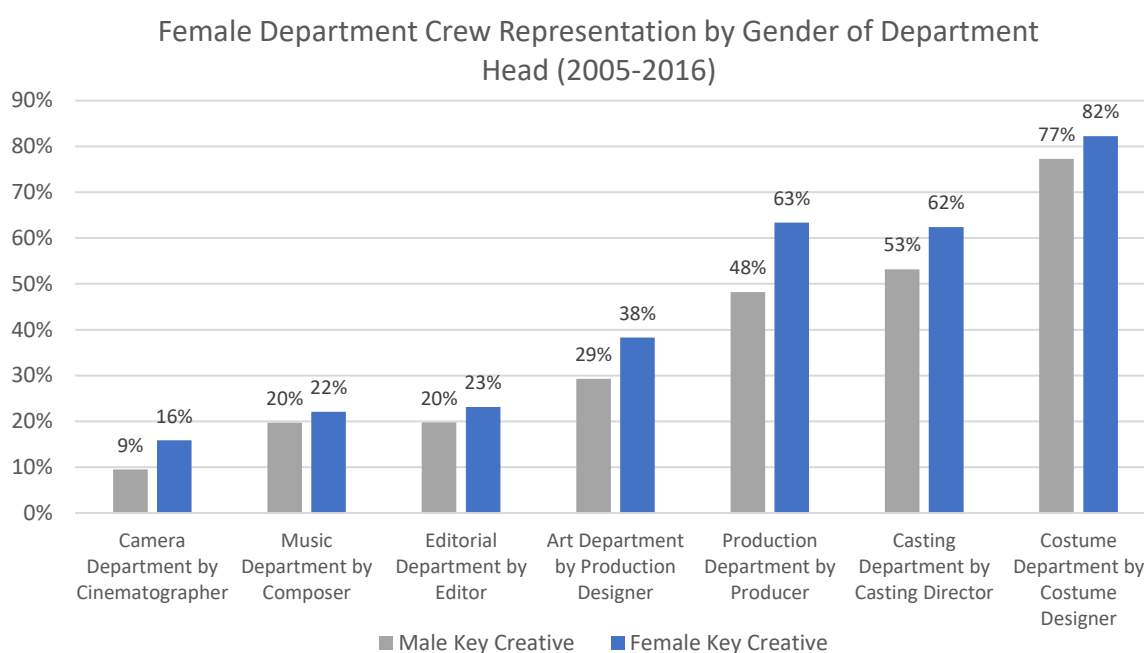
4.4a Understanding Unconscious Bias

Just as the personal preference of potential writers can impact their career trajectories, it is initially plausible the preferences of those on the other side of the hiring processes described in *Section 4.2*, are a contributory factor.

Individual bias is extremely difficult to avoid in the hiring and commissioning process and there is clear evidence across the industry that suggests those in senior positions are more likely to hire employees or freelancers of their own gender.

Throughout the film industry male department heads are consistently more likely to hire male employees; and female department heads are consistently more likely to hire female employees.

Figure 107: Department Crew by Department Head

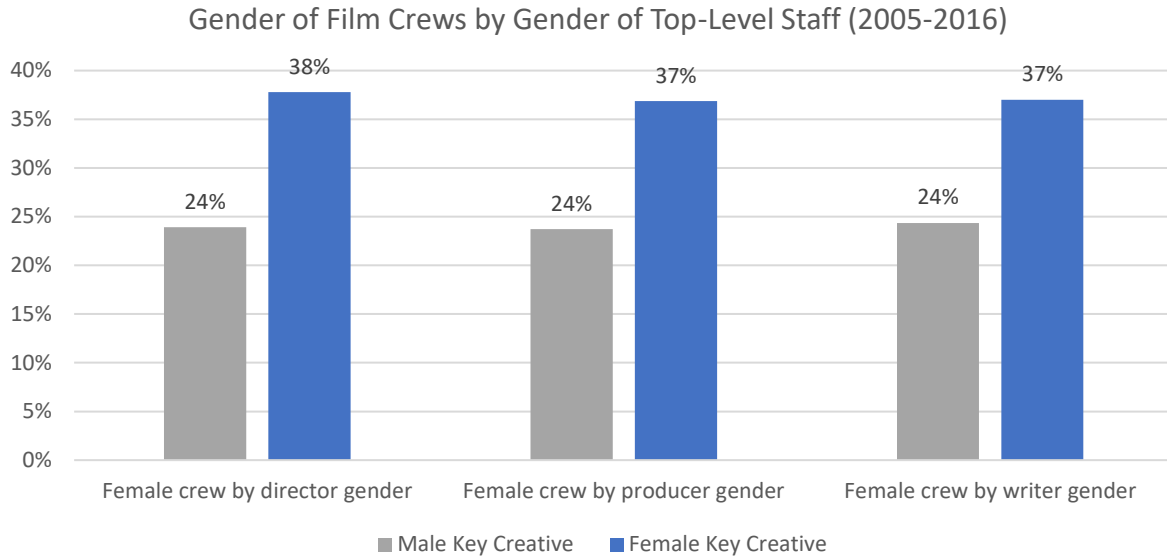


Across all film departments, female department heads hire a greater percentage of women than their male counterparts. Given the low overall numbers of female employment many of these discrepancies are pronounced.

Part Four - Analysis and Explanations

The cumulative effect of this practice on film productions as a whole can be starkly seen. The percentage of female crew rises dramatically when the writers, directors or leading producers are female.

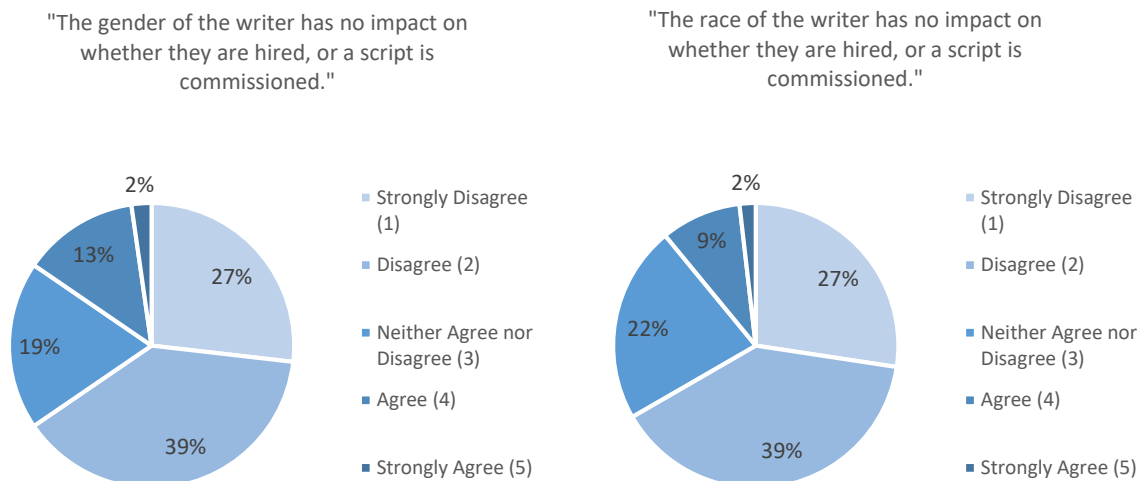
Figure 108: Crew Gender by Top-level Staff



The key conclusion to be drawn here is that the relation of the gender of the applicant to the gender of the individual hiring or commissioning seems to play some part in the hiring process (justifiably or not). In other words, gender appears to be a relevant factor in the hiring practices of both men and women.

This finding is again reinforced by writers' opinions:

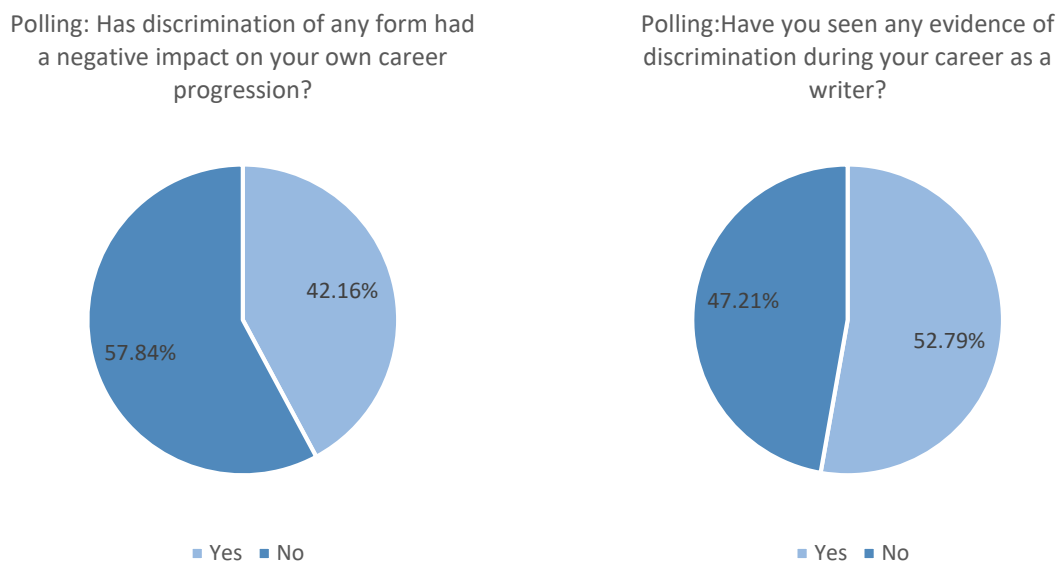
Figure 109: Polling (race and gender)



Part Four - Analysis and Explanations

As well as their own experiences:

Figure 110: Polling (summary of evidence/experience of discrimination)



Section 4.3a demonstrated how the data outlined in this report limits the plausibility of the personal preference explanation. In doing so it also provides consistent evidence to support the unconscious bias explanation, as there is a lack of alternative explanations (due to the evidence on the hiring and commissioning patterns in Section 4.2).

Throughout *Part Three – Career Progression*, data demonstrated consistent differences in career trajectories for male and female writers. In both industries, for male writers, greater levels of experience led in general to more prestigious projects (bigger budget, better timeslot etc.), however, in film, female writers with greater experience had lower average budgets, and in television, had an earlier average timeslot for the episodes they did write (and, as such, lower expected advertising revenue).

Section 3.2a noted that female writers have very little relative difficulty in writing further episodes for a given show, hence there is little discrepancy between the average number of episodes written by male and female writers respectively. However, both the number of programmes written for and number of films written consistently correlated negatively with the likelihood a writer is a woman.

In other words, when a female writer seeks further employment, they face a greater relative degree of difficulty (compared to male counterparts) whenever they apply to a programme they have not worked on or attempt to create interest in an entirely new feature film script; than they do if they want to write additional episodes of a programme they already have direct experience on. Despite the fact that, in both cases, the writer's actual levels of experience are identical.

The same effect appears true when moving to different types of programming. This helps explain the genre and programme tendencies shown in Sections 1.2c, 2.2a, 3.1b and 3.2b; and was also a common complaint that emerged from polling writers (Section 3.5).

The effects are particularly evident in primetime and big-budget findings. At the most advanced career stages, female writers find it comparatively harder to gain the experience necessary to prevent biases from impacting decision-making (as they are less likely to be able to clearly illustrate

greater experience than a male counterpart), resulting in a compounding effect, and evidence of a glass ceiling for female writers (*Section 3.3c*).

The unconscious bias explanation also fares better than personal preference in explaining many of the individual fluctuations in the data. For example, the notable outlying sectors in film with substantially better representation prove to be those with the greatest difference in approaches, methodology or processes (documentary, animation). It also helps explain the disproportionate restriction of female writers to genres and types of programming (particularly children's TV) traditionally viewed as "female" (and similar trends between film crew departments).

Finally, it provides an explanation for the relation of findings across the separate film and television databases. Data on female representation on primetime television, and particularly non-CDS drama, more closely resembles film findings than data for other television programming. If the focus is placed on the way that hiring and commissioning occurs (rather than just the medium), the increased level of competition, in conjunction with the unconscious bias explanation, would suggest exactly this finding.

Collectively, the limited plausibility of the personal preference explanation; evidence to suggest the average career of a female writer is restricted, both in the quantity and quality of content they are able to make; the pattern of a higher initial bar of entry for female writers and a glass ceiling effect on their careers; and polling explicitly and consistently indicating problems in the hiring and commissioning processes; make unconscious bias the most plausible, and widely applicable, explanation for the disparities seen throughout this report.

4.4b The Relation of Experience and Bias

As polling indicated, other factors, most notably prior experience, are also influential in hiring decisions. Hence, as female writers gain experience they can mitigate the bias against them with direct evidence of their ability (previous credits), and therefore, have decreased difficulty in progressing to further films/television (although only relatively). This relation of experience and bias is key to understanding the issue.

It appears bias tends to operate by demanding a greater level of experience from potential female writers; or undervaluing or distrusting experience they do have. In other words, the direct effect of unconscious biases is to make experience inherently less valuable for female writers in terms of their own career progression, than for their male counterparts, whilst the indirect result is to make experience itself harder to gain for female writers in the first place.

Hence, disparities are greatest at the outset of careers and in accessing the most prestigious programming and largest film projects. Greater relative restriction early in careers is likely a product of a lack of clearly demonstrable evidence with which to counteract any pre-existing biases. Whilst on the most prestigious projects, for which there is the greatest competition, the high number of male writers with adequate experience (experience close to the level of the strongest female applicant), makes unconscious bias once again relevant in final decision-making (for more on the impact of risk on decision making see *Section 4.5b* and *4.5c*).

The key conclusion to be drawn here is that unconscious bias appears to operate through more legitimate hiring techniques, such as valuing experience, by impacting the way that experience is viewed. Hence, it does not simply consist of broad biases against female employees, but often has a more complex impact on hiring methodologies, in ways those hiring are unlikely to be fully conscious of.

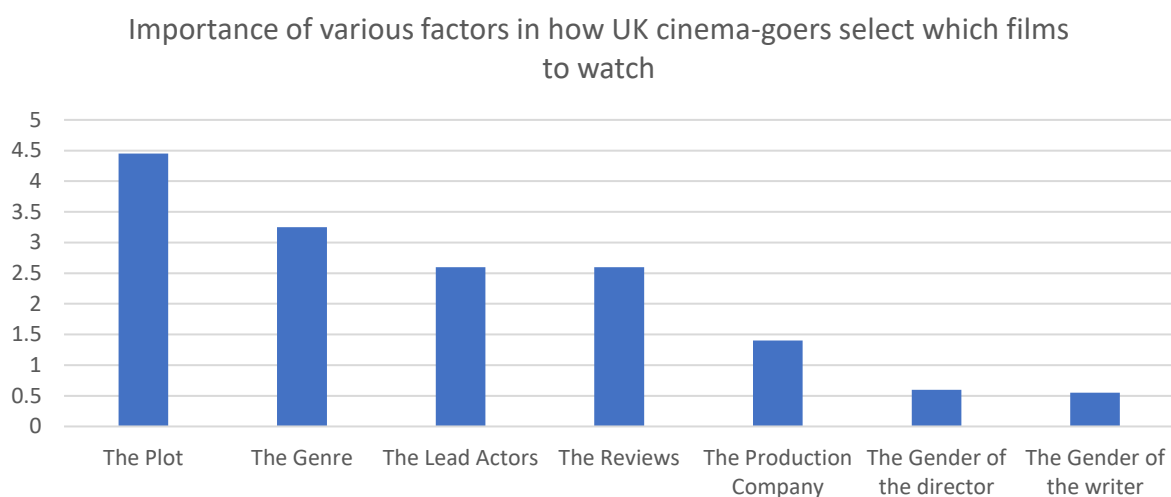
4.4c Classification

It is important to briefly note that no data suggested any justifiable reason for consistently choosing to hire a disproportionately higher number of men than women throughout the industries, and in particular as writers.

The concern that films written by women are neither as good, nor as profitable, as those films made by men, might lead to the view that female-written projects are a riskier proposition or that female creatives are naturally deselected by actual equality of opportunity. However, as shown in *Sections 1.2d* and *1.2e*, female-written films tend to be more positively viewed by critics and audiences and in general more profitable.

Furthermore, any gender-based preferences exhibited by hirers/commissioners would not be mirrored by audiences. This was confirmed by polling of UK cinema-goers in the UK conducted in 2016 for *Cut out of the Picture*⁷⁶, where the gender of key creatives was rarely an important concern.

Figure 111: Polling (audience preferences)



Respondents were told that giving a score of 0 meant 'I don't care' and 5 meant 'Very important'. Overall, the gender of the director and writer is the least important factor in how viewers choose which film to watch. Nearly 80% of respondents selected the lowest possible score for the gender of the writer⁷⁷.

This lack of evidence for either audience preference or indicators of film/TV quality, means the unconscious preferences of hirers and commissioners must be classified as biases and not merely reasonable selection criteria.

⁷⁶ Polling was conducted through targeted Facebook adverts. In total 104 cinema-goers responded to the questionnaire. As such these findings should not be taken as any more than a general indication of audience preferences.

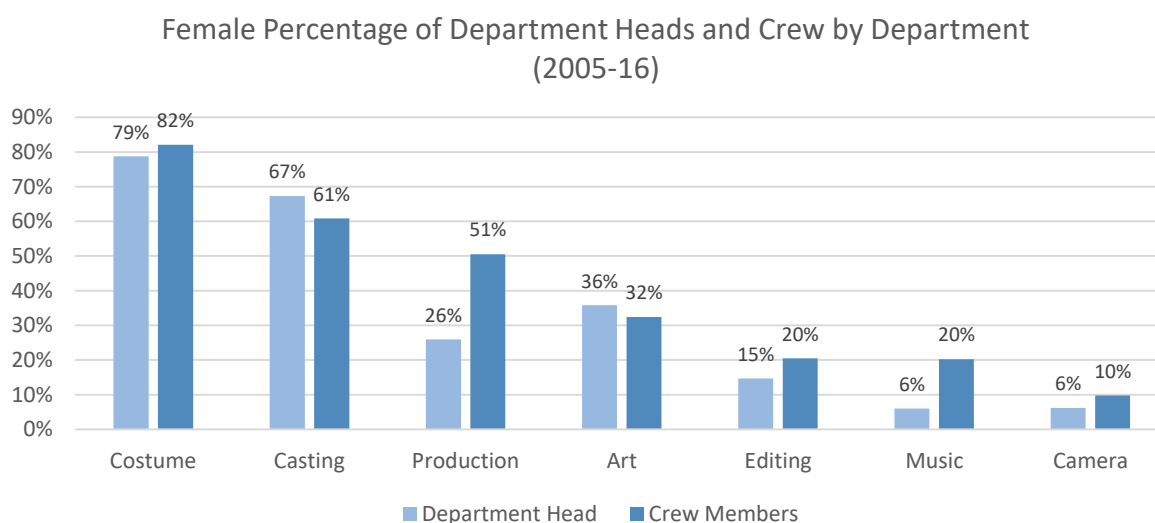
⁷⁷ Poling suggests film audiences do not outwardly care about the gender of the filmmakers. However, audiences do take account of the contents of a film, which is heavily influenced by the people in the key creative roles. 2015 research by Stephen Follows, showed that the films watched by the highest proportion of women tend to be made by female writers, producers, and directors. This suggests that audiences feel that although the gender of the filmmakers mostly not relevant, they do unconsciously recognise and value the contribution which different creative voices bring to each film.

4.4d Self-Sustaining Inequality

Unconscious bias is at the core of what makes inequality of opportunity so difficult to solve. It creates a self-sustaining loop which is exceedingly difficult, and takes concerted action, to break. Firstly, by definition, those responsible for the imbalance are unconscious of the preferences that create it, or at least struggle to acknowledge them. This creates an initial difficulty in drawing attention to, or even demonstrating the existence of, the issue.

More problematic still is the cumulative effect of this sort of decision making. As seen in *Section 1.3*, female employees are generally less likely to hold a position, the more senior it is, particularly in key creative areas and production.

Figure 112: Relation of Department Head and Crew



This is mirrored in writers' career progressions, where the percentage of female writers decreased as seniority and career advancement increased. This trend suggests that in general, the more control over a production an individual has, the less likely they are to be a woman.

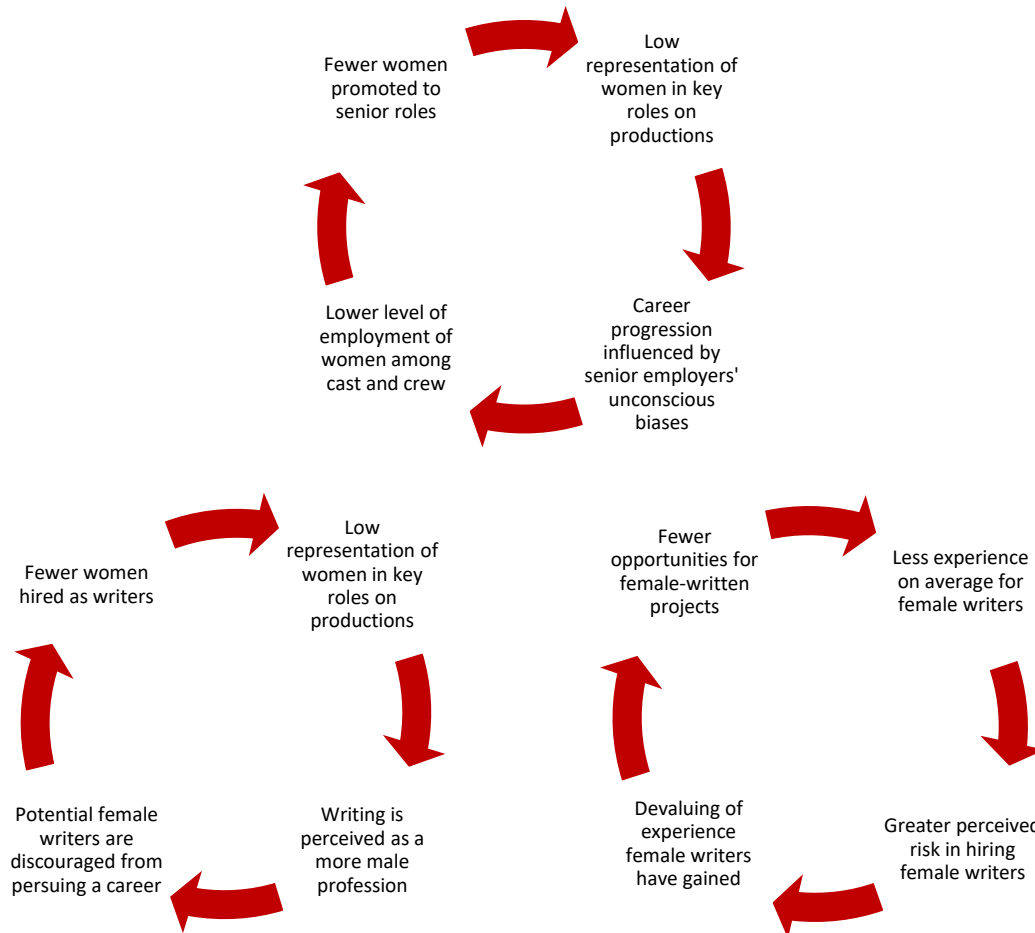
This structure results in an employment pattern that repeats itself. A predominantly male collection of senior staff predominantly hire crew who look like them, particularly to other key roles. This process then repeats, eventually with a new, but still predominantly male senior staff, making similar hiring choices. This explains the lack of any consistent or substantial change in female representation seen over the last decade (outside of the noted two-year improvement in film):

Personal preference adds an additional element to this self-sustaining inequality. As future applicants are discouraged from pursuing roles which might help rectify the imbalance, by the current status quo, thereby resulting in fewer role models to encourage future generations.

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In essence, the various elements of inequality across different areas of particularly the film industry reinforce and facilitate each other. This symbiosis can be characterised as three vicious cycles: the first created by the process of promotion and career progression; the second by personal preference; and the third by the relation of unconscious bias, risk and writer experience.

Figure 113: Self-Sustaining Inequality



Although these cycles appear to be created by decision-making methodologies and unconscious bias, industry actions or structures could prevent such practices and break any negative employment cycles. However, industry decision-making methodologies and hiring systems appear to be doing the opposite – sustaining and promoting undesirable practices, rather than seeking to limit their impact. The next section will consider the nature and effect of these systemic issues.

4.5 Explanation Three: Systemic Issues

The evidence in *Part One* and *Part Two*, suggest that the way the TV and Film Industries are structured helps protect and even promote undesirable hiring practices and prevent meaningful change from occurring.

The two principle systemic issues are as follows:

1. Limited effectiveness of regulatory systems to protect and encourage gender equality
2. Limited consistency and functionality of metrics and structures to guide decision making

Collectively, these two related systemic issues promote and protect forms of decision-making, and hiring and commissioning practices, which allow for, or even rely on, unconscious bias.

Although these systemic issues are somewhat visible in the findings regarding both the film and television industries, they do not affect both equally. Throughout this research, the television industry exhibited consistently higher female representation among writers. This is likely a product of the differences between the two industry structures and, in particular, the increased level of regulation and greater number of centralised bodies which can positively impact equality in the television sector.

Throughout the analysis of systemic issues below, a clear correlation can be seen: in each case the television industry suffers less from these systemic issues, and as a result seems to exhibit fewer of the related signs of inequality of opportunity and less impact from any unconscious bias (in certain sectors of television, if not others).

4.5a Limited Effectiveness of Regulatory Systems

The UK film industry has extremely light regulation, with its only legal restrictions coming from general laws which apply to all UK businesses (incorporation, employment laws, taxation) and controls on what audiences can watch (dealt with mostly by *The British Board of Film Classification* (BBFC) for cinema and home video and *Ofcom* for television broadcasts). It could also be argued that the *UK Film Tax Relief* (FTR) scheme is an optional form of regulation, as so much of the UK film economy depends on it.

The main regulation which affects the UK film industry and takes into account gender is the Equality Act 2010. The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because they have one of the 'protected characteristics', i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

However, over the studied periods for this report it has been difficult to prevent discriminatory hiring practices in the film (and to a lesser extent television) industry or to prove when they have occurred, because:

1. As noted in *Section 4.2*, most hiring and commissioning consists of a more informal networking-based process
2. The complexity of the relation between writer and product makes any objective hiring standard inherently difficult to generate
3. Each creative will provide a different vision for the role, thereby giving the employer a wide range of reasons to cite for their choice
4. Writers tend to have a 'freelance' employment status, as is the case with many other roles involved in UK film production
5. It requires the discriminated party to file a complaint, which is often perceived to be harmful to one's future opportunities in the industry (and is unreliable as a recourse for compensation or resolution)
6. There is often a lack of transparency regarding hiring decisions, processes and outcomes, with little information made available to applicants
7. The commissioning process can be more loosely governed by employment law due the variety and often informality of the development process

In television the centralisation of the broadcasters provides a counterweight to some of these issues. The larger broadcasters have some, although arguably not enough, internal regulation and standardised practices, and are more stable than most film productions and production companies. This provides greater security for writers and greater accountability for hirers, both of which promote equality of opportunity.

The role of regulatory legislation and centralised organisation systems is not to restrict employers range of opportunities or mandate artificial equality (which is itself a type of inequity and a concern noted by some polling respondents), but rather to provide a natural countermeasure to the problem of unconscious bias, and in particular to break the vicious cycles seen in *Section 4.4d*.

Without adequate regulatory systems to limit the impact of unconscious bias there continues to be the potential for discriminatory practices to continue unchecked. It appears that any employment systems in place in either film or television are failing to provide this regulating influence.

4.5b Decision-Making and the Limitations of the Profit Motive

The impact of this lack of a regulatory framework is made more problematic by the limited impact of profitability on decision-making and hiring practices, and the absence of clear metrics for success. This is then compounded in the film industry by short-termism.

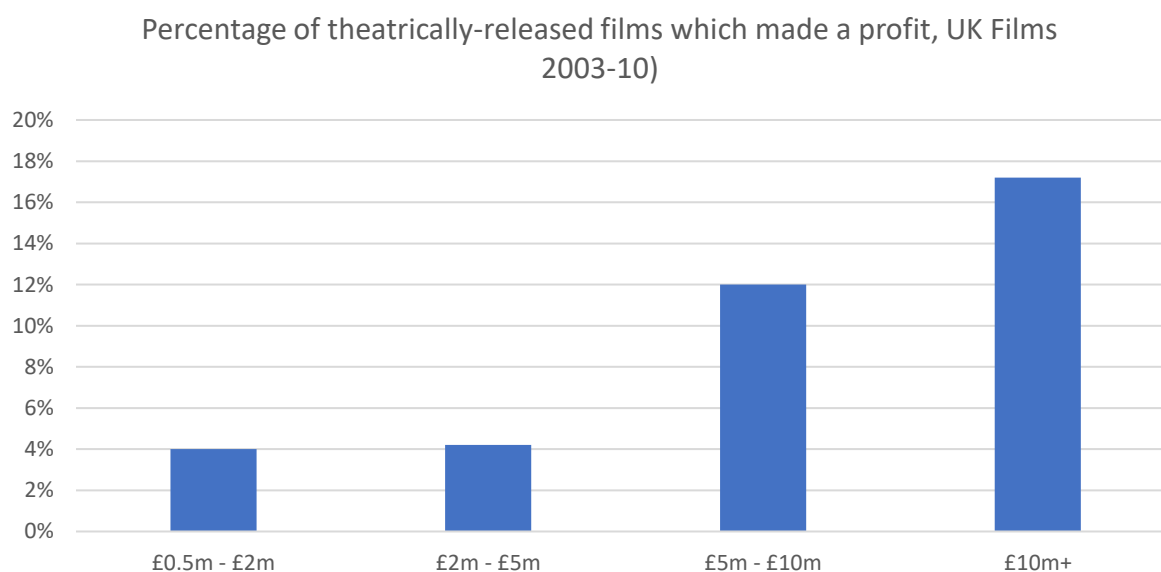
For the majority of industry sectors and businesses, the underlying driving force that necessitates change is that bad ideas are deselected because they fail to generate profit. Very broadly, free markets, when they work, do so because competition forces companies to adjust to whatever creates wealth better – thus necessitating change. This creates an informal regulatory framework for decision-making.

If adequate competition is removed and there is no pre-existing, artificial regulatory framework, there is little to drive change or deliver improvements in methods. There is no external pressure to alter industry-wide practices, so nothing improves – be it the methodologies themselves or the quality of the product.

Sections 1.2d and 1.2e showed female-written films are better regarded by critics and audiences, and in general, more profitable. Yet this greater profitability has not resulted in a greater number of female writers being hired⁷⁸.

One plausible explanation for this is that profit is actually a low priority for those making the vast majority of UK films. A 2013 study by David Steel, then acting head of research and statistics at the BFI, concluded that only 7% of British films return a profit⁷⁹.

Figure 114: UK Film Profitability (BFI)



Although it is not always evident from its publicised surface, film has limited profitability, and guaranteed returns on investment are often not financiers’ primary concern. Much film investment is based on high-risk, high-reward gambles, as well as the allure of the industry and its trappings.

⁷⁸ BFI’s 2013 report into Female Screenwriters and Directors found similar conclusions: “Of the independent UK films released between 2010 and 2012, just 16% of the writers and 11% of the directors were women. However, for the top 20 UK independent films over the same period, women represented 37% of the writers and 18% of the directors. And for profitable UK independent films, 30% of the writers were women.”

⁷⁹ This study looked at 613 British films made in the UK between 2003 and 2010. The BFI’s 2017 Statistical Yearbook contained similar findings, as UK Independent Film accounted for just 7.4% of UK Box Office, whilst the top 100 films accounted for 92% of the total in 2016.

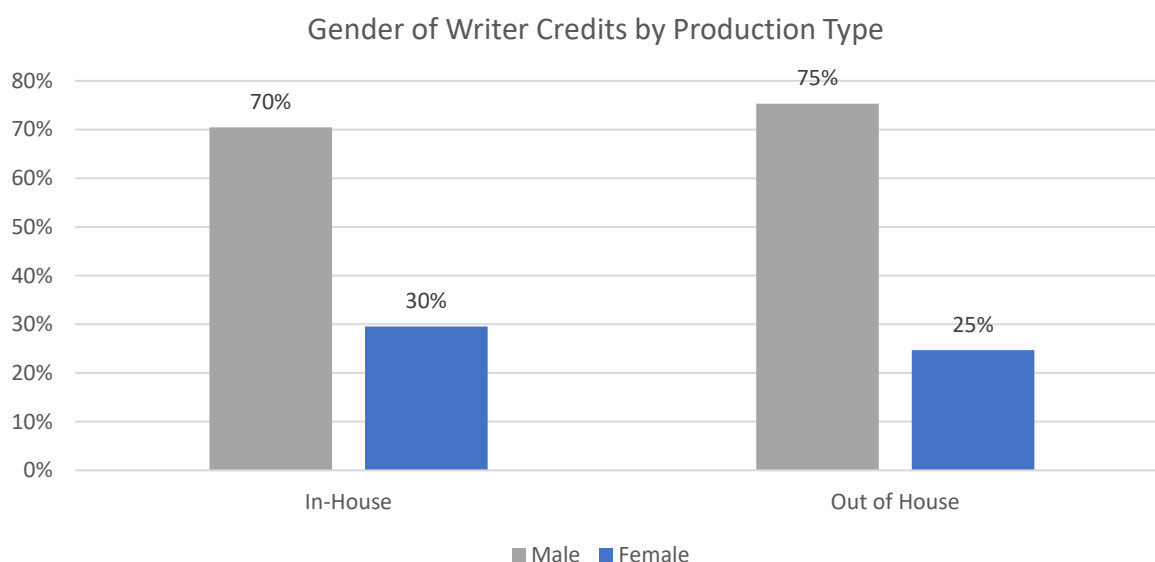
If there was no clear commercial reason for a disproportionately high number of film writers to be men, one would assume that over time a system free of other interference would automatically balance itself by rewarding those who hire over-looked talented female writers (as they would produce better or more successful films). In this model, self-interest would ultimately lead to a gender equality shift. However, this is clearly not the case (see *Sections 1.2b* and *2.2b*).

The profit-motive also functions atypically for television broadcasters, although it is somewhat dependent on the broadcaster. The impact of traditional economic factors on the BBC for example, is significantly different from their influence on decision-making at smaller digital channels.

The crucial difference in television is again the longevity of the broadcasters. This allows methodologies and practices to develop over time, and even be codified in company practices. Film productions often incorporate for a sole project and, despite having on average over 100 employees⁸⁰, they tend to lack any traditional HR systems and have few employees on long-term contracts. So informal regulation by broadcasters can replace the universal guiding principles that might be provided in a more predictable system.

This is plausible as an explanation for consistently higher representation on in-house productions when compared to those produced by independent production companies⁸¹.

Figure 115: In-House Productions



The profit-motive is not a necessity for equality of opportunity, however, wherever it has limited impact on a sector, the individual methodologies of decision-makers (and the absence of unconscious bias from their decisions) and the provision of alternative, evidence-based metrics becomes far more crucial.

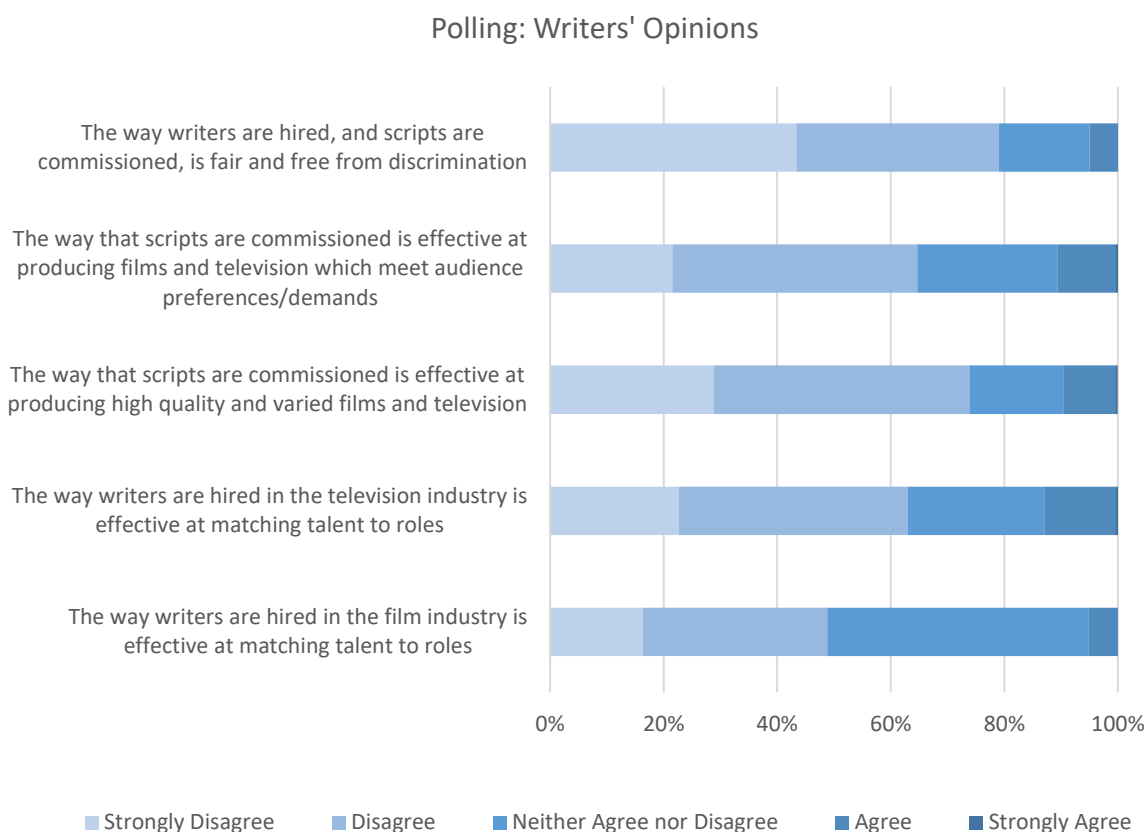
⁸⁰ According to 2017 HMRC data the average business in the UK has less than five employees (96% of all businesses have fewer than 10 employees). Research by Stephen Follows into the size of UK Film Productions found “The average UK film has 778 crew credits. Films budgeted under £150,000 credited an average of just 32 people. Films costing over £30 million have an average of 1,140 crew credits.”. <https://stephenfollows.com/how-many-people-does-it-take-to-make-a-film-in-the-uk/>

⁸¹ ALCS data contained Production Company data for a significant proportion of TV episodes and programmes. However, for reason outlined in *Appendix One: Methodology*, there are good reasons to restrain from either publishing information on individual companies or placing too much statistical weight on findings regarding them. The broad averages in Figure 115 are the exception as they are not significantly impacted by these reasons. For more detail see *Appendix One*.

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However, the scepticism of writers themselves regarding the ability of current systems to function meritocratically; or to produce quality film or television; or adequately serve their audiences, suggests methodologies relating screenplays to the success of film/television and audience preferences and responses currently have limited effectiveness.

Figure 116: Polling (opinions summary)



The final part of this section on Systemic Issues will consider the specific nature of these decision-making methodologies in direct relation to the systems decision-makers are forced to operate within.

So far, systemic explanations have focussed on the way in which disparities and negative employment cycles are sustained by the absence of external governing forces. However, systemic issues also define decision-making itself.

The flaws in decision-making metrics are not inherent to the types of decisions hirers in film and television are making, but rather are often necessitated by broader flaws in industry systems, which not only allow, but promote unconscious bias as a hiring and commissioning methodology.

4.5c How Systemic Issues define decision-making

Despite constant efforts to provide reliable methods of predicting the success of a given film or TV programme, producers continue, quite rightly, to see each project as a gamble. Even the largest studios regularly produce unexpected flops, whilst a few low and micro-budget projects occasionally make immense profits. Breakout primetime hits are similarly elusive, with far more projects quickly disappearing than reaching syndication.

This high base-level of uncertainty and risk has, in turn, increasingly led to (or prevented a progression away from) decision-making methodologies which prioritise or depend on individual biases:

1. Uncertainty and inherent risk make failures hard to define, spot, prevent or hold people accountable for. Hence, little development of methodologies is necessitated. As a result, there is limited pressure to develop evidence-based metrics, limited accountability for decision-making, and often difficulty in recognising unfair or discriminatory practices. A lack of transparency compounds this issue.
2. Innovation is discouraged. Going against the conventional practices is one of the few easily recognisable differentiators on a failed project, so it adds unnecessary personal risk to any decision made. This leads to individuals sticking to the same methods of finding and selecting writers, and, wherever possible, sticking to the same individual writers.
3. Third, in the absence of other methodologies a reliance on a vague notion of “expertise” on the part of development producers has become crucial, as no clearly effective evidence-based alternative has been developed. However, such approaches are extremely vulnerable to individual biases, and in the long-term produce heuristic rather than metric-based systems.
4. Fourth, it has created a reliance on “on the job” training, as, without clear predictive reasons for success, individuals instead follow methodologies related to prior success. In other words, why something is done is increasingly less important, as how it is done becomes what is key. This leads to the continuation of existing systems and biases and the gradual disintegration of those few evidence-based metrics which did previously help govern decision-making. Each new entrant learns how things have been done in the past and then bases their actions mostly on this behaviour. This means new knowledge is often ignored as irrelevant and experience and self-confidence can carry more weight than ability.

Ultimately, it seems very plausible that the issue of equality of opportunity for female writers is simply the most egregious symptom of a far wider problem facing the UK film and television industries – despite immense technological improvement, and creative innovation across the UK film and television industries, the development process and decision-making methodologies of hirers, commissioners and producers, has become badly outmoded.

In summary, this section has argued pervasive uncertainty of industry projects and absence of evidence-based methodologies for hiring and commissioning decisions, compounded by a lack of regulation and market principles, has led to hiring decisions increasingly relying on preconceived notions of archetypal employees, which are based not entirely on talent or demonstrable experience, but other factors such as gender.

Part Five - Potential Solutions

5.1 The Justification for Further Action

5.1a The Impact of the Disparity

Before examining potential solutions to the disparities seen in both film and television, it is useful to recap the reasons such inequality should be of concern.

The under-representation of female writers has a number of negative implications: for the industry; for film audiences; wider society; and the women directly affected.

Mostly simply, it is unfair that one gender has an unjustified advantage over the other in securing a job. Neither the film nor television industries have yet tackled entrenched gender inequality with the scope and scale required to have any real impact, hence the lack of trends toward improvement. Equality of opportunity is the most important aspect of building a fair system, and without it individuals will suffer under unjustified inequity.

However, the importance of equality of opportunity extends beyond individual concerns. If certain individuals retain an uneven opportunity to maximise their potential, then the sector as a whole will waste the potential of more talented individuals. This detrimentally impacts the product of the industries (a problem polling suggests plenty of writers believe is currently occurring).

The film and television industries need to hire the best people for each job. In order for any industry to flourish it needs a skilled workforce and selection processes that objectively seek out the finest talent based on skills, ability and potential. If an industry uses a flawed system for selecting its creative leaders and influencers, then the negative effects will be felt both within that industry and, in the case of film and television, far beyond it.

In this case, the impact is particularly important. Stories will be told differently by men and women, and female-led stories are more likely to be told by female writers and creatives (see *Section 1.3e*). Because stories are often drawn from the filmmaker's own experiences, with men dominating the pool of writers, it follows that we will have an over-supply of films which relate to male experiences at the cost of women-centric films.

Similarly, female writers will provide a new take on other narratives: widening the pool of films, stories and perspectives that audiences are exposed to (particularly given the strong correlation between female-written and female-directed projects). In other words, by limiting equality of opportunity, similar limits are placed on the range of topics examined and stories told.

This then feeds into the self-sustaining problem seen in *Section 4.4d*. Hiring fewer female writers (and other department heads) results in a lower overall proportion of women being employed. Therefore, the issue of under-representation of women among writers is also a relevant issue for directors, producers, and everyone who works in the UK film industry.

This under-employment of women in the UK film industry has been reported on for decades, although with varying degrees of exposure. Yet neither sector has shown marked signs of self-correcting the current gender imbalance. Both because film industry professionals do not tend to believe they are using gender as a factor when assessing employees and because there are limited structures in place to naturally redress the imbalance.

This current status quo is affecting individual preferences; potentially limiting the pool of future female writers and inequality within the industries; and as currently structured, appears to be self-reinforcing.

Finally, there is no precedent for a comparable industry self-correcting such a high degree of inequality without industry wide action through specific, targeted interventions.

In summary, there is good reason to believe that improved equality would be hugely beneficial to individuals, the sector and audiences, but little reason to believe the current industry structures and efforts will redress such inequality. As such, the film and television industries should be taking further action to improve equality of opportunity.

As inequality in the industry is not the result of deliberate, concerted actions (see *Section 4.4c*), it is plausible that simply revealing the unconscious bias of decision-makers will, over time, lead the industry to self-correct the gender bias. But concerted efforts to rebuild the structures of particularly the film industry would be both more effective and may have a wider positive impact on other problematic aspects of the sector.

5.1b Outline of Requirements

Any proposed solutions will need to target the range of causes of the gender imbalance: unconscious, individual bias and the personal preference of female writers; and the systemic issues that protect and promote these practices and inequality more generally.

However, these two factors should be viewed as distinct, and any proposed interventions must be similarly individual to each of the causes:

- *Unconscious Bias* can be addressed through campaigns to actively combat inaccurate beliefs and keep gender equality a focus across the sector. This requires a consistent and coordinated approach across the industry to inform and train those with hiring responsibilities on how best to limit the impact unconscious bias can have on the recruitment practices. Measures and monitoring will need to be put in place to ensure real progress is being made against the industry's pervading unconscious bias, as there is great risk that public rhetoric does not lead to real change.
- The *Systemic Issues* that currently perpetuate and reinforce the industry's gender bias could be converted into a vehicle for positive change. Current processes have resulted in self-sustaining inequality, however, if unhelpful methodologies are de-incentivised and new hiring structures, with adequate oversight, are put in place, this could easily be redressed.
- Further consideration must also be given to the problem of Personal Preference. Tackling unconscious bias will do this indirectly, but additional development programmes, mentorships and raising the public profile of female writers, could tackle the issue head on.

These aspects of the overall problem work in tandem, reinforcing and protecting each other. However, similarly, the interrelated nature of individual decision making and the structure of the film industry, should help them solve this problem in tandem.

5.2 Systemic Solutions

5.2a Data Reporting

Project Diamond

As this report has hopefully made clear, the problem of inequality of opportunity for writers in the film and television industries is more complex and nuanced than is often assumed. It is not simply the case that there are too few female writers, but rather that the distribution of credits and structures of career development represent layered, and systemic problems.

In order to adequately solve a problem, and to know it has been solved in a sustainable way, that problem must be properly understood first. Additionally, a greater consistency and depth to data reporting by industry bodies would help raise awareness of the issues, and help the individuals across the industry hold more powerful bodies to account.

However, traditionally, the film and television industries have made limited quantities of data available, due to commercial concerns⁸² and the lack of any obligation to report such data.

In 2015, the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5/Viacom, Sky (along with S4C, Bafta, ITN, Turner Broadcasting, Pact, Creative Skillsset and Media Trust) sought to rectify this, by founding the Creative Diversity Network. The stated objective of this not-for-profit membership organisation is:

“To work with its members and the wider industry to redress underrepresentation of identified groups in the UK television industry.”

At the centre of their work is a new data collection and publication scheme: Project Diamond (**Diversity Analysis Monitoring Data**). Diamond collects actual diversity data (across six protected characteristic groups), on contributors who have a role in making television, on or off-screen; as well as perceived diversity data of the on-screen contributors. It is designed to provide long term monitoring of the TV production industry.

Again, in their own words:

“Diamond is groundbreaking. No other broadcasting industry in the world has developed a cross-industry approach where competing broadcasters collect and publish diversity data together”.

Deborah Williams, CEO of the Creative Diversity Network, added:

“Diamond is a game changer. This is the first published report anywhere in the world of a data set like this, from broadcasting. The broadcasters have started something that means it will never be possible or acceptable to say, “we don’t know” when talking about diversity in the UK Television Industry”.

The *First Cut Report*⁸³ is at pains to stress that it would be premature to draw conclusions from the limited data published at this point, and this is certainly correct, although this caveat is often at odds with how the project has been described and publicised by its proponents.

⁸² It is worth noting another peculiar aspect of the BBC’s (and other partially public-funded channels’) relation to the profit motive. Despite being publicly funded, the BBC is partially exempt from FOI requests regarding this data, on the grounds of artistic purpose. In their own words: *“the Act recognises the different position of the BBC, as well as the other public service broadcasters covered by the Act (Channel 4, S4C and the Gaelic Media Service) by providing that it covers information “held for purposes other than those of journalism, art or literature”. This means that the Act does not apply to material held for the purposes of creating the BBC’s output (TV, radio, online etc), or material which supports and is closely associated with these creative activities.”*. However, there is good reason to suggest that this exemption is currently too widely applicable and is limiting independent ability to regulate these public bodies.

⁸³ creativitydiversitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Diamond_theFirstCut_pdf.pdf

Although the data reported in First Cut currently lacks significance, the report does provide insight into the methodology behind Project Diamond and in particular the diversity monitoring form utilised. As such it does allow some initial comment on the usefulness of the data as presented in the First Cut Report and an initial assessment of the functionality of the Project Diamond methodology.

This process is particularly helpful in clarifying good and bad data collection and disclosure practices related equality of opportunity in film and television.

How Project Diamond Works and the Response Rate Problem

Project Diamond operates through Silvermouse, primarily using four online forms to collect diversity data: the Contributors Form, the Diversity Actual Form, the Diversity Perceived Form and the Diversity Self-declaration Form.

Initially data on all programme contributors for whom rights information is collected, is added to the Silvermouse Contributor Form. Any details entered into the Contributor Form are automatically added to the Diversity Actual Form. The details of all contributors for whom rights information is not required (the majority of offscreen roles) must be added to the Diversity Actual Form manually.

This information is then used to automatically send each contributor a validation, and a link to their Diversity Self-Declaration form, where contributors add their actual diversity data. Once the production is complete, information on all on-screen contributors is immediately added to the Diversity Perceived Form, from the information in the Contributor Form, this can then be edited based on programme content, before finally being submitted.

At the centre of the accuracy of this methodology is the belief that the respondents to the Diversity Self-Declaration form are representative of the broader film population, both in respect to diversity characteristics and production role. However, neither the First Cut Report nor our detailed research of the Diamond Modules published by CDN⁸⁴, produced any clear evidence to support this assumption or to help understand the extent to which it might be true. The low current response rate of 24.3% compounds this problem⁸⁵.

In comparison, the polling conducted for this report is focussed on experience and opinions, however, it was necessary to collect and publish demographic information on the range of respondents and exact response rates, so the key findings could be understood in relation to any differences between polling respondent demographics and the make-up of the broader UK industries⁸⁶. No such data is provided by Project Diamond as part of the First Cut Report.

In technical terms, there is little understanding of prior probability distributions taken into account in this statistical work. These priors may be informative or uninformative, but without at least a cursory understanding of them, little of value can be inferred from the data produced through the Diversity Self-Declaration forms. As such, and particularly given the low overall response rate, the statistical significance of this data is doubtful (although it remains impossible to even properly calculate statistical significance with the data published).

⁸⁴ creativitydiversitynetwork.com/category/diamond/

⁸⁵ As does the report's note that "we are aware that there were potential contributors who were not invited to complete a DSF form". No additional context is provided for this comment so no additional analysis of the potential severity of this problem is possible.

⁸⁶ The difference between the two was in fact notable – as more respondents than writers were female, presumably due to the increased interest in the issue among that segment of the population. This needed to be taken into account in drawing conclusion, which the methodology allowed.

The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), who conducted an independent quality review of Diamond data for the First Cut Report had the following to say (emphasis added):

“Overall Diamond data appears to present an accurate representation of the demographic characteristics of the population of the creative industries who have opted to provide information. It aligns closely with previously collected data on the industry, and where differences are observed, there are plausible reasons which might account for these based on the differing methodologies and response rates⁸⁷. Nevertheless, there is the inevitable possibility of reporting bias due to sample self-selection as a consequence of the low response rate. And this caveat must be included in the methodology and results interpreted with a degree of caution.”

The problem, in essence, is the disconnect between NatCen’s data-driven urge for caution and the hyperbolic way the project has sometimes been publicised and is described in the First Cut Report (as evidenced in the quotes above).

Despite reprinting the NatCen’s comment the findings are often treated more as “an accurate representation of the demographic characteristics of the population of the creative industries” than “an accurate representation of the demographic characteristics of the population of the creative industries who have opted to provide information.”

Misleading Data Publication

The response rate problem is notable in limiting the statistical significance of findings at this stage, however, there is good reason to believe concerted efforts by the broadcasters should broaden the dataset.

However, prior to this occurring the issue feeds into the central problem with Diamond; one already voiced by a number of industry bodies and pressure groups: although the data collection methods may be rigorous and legitimate, the data disclosure so far (in particular the First Cut Report) has primarily consisted of the publication of potentially misleading data.

Sections 2.2a-e and 3.2a-b have detailed how overall averages are misleading in the television industry. As they disguise significant differences in distribution across different areas.

We understand that the First Cut Report is only the start of the Project Diamond process, and it has been “*released in the spirit of transparency*”, but to publicise broad averages in the way that this report does, we believe, is genuinely unhelpful for the broader diversity campaign.

Equality of opportunity is not satisfied by equal overall access to the entirety of the industry. It is measured by each individual’s ability to access those roles they wish to and that they are qualified for. The current data publications provide no way to adequately assess this actual equality metric, instead publishing broad averages which entirely obscure most of the important differences in career progression. This could lead readers to believe that no such problems exist, because the overall percentages are more even.

If it is the case that Diamond is a genuine effort to help the industry understand the state of diversity in television, the release of this report ultimately contradicts the aim. It is not the case that the

⁸⁷ This part of the statement is problematic. NatCen compared the report to the 2014 Workforce Survey, which has an identical problem with non-response, albeit greater with a total response rate of 2.3%. As NatCen state themselves “*only once it has been demonstrated that the Diamond data is representative of the industry can further comparisons to the national profile of diversity be made*”, but their data comparison doesn’t do this, it merely shows that the Diamond data is representative of previous self-reported industry averages. If one methodology is flawed, it is likely the other is in an identical fashion, hence the comparison of the two does little to further the reliability of either. As the support of ALCS in compiling this report has made evident, there are further databases which could be more functionally used to assess the validity of Diamond’s findings.

results directly contradict findings in this report (as they cover different datasets) but rather that its content paints a misleading picture of female representation in television by disguising actual inequality behind top-level statistics.

Given the evidence provided in this report, regarding differences in relative female representation across programme types; timeslots; advertising revenue; genre; budget; children's TV and CDS programming; as well as the differences in career trajectories, progression and longevity; along with the significant differences in representation across crew departments and seniority of roles shown in *Section 1.3*; it is, at a fundamental level, unreasonable to suggest that the broad unsegmented average, of the 24.3% of contributors who self-selected to respond to the Diversity Self-declaration form, provides a useful or accurate picture of diversity and equal representation in the TV Industry.

Diamond currently has access to data linking contributors to roles and contributions to programme types, through Silvermouse. Given the elucidation of the structure of inequality in film provided by this report's research and the self-reporting/response rate issue, publishing just top-level data, without utilising any of this segmentation in the way that Project Diamond has in the First Cut Report, is arguably irresponsible.

Contributors and Contributions

This sort of inaccuracy due to data-limitations recurs in several features of the First Cut Report. The most notable additional instance occurs in the relation of Contributors to Contributions. Again, this issue was noted by NatCen in their data analysis, but inadequately acknowledged in the report itself:

"The potential drawback to the inconsistent relationship between contributor/contribution is that reporting contributions only, as per the intended report, might hide such inequities. For example, is the high proportion of on-screen BAMEs a consequence of a small number of individuals appearing multiple times, or is the high proportion due to a large number of individuals each contributing a relatively smaller number of contributions?"

Despite this warning, Diamond published solely contribution data in the First Report. In total there were 80,804 contributions reported on, but these contributions came from just 5,904 contributors. Given the inconsistent relationship between contributor and contribution noted by NatCen, this difference allows for significant impact to the report's findings, based on variance between contributors and contributions.

Equally the consistent suggestion that perception of industry professionals of onscreen diversity (for their diversity perceived form) is a reasonable measure of audience perception remains unjustified. Problematically, this inference would require the premise that the makeup of the industry (and particularly those filling out the relevant forms in senior positions) resembles the diversity of the country as a whole – the very assumption Project Diamond was designed to assess in the first place.

Furthermore, the actual burden of data-reporting and collection is placed on individual producers (most likely the production manager), rather than on the broadcasters themselves. This is of course far easier in terms of implementation and upkeep for the organisations, but ignores (or at least fails to adequately recognise) the crucial role unconscious bias appears to play in disparities between men and women.

As long as these limitations exist, responsible data publication requires providing adequate data to allow some independent assessment of the methods of data processing. For example, if a detailed breakdown of the relation of contributors to contributions is provided, this would allow an understanding of prior probability distributions with which to assess the accuracy of the averages.

The problem of data-limitations is ultimately best captured by the report itself:

“Currently, we are also unable to ascertain the extent to which our data sample is representative of the workforce it is trying to capture.”

This is not in itself an issue. Project Diamond is in its early stages and, as will be discussed below, certainly has the potential to provide meaningful improvement in diverse representation.

However, it is notable that currently there is a visible disconnect between the limited data gathered and the confidence and fanfare that has accompanied this initial release. Much focus has been put on the potential of the campaign, before a statistically significant quantity of useful data can actually be gathered. And publication should ultimately have been withheld, until an adequate quantity and quality of data could be shared responsibly.

Furthermore, the lack of detail in the First Cut Report, and the way it misrepresents data for specific roles such as writers, provides justification for contributors and organisations making their participation in the project dependent on specific assurances from the broadcasters that this segmentation will occur, and hence that the data they provide will be used in a responsible manner. This would be a step back for the broader campaign, but given the current use of gathered data, not an unreasonable action on the part of these groups.

Disguising the Broadcasters

The absence of one specific piece of segmentation is particularly notable.

Although the First Cut report is quick to laud the broadcasters for working together on Diamond, there is an inherent problem with the way they are cooperating. Broadcasters working together on industry solutions is undeniably useful, but collectively gathering data through a single system only has the effect of allowing broadcasters to anonymise their individual impacts on the industry.

Yet, as seen in *Section 2.3*, there are notable differences in the practices and distribution of representation, between the various broadcasters. However, any mention of future segmentation by broadcaster is absent from the First Cut Report.

This is where it is reasonable to see the report as blurring the line between simply having inadequate data methodologies and being deliberately misleading. It is perfectly acceptable to publish data in whatever form one is able to gather it, as long as the limitations of those methods are clearly acknowledged.

However, rather than point to the limitation caused by their data-collection and publication methods in respect to the individual broadcasters, or explicitly acknowledge that certain segmentation won't be used, the report instead praises a cross-industry approach to collecting and publishing data.

Moving Forward

The criticisms above refer solely to the release of the First Cut Report in the form it was published. It is not an indictment of Project Diamond or the Creative Diversity Network more generally, merely a recognition that this initial release is at best misleading for the industries and at worst seems to contradict the project's stated aims directly.

More broadly, CDN have acknowledged the limitations of the data at this stage:

“It is our intention that over time, CDN and the Diamond broadcasters will also be able to report on the diversity profile across job roles and genres. As the data set grows, it will provide us with much greater scope for accurate and more comprehensive analysis.”

And have outlined next steps which include this necessary work:

“The Diamond journey has only just begun. Once the system is capturing all commissioned programmes from Diamond broadcasters across all genres, it will be possible to interrogate it in increasingly sophisticated ways — for example, by genre, role type or seniority.”

This progress will be the key to whether Diamond rectifies its inauspicious start.

As data in this report indicated, job roles and genre data is a necessity to make this project functional. The variance between roles and programme types is too great for any specific actions to be taken on this issue with any confidence, without such segmentation (consider the impact of children’s TV or CDS on the overall averages for writers for example). However, these additional data points alone will still disguise much of the nuance of the problem.

Further data on timeslot, budget and programme types, as well as individual information on broadcasters should be required. Programme level data would arguably be the most useful way of disclosing this information⁸⁸, but given the key role of CDS in broadcaster representation, availability of specific statistics on the longest-running, tentpole programming, at the very least, is key.

These concerns have already been widely voiced by a number of the union bodies in the industry, whose members have contributed to Diamond. Christine Payne, Equity General Secretary, expressed the concern as follows:

“Diamond has the potential to help facilitate the change we all want to see, but today’s report only highlights the need for more detail. We urge the Creative Diversity Network to continue to publish this data because it is through full disclosure that we can accelerate the pace of change.”

BECTU General Secretary Gerry Morrissey voiced the identical issue, adding the concern of unconscious bias:

“By far the biggest problem is the attitudes and hiring practices of the gatekeepers. Too many hirers are unable to believe that minority ethnic professionals are capable of doing the job, no matter how much experience or how successful.”

To address this, Project Diamond must publish the equality monitoring data by production so that we can identify who has a diverse crew, and can learn from their example, and who does not, so we can work with them to improve.”

WGGB’s General Secretary, Ellie Peers, succinctly captures the core of the problem:

“Project Diamond is a golden opportunity for positive change within our industry but only if there is transparency.”

The First Cut Report does not deliver this transparency or full disclosure. However, this does not mean that Project Diamond’s overall methodology is not adequately equipped to provide the diversity data-collection the television industry does desperately need.

⁸⁸ BECTU General Secretary called the suggestion that legal difficulties prevented programme level disclosure “nonsense”. The evidence available to us in compiling this report corroborates his basic sentiment.

Data-collection through Diamond is dependent on the relation of information standardly recorded in Silvermouse to the new diversity forms. However, all the possible segmentation tools listed above are available given the data Silvermouse collects⁸⁹, so it is a necessity that future data releases either contain programme level data or detailed segmentation using these categories, to prevent further reporting that continues to risk inaccurately or incompletely capturing the problem.

However, in the meantime, we would strongly encourage Project Diamond not to release any further information without reasonable segmentation of the kind that Silvermouse data allows (and has been possible from the project's inception), as we believe this report has demonstrated that such releases can be misleading.

Lessons on Data Collection and Reporting

Project Diamond provides an excellent guide for future diversity data collection and release. The centralised structure it uses, and the integration of Silvermouse, is an effective method⁹⁰ for gathering data (assuming a gradual increase in response rates as suggested by CDN).

Problems have however occurred in the data presentation, publication and disclosure stages of Diamond. The problem is that commercial and public relation concerns for the broadcasters run counter to the stated aims of the projects, and as such any promise to fully release data potentially puts the broadcasters at risk. Hence, no such promise has been forthcoming.

If broadcasters are entirely unwilling to simply fully publish the data they collect (once contributors have been anonymised), then the parameters for those releases need to be established before the initial publication. At the moment, broadcasters have indicated future publications will contain greater segmentation but are under no obligation to do so, and the nature of the First Cut Report has to draw concern as to whether this will occur at all.

Regardless, when data on this issue is published and shared, it must reach a minimal-level of statistical significance and have its limitations adequately explained. And the focus should be on the content of the data, and a detailed examination of the findings – not a collection of quotes praising the research that the report is supposed to consist of, accompanied solely by top-level statistics.

Otherwise we risk developing industry-wide misconceptions, which will actively stand in the way of attempts to design effective solutions, just as the failure to acknowledge the unconscious bias has up to this point.

The widespread availability of diversity data is a necessity for designing effective solutions to redress disparities. However, if the Broadcasters are serious about tackling this issue, they will, at some point, have to publish data which does not reflect well on them, or that potentially has some commercial risk. The reason the First Cut Report is concerning is because there is substantial evidence within it, of a fundamental unwillingness to share this sort of data. And it appears this unwillingness relates directly to the report's limitations, and the decision to release potentially misleading data.

⁸⁹ The BBC has traditionally used its own P4A system rather than Silvermouse. It remains unclear how their own datasets are to be integrated with new diversity data.

⁹⁰ This is evident in the relatively high-response rate compared to the 2014 workplace report. However, by objective standards this reflects the weakness of the latter more than the strength of the former.

This report recommends a series of simple guidelines for future data releases on this issue:

1. Never release diversity data that is not segmented at a minimum by role and seniority of position (the variance between roles is too great to allow any data not segmented in this way to be meaningfully accurate).
2. Programme-level data remains the most valuable in fully understanding this issue, as it allows independent bodies to validate segmentation techniques. If programme-level data is unavailable, segmentation methodologies and justifications need to be published in full.
3. Never release self-reported data that lacks statistical significance or for which prior probability distributions cannot be furnished.
4. Never release data on only contributors or contributions, without analysing and reporting the relation between the two, in detail. This is particularly necessary if data is self-reported.
5. Agree on the parameters of releases prior to the collection of data, taking into account the concerns and recommendations of bodies whose members will provide the data. This prevents commercial or public perception concerns influencing data publication in a way that relates to data content.
6. Where data reviews have been conducted, and CDN should be commended for involving NatCen in the process, the concerns of experts should be placed above any desire to release data in a certain form.
7. Awareness of the impact of how data is presented, and the language used to describe campaigns, must accompany any release. And publicity should be allowed to follow accurate reporting, not be used to frame data publications or dominate supposedly data-led reports.
8. Finally, the broadcasters have the ability to examine certain trends we were not able to in this report. Their access to both commissioning and production data allows a comparison of the two which was not possible using our datasets. Future publications examining this relation would provide an additional facet to our understanding.

There are also a number of non-data disclosures the broadcasters should consider. Greater transparency and accountability is required across hiring networks, and clarification of the relation of development, greenlighting and broadcast is also needed.

Film Data

As noted in *Section 1.2f*, the data collection by the Regional Screen Agencies in the film industry, and the availability of this data through FOIs, has shown clear signs of improvement over the last three years (in line with the recommendations above). With almost all bodies now providing data willingly and efficiently, and with a number of the bodies, including most importantly the BFI, now collecting complete data, rather than depending on voluntarily submitted forms (as with Project Diamond). Greater role and seniority segmentation to this data is however still needed.

These improvements demonstrate both the willingness of these bodies to aid in improving diversity in the film industry, and an understanding of the importance of accurate and complete data reporting in this process. Project Diamond has the potential to do the same on an even larger scale, as long as its data releases are complete and transparent.

5.2b Diversity Targets

BFI Film Fund Targets

In *Cut out of the Picture*⁹¹, a target of 50% female-directors for films backed by UK-based public funding bodies, by 2020, was proposed. Targets are not quotas, and do not set necessary conditions for hiring. However, they have been shown to consistently improve representation by providing a counterweight to pre-existing unconscious biases in decision-making.

As noted in *Section 1.2f*, public funding bodies have traditionally offered better support to female writers than the UK film industry at large⁹². However, across all films backed by UK-based public funding bodies only 19% were written by predominantly female writing teams.

In 2017, BFI Film Fund director Ben Roberts, announced crucial changes to the Film Fund's guidelines, including announcing a series of targets to improve representations. To be put into place from April 1, 2018, the targets are:

- A 50-50 gender balance in supported filmmakers
- 20% target for BAME filmmakers
- 9% target for LGBTQ-identifying filmmakers
- 7% target for filmmakers with a disability

This is an important step in the long-term solution to this problem, and the BFI should be applauded for putting these targets in place. Public funding bodies have extensive influence over the industry, and the BFI in particular; the findings of this report justify direct action to target and redress inequality; and targets are an effective and important tool in doing so.

Not only should it directly balance any individual biases operating within the employment structure, but with a focus on writers, directors and producers, it will also result in improved representation throughout productions, by promoting female key creatives. As well as having a positive effect on representation among cast and in the content of films.

Furthermore, over time it should encourage writers and directors to create and foster suitable projects as shrewd investors will be looking for female-written projects and smart producers will start forming relationships with female writers to build creative collaborations. We would encourage other screen agencies to follow the BFI's lead, and informal targets are also a reasonable tool for smaller production and distribution companies to contribute to solving these issues.

However, because targets are not quotas, they do require concerted focus and conscientious application across all levels of the employment structure. As such the announcement is important, but it must be consistently foregrounded to have an adequate effect on individual decision making. This is partly the responsibility of the BFI and Film Fund themselves, but also requires the industry to remain diligent as they report their decisions and representation annually.

⁹¹ "Cut Out Of The Picture: A Study Of Female Directors In The UK Film Industry"

⁹² *Cut out of the Picture* found this held for directors at similar ratios.

The Role of the Broadcaster

As examined in *Section 3.2*, female career progression in the television industry appears stunted in a similar manner, if not to quite the same extent, as in the film industry. This was true both in terms of female writer career progression, particularly when moving between programmes, and in terms of female representation at senior executive levels according to Ofcom's *2017 Diversity in UK Television*.

However, as Ofcom reports in 2017 noted, despite this, the broadcasters have had relatively few initiatives in place to support female written productions and female employees (prior to Project Diamond). Sky's 'Women in Leadership' programme aims to achieve a sustainable 50/50 balance of men and women in most senior leadership roles. Channel 4 also has initiatives in place encouraging women to develop in senior roles, including commissioning or directing. However, in general there are few significant efforts to improve equality of opportunity (particularly for writers and other freelancers).

This is symptomatic of a broader lack of focus on the problem amongst the broadcasters. The Ofcom report notes an additional difficulty in obtaining accurate and complete diversity data from the broadcasters:

Our findings show that too many broadcasters do not sufficiently understand the make-up of their employees and collect too little or no diversity data. Among the major broadcasters - with the exception of Channel 4 - the data are patchy. The industry cannot address what it doesn't fully understand.

Additionally, the 2017 report suggests the similar implementation of targets for the broadcasters, similar to those embraced by the BFI:

We expect broadcasters to set diversity targets. All broadcasters should set clear targets on diversity, so their employees more accurately reflect the society we live in.

The additional evidence provided in this report reinforces Ofcom's suggestion, and suggests particular focus should be given to the writers, directors and producers of programming. To further improve female representation in TV, targets are a crucial next step. The centralised nature of television gives such a solution even greater influence, and makes it easier to implement, whilst the larger percentage of experienced female TV writers currently provides an excellent initial pool of writers to draw from.

In truth, such targets are all that stand in the way of equity for female television writers. Although the sector still suffers from many of the subtler forms of inequality seen more clearly in film, targets would gradually eliminate these processes, whilst providing an artificial balancing force until such practices are fully eliminated. If the Broadcasters are serious about tackling the issue, in the way the BFI are increasingly proving to be, targets and not just the data-collection under Diamond, is the crucial step.

However, these targets should take into account the limitations to the range and prestige of female written content and the stereotype threat faced by female writers. From the data in *Section 2.2*, improvement is needed most in prime time and mini-series/comedy programming. For more detail on female employment in the TV industry and actions currently being taken by broadcasters to aid diversity, see Ofcom's 2017 reports⁹³.

⁹³ www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/106354/diversity-report-steps.pdf

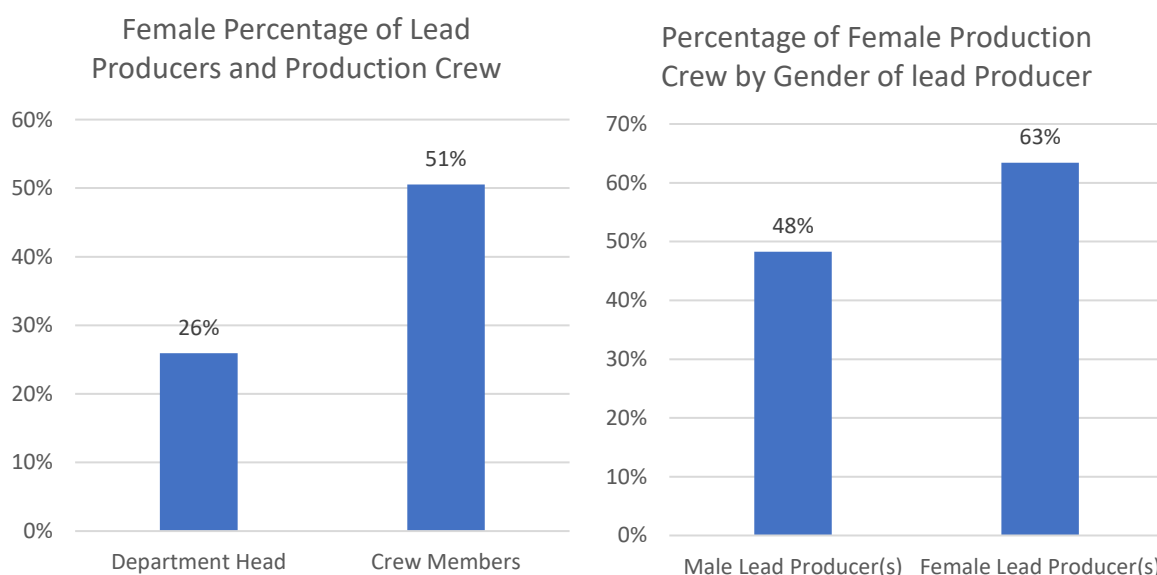
The Role of the Producer

Focus is often placed on public funding bodies and broadcasters, but some consideration should also be given to the production companies who often spearhead project development and are responsible for much early hiring, and the private funders who sustain the industries. This is particularly true in the film industry, but a significant percentage of all major TV broadcasters' programming is not produced entirely in-house. Given that publicly funded films and television programming have superior representation to films more broadly, and programmes produced in-house by the broadcasters also are more likely to be female-written, these organisations with less oversight and regulation should also draw our attention.

Throughout this report, Producers and Production staff have had some of the most extreme disparities between male and female employees.

Firstly, they have the greatest disparity between the gender ratios of their crew and of the department heads. A Department head is almost twice as likely to be male than a member of the production staff. Additionally, they also had the greatest disparity in gender hiring practices between male and female heads of department.

Figure 117: Producer Disparities Summary



In other words, male and female producers are more likely to hire production staff of the same gender than any other key role. And this has resulted in the greatest overall disparity between crew and the department heads.

Furthermore, the control accumulated by the most successful producers, and its relation to hiring and firing power, has been at the centre of many of the most troubling stories of abuses of power to emerge from the industry over the last year.

The significance of the difference of practices between male and female producers, provides strong evidence of unconscious bias in producers' decision making. This pattern is particularly problematic as producers are arguably the most important single influence on hiring practices across other

departments (this certainly holds for writers, as producers tend to play a key role in developing a script or project and commissioning writers).

Production companies and producers are the final group at the centre of the employment structures of the film and television industries. Although rough data on production companies can be furnished it is in general too incomplete to draw meaningful conclusions from. However, it does show massive fluctuation in representation between companies, and in general worse representation than films and television produced in conjunction with public funding bodies and broadcasters.

There are structural changes which could influence this (these will be examined below), however, public pressure should be raised on production companies to perform better in this area, and individual producers need to acknowledge and be aware of their role in creating and sustaining inequality.

5.2c Amending the Film Tax Relief

The following two suggestions apply solely to project development in the film industry. They provide alternative options to redress the greater overall disparity in that industry.

The broadcasters, public and private funders, and production companies make up the bodies within the industry responsible for the internal structure of the UK film and TV industries. However, the UK Government also has significant control over the industries as a whole, and takes particular care to promote them at the centre of the UK's cultural exports. This provides one way to influence the wider set of funding and production bodies, promote better practices and potentially counteract the cumulative impact of biases.

The *Cut out of the Picture* report noted that:

The most significant way the UK government currently encourages and supports the film industry is via the Film Tax Relief (FTR) scheme.

The FTR reimburses all UK films just under a fifth of the money they spend in the UK. Arguably, it is the only aspect of government support for the UK film industry which impacts all films, no matter their origin, scale, genre, creative content, or market potential. Therefore, it is one of the most powerful mechanisms with which to effect industry-wide change.

Research by Stephen Follows on the impact of Film Tax Relief found it has been one of the principal reasons behind the UK Film Industry's significant growth in the past decade⁹⁴. Just as other legislation has been able to effectively impact the quantity of films produced in the UK.

Between 2006 and 2014, the Film Tax Relief paid out £1.36bn across 1,240 films. According to government statements on the policy, the Film Tax Relief generates £12.49 for the UK economy for every £1 of tax relief granted, and investment in the UK film industry through the government's Film Tax Relief led to over £6.9 billion investment from the film industry across the UK between 2007-14.

Tax reliefs have also been successful in attracting investment, helping productions get made and production companies survive and thrive, as well as providing infrastructure growth across the UK. However, they could also be used to improve diversity in the film industry.

The cultural test for film is managed by the BFI and awards points for a variety of the film's attributes. Producers need to score at least 18 points (out of a possible 35) in order to pass the test. An additional 'diversity' dimension to the requirements all films must fulfil to be eligible for Film Tax

⁹⁴ stephenfollows.com/film-tax-breaks-by-the-numbers/

Relief, within which gender would be a specified group, is possible but not an ideal solution. Any impact could be avoided by qualifying the film in another way, so results would likely be limited. Additionally, placing diversity tests on a similar footing to commercial concerns is generally inadvisable. As such, any effective diversity test would need to be separate the Cultural Test.

However, it remains reasonable, given the findings outlined in this report, to require filmmakers to take some account of diversity within their cast and crew. An adjustment to film tax relief would help foreground concerns of equality during hiring choices, as it connects it to the financial viability of the film. This in turn would reduce any impact unconscious bias has by providing a balancing influence.

Therefore, we suggest a new but separate 'Diversity Test', which would allow filmmakers a degree of freedom as to how they reach the pass mark, but must also be cleared, along with the cultural test, to receive tax relief. The exact wording and criteria for such a 'Diversity Test' would need to be drafted in consultation with representatives from all stakeholders.

5.2d Private-Funding

Almost all of the strategic decisions made during the development of a feature film are influenced by the financing route the producers choose to follow. Therefore, in order to affect change in the hiring of UK film directors we need to target the individuals and bodies who hold the purse strings.

Funding for UK films tends to come from numerous sources, with producers creating a bespoke combination for each of their films, utilising personal contacts, crowdfunding, grants and the use of the film tax relief. However, most films in the UK raise some form of private finance, as even those receiving grants are often expected to 'match-fund' their awards via private funding. The reasons private investors back films can be grouped into two broad categories:

- Financial – Although the majority of films lose money (see *Section 4.5b*), when films are a breakout success they can recoup far in excess of their original budget⁹⁵. This leads some people to see film as an attractive, albeit high-risk, financial investment.
- Lifestyle – Film is often perceived to be a glamorous business and there are plenty of opportunities for a film's investors to enjoy themselves, both physical (i.e. set visits, premiers, etc.) and in terms of perception (i.e. producer credits, the ability to refer to oneself as 'in the movie biz', etc.).

The low overall profitability of private film investment suggests investors are likely to be influenced by a combination of these two factors. Specific incentives can be provided for both motivations.

- Financial – Promote the uncommercial nature of the current discriminatory hiring practices and highlight the overlooked potential that female-led projects may offer.
- Lifestyle – Make backing female directors more rewarding, outside of financial returns.

Any investor seeking financial returns will want to ensure that the product they're backing is the most commercially-viable version possible. As we have shown repeatedly throughout this report, the over-reliance on male-written scripts in the UK film industry is not a product of sensible business decisions, but rather of systemic failings in the smooth operation of the industry.

⁹⁵ Recent successes include *The King's Speech* (which grossed £289 million in cinemas worldwide on an £8 million budget) and *Paranormal Activity* (\$194 million worldwide gross on a reported production budget of just \$15,000)

Part Five - Potential Solutions

Female writers remain underemployed, despite more positive reviews and audience perception, and greater profitability. As such, there are female-written and female-led projects being overlooked which might otherwise prove more profitable than some of the current male-written and male-led projects.

This message could effectively be marketed towards private investors, along with easy methods for them to find female-led and written projects to consider. The links between female writers, directors and producers, and between female writers and female cast, also suggest promoting female writers in this way, would help their collective development, by forging stronger links with investors for other overlooked female creatives.

This offers a subtle way to resolve some of the issues outlined in *Sections 4.5b* and *4.5c*, in which it was noted that the lack of influence the profit motive on decisions undermines the ability of market forces to redress anti-commercial over-reliance on male directors.

Investment driven by lifestyle reasons, is more difficult to impact directly. However, industry events and awards exclusively for those connected to female-led films, offer a way to improve exposure and recognition. Whilst ideological appeals, aimed at connecting the investor's desire to improve the industry and create positive change, with the investment decisions they make in film, can also prove effective.

However, most useful is simply prolonged exposure of the issue to help investors, who may come from outside the industry or are unaware of the problems, make informed and conscientious decisions.

5.3 Tackling Unconscious Bias

5.3a The Broader Campaign

The suggestions above attempt to provide a way to redress the imbalance in both industries, by fixing the systemic problems which allow individual bias to affect hiring practices. However, a concerted campaign improving awareness and incentivising female-written projects can also directly redress the impact of unconscious bias.

In recent years, across both UK and US film and television industries, this campaign has been building. Sustained by the actions of individuals and the increasing organisation of pressure groups and campaigning bodies, it has been extraordinarily effective at raising awareness of the issue of diversity and discrimination in film and television.

Hopefully this report will provide a further understanding of the issues, and help clarify where focus can best be put. However, it is certainly not the case that our input or expertise as researchers is required or relevant to how this awareness campaign proceeds.

Instead, the focus will be placed on providing a brief summary of areas such campaigning could be focussed on, and that would likely prove most effective in bringing about meaningful, sustainable improvement, with a particular focus on writers.

1. Addressing the Perception Problem
 - a. As noted in *Section 3.3a*, a smaller percentage of applicants to screenwriting courses are female than to film courses generally (although there remains a disparity between screenwriting courses and industry average as well).
 - b. Some further consideration should be given as to how to promote writing for film and television as a viable and desirable option for potential female writers and other new entrants to the sector.
 - c. However, one of the most effective ways to tackle this is by raising the public profile of successful female writers and by allowing more of the most prestigious productions to be female-written.
2. Understanding New Entrants
 - a. The film (and to a lesser extent TV) industry treats new entrants poorly compared to almost all other industries of its size. Long hours, limited pay (or even the expectation to work for free) and limited labour protections are the products of the high level of competition for entry-level roles, due to the desirability of the industry, in combination with limited formal, open hiring structures.
 - b. As shown in *Section 3.3a* and *3.3b*, disparities emerge quickly between departments and roles, although runners and production assistants are as likely to be female as male.
 - c. Greater stability, and early career development help, that reduced employees' dependence on cultivating personal relationships, would prevent unconscious bias having an immediate effect on individuals' careers by shaping the opportunities and avenues afforded to them and limiting the encouragement of certain demographics towards certain roles.
3. Short Films and Digital Shorts
 - a. Our research in *Section 3.3b* into short films on UK Television showed better representation for female writers on short films than on features, but there remained clear room for improvement. Additionally, the low relative cost of shorts makes this an area where improvement can be achieved with relatively small

investments. Similarly, digital shorts are a functional way for broadcasters to positively impact early career development (particularly for creatives).

- b. A greater number of female focused short film and digital shorts schemes providing these sorts of benefits would help redress the low percentage of female-led shorts and, by extension, help support the career development of female writers by building their experience, exposure and contacts.
 - c. Such schemes will help fight the vicious circle illustrated in *Section 4.4d*, by increasing the pool of talented female creatives, as well as making existing female creatives more visible.
4. Mentoring
- a. Current writers (both male and female) can always do more to mentor and encourage young, female, potential writers.
 - b. The perception problem (characterised in this report as “personal preference”) could be tackled through a more concerted and organised effort by writers (and particularly successful female writers) to seek out and support new entrants to the industry.
 - c. Formalised mentoring programmes would be ideal for this, connecting young female writers with more experienced colleagues who can both provide exposure where they might otherwise have been overlooked, and guidance and encouragement when the odds seem too steep.
5. The First Film
- a. As noted in *Section 3.3d*, the greatest relative restrictions on female writers’ careers are faced at the start of careers and at the later stages of career development, with greater stability (albeit with its own restrictions) once they are established.
 - b. Due to the risk-averse culture of the film industry (see *Section 4.5c*), the first stage of gaining support for a new project is often the hardest. Many players will wait to see if others support it before committing, creating a Catch 22, whereby projects gain huge amounts of non-tangible ‘interest’ but no actual support.
 - c. However, relatively small amounts of financing are required to move a production to the point at which it can begin to raise production funding. This stage can include securing intellectual property (IP) rights for adaptations, paying writer(s) for additional script drafts, research, casting, and creating material to be presented to potential investors. In essence, this stage is demonstrating the viability of the film project to larger investors.
 - d. Smaller investments at this stage, for female writers looking to make the jump to their first feature, would allow greater career stability earlier in writers’ careers, and also help female-led projects demonstrate viability and again, balance any unconscious bias.
6. Genre Restrictions
- a. Misconceptions persist about the preferences of female audiences, and the abilities of female writers, in respect to genre.
 - b. Many of the causes of the current gender inequity stem from a lack of real information and awareness, with industry professionals instead opting to rely on their subconscious biases. Therefore, it is vital that the facts about female writers, and female film employees, are made available in such a way as to be easily accessible for everyone.

- c. Easy-to-quote information which fights common fallacies and biases must be widely available, arming filmmakers with statistics and data points to be used in their presentations to investors, producers and other gatekeepers.
7. Primetime Development
- a. The largest single issue in our study of the television industry is the inverse correlation between expected advertising revenue and audience; and the probability that a programme is female-written.
 - b. The larger disparity visible in primetime programming, particularly outside of CDS, should be addressed directly by the broadcasters.
 - c. This could be achieved through targeted development schemes, a system of targets outlined above, or even simply a concerted effort on the part of key decision makers.

5.3b A Reason for Optimism: Self-Sustaining Equality

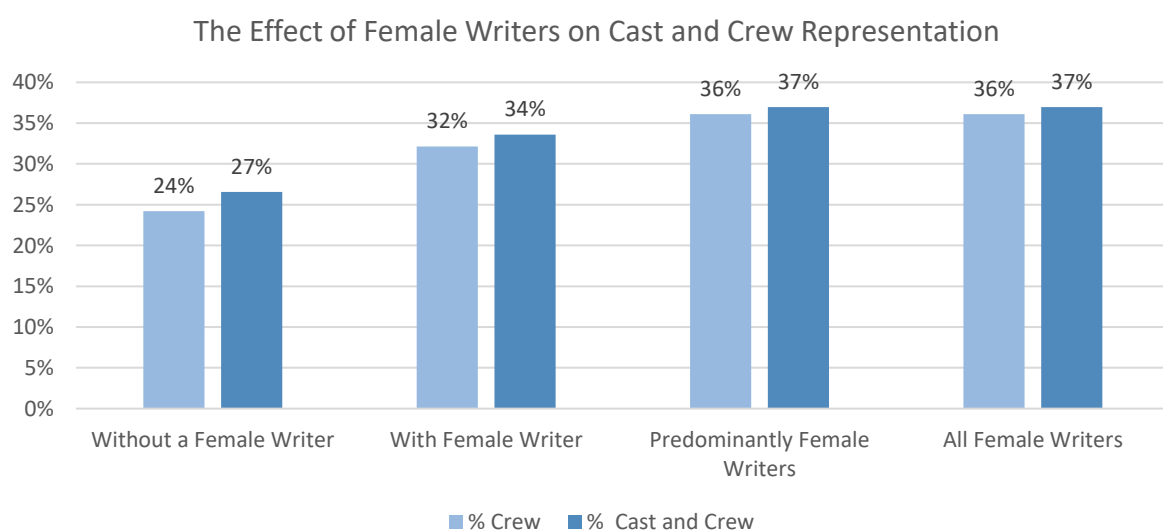
Section 4.4d suggested that inequality in the film and television industries is self-reinforcing due to the way hiring and commissioning decisions are made, and the lack of industry wide structures to protect equality (as well as the way individual bias effected personal preference and vice-versa).

In combination these factors created two vicious cycles which resulted in low overall female representation.

However, it equally suggests that under the current structure, individual effort can create a situation under which it is equality, and improvement towards it, that is similarly self-sustaining. There remains a large group of underemployed female staff across crews in the UK Film Industry to draw upon, hence the disparity between the gender makeup of crews and the heads of their respective departments.

Female written scripts had improved female representation amongst key creative roles, crew and cast. Just as improved female representation in key creative roles had a direct positive effect on the crew working for them.

Figure 118: Writer influence on Representation (cast and crew)

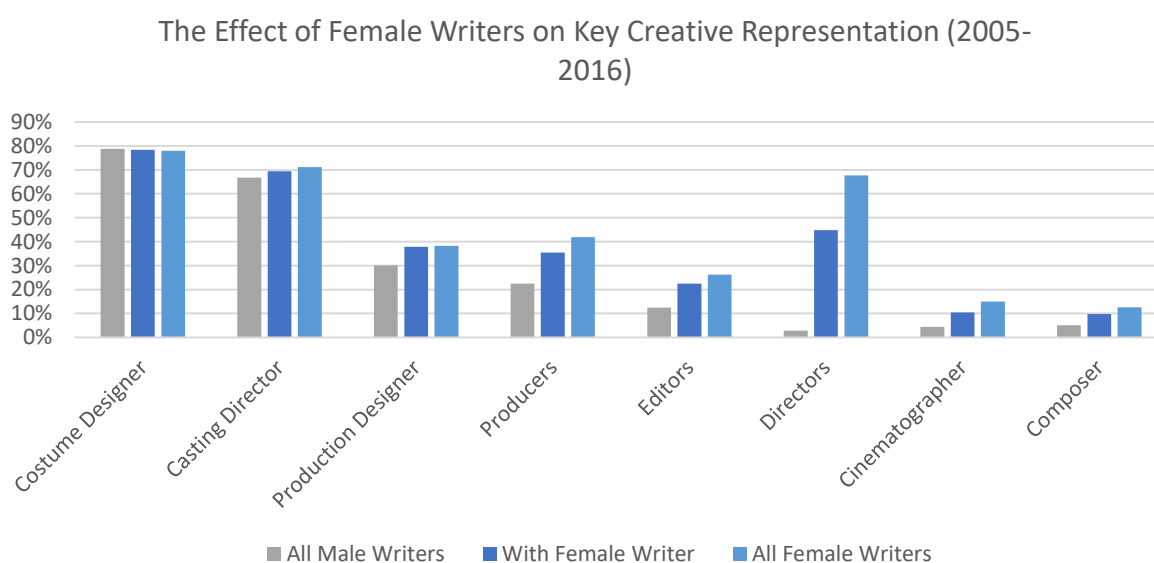


In essence, there is a trickledown effect of higher female employment in key creative roles (including writers) resulting in better representation throughout the production, whilst higher female employment in key creative roles correlates with female written scripts.

This trend is particularly notable in the key cases of directors and top-level producers. Female written films are far more likely to have female heads of both their creative and production teams, resulting in far greater female influence over both hiring down the line, and the eventual content of the project.

This trickledown effect, can be seen in the representation among key creatives on films with female writers. Particularly, in roles with low overall levels of female representation, female writers correlate strongly with female employees in other key roles.

Figure 119: Writer influence on Representation (key creatives)



It is important to note that it is not the case that female writers are at the centre of employment decisions on productions. Rather the effect is broader, produced by its correlation with other factors.

Female written films and programmes are more likely to attract female key creatives, and they are more likely to employ female crew. Female writers have an even greater effect on the content of the film, and in particular female representation amongst the cast. This in turn, has further positive effects in addressing the issue of personal preference.

In essence, greater equality at the genesis of a project filters through the whole of that production, beginning with a female writer or a female-written script, and building around it, has a positive effect on female representation far beyond the writers themselves⁹⁶.

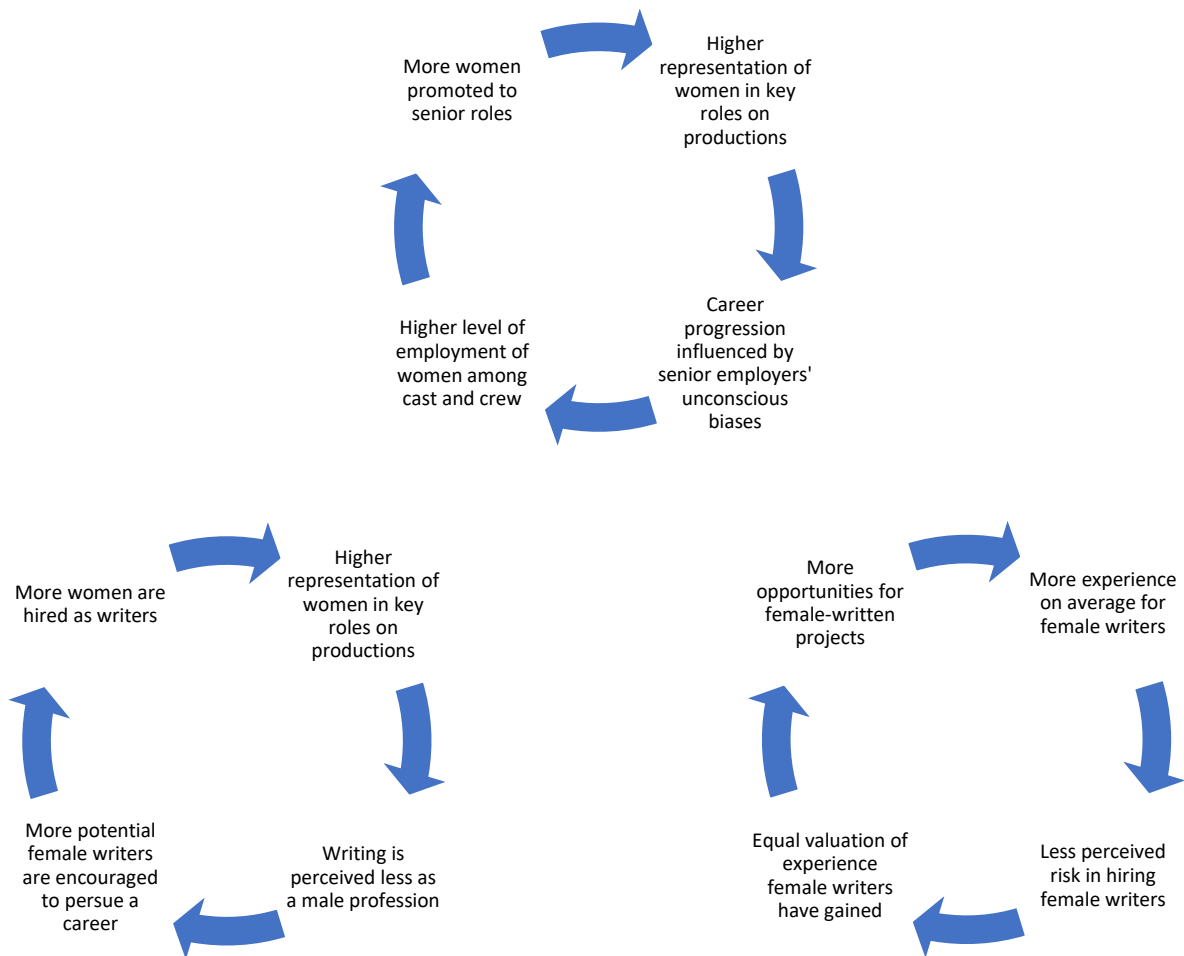
⁹⁶ Although further examination of this is necessary, it does suggest that, for certain other roles in particular, indirectly targeting inequality, through promoting female-written scripts, would be one of the most effective ways of furthering equality more broadly. This is particularly notable for female cast: the strong correlation of writer gender to the ratio of the cast suggests actors and actresses interested in a greater variety of roles should be focussing their efforts on female-written and directed projects (not, for example, award ceremonies, which being on the opposite end of the causal chain to writers, are really better defined as a symptom of the problem for actresses and female creatives, not any sort of cause of it).

Part Five - Potential Solutions

The key conclusion is that a concerted effort to improve the quantity and exposure of female-written scripts, would have a similar effect on the industries as a whole as the current inequality is having.

The aim would be to turn the current vicious cycles (low representation of women leading to low numbers of/less regard for female writers leading back to low female representation) into a virtuous cycles (increased awareness of female writers, leading to more deciding to employ women/improved perception, resulting in more work and greater exposure for female writers):

Figure 120: Self-Sustaining Equality



Appendix One: Methodology

Two separate core databases have been used in compiling this report and producing its findings:

The Film Database consists of 2,624 features, shot in the UK between 2005 and 2016. Across this set there were we 3,310 unique credited writers.

The Television Database consists of 4,005 unique programmes, with a total of 65,886 episodes. In total 8,285 unique writers were credited on these programmes. Television data is primarily from 2001-2016, but also contains data for long-running shows from before 2000.

Although findings will be drawn from both databases, the two datasets have not been combined.

Data Sources

Our data sources included:

- Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS)
- The British Film Institute (BFI)
- Internet Movie Database (IMDb)
- Rentrak / comScore
- Rotten Tomatoes
- Metacritic
- The Numbers
- The British Council
- Wikipedia
- UCAS
- OBS LUMIERE
- Websites, social profiles and agent pages of individual writers (in order to verify credits and determine gender)
- Ipsos Mori (where referenced)
- BARB (where referenced)
- Ofcom (where referenced)
- Polling of WGGB members

Film Dataset

The film dataset began as a list of feature films shot in the UK between 2005 and 2016 (inclusive) supplied by the British Film Institute (BFI). We built upon, adapted, and expanded this to build an initial dataset of 3,078 films.

Prior to 2008, the BFI did not track films budgeted under £500,000 and therefore our awareness of low/micro budget films for the years 2005-7 is limited.

The following types of films were then excluded:

- Movies shot before 2005, even if the movie was then released or re-released in UK cinemas since 2005.
- Concert film and 'Event cinema' productions, such as National Theatre productions
- Films which began life as a feature film but which were eventually released in another form, such as a TV show, web series or short film

Appendix One: Methodology

- Duplicates or films listed under multiple titles
- Films without credited writers
- Films not completed or released

Once these films were removed, 2,624 features remained, with 3,310 unique credited writers.

Television Dataset

TV Industry data comes solely from ALCS' records. They also provided a detail description of their own data collection and categorisation methods:

ALCS data about audiovisual productions is collected for the purpose of remunerating ALCS members for secondary uses of their work.

These secondary uses relate to remuneration schemes which vary from country to country, but which include Educational Recording, Cable Retransmission, and fees generated as a result of Private Copying levies.

The accurate administration of these schemes relies on the collection and exchange of information about AV productions, about how they have been used, and about the people who created them. This information is collected primarily from three broad sources:

- *ALCS monitors all UK terrestrial television channels and a wide range of European television channels in order to construct extensive transmission schedules.*
- *ALCS receives information about UK audiovisual content from partner organisations around the world.*
- *ALCS members notify the society about the audiovisual productions to which they have contributed.*

A series of technical and business processes ensure that these disparate sources of information are combined to establish a record of written contributions to AV productions made by ALCS members, and of the ways in which these productions have been used in relevant markets. Where information is missing or ambiguous, ALCS members of staff use a number of tools and data sources to make appropriate updates. These tools and data sources include a selection of TV listings magazines and databases.

The information collected in this way is stored in a customised data system that combines contact management, repertoire management, accounting, and payment management functionalities. The information is collected and maintained with the purpose of ensuring that ALCS members are paid any monies that they are due for the use of their work, in the most efficient way possible.

For the purpose of this study, the following pieces of data were provided:

Channel, BroadcastYear, Timeslot, SeriesCode, EpisodeCode, ContributorCode, Gender, AVType, ProgType, ProductionCompany.

As with the film database, the initial television dataset was larger than the core database used for the report. A similar process of manual data cleaning removed the following credits:

Radio credits were removed entirely from the television dataset, and a separate database for radio credits was created.

Film credits were also removed from this dataset, as they ran the risk of impacting TV averages, and are better assessed through the far more complete film-specific dataset. They were however used to check the consistency of the datasets (as they were the only data points which spanned both film and television). Averages and representation ratios for film credits broadcast on UK TV, were very

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similar to those produced by the film dataset. One-off documentaries were similarly excluded from general TV findings.

In total 10,653 unique writers were credited on UK Television programmes in the dataset. Gender data was not available for 1,336 of these writers (episodes without a writer with gender information were naturally excluded from findings). The final database after data processing contained 8,285 unique writers, with gender information, credited on UK television programmes.

Single writers could also be credited multiple times for single episodes (for scriptwriting and storylining work for example), such occurrences were counted as only a single credited writer for episode writer ratios, but were recorded as multiple credits for the writers themselves (for career progression calculations).

Basic Analytical Methodology

There are four primary ways of analysing the gender of writers across the film and television industries:

- The percentage of writers who are male/female
- The percentage of films/programmes that are predominantly written by men and women.
- The percentage of writer credits which go to female writers
- The percentage of films/programmes with/without female writers

All four proved useful in elucidating the intricacies of disparities and were used at points throughout this report. However, to help clarity they have been utilised in specific ways:

The first has been used primarily for statistics related to the writers (not the industries as a whole), and in particular for the career progression of the writers. The second was the primary metric used for the industry as a whole, as it best captures the relation of writers to their products.

The third was used for trends over time, as it provides a simple way to understand the broad relation between male and female writer credits. Finally, the fourth was used to illustrate particularly stark contrasts, as it shows the discrepancies between male and female writers particularly clearer (for the same reason it was not used in isolation as it can oversimplify actual representation).

The two primary metrics, for individual writers and for the industry as a whole, match the most important theoretical problems with inequality of opportunity amongst writers in the film industry. First, the impact on individual writers, their opportunities and career progression. Second, the impact of any such inequality on the product of the film and television industries and the effect this might have on its audiences.

By Section Methodology

A number of further data processing steps were taken for individual calculations and sections.

First, multiple databases were created from the core databases on both film and television. These datasets grouped credits by:

- Individual feature films
- Individual TV episodes
- Individual TV programmes
- Individual credited writers (film)
- Individual credited writers (TV)

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Each stage of individual calculation then contained further methodological choices. These are outlined in detail below for each section:

The Film Industry

One additional set of data points was manually removed from the film database before any findings were produced. Writer credits in the initial film database also included credits for the authors of the original content adaptations were based on. These were manually checked and removed, as they are unrelated to screenwriter credits, and covered texts written over a far longer time period.

Budget Data

The BFI supplied budget ranges for all films shot since the start of 2008. The BFI collects budget data from a number of sources, not least official filings to HMRC via the UK film tax credit. Therefore, we can regard these budget ranges as being reasonably accurate. This central dataset was then supplemented with additional data from the sources above, and a consolidated set of budgets bands were created.

For films shot before 2008, it was not possible to find other reliable sources for budget data on low-budget films. Therefore, in this report, findings by budget level for low and microbudget cover a slightly different time period, running from 2008-2016.

Genre Data

Genre data poses a problem, in that it involves subjective judgements on the part of the viewer, and few films can be adequately captured using a single genre classification.

BFI and IMDB data on genre was combined, and each film was classified with up to five genres (the majority of films were classified by two or three).

One result of this methodology is that for “combined genre” or “all classified genre” data points and findings, individual films can appear multiple times, as they were classified in multiple genres. 14 genres had at least 100 films classified under them, and these were used as the primary genres for all findings (see Figure 9). A small percentage of films were not classified under any of these 14 genres (however earlier data cleaning made this rare), these films were excluded from genre findings (rather than creating an “other” category which would have combined a wide variety of films).

Comparing genre and budget data enabled further validation of the findings for both, as well as illustrating additional useful correlations.

Reviews and Audiences

Audience preferences were measured using IMDb ratings.

IMDb ratings are unreliable for smaller films, as the majority of votes come not from viewers, but those who worked on the film. This problem can be seen in the spread of votes on such films. The proportion of their ratings which are perfect scores (10/10) is notably higher than the average for all IMDb film ratings. As such, films with fewer than 100 total votes were excluded from these findings.

Reviews used Metacritic’s averages. Metacritic scores were chosen over Rotten Tomatoes aggregates as the Fresh/Rotten system used by Rotten Tomatoes often creates overall averages which obscure a wide variance of opinion. Metacritic’s methodology is simpler, and the criteria for their “Top Critics” is more clearly defined.

Metacritic data was available for only 28% of all films in our dataset, as not all feature films reach cinemas, and even fewer are reviewed by “Top Critics” according to Metacritic’s criteria.

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Scatter plots have been used throughout this section, as broad averages for this data could be misleading in isolation. However, as a result Figures 13 & 14 have subtly different datasets, as they used exact budget data, rather than budget bands (and exact budget data was not available on all films).

Box Office Revenue

Box office revenue comprises the weakest dataset in the film section of this report. Although budget and box office data was available for a large proportion of films, it was still necessary to exclude nearly 40% of films in the dataset as they lacked either revenue or budget data.

The majority of excluded films were low or micro-budget. Hence, revenue findings regarding lower budget bands should be viewed with greater scepticism. However, so few low-budget features return any sort of meaningful profit, and female writers are rare among such films anyway, that these findings have limited significance to analysis anyway.

Given there is no reason to believe writer gender is related to collection and availability of box office data, this should not alter percentage-based findings regarding gender. Furthermore, given that the findings suggested female writers were, very generally, less common at lower budgets than higher ones, the exclusion of lower budget films from box office findings, is unlikely to understate female representation or the revenue of female-written films.

However, given that budgets bands do correlate with writer gender, there is one possible impact that should be acknowledged: it is plausible a disproportionate percentage of female-written films fall into the top-half of certain budget bands, such films, costing more, would be expected to have a higher revenue. Plausibly this could result in improved revenue for female-written films, relative to male-written films in the same budget. The consistency of data across different bands does however mitigate this already limited concern, as do exact budget findings.

Public Funding

For data gathering our definition of public funding bodies was kept intentionally broad – encompassing any organisation that redistributed public money to feature film projects shot, at least in part, in the UK. It covers both development and production funds.

This included dedicated film-funding bodies (e.g. BFI), other arts bodies (e.g. the Arts Council), regional film funding bodies (e.g. Film London), local councils, foreign governmental organisations and charitable film funding bodies (e.g. the Bertha Foundation).

Certain public funders were then excluded from findings. Local councils, foreign-based funding bodies and educational institutions were sometimes listed as public funders, but data on them must be assumed to be incomplete, and as a result they have been excluded from findings.

The exception to this rule is the Irish Film Board, which funded, at least in part, over forty films, shot, at least in part, in the UK. As such, despite not being a UK-based funding body, their influence on UK feature films (as defined for this report), is notable.

Separate data was gathered through Freedom of Information requests (FOIs) sent to the regional screen agencies and the BFI. This data tended to cover different time-periods and had differing levels of detail. Hence, few findings were drawn directly from this data. However, they provided another distinct dataset for data validation tests, again FOI data on public funding did not differ significantly from data already in our film database.

Appendix One: Methodology

FOI request did allow us to assess the data collection and publication by these bodies. Identical requests were sent to the same organisations as part of *Cut out of the Picture* research in 2014. Apart from Creative Scotland, data collection and publication has improved at all of these bodies. Multiple follow ups were sent to Creative Scotland, over multiple months, both by phone and email, and we were assured data would be provided. However, we have not yet received any such information.

FOI data is published in full in *Appendix Three: Additional Data*.

Key Creatives and Crew

Key creative and crew data on films comes from the same primary databases as the writer data, and were collected and sorted through the same methods.

Key creatives were defined as top-level credits (i.e. without qualifications other than “Director” or “Executive” for producers), whilst crew were all lower-level positions (e.g. “assistant”, “associate”, “second/third/etc.”, “Production Manager”), in the studied categories.

The central creative team is defined as including directors, writers, cinematographers and editors. Producers are considered separately, as data distributions regarding them are notably different. Generally, in the film industry, producers are considered as part of this central creative team.

Key creative and crew data refers solely to the film industry. No similar data was currently available for the television industry.

The TV Industry

Before any further processing of the dataset provided by ALCS all individuals, episodes and programmes were anonymized using alphanumeric codes. As described by ALCS:

To protect the personal data of ALCS members, anonymised codes were supplied in place of the series title, episode title, and contributor names. Where available, the gender of the contributor was supplied. Gender is not a required field in ALCS contact data, but where the gender was not recorded, it was calculated using appropriate fields such as the name prefix (Mr, Mrs, Ms, etc) or forename. Where gender was not recorded and could not be safely calculated, the value ‘U’ was reported, representing ‘Unknown’.

Although necessary, this anonymisation makes independently assessing the completeness of the ALCS database by comparing it to other databases more difficult. As a result, it should be explicitly stated that the Television database covers all writer credits collected by ALCS between 2000-2016 (and some for longer running programmes before), not necessary all writer credits during that period. Although, given both the reliability of ALCS’ collection methods as described above and the quantity of writer credits in the database, this concern is, we believe, limited.

A few additional methodological choices regarding the presentation of television data were also made:

Wherever possible TV industry statistics are expressed in terms of both episodes and programmes. The relative scarcity of female writers means that the use of “predominantly female-written” statistics for programmes is heavily impacted by a compounding effect of low representation. It does not reflect the gender ratio of the senior writers on this programme, just the overall ratio of male to female writers over the course of that programmes’ broadcasts.

The relation of credits to writers is even more varied in television than in film. Episode length and type both impact the average number of writers per episode or programme for both male and

Appendix One: Methodology

female writers; and, as a result, the number of credits a writer could feasibly receive over the course of their career. For example, children's TV writers tend to have far more episode credits than primetime writers but are unlikely to be equally compensated even considering the sum of those credits.

The data also obscures differences between types of writer credit, as single credits might refer to a sole-writer of a programme, a member of a writing-staff or a writer who contributed solely to the storyline of the programme.

To restrict the impact of these limitations on the findings as a whole, television data has been presented using a wide range of segmentations, utilising the most rigorous categorisations provided by ALCS (as listed above).

Timeslot

ALCS data contained the original broadcast times for all episodes. These were used to create four timeslots based on the start-time of the episode:

- Early-Morning: 11pm-6am
- Morning: 6am-12am
- Day-Time: 12am-6pm
- Prime-Time: 6pm-11pm

This methodology does not capture programmes that may have moved timeslot, nor does it capture programmes that have been broadcast on multiple channels. It reflects only the first broadcast time and channel for the programme.

However, the timeslot for each episode and channel was included so this problem is removed for episode level statistics, which are primarily used in this section. Rebroadcasts of episodes were not included in the database (even if they were rebroadcast on a different channel or at a different time).

Episode Quantity and Continuing Drama

Our classification of long-running series (CDS) uses just the total number of episodes classified under the same alphanumeric programme code. As such, it does include a long-running, shorter-form TV programmes (almost exclusively long-running children's TV), in addition to those types of programme normally classified as CDS (such as serials and soaps). Anonymisation of the data prevented a manual solution to this problem.

Instead, this issue was mitigated by dividing CDS by timeslot, wherever possible. And, in particular, splitting primetime CDS from other types.

Programme Type

Programme type was the most unreliable data categorisation used in this report. Little significance has been given to any findings from this data. However, as no other dataset provided information to separate "Comedy" and "Light Entertainment" programming, from "Serials" and "Drama", the decision was made to include it, but heavily signpost its weaknesses.

ALCS provided the following explanation:

The 'ProgType' (short for 'Programme Type') field allows a number of values that describe the nature of the programme, including 'TV Series', 'Situation Comedy', 'Documentary'. These descriptions are applied by ALCS members or by members of staff when the series or stand-alone production is first recorded in ALCS data. In practice, it is used to differentiate between similar audiovisual items (eg

Pride and Prejudice the mini-series versus Pride and Prejudice the feature film), and is therefore not intended to be an exhaustive and unambiguous schema. Each description is not necessarily exclusive of all other descriptions in the schema (eg, a 'Situation Comedy' could also be marked as a 'TV Series').

As acknowledged, the different “ProgTypes” are not distinctly or exclusively defined. It is unclear, for example, what traits fully distinguish a “Drama” from “TV Series”.

There were also occasional inconsistencies between classifications in the ALCS dataset, however, almost all of these ultimately involved “ProgType” in some way. There were discrepancies between programme type classifications and multiple other classification categories (but extremely few were found between classifications other than “ProgType”).

Because the ALCS data was anonymised, it was not possible to resolve inconsistencies using manual checks. Instead inconsistencies that had the potential to impact the dataset as a whole (e.g. where a programme on a radio channel had a “programme type” description using a TV-type category), the non-“programme type” categorisation was prioritised.

Production Company

ALCS also provided data on production companies:

Where available, one production company was supplied per event (production company is not a required field in ALCS AV data).

Due to the potential impact of naming individual production companies, and the representation on the programmes they create; combined with the lack of certainty that the production company data was complete or representative, these findings were excluded entirely.

On average, female writers were slightly more common on in-house productions, than those produced by independent production companies.

Broadcasters

Little additional data processing was necessary for broadcaster findings. Data validation produced no contradictor data points relating to “Channel” classifications and “Channel” data was available for all episodes and programmes. Broadcaster data was based entirely on the original broadcast “channel” classification.

Limitations to the TV dataset acknowledged above also affect the broadcaster findings. But again, wide ranging segmentation is used to paint as broad a picture of representation as possible.

Career Progression

Career progression datapoints come from the two separate writer databases. Because of the anonymisation of individual writers in the ALCS database it was not possible to combine the two in any way, although writers often do work in both industries. All writers for whom gender data could not be provided were removed from these datasets at the outset.

Career progression data points do not cover the entirety of writers’ careers. Rather it covers the studied periods for each dataset: 2006-2016 for film and 2000-2016 for television.

Career Trajectories in Film

The order of writer credits was produced by cross-referencing writer data with film release dates. Film release dates were classified solely by year, hence, it is possible that if a single writer had two films released in the same year, they could be wrongly ordered. Such occurrences were resolved

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through manual research wherever possible, but even exact release dates do not necessarily capture the actual order a writer received commissions and wrote screenplays.

Career averages were produced directly from the film writer database. However, analysis of career progression required reclassifying all films by the number of previous credits of the writer. Although this allows a clear understanding of quantitative career progression (e.g. it accurately captures the percentage chance for writers of each gender of progressing to further films), it is weaker in measuring qualitative features, such as budget.

Budget career progression statistics do not take into account the budget for each project relative to the previous credits of any specific writer, but rather what budget band each film is classified under, and whether it was a writer's n^{th} film. As such it is not an exact analogue for career progression, but rather a representative picture of qualitative career progression trends.

Career Trajectories in TV

Career trajectory data for television was produced through the same methodology as for film career trajectories. With programmes and episodes reclassified by previous writer credits (and grouped in career progression bands).

Qualitative career progression by timeslot faces the same problem that career budget progressions faced in film.

Education Data

Data on film education was purchased from UCAS for the *Cut out of the Picture* report. It covers all students who applied for a "film-related course" via the UCAS system between 2007-14. "Film-related courses" were defined using UCAS' own classifications, including all P3 (media studies) and W6 (cinematics and photography).

It was recategorized using multiple search terms, to create 20 categories covering the majority of crew roles and popular course classifications. During this process P3 courses not involving any of the 20 categories created were removed from the education database.

Combined honours courses meant that many courses were included in multiple sub-categories. The average course appeared in 1.47 courses categorisations.

Other Credits

Other credits were included in the initial film and television datasets, but not in the core databases. Instead separate databases were created for all radio credits registered with ALCS, and all credits categorised as "partial" in any film data source.

"Partial" credits were for assistant or associate writers and writers, script coordinators and editors, or dialogue or rewrite credits. This is a less complete dataset than fully credited writers, as such, these findings are more illustrative, particularly as writers often do not progress through such roles at all. Radio provides a much firmer comparison for television, as the datasets are identically collected and categorised.

Polling and The Writer's Journey

Polling was conducted through a questionnaire sent to all television and film writers with full WGGB membership (1,291). "Film" and "television" writers were defined by self-disclosed data. As described by WGGB:

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When members sign-up they indicate the areas in which they are interested, and we have a series of tick-boxes ... throughout their membership, members can change this information through the members area and staff can update it as and when we have contact with members.

The questionnaire was delivered to 98% of this sample of writers, with 223 unique responses.

Due to the low total response rate (17%), polling, when included in this report is illustrative, rather than being evidence by the same justificatory standards as other reported data (i.e. it is never used to prove a finding not independently justified by our primary datasets). However, there are two exceptions to this rule:

- **Writer’s Journey Data** – The more detailed examination of writer’s careers was based on polling questions focussing on the steps writers believe were crucial to their own development, and how they currently receive work. Both produced strong trends – the vast majority of respondents found work through agents and pre-existing industry contacts, and there were few commonalities in early career stages (no single step indicated by more than 25% of respondents).
- **Disproving the validity of inferences towards writer preferences** – Certain potential counterarguments to the importance of the findings in this report, depend on inferences regarding female writers’ preferences. The direct contradiction of these positions with the majority opinions expressed in polling was also noted as they reduce the plausibility of such explanations.

The questionnaire referenced solely personal experience of writers and gauged their opinions regarding the validity of certain descriptions of industry methodologies and outcomes.

Two questions required a more detailed justification on the part of respondents:

- Have you seen any evidence of discrimination during your career as a writer?
- Has discrimination of any form had a negative impact on your own career progression?

Differences in responses to the second question would be expected depending on writer gender. However, both questions received entirely different responses from male and female respondents:

	Evidence		Experience	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
% of Male Respondents	38%	63%	25%	75%
% of Female Respondents	77%	23%	71%	29%

In total, there were 122 male respondents, 77 female respondents and 24 who did not provide gender information. As such the demographics of the sample will have affected the overall averages for these questions.

Unfortunately, the limitations of the polling dataset allow little further processing past this point. This is certainly a significant disagreement about the fundamental nature of the film and television industries. However, without further analysis and more detailed polling it is impossible to clarify the cause of these differing perceptions. Individual detailed responses were requested on both questions. These are published in full in *Appendix Two: Writer Opinions*

For any further detail on methodologies or datasets used in this report please contact alkreager@gmail.com.

Appendix Two: Writer Opinions and Experiences

The following section contains all individual responses to the following polling questions:

- Have you seen any evidence of discrimination during your career as a writer?
- Has discrimination of any form had a negative impact on your own career progression?

These responses have been broadly classified to aid clarity. Occasional sub-edits to individual quotes have been made to improve clarity of individual responses; or where respondents provided information in their answers which would have made the easily identifiable. Finally, a number of longer responses have been broken up into the classifications different sections of the quote applied to.

As with all information gathered through polling, the following section is intended to be illustrative, rather than providing evidence by the same justificatory standards as other reported data.

Types of Discrimination

Respondents referenced discrimination based on a range of protected characteristics. Gender was most common, but this should be expected due to the collection methods of the polling, and other questions included in the questionnaire. However, we were careful not to ask questions relating specifically to evidence and experience of gender discrimination.

Age

Discrimination based on age was a common complaint of respondents. Primarily responses were concerned with a preference for younger writers, but multiple respondents suggested age-based biases also negatively impact young writers when starting out in the industries:

Age-related, not young enough to be the next big thing.

I felt I needed more experience and there were no internships available to people older than 25 years old.

Older writers are passed over.

People don't always like older writers cos they ain't down with the kids innit

Agent once told me, "They liked your pitch but they want a young writer that they can push around"

I assumed I had a job recently but I was then told "we've gone for a YOUNG exciting writer instead". I was told at the BBC writers' festival that as a white middle-aged male I'd be lucky to be considered for any new shows.

New people are routinely overlooked

Race

Discrimination based on race was also frequently indicated by respondents:

Reluctance of drama commissioner to take on black writer for a drama about the black community as they were considered too inexperienced. The job eventually went to a white writer.

The team on soap operas (where I make my living) is pretty much all white.

Spoke to a few people who said i was too old and my race would affect my chances.

Very poor representation of black and ethnic minority writers, again mainly due to lack of available funds at start out stage.

Appendix Two: Writer Opinions and Experiences

We have twenty odd writers and we're all white. Our sister show has a similar demographic. It's wrong. Itv needs to address this urgently via outreach work in Leeds and Manchester, as well as directly approaching BAME members in the guild.

Class

Class-based discrimination is often harder to assess, as protected characteristics are less immediately visible. However, there has been longstanding evidence that class-based preferences are important in hiring decisions, and this was frequently acknowledged in individual polling responses:

While I've had many original series pilots commissioned, I've very rarely got green lights while I have watched white, middle class, middle aged Oxbridge men get green lights in the same genre with inferior work.

Also, the industry is utterly dominated by posh white people, often young, ambitious and inexperienced, but on an upward trajectory.

Oxbridge writers, producers and TV execs are massively more favoured than non Oxbridge equivalents. There are so many Oxbridge educated people in the industry it's laughable. In my experience they are certainly not better qualified for the job.

Having the right school tie is still worth a great deal at the BBC.

Yes, excluded because of being middle class

I have been looked down on for being working class.

Deeply entrenched ageism penalises career breaks. Diversity and inclusion initiatives are youth focussed. Lived experience of writers not even thought to be valuable as against the 'glamour' of youth. New, emerging, next generation - all codewords for privileging youth.

Not as serious as racism or sexism, but because you ask 'of any form' I would say that the fact that I didn't go to university, let alone Oxbridge, has occasionally had a negative impact.

Big drop in working class writers. Discriminated against by increasingly unequal education system, lack of available funds at start out stage.

Relation of Gender, Race and Class

Discrimination based on these protected characteristics is neither distinct nor exclusive.

Respondents suggest multiple unconscious biases appear to be interrelated:

Sexism, ageism and ableist attitudes - the young bulls get commissioner over more experienced older (particularly female) writers - young females are patronised and deal with unwanted sexual attention and 'jokes'

Male dominance, also ageism especially against older women.

I've been discriminated against on the basis of my nationality, gender, age, class and looks!!!!

Yes, gender discrimination mostly but now ageism has joined the party too!

Positive Discrimination

Respondents also frequently cited positive discrimination as a concern, and a negative impact on their careers. Positive discrimination is a legitimate equality of opportunity concern. Mandated equality is unfair in that it produces

This report has argued that the scale and scope of the disparity in the film and television industries, and the lack of alternative solutions, justifies the implementation of targets across UK funding and

Appendix Two: Writer Opinions and Experiences

commissioning bodies. However, it should be acknowledged that such targets do tend to result in positive discrimination, and this can negatively impact individuals' careers:

I wholeheartedly support diversity and equality in all of its forms... BUT... There are so many schemes, job openings, opportunities, and competitions aimed exclusively at BAME, sexual minorities, religious minorities etc. that there is an element of reverse discrimination creeping into some areas of the industry.

I know of one writer who considers sending his material to the BBC 'pointless' as he is white, straight, CofE, able-bodied and his (awesome) material doesn't tick and specific diversity 'boxes'.

People being fast tracked because of race/gender

It is not uncommon on government schemes for BAME/female 'slots' to be informally maintained. in other words informal positive discrimination.

To be honest, as an older white male, I've only ever encountered positive discrimination in favour of younger, female or ethnic minority writers, and I think that's exactly as it should be.

Generally it has been positive discrimination so far, like affirmative action.

As a white male, the drive to recruit BAME writers has limited my opportunities within TV.

Recently females are given priority by producers wanting to appear that they are not being sexist, but sometimes to the detriment of the final writing.

I've lost out on jobs because of positive discrimination... but I'm not complaining about that!! I just know it for a fact because I've been told explicitly that choices were made to favour more diverse applicants. I've had a good career - I really don't mind! It's a competitive industry and we should take the breaks where we can get them - and good luck to everyone!

At a time when diversity was being pushed I was too white and too male. I understood though. Something had to be done.

there are less 'slots' for white male writers on schemes as result of positive discrimination. i do not necessarily disagree with this outcome but many selections are made on base of right ethnic/gender mix and not best talent. In one job I was replaced by a woman on a show where there had previously been no women writers.

It is not a conscious discrimination and I completely understand why it is necessary, but female only positions are an indirect form of discrimination against males like myself.

Writer Experiences

Many respondents also went into greater detail regarding their experiences, and how discriminatory practices actually impact individual writer's careers. These should not be treated as entirely representative of writers' experiences, but rather illustrative of the damaging effects often hidden behind individual data points.

A number of responses specifically noted potentially biased hiring practices that appear to function through reference to experience:

Experiences

Many more men are employed than women. And they are often paid more.

I think it has been easier to get commissions if you were a white male, I hope this is changing.

Writers of colour and female writers are less likely to get their original work commissioned, even if they have more experience.

Writers of less ability are always vaunted ahead of myself despite less credentials and less feasible projects.

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Female writers at all levels are frequently passed over in favour of male writers ... The imbalance is often defended by show runners, script editors and producers claiming they "could not find" any female writers with the requisite qualifications - but they hire plenty of male writers without such qualifications. In general, those with commissioning power - male and female - exhibit a worrying lack of trust in women.

The issue of 'being a risk' often comes up - and it becomes a catch-22, need more under your belt to get this off the ground, can't get it off the ground because...I've been treated as less experienced than my male or older counterparts who are in fact less experienced. My opinions are taken with a heavy pinch of salt in situations in which my experience and knowledge are incredibly valid and relevant. I am spoken down to frequently. As much to do with age as gender. But both are factors.

It has made it hard to win new commissions with producers who don't know my work - I have to work twice as hard to persuade producers that I can be 'trusted' because I don't fit their expectations of what a writer should be/look like. It has (so far) made it absolutely impossible to get show runner jobs/my own series commissions despite having more experience than many.

As someone who has written regularly for the continuing drama shows over the last six years, I know I am less likely to be considered for writers rooms of original series, even if I have more TV writing experience than the other writers ... Production companies are more likely to give playwrights with no TV experience the opportunity to write an episode of an original series, or even their own original series, than a writer who has written for a soap.

I feel that I have been discriminated against because I am thought "too old" for several opportunities. This can be euphemised as having "a little too much experience." BBC Writers' Room did this.

Career Instability

Other respondents focussed on the resulting impact on career stability:

In cases where a writer disagrees with a script editor/ producer, even if the writer is found to be right, they're moved on/ fired. Staff is always protected; the freelance writer almost never.

I believe so - I'm a female comedy writer and while radio comedies such as panel shows employ plenty of women writers, the credits on comparable TV shows are nearly entirely dominated by men. More often than not, they are written by a team of all male writers. It's around the general shape of your career as a woman in TV. I had a certain amount of momentum, then took a step sideways into radio and youth theatre when my son was younger. Felt like I was written off in a way that is not the same for male peers. Different career shape.

Women far less likely to be given second chances. If you struggle with a script (which everyone does from time to time) women are 'not up to it', men are 'talented, but it wasn't the right project for them'. This is still true.

Despite having more broadcast hours/ experience than other writers (male) described as inexperienced and considered a 'risk' for a new project so not employed. Sacked from shows at early drafts for "not being up to scratch", but male counterparts (again with less experience) continuing on.

Female writers given less "chances to fail" and left in position of insecurity, constantly feeling need to prove themselves.

Career progression and the Glass Ceiling

Other respondents focussed on the limitations of access and to career progression.

The 'old boy network is still alive and well. My female writer (and writer/director) friends (mostly in TV) are just as qualified, and seasoned as their male counterparts, yet are constantly passed over in favour of the same five go-to men.

Prestigious commissions are nearly always handed to male writers, even if the subject matter is women's lives and the lead characters are female.

Appendix Two: Writer Opinions and Experiences

A sense of only certain kinds of prime time scripts/ideas being "suitable" for women to write, eg adaptations and period pieces.

Women writers not being hired on many projects. Women writers stereotyped as children's writers. Good projects being taken off the creator/ writer to give it to a "name." In cases where a writer disagrees with a script editor/ producer, even if the writer is found to be right, they're moved on/ fired. Staff is always protected; the freelance writer almost never.

The large number of female writers working in - or attempting to enter - the industry has not been reflected in the majority of writing rooms of which I've been part.

I feel I would have progressed faster and had more prominent productions if I was a man.

Features of the Industries

Questions requesting evidence of discriminatory practices identified a range of restrictions, encompassing qualitative as well as quantitative concern.

Production Type

Respondents frequently suggested similar types of restrictions, often indicating similar biases:

The general idea that women write emotion and men write action is reiterated over and over again.

I've heard phrases like 'we need a bloke writing this' for action and 'emotional writing' seen more as women's work.

I would say that I have experienced gender discrimination - at times directly and at other time subtle prejudices/assumptions - with particular reference to the type of work I should or should not be writing.

Women writers not being hired on many projects. Women writers stereotyped as children's writers. Good projects being taken off the creator/ writer to give it to a "name."

Silly question. Too few women are hired as writers (or any other job, for that matter) as they're not considered by men to be smart enough, or funny enough. Surprise that women are capable of writing action films.

Difficult to pin down but during a period they made programmes for boys so preferred male writers "as girl will compromise and watch boys programmes, boys won't." I would have preferred to writer series that were more gender neutral.

Women not hired for many drama series (Dr Who); comedy writing teams for panel shows (Mock The Week, etc.) The development of these shows reflect that too.

At the beginning of my career, I was advised to write about what I know, but I also wanted to write stories that excited me ... but people weren't ready to risk themselves on such untested material. So I veered towards low-budget British-Asian comedy, which attracted attention primarily, but then Citizen Khan took the Asian slot, and everything I wrote set in that environment was compared to a show that was very unlike what I wrote - other than having brown characters.

I don't know just how much an impact it has but I know I've been pigeon holed as a woman, as a soap writer, as an older woman, as a daytime writer.

BAME writers are often hired via schemes etc but are rarely asked to write anything other than BAME content

As someone who has written regularly for the continuing drama shows over the last six years, I know I am less likely to be considered for writers rooms of original series, even if I have more TV writing experience than the other writers.

Appendix Two: Writer Opinions and Experiences

Continuing Drama Series

A smaller number of respondents notes problems specific to CDS (/LRS).

Male writers awarded more substantial contracts and more episodes in LRS than equally or more-qualified/experienced/talented female writers. Noticeable lack of diversity in writing teams.

There are far more female writers on the continuing drama series I work on but the male writers get a higher percentage of the storylining work.

The team on soap operas (where I make my living) is pretty much all white.

I write regularly for [BBC CDS Programme] and know that more men are hired as core writers than women

In continuing drama I've seen a very unequal split of episodes between written by male/ female writers; female writers almost never being offered the larger episodes including stunts/ big reveals/ Christmas; story meetings and conferences with fewer female writers than male invited.

Agents

As noted in Section 4.1, there are a number of potential explanations we were not able to assess through the datasets available. One of these is the impact of bias amongst agents. A number of respondents indicated concerns in this area:

Discrimination from Agents.

"I have seen people taken less seriously by a prospective agent because of age (both ""too young"" and ""too old""), gender and ethnicity.

I think that I may have less chance of getting an agent because I am older, as well as a woman.

On Screen

Among the most commonly voiced concerns, were those relating screenwriting and script development to the content available to audiences:

Been asked to justify a character being non-white, and justify a character not being straight. Like had to make a dramatic reason in order to veer away from straight/white.

On a small unpaid production I had opposition when I wanted to make the lead character female.

I was once told I couldn't have a black character in an episode because the (Italian) company I was working for didn't believe they could "sell" a show with black leading characters to South America and other world markets.

A female writer-performer who had a 15 min pilot was told it was either her pilot or another female comedy pilot that would go to series because the BBC couldn't commission two female led comedy series. (Mitchell & Webb and Armstrong & Miller were on at the same time, notice.) "

I understand it is not my place to make casting suggestions, but it always feels extremely difficult to convince producers to consider POC for key roles.

Being told to reduce the number of ethnic minority characters (in favour of white characters) as otherwise it would "look too much like a Benetton advert."

Every time I suggest a female character do something interesting and nasty, being told the audience won't accept it. Massive censoring of portrayal of female behaviour, massive perpetuating of negative stereotypes.

Prominent black British actor turned down for TV series because 'audience not ready for black lead' (1990s)"

A bbc commissioning editor male said no one is interested in seeing a series about middle age women .

Appendix Two: Writer Opinions and Experiences

"At the beginning of my career, I was advised to write about what I know, but I also wanted to write stories that excited me. So I wrote stories about identity crises, but set my stories in Ancient Mesopotamia or the other side of the universe, but people weren't ready to risk themselves on such untested material. So I veered towards low-budget British-Asian comedy, which attracted attention primarily, but then Citizen Khan took the Asian slot, and everything I wrote set in that environment was compared to a show that was very unlike what I wrote - other than having brown characters

I pitched a film project where the idea was liked but they wanted another writer to write it. The script was predominantly about the black experience. The person they wanted to write it was white. The writer themselves said they would present it as "their view" which itself would go against the fabric of the screenplay.

It made me question whether my urge to tell the stories regarding sexuality would mean if i ever got something made/commissioned. A few years ago when working in Tv i was told that if i wanted to write stories with lesbian characters were in it to go somewhere else.

When I have spoken up about female characters being created and written in a particular way (only useful as a sexual accessory for the male characters, passive and 'sidelined' rather than given POV and agency in a story) - I've been labelled as 'politically correct' (which I think is meaningless in this context) and told I was trying to make the drama 'feminist'. Which apparently makes it boring and prudish. This from another male writer in storylining.

Explanations and Unconscious Bias

A range of responses related directly to a number of the explanations provided by this report. Again, the justification of these explanations is entirely separate to the content of these responses, but they provide a more intuitive way to understand their implications:

Personal Preference

Personal preference was rarely noted, but given those whose careers are most influence by personal preference are unlikely to be included in the sample, this is perhaps unsurprising.

I think the issue is at the training end - it's about who enters the profession to start with. My evidence? Take a look at competitions that are judged blind. eg the Bruntwood Stage writing competition at the Royal Exchange. The shortlist is predominantly young white men. And predominantly middle class ones at that. Competitions where the ID of the writers is known get more female and BME finalists because producers/directors are keen to foster diversity. So this tells us that it's about who submits, who enters etc. There may or may not be discrimination in places but the problem of lack of diversity in the output will only be solved when more diverse people enter the profession.

Women as a whole have been discriminated against historically, and therefore individual women feel the effects of this legacy (for instance, fewer female producers and development executives who are there to choose/develop female-driven stories, etc.)

Individual Contacts

More common were concerns related to the importance of individual contacts for career progression:

On series tv, it's very much about who the series producer likes, you can find yourself sidelined even when you've been writing for a show many years if producers change.

I was the only woman on an ensemble feature. The way my element (short film) of the feature was treated was completely different. The way it was script edited by a number of the other (Male) writers was really harsh, in comparison to how they script edited each others projects. On the shoot we were also given a smaller budget, and defective equipment.

Appendix Two: Writer Opinions and Experiences

Without an Agent to get one into meetings, there is NO career progression.

I feel it is hard to be taken seriously unless you are all singing and dancing, and know the right people and are pushy enough to make them notice you (rather than your work)

only in the sense of see above, that when I've come into the right door with the right champion a thing tends to have worked or had a good hearing, fairly much regardless of quality assuming some originality and competence, and when I've come through the wrong door with the wrong champion it hasn't had a snowball's regardless of quality/competence (or not, nobody's perfect).

It's very hard to get your foot in the door. You can't get an agent or a job without experience but you can't get experience without an agent or job

Have been told by persons in the industry that having a small agent based outside London would harm career prospects.

Male writers drinking in the bar after meetings and making decisions, while the women went home to deal with kids, families etc. Also meant that the male writers got opportunities to develop relationships with the actors and executives (on a soap opera) which helped their future careers. I can name many male writers who now have their own production companies. Not one of the women I worked with on the soap has a production company. (I have just started one and I am 68!!) I can name many male writers who have well known actors and execs as godparents to their kids, best men at their weddings etc - I can't name one woman in the same position.

Unconscious Bias

These concerns also often directly referenced instances of unconscious bias.

I think it is very hidden and often I am the only woman at a writers meeting. I think the producers always think of male writers first.

I have been a lead writer and in many writing teams, and I have been present at many discussions on hiring writers, and I have never heard of a writer turned down because of their race or gender.

Producers hiring friends irrespective of experience or creative input.

I've had script editors say ""one of the good things about your writing is that I don't know you're a woman"

Male commissioners sometimes struggle to understand that female stories may need to invent/follow their own rules, not the ones laid down as "standard". The old rules may bias towards masculine stories and characters. This discrimination at story level is deeply buried and unrecognized, but present even in impeccably liberal execs, and strong particularly in film, I think.

A number of respondents used different terminology to capture the essence of unconscious bias, distinguishing between the insider and the outsider to the UK film industry:

'Insider' preferences; preferences for born and bred in UK

Non-British accented English and education overseas relegated me to outsider status despite British nationality

Assumptions based on my working class background] seem like small things - but the accumulation of these, and many other 'indicators', create a strong impression that one is considered an 'outsider', not 'one of us' - like a benevolent barbarian. Added to a sense that the industry is fractured along class-lines and London-centric (though Manchester is very much a second hub now), it is rather difficult not to feel outside of the tent.

Appendix Two: Writer Opinions and Experiences

Lack of Accountability

Other respondents noted the importance of the lack of accountability that surrounds hiring decisions:

Quite possibly but if I have been discriminated against for a commission, I may not even know!

You never really get a reason for why you might be turned down for a job, so this is hard to answer one way or the other.

Hidden (gendered) discrimination is hard to combat though.

Impossible to determine for certain, of course, but I've been rewritten by a writer chosen, I think, for other reasons than that writer's ability and track record.

I'll say "No" because I don't have proof. That said, it's so insidious, it's highly likely I have been.

To be honest, it's impossible to know. And I speak as a director as well as a writer. But the general idea is the same, it's as though, as a woman, your ideas (scripts) aren't quite in the same league.

I ticked yes because this is a question I can't ever know the answer too and that's part of the problem - it's behind closed doors

Disconnect

Finally, at a number of stages in this report we have suggested there may be a disconnect between the way industry bodies talk about diversity and the actions they are taking; and the actual steps followed by these same organisations. Similar, concerns were voiced by a number of respondents:

I've been told that [a] story isn't British enough to be picked up here...Discrimination has been subtle, but there's always been the sense of "We have our 'brown' project covered.

I have spoken to and seen female filmmakers dismissed for certain work, as well as those with disability, or work around disability not recognised or supported in a way often talked about, or confessed to be.

I've been the only woman in a room full of men, where my role appears to be to reassure the men that they aren't sexists. I am forced into a position where I have to do all the fighting for proper female characters, am often shouted down or bullied into silence. Then forced to write these terrible characters while the men pat themselves on the back for 'hiring a female episode writer.'

Where to start! Recently a writer of colour was discriminated against despite the fact they were hired via a diversity scheme.

Film Culture and the Vicious Cycle

Individual responses to polling were most informative in elucidating the way unconscious biases can affect broader treatment of minority or female writers. Respondents also often related such experience to broader culture in film and the way it appears to create a vicious cycle.

Treatment of Writers

There is a prevailing view that black screenwriters actually don't exist and that a new generation must be recruited and "developed" by producers. Even biographical/firsthand stories are commonly told by white writers interpreting black lives, in ways unthinkable in reverse. People like a script, invite you in and when they have recovered from the sight of you, s-p-e-a-k s-l-o-w-l-y, presumably so you can keep up. Then you never hear from them again.

I feel I am often overlooked in meetings or spoken down to because I am female. I often feel that my career isn't nurtured in the same way. Women are expected to turn up as the finished product whereas men are allowed chances to fail. Projects of mine that have been less successful have had direct impacts on my employment whereas my male counterparts do not face the same scrutiny.

Appendix Two: Writer Opinions and Experiences

As a woman writer, I know I have been called 'difficult' for behaviour which would simply not be an issue for a male writer (eg being assertive in meetings, defending my decisions and preferences, leading discussions rather than taking back seat or a 'handmaid' role). I have seen other women writers judged in the same way.

I feel less trusted than my male peers and feel i have to work twice as hard to be allowed free reign. My work has been rejected because , i feel , there is only allowed to be a certain number of female projects at any one time. Projects by women are compared to each other the way projects by men are not. I have disguised and hidden my private life- eg the fact I have children to the extent where people are surprised I have kids. Men do not feel they have to do this. I have never once cited childcare as a reason not to meet/ deliver. I do not think men think twice about this.

I have been told privately that I have not been commissioned to write episodes of series because I am too "bolshy" and "difficult". I don't believe that an opinionated man would receive the same treatment.

In the past I took a film production course because I was interested in camera/directing, but was literally elbowed out of the way by the men students. I never got near a camera. I turned to writing because nobody could stop me doing that. It remains to be seen whether I can sell my scripts.

Impossible to determine for certain, of course, but I've been rewritten by a writer chosen, I think, for other reasons than that writer's ability and track record.

Being talked over is a common occurrence when I'm the only woman in a writers' room.

Pretty sure that as a woman I am considered to not be as 'serious' and 'capable' as my male counterparts. When I went back to one show after having kids they offered me less money per script than they had been offering me pre-kids; in the meantime I had co-created a successful BBC series so it wasn't lack of experience... I have been offered ludicrously low fees for scripts that I suspect wouldn't have been offered to a man for the same work. But it's very hard to prove.

Film Culture

I have seen women writers discussed in terms of being 'difficult' in a way that male writers are not (this is when I was working as a script editor and as a writer). I have seen women writers left off shortlists for shows and projects as they are not seen by the execs as realistic candidates for 'big' state of the nation type stories (this is seen as being more of a male writers' territory). I've heard black writers dismissed for 'not getting' how mainstream telly is written, when I think those writers were actually writing from a different perspective, and with a different voice. I think a key area of discrimination against certain writers is the question of how well they will fit into a team. 'Boysy' producers and execs like to hire 'boysy' writers (up for a laugh and a drink, no one has to 'watch what they say'). Women aren't seen as a good fit for a show unless they play along with as one of the lads. Which among other things means not making a fuss about stereotypical or highly sexualised female characters, and putting up with sexist 'banter' ... This kind of discrimination is very hard to pin down because it all comes under the heading of being 'a good fit' with the existing team. But it is a way of excluding certain groups of people.

I've seen boy's clubs picking writers that will be easy to work with due to a perceived lack of 'drama'. I've experienced women being picked over men because of a feminist agenda (although given the inequality this didn't really bother me).

Where do I start? Mediocre, confident men promoted over women multiple times. Tall men with authoritative manner getting commissions over less confident woman. Being told that as a woman, I would put noses out of joint if I was hired in BBC Comedy. Women being told they are not funny if they object to sexist chat in writers' rooms. Being told I had 'no sense of drama' if I objected to yet another rape storyline. Being shamed for putting on weight whilst pregnant and eating a lot. Having to listen to endless comments on the attractiveness of actresses. Being told we can't have black leads. Being told I was worthy if I tried to argue against storylines about made up racism complaints/ rape complaints.

Appendix Two: Writer Opinions and Experiences

Nothing specific but I do feel as a female writer I'm not always listened to. As I write with men I find they are often treated subtly differently in meetings.

You can see the affinity of some producers to the confidence/arrogance of enthusiastic male writers, esp young men - even though on reflection none of it was viable or realistic or even engaging. Much more about presentation than substance.

I am frequently the only women in whatever writers room I happen to be working in. It's clear to me that women are being given fewer opportunities. Then, when they get a gig, the ""boysy"" atmosphere is often toxic.

I've experienced sexist language and "jokes" both generally at work and specifically towards me. This is demeaning to me and serves to diminish my contribution.

Women are not treated like men, as a rule.

See above--there are many fewer female producers, which affects the general marketplace of trying to find producers for female-driven stories.

I have been told in public that I and another female writer "only got the job because we were women", by a man who was much less qualified than either of us when he was appointed to his own role. I've been told that we need to add male writers to the team to bring "a strong male energy". I've been subjected to bullying and sexist "banter" in story lining meetings time and time again. After many such experiences, one loses heart and stops knocking on the doors of the many boys' clubs in the industry.

Rarely taken seriously. I re-wrote two scripts for an award winning Hollywood Director/Writer who used everything I gave him and then refused to pay me or give me credit for the work. That never would have happened to a man.

I have had prima facie instances of bias, such as being mysteriously let go, then later finding someone - even someone junior to me - hasn't liked me. More common are issues around expectations of my abilities and likely performance if commissioned being based on my origins and not on an understanding of my work. It's painful how often it becomes clear that the nuances of my work, and that of others I know, are misunderstood. Discussing my work, I often feel as though I have to teach a seminar in who "we" are before others can really approach the piece. Embarrassingly daft prejudices are commonplace. You waste a great deal of time and effort because no one around understands you.

More Serious Abuses of Power

This occasionally included even more egregious abuses of power:

I've seen producers using their role to seduce women

Bullying of female script editor by producer until she was in tears. Bullying of me by same producer.

I have been told to my face that I was a diversity hire (as a female presence in the room) and was only to speak when spoken to.

I have experienced many unwanted advances but I don't know for sure if these have negatively affected my career. The frequency with which these typically occur does not feel different from my time in advertising, perhaps indicating a society-wide problem.

Appendix Two: Writer Opinions and Experiences

Vicious Cycle

A preponderance of male writers. Those responsible for commissioning were usually men and commissioned men.

I think the industry is still predominantly white male dominated. I think commissioning has shrunk to people falling back on the same writers time and time again.

At every stage of my career, I have watched men of both lesser and greater ability get the attention most needed, get the training and opportunities and ultimately the job. Depressingly, many of the decision makers have been women.

The discrimination I've witnessed most is principally to do with (only relatively corrupt) systems of feudal patronage, which in my experience are more prevalent in TV than film

I believe myself and my work have been judged more harshly than other members of writing teams because I am not part of the boys club. I have been given less access to producers and lead writers than men I've worked with.

Not being London-based, and having a non middle-class accent definitely limits opportunities, because favoured sons and daughters (white middle class people who live in London) are given the chances, because they are... 'one of us'.

Reluctance of drama commissioner to take on black writer for a drama about the black community as they were considered too inexperienced. The job eventually went to a white writer.

Commissioners always public school educated and often out of touch with real world.

Discrimination in the film industry led to my losing my agent and losing confidence to go out there and try for a new agent/ commissions for a while.

I fully support positive action, but because all commissioners are white they are often reluctant to commission white writers for certain stories because they are nervous of being accused of a lack of Authenticity. Understandable, but frustrating. The answer is more non-white people in positions of power, and more non white writers, but not a ban on white writers writing stories about diverse communities.

Appendix Three: Additional Data

Freedom of Information Requests

All data received from FOI requests and other data requests are published here, without any additional editing. The datasets tend to be too small to make significant inferences from the results, however, it does provide a good indication of the detail and availability of data diversity for the UK Screen Agencies.

Northern Irish Screen

Northern Irish Screen data is collected under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, and is extremely comprehensive. The data published over that period covers 2010-17 in detail, with further data for 2004-2010. The same data was provided in response to FOI requests, but is too extensive to be usefully repeated here in full. [However, the data is also made available to the broader public as part of Northern Irish Screen's commitment to Section 75.](#)

Ffilm Cymru

Ffilm Cymru provided full data, covering all funding schemes since 2013, including data on applications as well as projects funded for most schemes.

Summary (2013-2018)						
Development Summary	No of apps	Male writers	Male %	Female writers	Female %	Not specified
Applications	350	245	70%	96	27%	12
Funded	75	58	77%	22	29%	
Production Summary	No of apps	Male writers	Male %	Female writers	Female %	Not specified
Applications	104	73	70%	30	29%	1
Funded	36	28	78%	9	25%	
By Year (2013-2018)						
Applications – Development	No of apps	Male writers	Male %	Female writers	Female %	Not specified
2017/2018	63	37	59%	26	41%	n/a
2016/2017	69	53	77%	19	28%	n/a
2015/2016	86	65	76%	18	21%	3
2014/2015	82	58	71%	20	24%	4
2013/2014	50	32	64%	13	26%	5
Applications – Production	No of apps	Male writers	Male %	Female writers	Female %	Not specified
2017/2018	26	18	69%	8	31%	n/a
2016/2017	11	6	55%	5	45%	n/a
2015/2016	11	9	82%	2	18%	n/a
2014/2015	13	11	85%	2	15%	n/a
2013/2014	43	29	69%	13	31%	1

Appendix Three: Additional Data

Horizons Stats 2014 - present:

44 Horizons Projects funded with a Writer attached = 45% with a Female Writer, 55% Male Writer
16 Horizons Projects funded with a Director attached = 68.75% Female Directors, 31.25% Male Director

Beacons, 16 Projects funded 2015 - 2016

Female Writers: 37.5%

Male Writers: 62.5%

Female Writers: 37.5%

Male Directors: 62.5%

Beacons 2016-17 application data by gender (84 applications received).

Role BEACONS 16/17	No. of responses	Female	%	Male	%	Prefer not to say
Writer	28	14	50.00%	14	50.00%	0.00%
Writer/Director	46	8	17.39%	38	82.61%	0.00%
Writer/Producer	2	1	50.00%	1	50.00%	0.00%
Writer/Producer/Director	9	3	33.33%	6	66.67%	0.00%
Director	20	6	30.00%	14	70.00%	0.00%

[Creative England](#)

Creative England provided top level statistics for film funding schemes since 2014.

Applicant Writers

806 Female

1,413 Male

1 Other

178 Prefer not to say

Awarded Writers

81 Female

131 Male

15 Prefer not to say

Awarded all other talent

327 Female

351 Male

1 Transgender – Male to Female

213 Prefer not to say

Appendix Three: Additional Data

Film London

Film London provided a range of data on their film funding schemes: London Calling, FLAMIN Production, FLAMIN Fellowship and Microwave.

London Calling:

year	% of F Applicants	# of Shorts	Overall F %	# of Writers	# of F Writers	# of M Writers
2017	48%	21	46% F	21	8 (+1 non binary) 43%	12
2016	45%	20	59% F	23	13 57%	10
2015	39%	21	42% F	22	6 27%	16

year	# of Directors	# of F Directors	# of M Directors	# of Producers	# of F Producers	# of M Producers
2017	21	9 43%	12	25	13 52%	12
2016	20	10 50%	10	25	17 68%	8
2015	24	8 33%	16	31	18 58%	13

Film London Microwave

- Round 1 in 2015: 5 women out of 12
- Round 2 in 2016: 5 women out of 12
- Round 3 in 2017: 7 women out of 12

FLAMIN Production

year	n. of applicant	Males	Females	Other	Prefer not to say	Awardees	Males	Females	Other	Prefer not to say
2014	92	37	50	0	5	3	0	3	0	0
2015	77	27	47	0	3	3	1	1	0	1
2016	80	31	42	2	2	2	1	1	0	0

FLAMIN Fellowship

year	n. of applicant	Males	Females	Non binary	Prefer not to say
2017	167	67	87	5	8

Appendix Three: Additional Data

BFI

The BFI began collecting diversity data on applications forms in late 2013. They provided top-level data for all funding schemes from 2014-2017.

Year	Funding Type	Director	Producer	Writer
2014-15	Production	12%	12%	12%
	Development	11%	24%	14%
2015-16	Production	44%	50%	44%
	Development	27%	52%	37%
2016-17	Production	14%	43%	14%
	Development	45%	48%	44%
Apr 17 – Dec 17	Production	54%	69%	62%
	Development	43%	50%	50%

Creative Scotland

The original FOI request submitted to Creative Scotland was acknowledged promptly and properly, and we provided clarification of some elements of the request. The request was then referred to their Screen Team, as the data requested referred specifically to film projects. However, despite further contact with the screen team, and multiple assurances data would be provided, it was never forthcoming.

It should however be noted that outside of this oversight Creative Scotland is taking steps to tackle inequality of opportunity and tackle discrimination. Their first comprehensive [Review of Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion with Scotland's Screen Sector](#) was published January 2017. And we were assured further data releases will follow this year.

It remains frustrating that this information was not made available on request to researchers working to support Creative Scotland's stated aims on diversity. This is data that should be widely available, and easily accessible. Given requests submitted to Creative Scotland were identical to those submitted and responded to by the other screen agencies, we have little reason to believe the request was particularly difficult or time-consuming for Creative Scotland.

Other Data

A number of datasets and findings were excluded from the main report. Primarily these additions were excluded based on constraints on space, whilst findings lacking statistical significance are excluded entirely. Also included in this section is the limited data provided by film schools in response to data requests.

Film Schools

Speculative data requests were sent to the majority of major UK film schools. There is no obligation for institutions to share this data, so it is unsurprising that few institutions provided any data on student and applicant gender.

The NFTS did however provide data on the ratio of students on their screenwriting MA over the last six years:

2017 – 50% female
2016 – 58.3% female
2015 – 60% female

Appendix Three: Additional Data

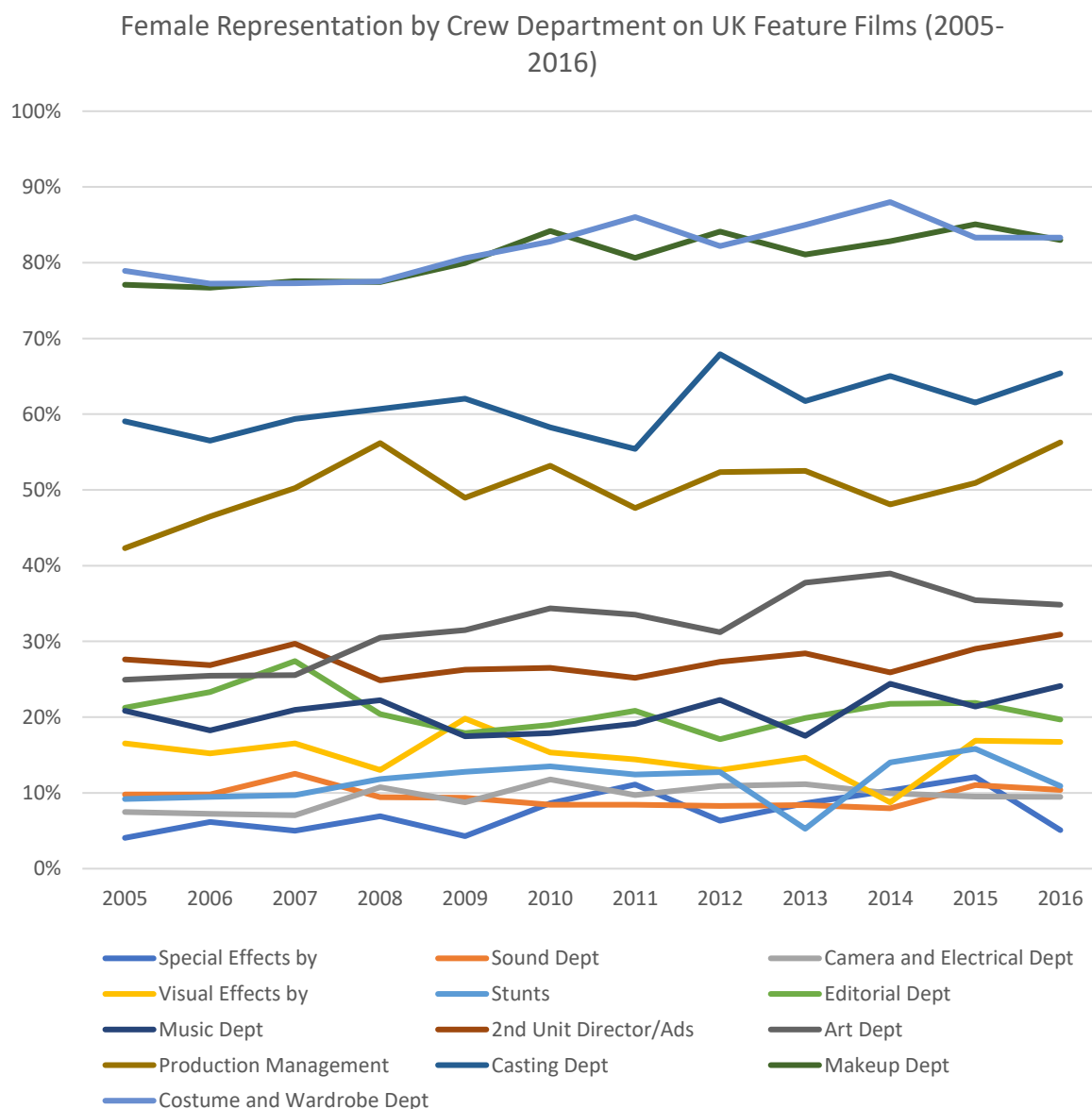
2014 – 50% female
 2013 – 22% female
 2012 – 55.5% female

London Film Academy provided data on the ratios for their 2017 intake for their Screenwriting MA (2 male, 3 female). No other film schools provided data of any form.

Additional Data

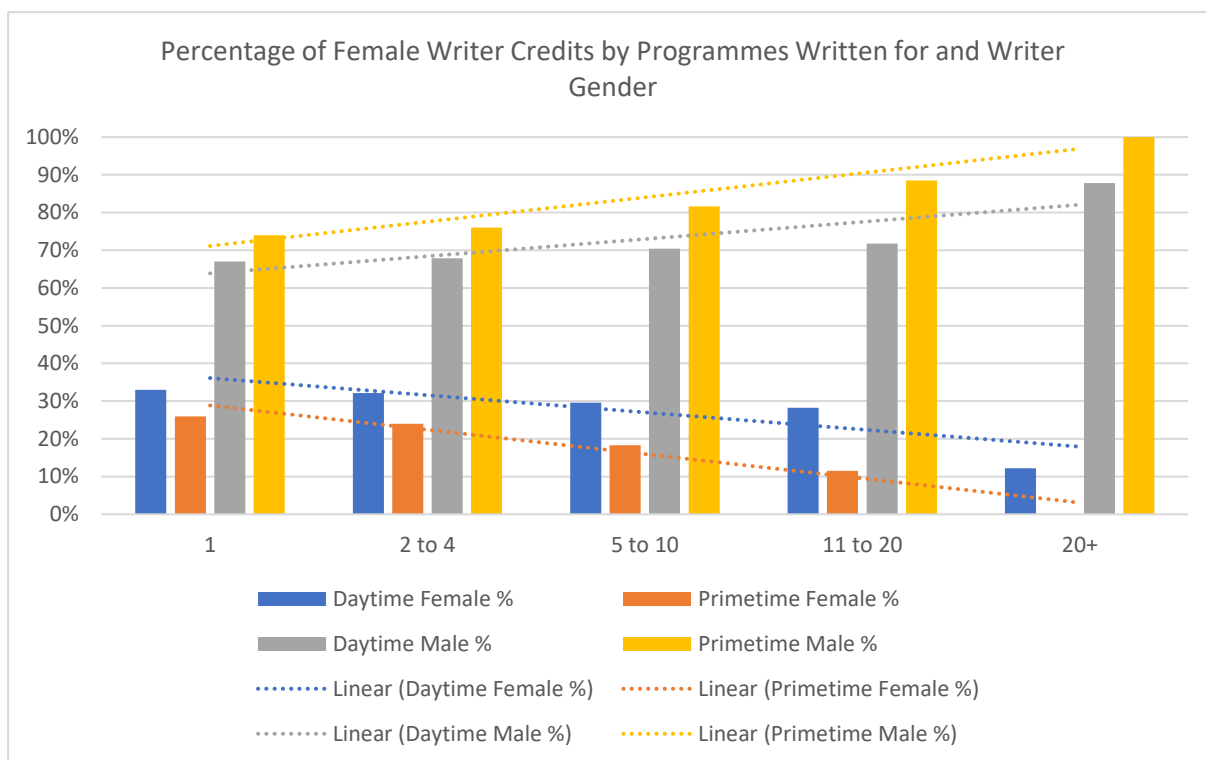
A number of larger graphs were replaced with simplified findings, these decisions are indicated throughout the text. This section consists of those graphs providing clarification of a number of data points throughout this report.

Section 1.3d noted limited increases in female representation among crew departments. The graph below displays female representation for each crew department, over time. It demonstrates that, although the vast majority of departments have had modest increases in the percentage of female employees over the last decade, this trend is often limited.

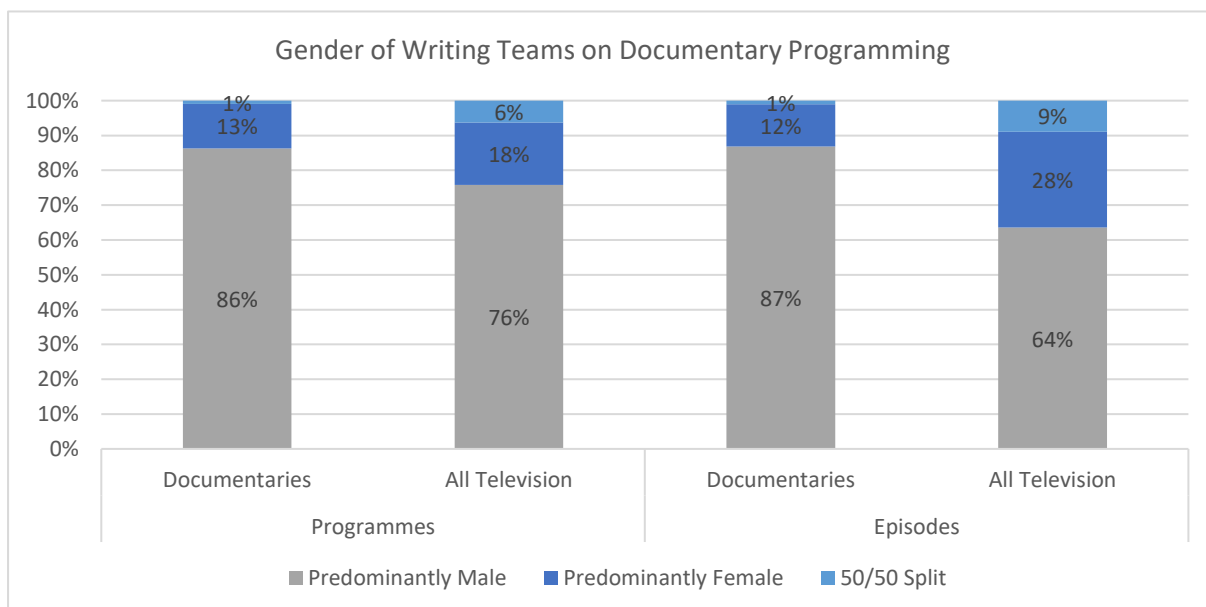


Appendix Three: Additional Data

The following graph provides a clarification of the differing relative trajectories of male and female writers in television.



Data on documentary TV programmes poses a number of issues, related to limited ALCS data on documentary programmes. Including one-off documentaries documentary representation



Our belief, given the lack of correlation both with other datasets in the TV database, and with film data on documentaries, that this outlier is more likely to be a product of data limitations than an important insight into documentary television production. However, omitting the data entirely was considered equally inadvisable.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we'd like to thank everyone who supported the research and contributed both time and thought to improving this report, in any way at all. Too many individuals to count have made this report more detailed and comprehensive than we could otherwise have hoped, and we appreciate every idea, note and correction you provided.

A few specific acknowledgements should also be made:

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Finally, to all the writers who responded to our questionnaires, your opinions, experiences and, above all else, honesty, was hugely appreciated. And we are equally appreciative of all the institutions, and those working for them, who provided further data, and exhibited a desire to improve our collective understanding of these issues, when often the easier and safer option was made all too easy by the systems currently in place.

This report has focussed on industry structures and trends, but the willingness of the support and hard-work we have consistently received is a powerful reminder that, although systemic problems lie at the heart of the issue, ultimately these industries will be improved by the collective actions of those people who care enough to go out of their way to make them better.

Alexis Kreager
Director, Laghima Ltd.

