

CUT OUT OF THE PICTURE

A study of gender inequality amongst film directors in
the UK film industry

By Stephen Follows and Alexis Kreager,
with Eleanor Gomes

Commissioned by Directors UK

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1. Welcome

1.1 Introduction from the authors

Over the last decade there has been growing awareness and discussion of the limited representation of women in the film industry. Our own research into the gender of UK and Hollywood film crews in 2014 found women made up only 26% of crew members in the UK and just 23% in the US, with female directors particularly poorly represented.

However, despite the increasing awareness of this disparity, there had not been a comprehensive study into the problem or its root causes.

For this reason, we are extremely grateful to Directors UK, who commissioned us to look at the situation in far more detail; to uncover the reasons behind the disparity between men and women in the film industry, and to provide suggestions as to how we may start to redress the imbalance.

With Directors UK's support, this report provides the most comprehensive analysis of gender inequality in the UK film industry to date, studying over 2,500 films across the last decade.

We interviewed a wide range of individuals including directors, producers, writers, cinema-goers, executives at public funding bodies, and other experts. We would like to thank all those who have contributed to the project and its findings and supported the research, in particular, Eleanor Gomes, who assisted in the research, analysis and interview process.

We found not only that the scale and scope of the disparity is greater than has been widely acknowledged, but also that the problem is deeply entrenched within the structure of the industry, with little meaningful trend towards improvement in the representation of women, particularly in key roles, such as director.

We believe that this report breaks new ground in furthering the industry's understanding of gender inequality, by elucidating the systemic issues within the industry which create and protect this disparity and by providing actionable solutions with which the industry can begin to tackle this problem practically.

Our hope is that these findings and recommendations not only provoke a greater discussion and recognition of the issue of gender inequality, but also a united and concerted effort by the industry to resolve it, particularly from those individuals and institutions with influence. Because, above all else, the disparity between male and female directors and between men and women in the film industry more generally, is unfair, outdated and damaging to the industry as a whole.



Stephen Follows



Alexis Kreager

1.2 Foreword – Beryl Richards, Directors UK

The representation of women directors in the film industry has been the subject of much recent debate, and the virtual absence of women directors in major awards and festivals each year is still shocking.

As Chair of Directors UK and of Directors UK's Gender Equality Group, I know first-hand the concerns and frustration from many of our women directors at the lack of opportunities to progress a career in film. But talking about it isn't enough. We want to be able to *do* something about it.

We need a better understanding of exactly what is going on. To succeed in making a feature film, you need enormous determination, but how much more difficult is it for women? At what point in a woman's directing career does this happen? How great is the gender imbalance? Are women less likely to direct particular genres – or does it just appear that way? Only with better understanding of the true situation for women directors can we begin to change it.

The comprehensive study by Stephen Follows and his team gives insight and understanding into the reality facing women film directors. In 2016 it simply cannot be acceptable that just 13.6% of UK films are directed by women. It's time for this to change.

Beryl Richards

Director and Chair of Directors UK and the Directors UK Gender Equality Group

1.3 About Directors UK

Directors UK is the single voice of British screen directors representing the creative, economic and contractual interests of over 6,000 members – the overwhelming majority of working film and television directors in the UK.

Directors UK campaigns for the rights, working conditions and status of directors in the industry and works closely with fellow organisations in the UK, Europe and around the world to represent directors' rights and concerns.

It also promotes excellence in the craft of direction both nationally and internationally and champions change to the current landscape to create an equal opportunity industry for all.

For more information please visit: www.directors.uk.com

1.4 About the authors

Stephen Follows

Stephen is a writer, producer, film industry expert and runs a production company in Ealing Studios, London. He publishes new film industry research projects every week at www.stephenfollows.com

Stephen is an established data researcher in the film industry whose work has been featured in the New York Times, The Times, The Telegraph, The Guardian, The Daily Mail, The Mirror, The Evening Standard, Newsweek, The New Statesman, AV Club and Indiewire. He acted as an industry consultant and guest on the BBC Radio 4 series The Business of Film, which topped the iTunes podcast chart and he has consulted for a wide variety of clients, including the Smithsonian Museum in Washington.

Stephen has taught at major film schools, normal business schools and minor primary schools. His lessons have ranged from established topics such as Scriptwriting, Producing, Online Video and the Film Business to more adventurous topics such as Measuring the Unmeasurable, Advanced Creative Thinking and the Psychology of Film Producing. He has taught at the National Film and Television School (NFTS), the Met Film School, Filmbase, and on behalf of the BFI, the BBC and the British Council. He was recently appointed as chairman of the board of the Central Film School.

Stephen has produced over 100 short films and two features. He has produced corporate videos for a wide variety of clients ranging from computer game giants (Bethesda), technology giants (Nokia Siemens Networks) to sporting giants (Jonny Wilkinson) but sadly no actual giants. He's shot people in love, in the air, on the beach and on fire (although not at the same time) across over a dozen different countries in locations ranging from the Circle Line to the Arctic Circle.

Stephen's scriptwriting has won Virgin Media Shorts, the Reed Film Competition and IVCA awards and been watched by over 30 million people.

Alexis Kreager

Alexis is a researcher and writer, working primarily within the film industry. He graduated from Jesus College, Cambridge with a degree in philosophy, specialising in formal logic and statistical analysis; metaphysics and epistemology; and political philosophy.

Cambridge is the birthplace of modern analytic philosophy, from Anscombe to Wittgenstein, and this rich history provided an unrivalled grounding in both the technical craft of research and in logical interpretation, evaluation and analysis based on empirical data. These skills have since been developed through work for major charities and causes; and on large, data lead reports.

Alexis has managed research on projects for Age UK, the Natural History Museum, Compassion in World Farming and PETA. Examining topics as diverse as the psychology of decision making; the morality of the leather trade; the history of English military fortifications; and the destruction of coral reefs.

A desire to work in greater detail, on larger, more complicated issues lead to long-form research work for the Central Film School and Directors UK. These in depth, data driven reports covered political, economic and social issues within the film industry, providing analysis and recommendations.

Alexis has also worked as a writer for multiple, award winning film and communications companies. Utilising the intersection of creative and research based skills to craft compelling and effective narratives which convey ideas, invoke desired responses and provoke specific actions.

2. Executive Summary

Introduction

The issue of female underrepresentation in the film industry has been discussed with growing regularity over the last decade. Major industry events have come under fire and major industry figures have voiced their concerns. This increasing pressure has begun to focus attention on the discrimination women face in film.

However, there has been a dearth of comprehensive data and analysis to demonstrate the actual nature and extent of the problems facing women in the film industry. This report endeavours to provide this information, along with a more nuanced set of explanations of its causes.

Our findings show the scale and breadth of these issues are far greater than has often been acknowledged, particularly in respect to female directors. Its causes are also more complex and deep-seated than is usually suggested.

We hope that this clearer picture of the issues and their antecedents will aid the efforts to redress this imbalance, and have offered a number of solutions based upon them to this end.

Women are poorly represented within directors of UK films

We studied a total 2,591 films released between 2005 and 2014, inclusive. In that ten-year period, **just 13.6% of working film directors were women.**

Perhaps more problematically, **there has not been any meaningful improvement in the representation of female directors** in our studied period. In 2005, 11.3% of UK films had a female director but by 2014 this had only increased to 11.9%.

Female directors are also disadvantaged in their career progression and the opportunities they receive even after directing their first film. On average, **female directors will direct fewer films in their career and are less likely to receive a second, third or fourth directing gig.** Furthermore, as budgets rise, fewer female directors are hired and those that are hired are disproportionately limited to certain genres.

Female representation is also poor in many other parts of the UK film industry

Data on the crews of the films we studied revealed that the disparity between men and women, although most pronounced for directors, is evident throughout the industry. **We identified nine key creative roles on film productions. Of these only two had greater than 50% female representation** with the rest ranging between 6% and 31%. Similarly, only casting, make-up, and costume departments have a majority of female crew, meaning of the seventeen crew credits we studied, fourteen had fewer women than men.

However, the scale of the disparity between men and women in crews was not as stark as that between key creatives, which in turn was not as severe as that between male and female directors. The general trend is for the percentage of women in a given role to broadly be dependent on the seniority of that role. In other words, **the more senior a role, the less chance it is held by a woman, and, by extension, the less chance a woman has of being hired for it.**

Female representation in key creative roles and among film crews, like the percentage of female directors, has also stagnated across the last decade. **Across the whole of the industry there is no meaningful trend towards greater representation of women or any real improvement in their career prospects.**

Over a fifth of UK films receive some form of public funding (development and/or production), and we found that those films had a higher representation of women amongst directors. However, the overall

average hides a clear decline in the support of female directors. **In 2007, 32.9% of films with UK-based public funding had a woman director, but by 2014 that had dropped to just 17.0%.**

We also discovered that **the majority of UK film public bodies do not adequately track the gender of applicants and awardees.**

The route to becoming a film director in the UK

Based on responses to our survey of working directors we outlined the various routes directors take in their career. This illustrated the increasing difficulty women have in progressing through the industry and more clearly located where inequality emerges. **UK film students, like the UK population as a whole, are broadly 50% male and 50% female. Similarly, entrants to the film industry are 49% female.**

Yet as they begin to progress through their careers and gain the credibility required to launch a directing career the disparity begins to emerge. As we've seen, women are already underrepresented in the majority of film crew departments and the difference between male and female representation increases as we progress to key creative roles. Female directors face similar issues in other important stages of their career development: **just 27.2% of British short film directors and 14% of drama television directors are female.** And, as noted, once they become directors they struggle to progress to larger budgets (16.1% female directors on low-budget films compared to 3.3% on high-budget films¹) and to make additional films (12.5% of directors who have made two films are female compared to just 4.0% on directors who have made four or more).

Collectively, **these findings paint the picture of an industry where female directors are limited in their ability to become directors and their career progression once they do.** They are limited in the number of films they can direct as well as the budget and genre of the films they do. They are less likely to be hired at all stages of their careers and find it proportionately more difficult to be hired to senior roles and gain the credibility and experience needed to launch a successful directing career. And there is no meaningful sign of improvement without concerted action to resolve these issues.

Searching for the cause(s) of gender inequality among UK film directors

We found no evidence that that fewer women wish to become directors than men. Given the lack of any disparity during film education or at the point of entering the career, the scale of the disparity at later stages in directors' career progressions and its consistency through careers and across the industry, this explanation simply seems highly unlikely to be even close to a full explanation of the issue.

If the personal choices of women in the film industry is inadequate as an explanation of the disparity between male and female directors then, given individual decisions and contacts are the gate-keepers to progression and success within the industry, whatever the root causes of the inequality are, the point at which they are realised must involve some action of the individuals with power in the industry. In other words, the disparity must be a result of the preferences of those making hiring decisions rather than those applying for those positions.

We found evidence to support this hypothesis in the difference in representation of female employees under female directors and heads of department and their male counterparts. Female key creatives have a notably higher percentage of women in their departments and female directors hire a greater percentage of female key creatives. Hence, the differing preferences of male and female employers is clearly resulting in a difference in their hiring practices.

¹ For the purposes of this table, we have classed films budgeted under £500,000 as "low-budget", films budgeted between £1 million and £10 million as "mid-budget" and films budgeted over £30 million as "big budget". For the full statistics see section 3.4.

However, we found no evidence of any organised, conscious or deliberate efforts to exclude women from the industry or certain positions within it. Therefore, **it is our belief that the gender imbalance is primarily due to an unconscious bias.**

By studying three aspects of UK films, namely audience ratings (popularity), critics rating (quality), and box office (profitability) we were able to show that the evidence available is not adequate to justify any such preference. Meaning **that there is no evidence to support the notion that the bias against female applicants is in any way justified.**

Hence, the best initial explanation of our findings is that they are the result of a widespread, unjustified, and unconscious bias within the industry. However, this is far from a full explanation. It is important to note we have not seen evidence to support the suggestion that those making hiring decisions genuinely hold such biases in a wider context, and we do not believe this to be the case.

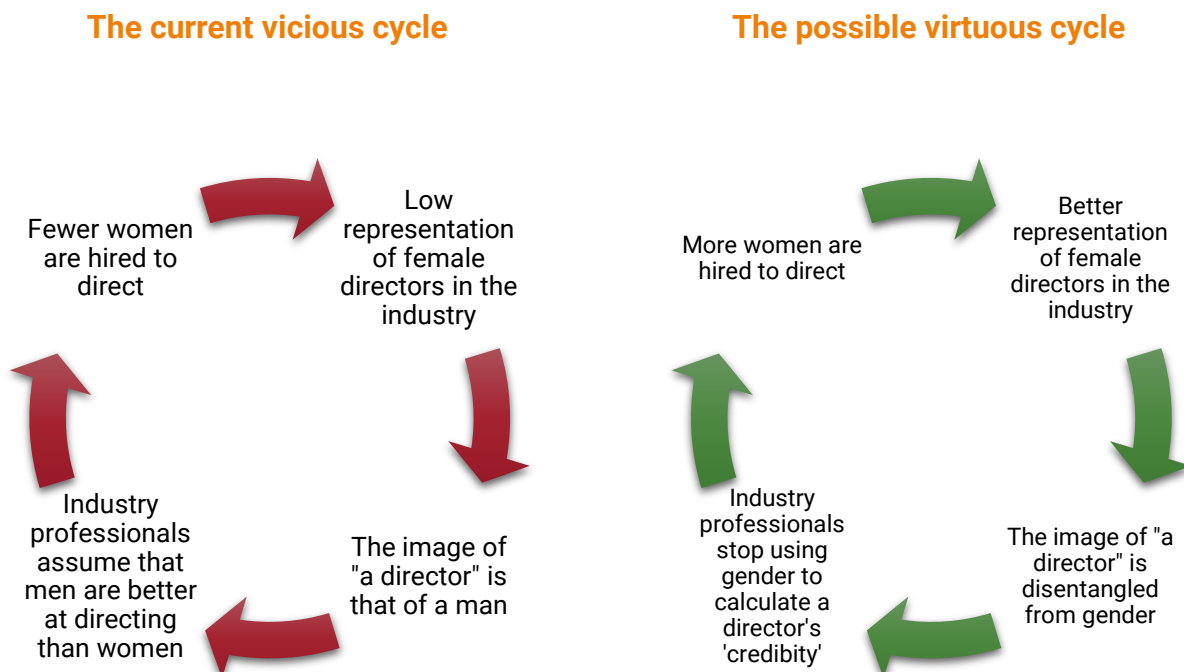
The lack of any trend towards an improvement in female representation, despite the frequent churn of individuals within the film industry, suggests that **there are systemic issues which are sustaining and perhaps creating these biases.** In simple terms, the individual instances of bias are not the problem themselves but rather a symptom of it. **We identified four principal systemic issues we believe produce, allow, and protect the disparity between men and women in the film industry:**

1. First, **there is no effective regulatory system to police or enforce gender equality.** Without adequate protection and in an industry where hiring is conducted primarily privately and reputation is of great importance (discouraging any complaints by a discriminated upon party) unfair hiring practices go unreported and ignored. In addition, just 7% of UK films make a profit, thereby effectively removing the power of the market to deselect unsuccessful projects and methods. Without competition driving change and with no external pressure to force change there is no reason to deselect damaging ideas, so no change occurs.
2. Second, **the pervasive nature of uncertainty,** which creates a climate of insecurity, leads to illogical and ritualistic behaviours, which results in the industry operating based on preconceived notions of the archetypal director, rather than on their individual abilities and talents.
3. Third, **the permanent short-termism in the film industry** discourages long-term thinking and prevents positive HR practices, best exemplified by the un-family-friendly nature of the industry. The vast majority of producers work film to film and build the team and structure for each project anew and at considerable pace. This means hiring must often, by necessity, rely on traditional methods and preconceived notions, as there simply isn't time to conduct a more extensive hiring process. In addition, the sporadic employment, long hours, and unpredictable and constantly changing nature of the work make it nearly impossible to effectively progress in the industry whilst also being the primary care-giver in a family, a role which is disproportionately held by women.
4. Finally, **inequality in the film industry is symbiotic – the various instances of inequality across various areas of the industry reinforce and facilitate each other – creating a vicious cycle.** First, male employers hire a greater percentage of men, resulting in a greater percentage of men in positions to hire others. And second, a lack of female directors leads to a lack of role models for those starting out and greater pessimism about their prospects, which may discourage many candidates. And third, low female representation leads to low regard for female directors which in turn leads to low female representation.

Collectively, **we believe the evidence suggests that these four systemic issues protect and sustain the outdated, unconscious bias of the individuals within the industry, and these in turn result in fewer women being hired and fewer films being directed by women.**

Providing solutions to remedy the gender inequity among film directors of UK films

However, we suggest the current vicious circle which perpetuates the under-employment of female directors can be used as the engine of change, becoming a virtuous circle, as shown below.



To this end, we have outlined three solutions to these systemic issues, which we believe would greatly improve the representation of female directors and women in the industry more generally.

1. First, **we propose a target of 50/50 gender parity within public funding by 2020**. Only 21.7% of the projects we studied that were funded by UK based funding bodies were helmed by a female director. A target that half of films backed by UK-based public bodies be directed by women by 2020 offers one of the most direct opportunities to redress the imbalance between male and female directors on publicly backed films. In addition, we suggest that all bodies which disperse public money within the UK to films or filmmakers are required to provide full details of the gender of applicants, grantees, and key creatives on each production. The current lack of any widespread, comprehensive data has limited awareness of the issue and so slowed efforts to change it.
2. Second, **we propose amending the Film Tax Relief to require all UK films to account for diversity**. The Film Tax Relief (FTR) is the largest single element of government support for the UK film industry. It touches all films, no matter their origin, scale, genre, creative contents, or market potential and therefore it is one of the most powerful mechanisms with which to effect industry-wide change. We propose an additional 'diversity' dimension to the requirements all films must fulfil in order to be eligible for Film Tax Relief, within which gender would be specified group
3. Finally, **we propose an industry wide campaign to rebalance gender inequality within UK film**, whereby different parts of the film industry take responsibility for the respective roles they have to play in tackling gender inequality and enabling more women to become directors and direct films. Public bodies and agencies should continue to lead a coordinated campaign raising awareness and promoting action and intervention, including: funding, career support, unconscious bias training and challenging industry myths. This report includes suggestions and methods for running this campaign.

In combination, we believe these solutions would go much of the way towards fixing the gender disparity in the film industry. Not only by directly improving the opportunities for female directors and the number of female directed films, but also by removing the systemic issues which propagate inequality in the industry.

Why action is needed

What is clear is that **without serious, concerted effort to alter the hiring practices in the industry, this is not an issue that will resolve itself**. However, the reasons to implement such change are numerous and extend far beyond simply the benefit to women within film itself.

By expanding and diversifying the pool of working directors we increase the range and variety of the films we make and the stories we tell. **By shutting out entire segments of society we exclude unique voices and limit the scope of our culture as a whole**. Equally audiences are limited in the films they can see. A male-dominated film industry leads to male-focused films, leaving women not only underrepresented amongst directors but underrepresented in the art and stories themselves.

The film industry benefits hugely by improving the meritocracy of its hiring decisions. By hiring more women in prominent positions we improve the opportunities for other talented women within the industry and create role models to inspire the next generation, further increasing the talent to choose from.

Finally, and most simply, it matters because **it is unfair and unjust for any individual's opportunities to be limited simply because of their gender** and because this sort of discrimination is outdated, illegal and immoral.

Film occupies a unique position, sitting at the crossroads between being product and art. It has great influence over what we as a society believe and how we feel about it. It not only responds to but shapes public opinion, and so **it has a greater obligation to represent our society as a whole and to project informed, developed beliefs than perhaps any other industry**. The disparity between male and female directors and the inequality in the industry more generally means we are failing in this obligation. But it is well within the industry's power to change this.

Section A: The Current Landscape for Female directors

3. Female directors within the UK Film Industry

The percentage of UK directors who are women

- Just 13.6% of working film directors over the last decade were women.
- Only 14.0% of UK films had at least one female director.
- UK films are over six times more likely to be directed by a man than a woman.

The issue over time

- In 2005, 11.3% of UK films had a woman director; by 2014 this had only increased to 11.9%.

Career progression for female film directors

- During their careers, female directors tend to direct fewer films than male directors.
- Men are 13.1% more likely to make a second film than women.
- Female directors make fewer second, third and fourth films than men.

The budget level of female-directed UK films

- As budgets rise, fewer female directors are hired.
- 16.1% of films budgeted under £500,000 have a woman director.
- That figure drops to just 3.3% of films budgeted over £30 million.

The genre of female-directed UK films

- Female directors appear to be limited to genres traditionally viewed as “female”.
- Female directors are best represented within documentaries, drama, and romance films, while having the lowest representation within sci-fi, action, and crime.
- Although female cinema-goers prefer some genres more than others (i.e. drama over sci-fi), the extent of this preference is not as stark as the employment of women as directors in each genre.

The quality of female-directed films

- Films by female directors get higher ratings from film audiences and film critics compared to films by men.
- 22% of ‘Top Film Critics’ on Rotten Tomatoes are women.
- 36% of reviews written by female film critics and 21% of reviews written by male critics were about films directed by and / or written by a woman writer

The core dataset for this report consists of 2,591 feature films shot in the UK between 2005 and 2014 (inclusive). Expanding this films database, we created a directors’ dataset which contains details of everyone who directed a feature film shot in the UK between 2005 and 2014.

Across the 2,591 films there were 2,899 director credits, meaning that our films had an average of 1.2 directors per film. Taking into account the fact that some people direct films more than once, we were left with 2,118 unique individuals. This means that on average, each director directed 1.22 films.

We analysed both datasets to discover more about the films made in the UK and the directors behind them. Full details of the films and methodology can be found in Chapter 10.

3.1 The percentage of UK directors who are women

- Just 13.6% of working film directors over the last decade were women.
- Only 14.0% of UK films had at least one female director.
- UK films are over six times more like to be directed by a man than a woman.

There are two distinct ways of measuring the ratio of male and female directors and the disparity between them.

1. **Focusing on the individual female directors.** - The percentage of the total number of working directors who are women.
2. **Focusing on the number of films with a woman director.** - The percentage of the total number of films that are directed by at least one woman director².

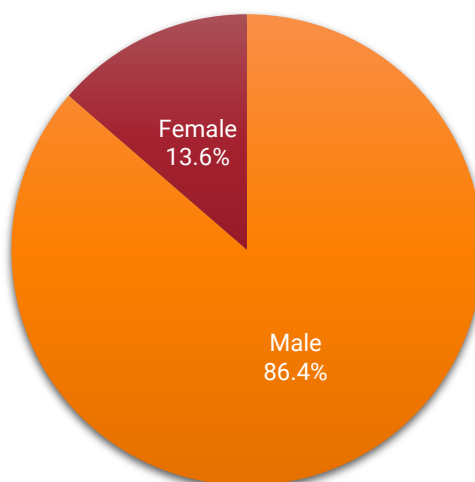
Although these two methods return similar results, there are subtle differences between them, so both have been covered below³.

Method 1: Focusing on the individual female directors

The simplest illustration of the overall disparity between the number of male and female directors is the gender ratio across the entire set of 2,118 unique directors who have helmed a film between 2005 and 2014.

Just 13.6% of all working directors over the last decade were women, whilst 86.4% were men.

Gender of directors of UK films, 2005-14



² In the vast majority of cases this means that the film has a single female director, although this classification also includes teams of directors, where at least one of the directors was a woman.

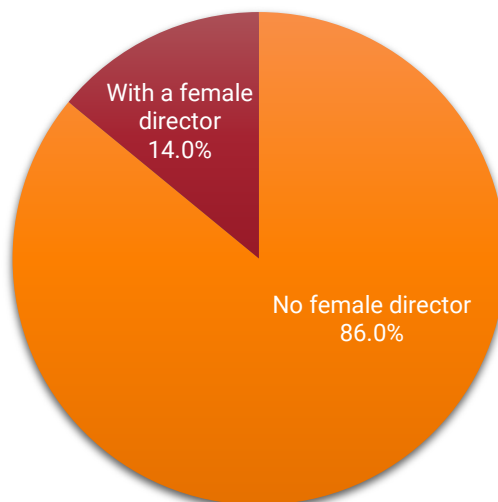
³ It is possible to use a third method, which looks at the number of directing credits on UK films which went to women, which in this case is 12.9%. This method provides the lowest level of female representation due to the fact that female directors are less likely to direct subsequent films. This is addressed in detail in section 3.3.

Method 2: Focusing on the number of films with a woman director

The issue is more complex than simply the raw number of directors, as individual directors may direct multiple films, and indeed multiple directors may direct a single film. When focusing on the films, we can see that 14.0% of UK films had at least one female director.

The difference in female representation via the two methods (13.6% and 14.0%) reflects the fact that some films are made by more than one director.

UK films (2005-14) with a female director



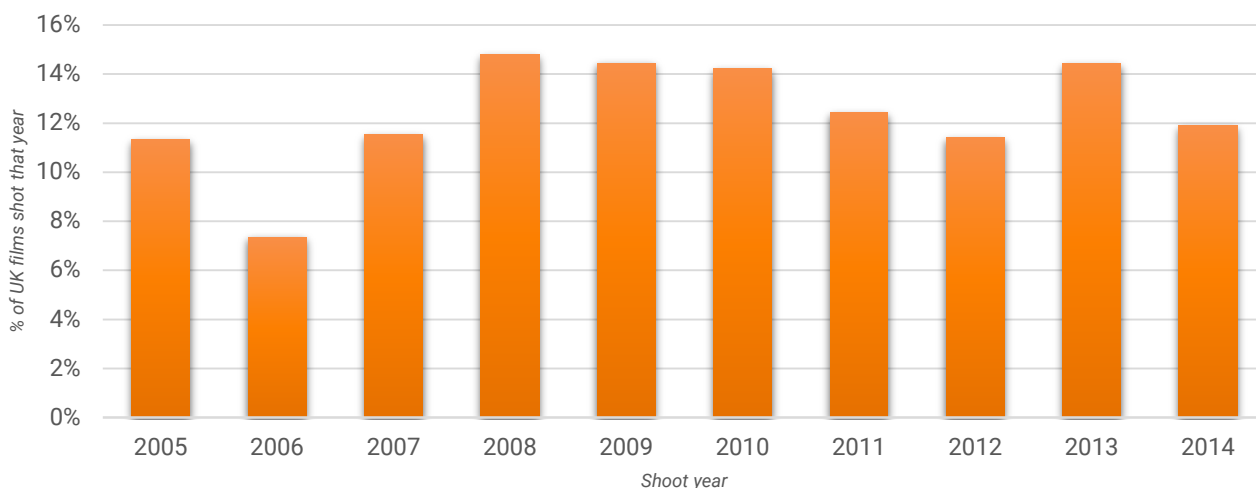
3.2 The issue over time

- In 2005, 11.3% of UK films had a female director; by 2014 this had only increased to 11.9%.

Method 1: Focusing on the individual directors

Between 2005 and 2014, women made up between 7.4% (2006) and 14.8% (2008) of working UK film directors each year.

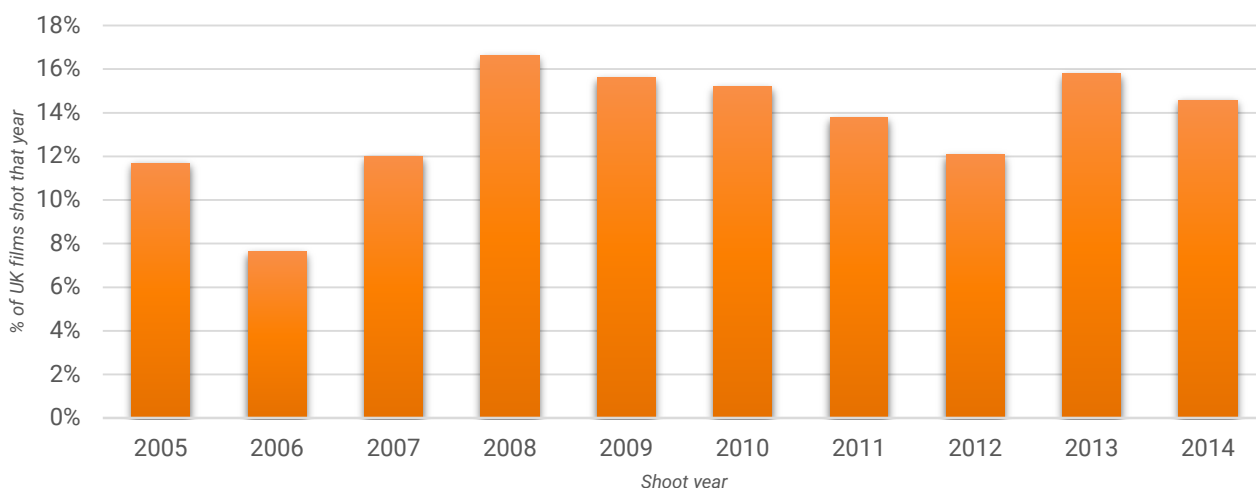
Women as a percentage of directors of UK films



Method 2: Focusing on the films

Over the same period, the percentage of films with a woman director fluctuated between 7.6% in 2006 and 16.6% in 2008.

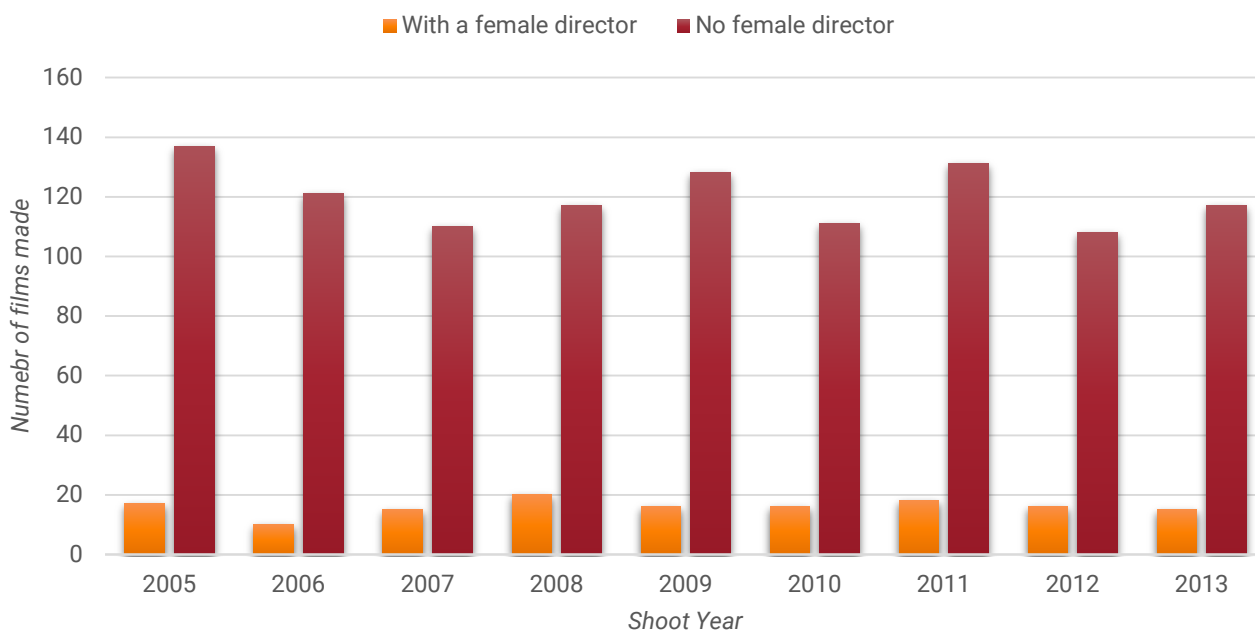
Percentage of UK films which had a female director



Both methods demonstrate the overall lack of any meaningful trend, either positive or negative, in respect to the number of films directed by women.

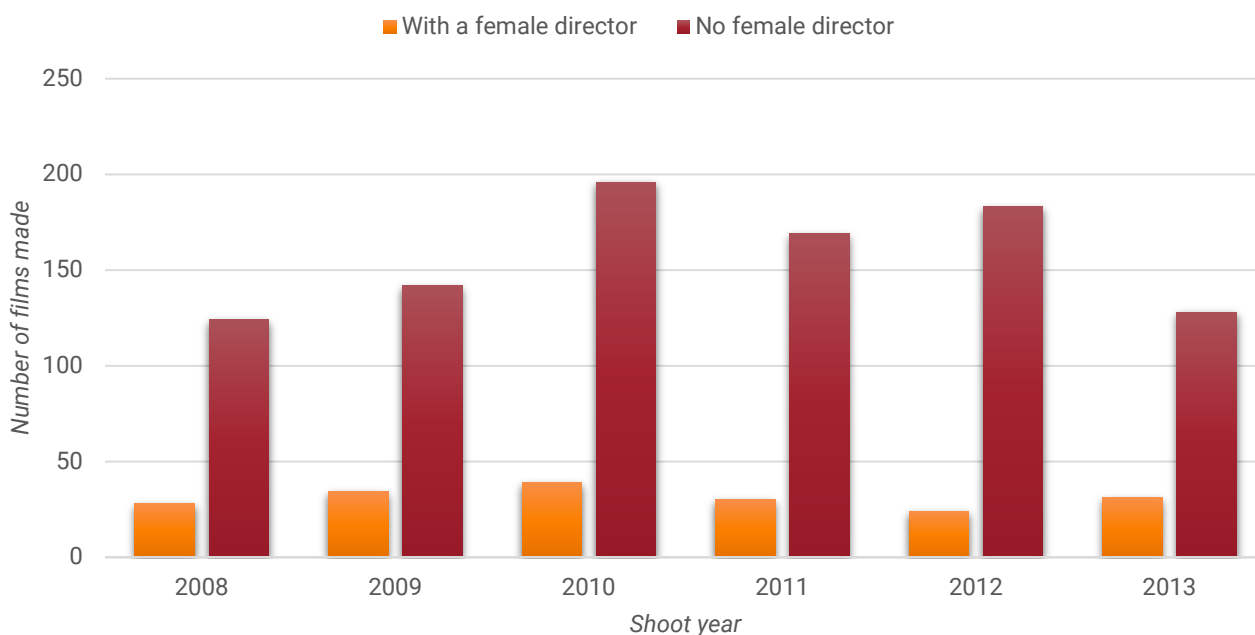
The issue is even more sharply captured by the raw numbers of female directors across each year.

Feature films made in the UK budgeted over £500,000



Note: The BFI only started tracking films budgeted under £500,000 from January 2008 onward⁴.

Feature films made in the UK budgeted under £500,000



In summary, there has been no significant or meaningful improvement in the last decade in either the number of films directed by women or the total number of working female directors.

This data does not give us any reason to suggest that any positive change will occur without further conscious efforts. It also offers little evidence in support of either the notion that the industry will self-correct or that efforts over the last decade have had any significant effect.

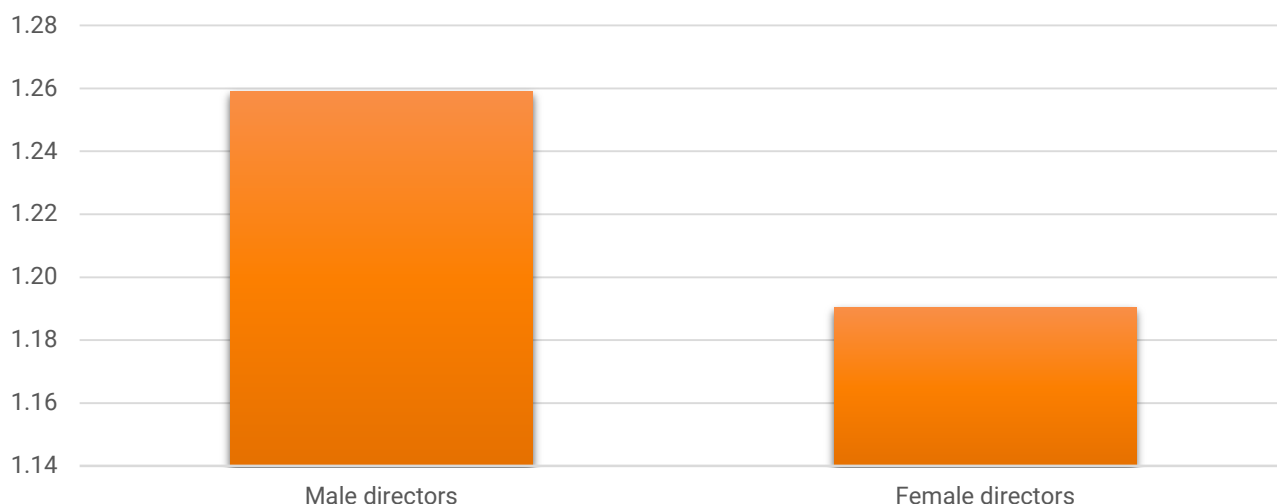
⁴More details can be found in section 10.3

3.3 Career progression for female film directors

- During their careers, female directors tend to direct fewer films than male directors.
- Men are 13.1% more likely to make a second film than women.
- Female directors make fewer second, third and fourth films than men.

Career progression is arguably as important to gender equality as the total number of films being directed by women. On average, male directors in our dataset made 1.26 UK films between 2005 and 2014, whereas female directors made only 1.19 films.

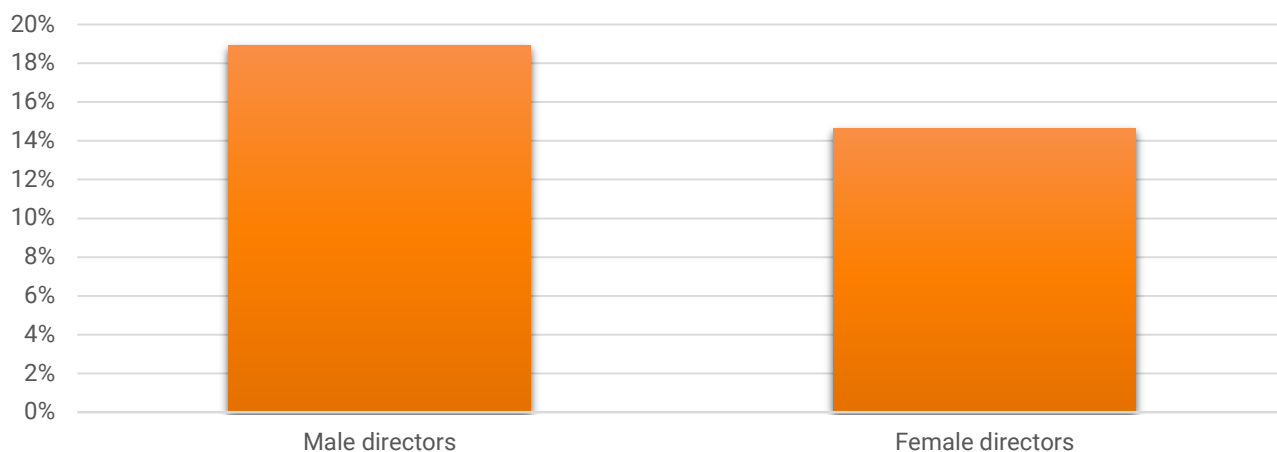
Average number of films per director, UK films 2005-14



This can be captured even more noticeably in the percentage chance each female or male director in our dataset has of directing a second, third, fourth, or further film. This, in essence, tells us the relative difficulty each gender of director has in progressing once within the industry.

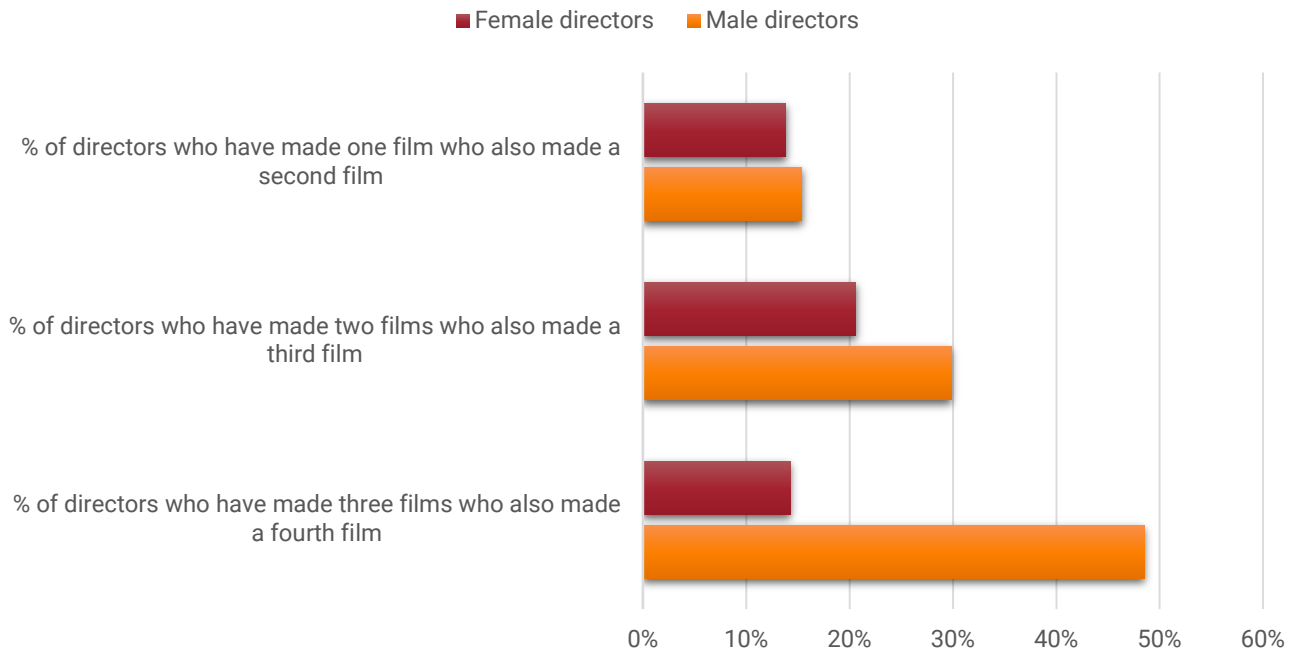
Across all films in our dataset, 18.3% of directors made more than one film. However, this was not equal across the sexes, with male directors 13.1% more likely to make a second film than female directors.

Percentage of directors of UK films who made a second film, 2005-14



Female directors are less likely to make another film at every step of their career that we studied.

Career progression for directors of UK films, 2005-14



Fifteen male directors directed five or more films in our dataset, compared to just one woman director.

Even after directing two films, it becomes comparatively harder for a woman director to direct her third film than it is for a male director to direct his third. A male director has a 28.3% better chance of directing a third film after their second, and a 70.6% better chance of making a fourth after their third, compared to his female counterparts (see Appendix 10.4 for methodology).

In conclusion, female directors struggle to progress even once they have directed their first film and broken into the industry. It continues to be far more difficult for female directors to direct additional films than it is for their male counterparts.

3.4 The budget level of female-directed UK films

- As budgets rise, fewer female directors are hired.
- 16.1% of films budgeted under £500,000 have a woman director.
- That figures drops to just 3.3% of films budgeted over £30 million.

In the previous section, we noted the additional difficulty female directors have in respect to their career progression even once in the industry. However, as well as finding it harder to direct as many films as their male counterparts, female directors also struggle to progress to larger projects, comparative to male directors.

The trend is particularly stark here, where 16.1% of low and micro-budget films (i.e. those budgeted under £500,000) have a woman director, that figure drops to just 3.3% of films budgeted at over £30 million⁵.

Percentage of UK films with a female director, by budget range (Jan 2008 to July 2014)



This suggests female directors find it more difficult to progress to larger projects than their male counterparts and their career progression suffers as a result.

⁵ Across our dataset, there were only three female directing credits on films budgeted over £30 million and two of those went to Lana Wachowski. Although Lana began her directing career as a man she is now a female director, hence her route into directing differed significantly to that of most other female directors. The third and final credit went to Sarah Smith, who co-directed the animated film 'Arthur Christmas'.

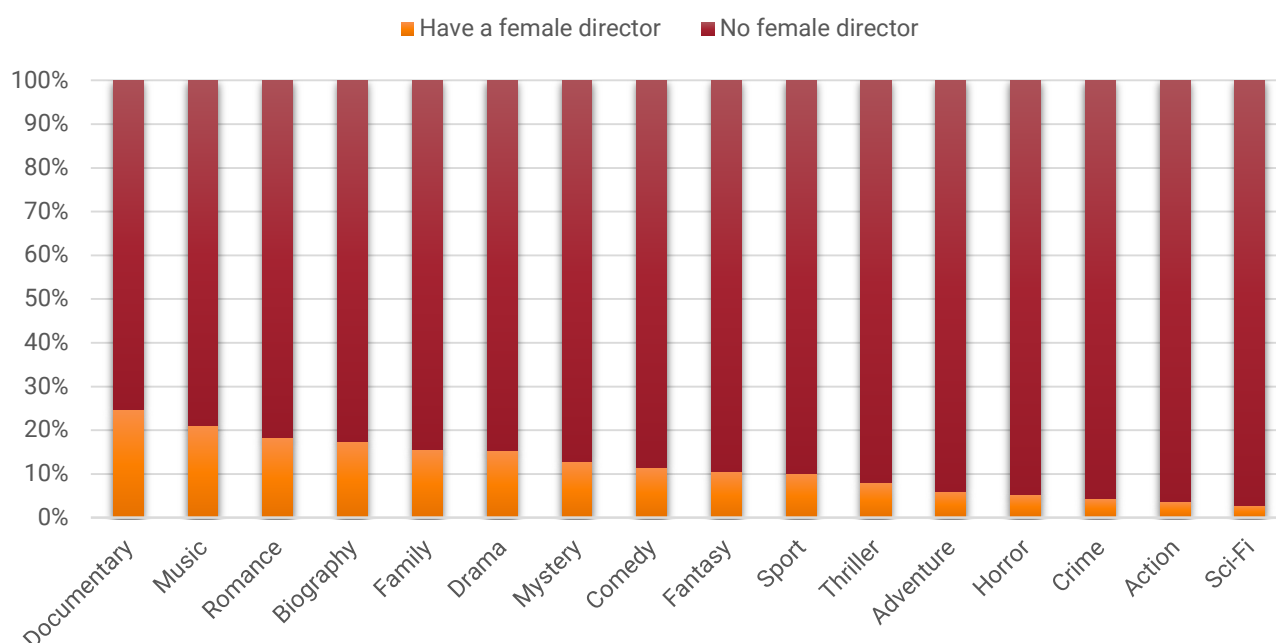
3.5 The genre of female-directed UK films

- Female directors appear to be limited to genres traditionally viewed as “female”.
- Female directors are best represented within documentaries, drama, and romance films, while having the lowest representation within sci-fi, action, and crime.
- Although female cinema-goers prefer some genres more than others (i.e. drama over sci-fi), the extent of this preference is not as great as the employment of women as directors in each genre.

As well as being disproportionately limited to smaller budget productions, female directors are also restricted in the genres⁶ they tend to direct.

Female directors are best represented within documentaries (24.8% women), music (21.1%), romance (18.1%), and biographical films (17.5%). The most male-dominated genres are science fiction (2.9% women), action (3.6%), crime (4.3%), and horror (5.2%).

Gender of the director of UK films (2005-14), by genre

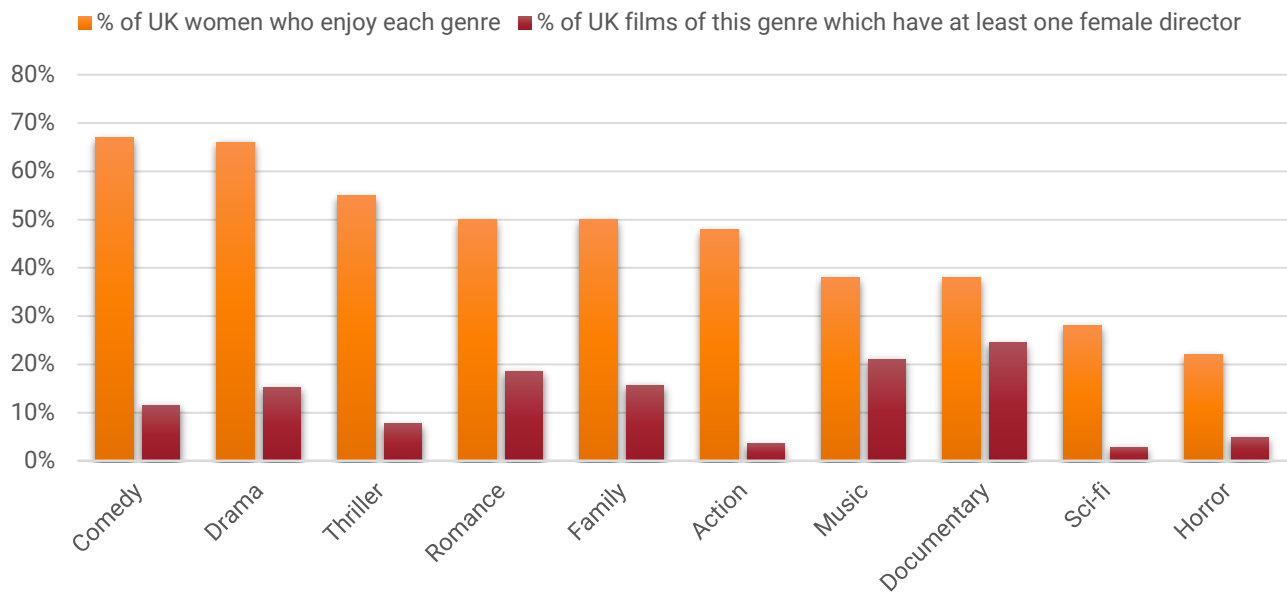


It is not the exact percentage of female directors within each genre that is the key factor here, but rather the level to which female directors are prevented from following their tastes in the films that they direct. We found no evidence from our survey of working directors that this is a product of women’s genre preferences. In fact, many respondents suggested that they want to move beyond this sort of working assumption.

To gain understanding of female cinema-going tastes, we combined the above data with a measure of interest for each genre in the wider UK population via a 2011 *Ipsos MORI* poll.

⁶ See Section 10.4 for a breakdown of how we classified genres for films in our dataset and for more detailed results around genre.

Comparison of female audience preferences and the employment of female directors



As the graph illustrates⁷, not only do female directors find themselves limited to certain genres, but this does not correlate to the percentage of women expressing preference for those genres. The three most popular genres amongst women (comedy, drama, and thriller) represent the sixth, eighth and eleventh most directed by female directors, whilst music and documentary, the two genres most directed by women fall seventh and eighth in the list of women's genre preferences.

Hence, it seems highly plausible that women are being disproportionately prevented from directing the genres of film they may well wish to direct.

⁷ See section 10.4 for a full breakdown of our methodology and findings relating the genre.

3.6 The quality of films and female directors

- Films by female directors get higher ratings from film audiences and film critics compared to films by men.
- 22% of 'Top Film Critics' on *Rotten Tomatoes* are women.
- 36% of reviews written by female film critics and 21% of reviews written by male critics were about films directed by and / or written by a woman writer.

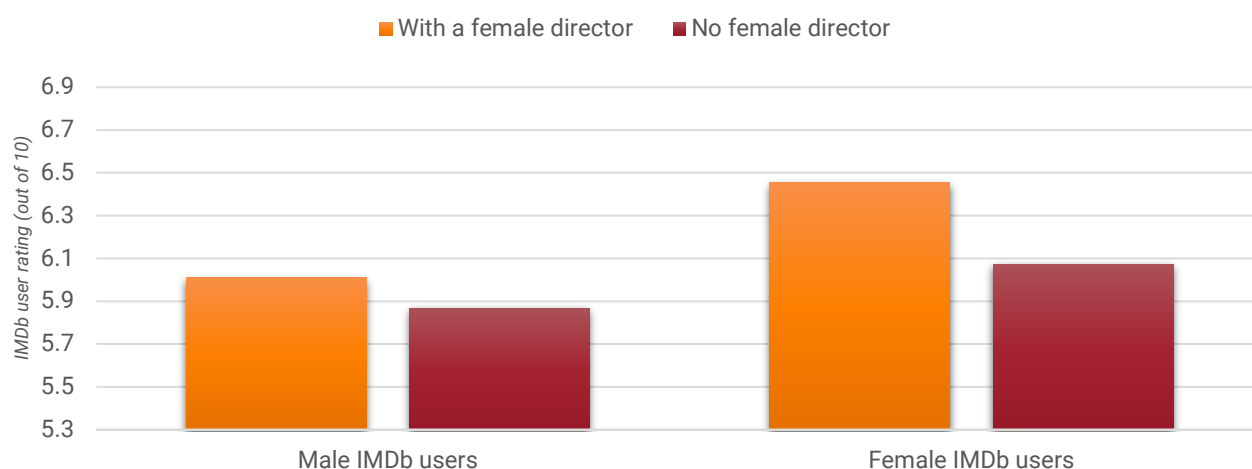
The quality of a film is a highly subjective topic and it's not possible to use objectively data to prove that one film is 'better' than another. However, it is possible to find datasets where a large number of people have rated a collection of films, and to see how each variable effects the ratings given.

We used ratings given to each film by *IMDb* users (out of 10) as a measure of quality according to film audiences⁸, and to represent film critics we used *Metacritic's* Metascore and *Rotten Tomatoes's* Tomatometer (both out of 100)⁹.

The overall *IMDb* user average rating was 5.96 out of 10. However, the vast majority of votes¹⁰ were cast by men (80.5%) and so we feel it is necessary to gender split these results. The average rating given by men was 5.88 and the women's average was 6.12. This pattern is found in every genre, suggesting female users are more generous with their ratings than men.

Films directed by a woman had higher ratings from both male and female *IMDb* users. Male *IMDb* users gave male-directed films an average of 5.87 and female-directed films 6.00. Female *IMDb* users gave male-directed films an average of 6.07 and female-directed films 6.44.

IMDb user ratings for UK films (2005-14)

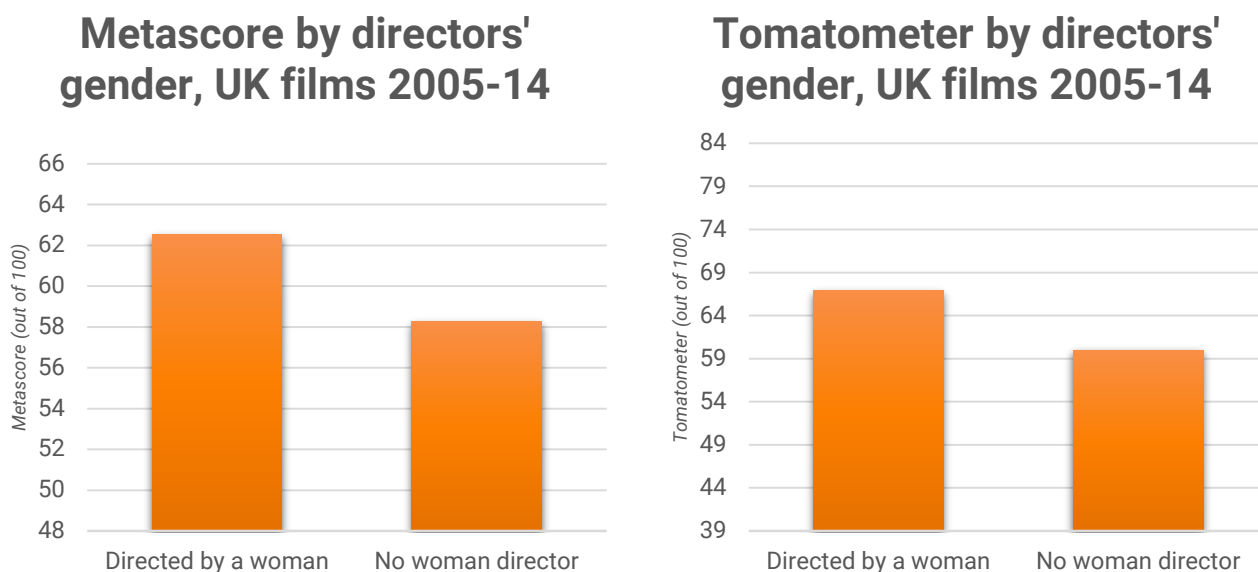


⁸ We only included films which had at least 100 user votes. Most films can rely on their cast, crew, and families to cast positive votes, therefore we felt that any film with under 100 votes was too open to manipulation as to be useful in this research..

⁹ The two different measures of film critics' ratings illustrate two different aspect of press support. The Metascore takes account of the level to which each critic liked or didn't like the film, whereas the Tomatometer simply measures whether reviews by film critics en mass were positive. For example, a film with five reviews, two 4* reviews and three 1* reviews, would receive a Metascore of 22 (i.e. the average of 80, 80, 10, 10 and 10 out of 100) and a Tomatometer rating of 40 (i.e. two positive reviews out of five)

¹⁰ Of the 45,536,242 votes cast, 13.7% were not assigned a gender by *IMDb*.

The Metascore¹¹ is a weighted average of reviews from top critics and publications¹² and the Tomatometer¹³ looks at the percentage of reviews which were positive¹⁴. By both measures, female-directed films outperformed films directed by men.



Similarly to audience ratings, critics, regardless of gender, prefer female-directed films.

This evidence does not demonstrate films directed by women are better in any conclusive sense. However, it should certainly be taken to dispel any suggestion that there is any evidence that films directed by women are either less highly regarded or less popular with audiences.

The effect of the gender of film critics

A 2013 report¹⁵ for the Centre for the Study of Women in Television and Film concluded that although the vast majority of film critics were men, there was no evidence to suggest that film critics were biased towards or against films directed by directors of their own gender (i.e. male critics did not give male-directed films a higher or lower rating when compared to the ratings given by women film critics).

However, they did find that female film critics were more likely to review films directed by women, suggesting that female film critics are actively seeking out more films from female directors.

In our research into Metascore and Tomatometer ratings, we did not see any obvious bias towards or against the decision to review a female-directed film¹⁶.

Section 10.5 provides full details of our methodology and more detailed breakdown of the findings from this topic.

¹¹ 24.3% of our films had a Metascore, reflecting the fact that not all films made reach cinemas, and even those that do, not all will be reviewed by top film critics

¹² Using the Metascore, a film with entirely 5* reviews would score 100. The average Metascore for all our UK films was 58.8.

¹³ 31.4% of our films dataset had a *Rotten Tomatoes* rating

¹⁴ The average Tomatometer rating across all UK films was 60.9, meaning that almost 61% of reviews for UK films were positive (i.e. at least 3* reviews).

¹⁵ "Gender @ the Movies: Online Film Critics and Criticism" Martha M. Lauzen, Ph.D
http://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/files/2013_Gender_at_the_Movies_Exec_Summ.pdf

¹⁶ 13.6% of films reviewed by Metacritic had a female director, as did 15.4% of films on *Rotten Tomatoes*. This is close to the overall representation of female directors across all UK films made (14.3%). This is encouraging as it implies that female-directed films have similar press attention as male-directed films. Especially considering that female representation among directors falls as the budget rises (see section 3.4) and that smaller films tend to have a harder time getting press attention and reviews from top film critics.

3.7 UK Box office income for films by female directors

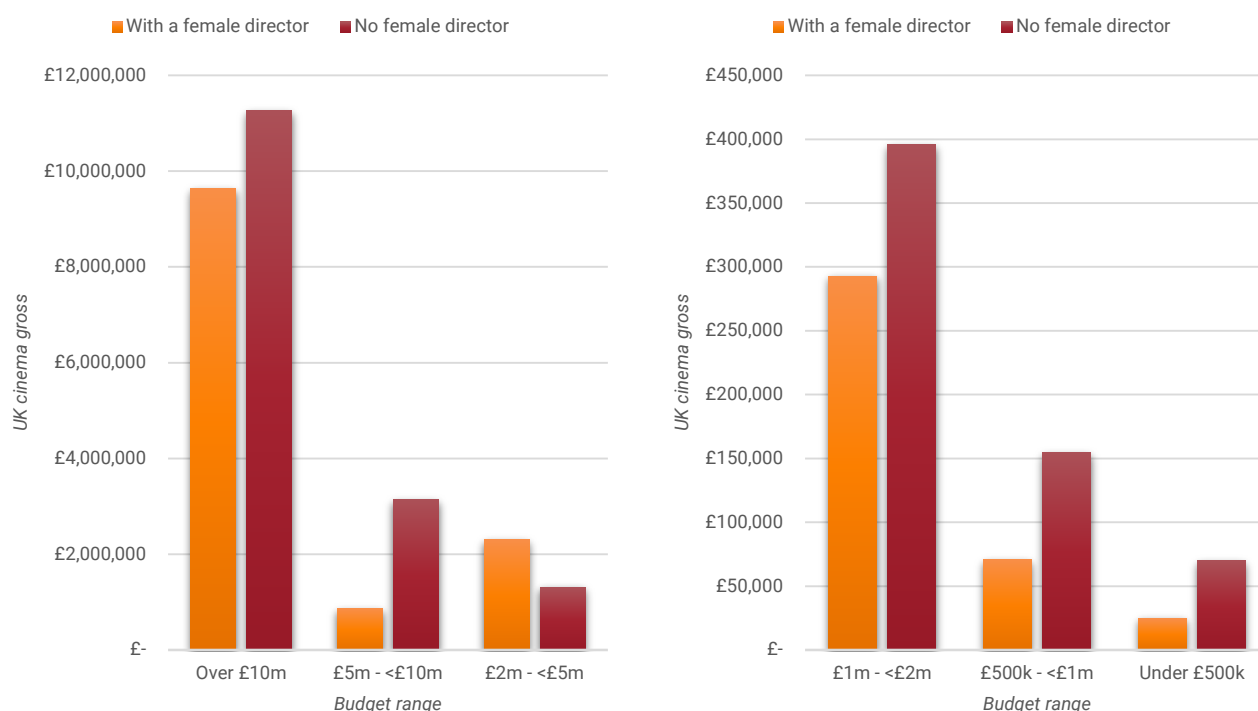
- Although we cannot measure profitability, we can note that female-directed films in five out of six budget bands have a lower average UK Box Office gross than male-directed films.

It is very difficult to calculate the profitability of a film from the outside, as most of the costs and income are hidden from public view¹⁷. In section 10.6 we breakdown the full costs and income for a film.

Without knowing how much was spent and earned by a film, it's impossible to know its profitability. For example, two films of the same budget may perform differently if they've had significantly different amounts spent on their marketing (P&A). However, it is possible to report on the UK cinema box office totals for films in our dataset.

Using data provided by HMRC (via the *BFI*) we can split each of the 627 UK films¹⁸ shot in 2008-14 which grossed at least £1 at the UK Box Office, into six budget bands.

Average UK cinema gross for UK films 2008-14, by budget range



In all but one of these budget bands, male-directed films have a higher average UK cinema gross than their female-directed counterparts¹⁹.

However, we advise caution in these statistics, as they should not be read as profitability statistics but simply as what they are – the total gross amount of money collected in UK cinemas for each film.

¹⁷Of the nine sources of income, we can only be fairly sure of one (cinema box office) and find ways to approximate a few others (such as looking at video sales and RRP). The others need to be estimated using industry norms, which frequently change and for which there is little public data. Similarly for costs, we can be sure of VAT and use benchmarks for fees charged by sales agents, distributors and exhibitors but the other costs are shrouded in secrecy.

¹⁸ Of these films, eighty-three were directed by women, representing 13.2% of films in the criteria.

¹⁹ In the case of the "£2m - £5m" range, just two of the fifteen female-directed films accounted for over 60% of the income, namely *StreetDance 3D* and *Nativity 2: Danger in the Manger*.

4. Female representation in the UK film industry

Women in key creative roles on UK feature films

- Only two out of the nine key creative roles have above 50% female representation.
- 25.7% of producers of UK films are women.
- Women account for 14.6% of screenwriters on UK films.

Female crew members on UK feature films

- The transportation, sound, and camera departments have under 10% women crew members.
- Only casting, make-up, and costume departments have a majority of women crew.

Female representation among department heads and their crew

- In the vast majority of cases, the more senior a role is, the lower the percentage of women holding the role is.
- A crew member working in production is almost twice as likely to be women (49.9%) than the producer (25.7%).
- The data suggests that in the vast majority of departments within UK film, women have a harder time working their way up the chain than men.
- The weight of evidence suggests that there is a pervasive belief within the film industry that women, outside of the roles and departments that have been traditionally viewed as “female”, are less able to hold senior roles than their male counterparts.

The effect of a woman director on overall female representation

- 30.9% of crew working on female-directed films are women, compared with 24.1% of crew on male-directed films.
- The difference is starkest for writers, where 65.4% of writers on female-directed projects are women compared with just 7.4% on male-directed films.

Changes in female representation on UK feature films over time

- There is no meaningful trend towards improvement in female representation across the UK film industry.

As we saw in the previous chapter, just 13.6% of directors are women, however this is symptomatic of a broader disparity between the employment of men and women in other parts of the UK film industry.

This chapter will examine the gender inequality in the UK film industry more broadly. Illustrating the broader disparity between men and women in the film industry is necessary for two reasons:

1. **The road to becoming a feature film director tends to be a long and arduous one.** The majority of directors, both men and women, will first progress through film department and crew roles. For this reason, if the industry suffers from a more general gender inequality, this could be an important factor in the later disparity between men and women directing.
2. **The inequality across the industry is not simply a cause of the inequality between directors, it is also a symptom of it.** In essence, the inequality across the industry is symbiotic: it is interrelated and self-reinforcing. This reciprocal relationship means that there is good reason to suggest that an increase in the number of female directors might greatly improve the gender equality in the film industry as a whole.

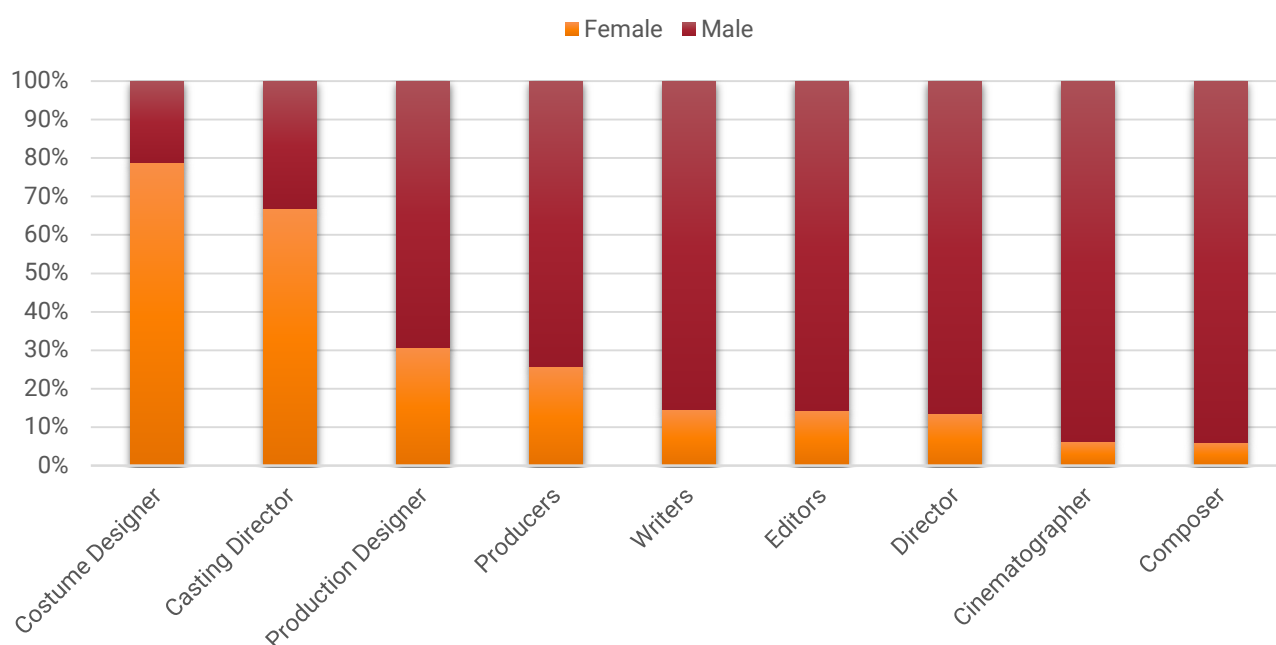
4.1 Women in key creative roles on UK feature films

- Only two out of the nine key creative roles have above 50% female representation.
- 25.7% of producers of UK films are women.
- Women account for 14.6% of screenwriters on UK films.
- Fewer than one in fifteen cinematographers on UK films are women.

Of the major creative roles, only two have a majority of women: costume designer (78.8% women) and casting director (66.7%). Seven of the nine key creative roles are therefore predominantly held by men and no other creative role has greater than 30.8% (production designers).

The only roles which have a lower representation of woman than directors are cinematographers (6.2% women) and composers (6.0%).

Gender of key creative roles, UK films 2005-14



Hence, we can see the disparity between men and women appears not just to affect directors, but also key creatives across the film industry as a whole.

Women respondents to our surveys and interviews noted an additional difficulty for women creatives and heads of department.

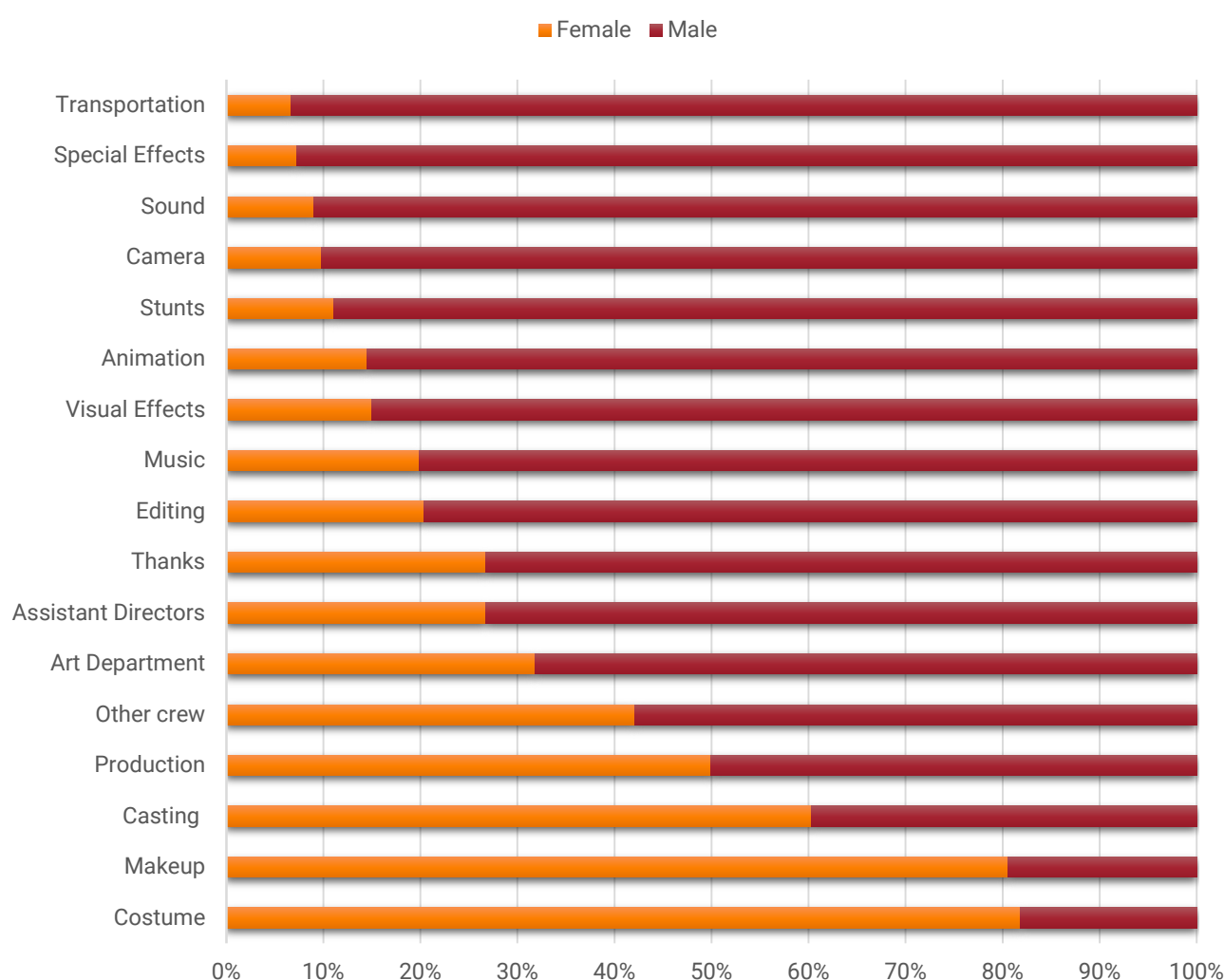
4.2 Women crew members on UK feature films

- The transportation, sound, and camera departments have under 10% women crew members.
- The production departments have 49.9% women crew.
- Only casting, make-up, and costume departments have a majority of women crew.

This extends the trend we saw in the key creative roles: only traditionally “female” crew roles and departments are filled predominantly with women.

The departments with the highest percentage of women employed are Costume (81.8% women), Make-up (80.5%), and Casting (60.3%). The most heavily male-dominated departments are Transportation (6.6% women), Special Effects (7.2%), and Sound (9.0%).

Gender of crew in major departments, UK films 2005-14



Note: The “Assistant Director” department includes 2nd Unit directors²⁰. The ‘Thanks’ data relates to the people thanked in the end credits of the film.

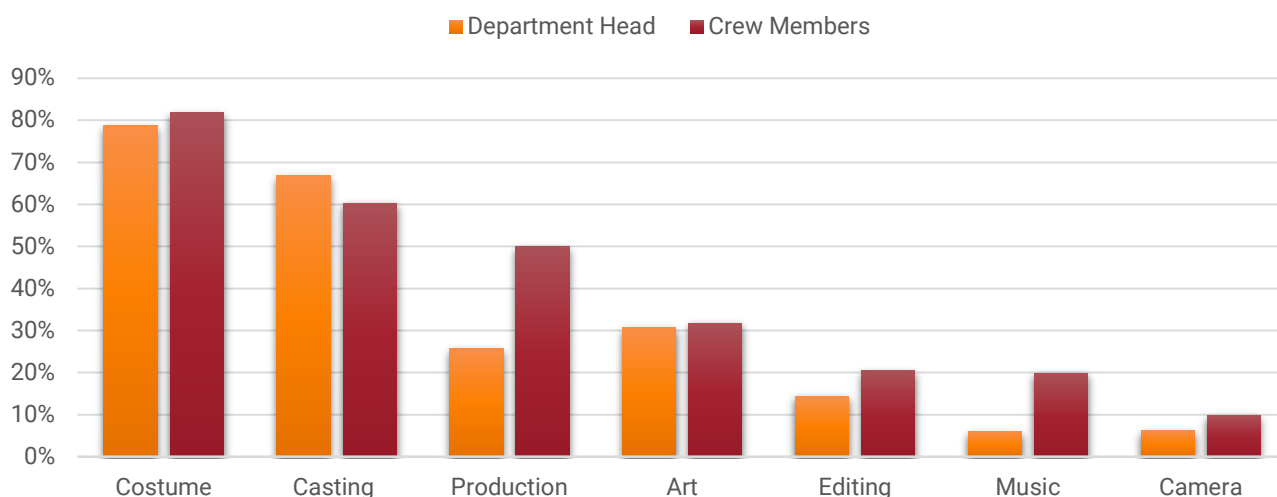
²⁰ Due to the way *IMDb* groups crew roles, the Assistant Directors department listed above also includes 2nd Unit Directors. The complexity of crew credits and volume of data prevents us from splitting up these job roles. Based on previous research into the Assistant Directors department, we estimate that around 9.4% of roles classified by *IMDb* as being within “2nd Unit Directors and Assistant Directors” are directors of some kind (2nd unit, model unit, aerial unit, underwater, etc). The role of these additional directors differs greatly from that of a film’s main credited ‘Director’ and therefore we have not included them in the analysis of ‘directors’ in this study. The gender of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Assistant Directors is broken down in section 4.3 of this report.

4.3 Female representation among department heads and their crew

- In the vast majority of cases, the more senior a role is, the lower the percentage of women holding the role is.
- A crew member working in production is almost twice as likely to be woman (49.9%) than the producer (25.7%).
- The data suggests that in the vast majority of departments within UK film, women have a harder time working their way up the chain than men.
- The weight of evidence suggests that there is a pervasive belief within the film industry that women, outside of the roles and departments that have been traditionally viewed as “female”, are less able to hold senior roles than their male counterparts.

The graph below matches the gender split for department heads with their departments.

Female department heads and crew, UK films 2005-14

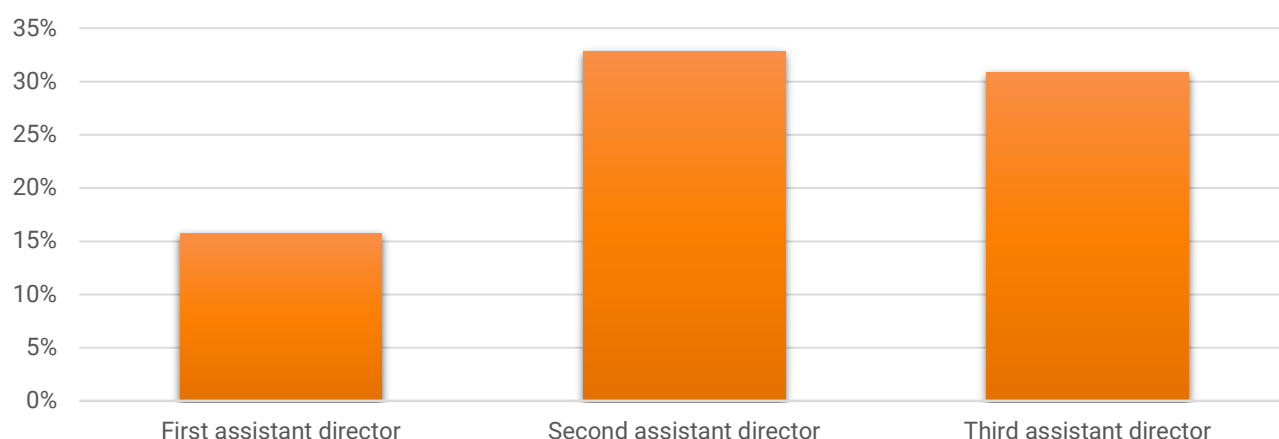


In the majority of cases, the more senior a role is, the lower the percentage of women holding that role. A crew member working in production is almost twice as likely to be women (49.9%) than a producer is (25.7%).

A similar trend is visible in the editing department (crew are 20.4% women compared with 14.4% for the department head, the editor), music department (19.9% to 6.0%), and the camera department (9.8% to 6.2%).

This is also present in the assistant director's department, although, as the roles of 1st AD, 2nd AD, and 3rd AD are so different, it's harder to disentangle gender bias from differing job preferences.

Percentage of people in the Assistant Directors' department who are female, UK films 2005-14



Given that most crew members are seeking career progression within their own field of expertise, the drop-off in the number of women making it to the head of department suggests that women have a harder time working their way up the chain than men.

As illustrated by the previous two graphs, the sole sectors of the film industry where women do tend to make up the majority of employees are those areas traditionally associated with women, suggesting that self-reinforcing and outdated preconceptions are dictating hiring practices.

Although there is not enough of a trend here to prove this conclusively, the weight of evidence certainly suggests that there is a pervasive, but unconscious, belief within the film industry that women, outside of the roles and departments that have been traditionally viewed as “female”, are less able to hold senior roles than their male counterparts (or simply a preference, for whatever reason, for men rather than women in senior roles across the industry).

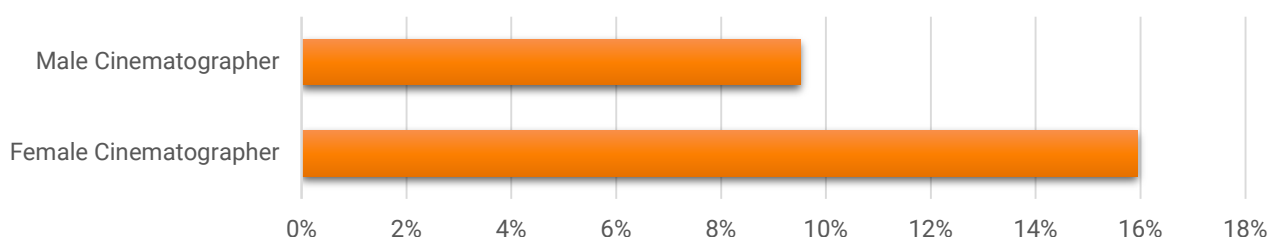
This suggests that the results we have already seen for directors are part of a wider industry trend affecting the senior positions, both on and off set, in the industry.

4.4 Female representation in senior roles

Furthermore, the general trend is for the percentage of women holding key roles to be broadly dependent on the seniority of that role. In other words, the more senior a role, the less chance it is held by a woman, and, by extension, the more senior a role is the less chance a woman has of being hired for it.

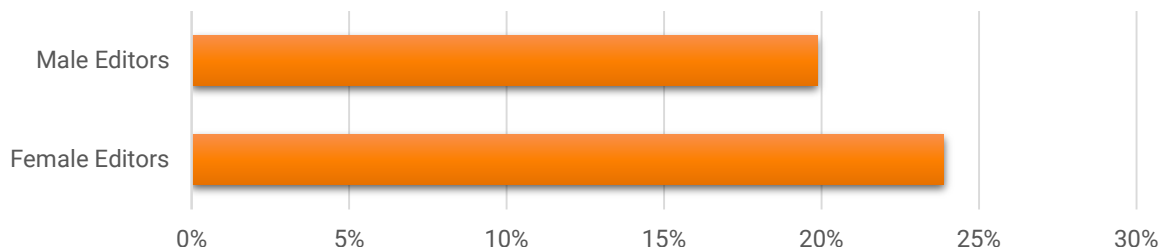
As the graph below shows, 9.5% of UK camera departments are female when they are headed by a male cinematographer, but 15.9% are women when the department is led by a female cinematographer. Meaning female cinematographers on average hire 67.4% more women in their camera departments than male cinematographers do.

Gender of the camera department by gender of the cinematographer, UK films 2005-14



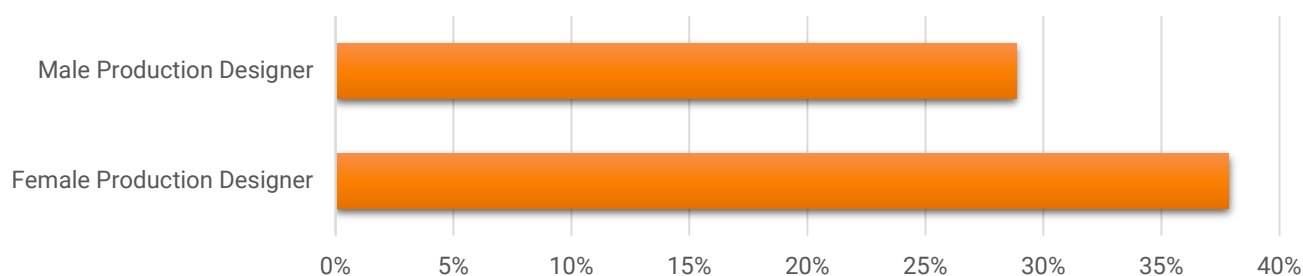
19.9% of the editorial crew are women when a film has a male editor and 23.9% when the editor is a woman. Meaning female editors on average hire 20.1% more women in their editorial departments than their male counterparts do.

Gender of the editorial department by gender of the editor, UK films 2005-14



Art department crew members working for male production designers are 28.9% female whereas those working for women production designers are 37.8% female, meaning female production designers on average hire 31.8% more women in their art departments than male production designers do.

Gender of the art department by gender of the Production Designer, UK films 2005-14

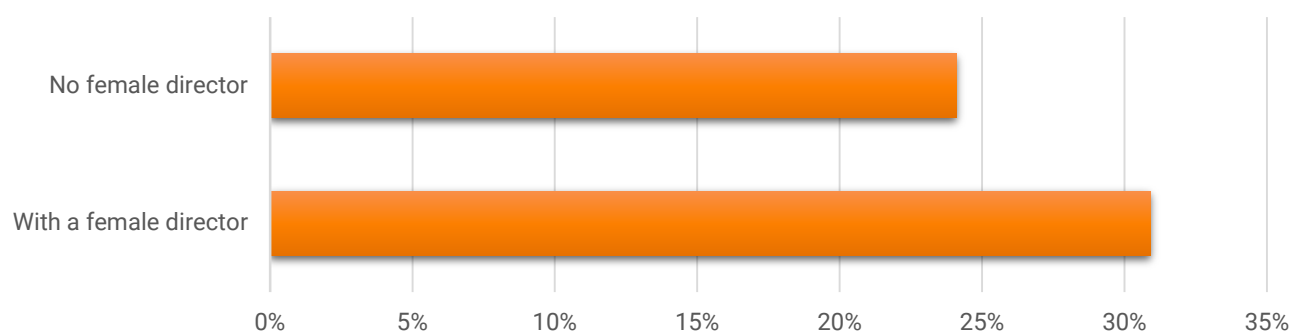


4.5 The effect of a woman director on female representation overall

- 30.9% of crew working on female-directed films are women, compared with 24.1% of crew on male-directed films.
- The difference is starkest for writers, where 65.4% of writers on female-directed projects are women compared with just 7.4% on male-directed films.

The effect illustrated in the previous section is also seen when studying the effect of a woman director. Across all crew members on all films, 30.9% of crew members were women when a woman was directing, and just 24.1% were women on male-directed films.

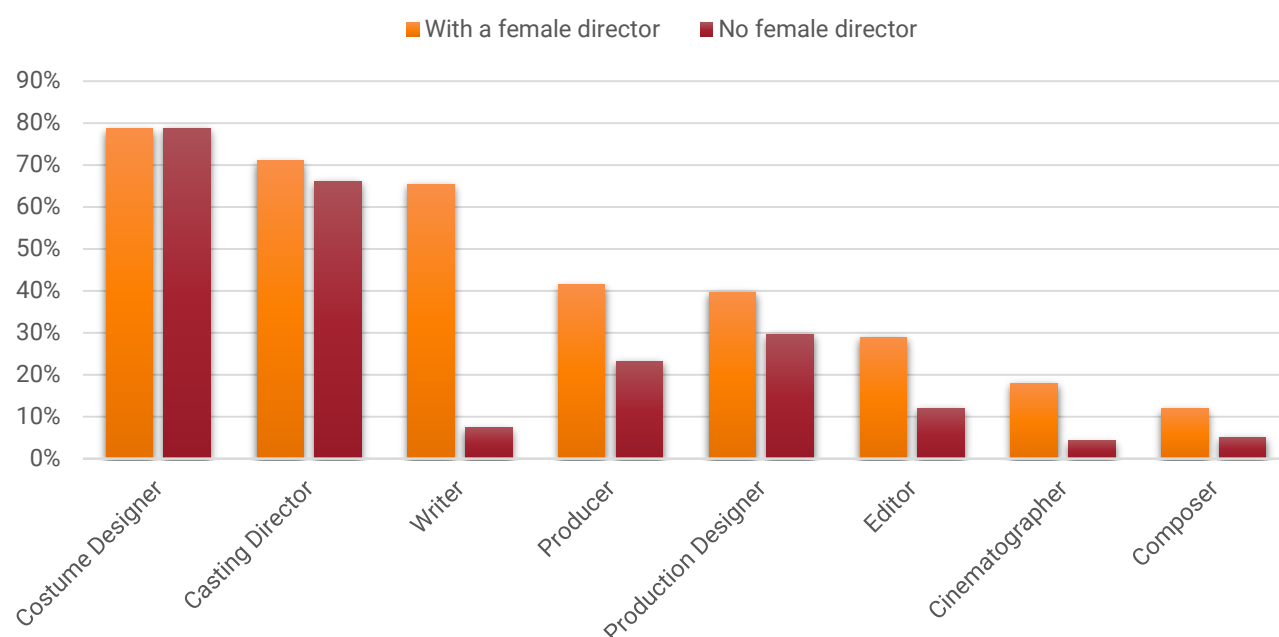
Percentage of crew members who were female, UK films 2005-14



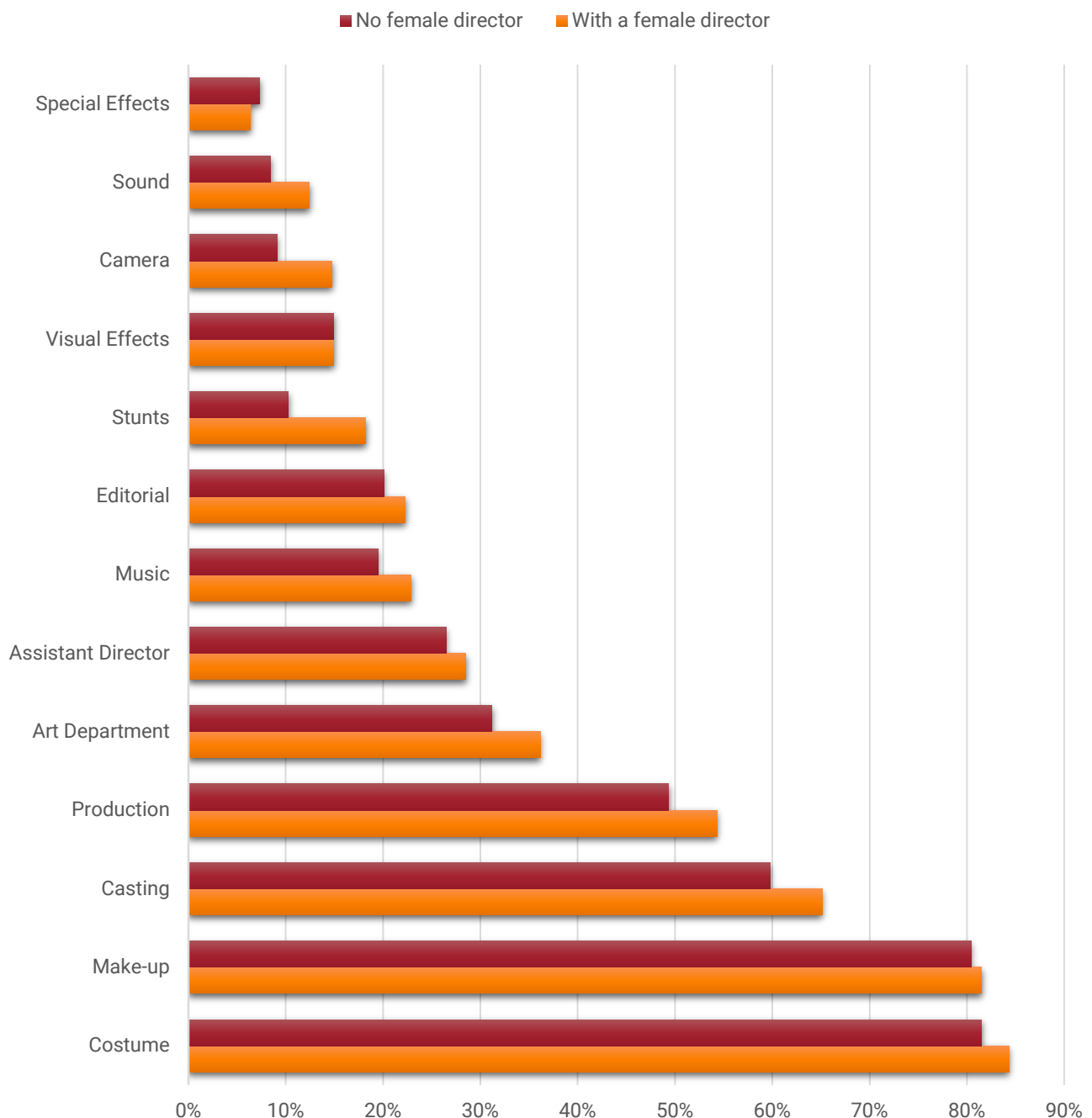
In all but one of the key creative roles, female representation increases when a women is directing. The one exception is the costume designer, where women account for 78.6% costume designers on female-directed films and 78.8% on male-directed films.

The difference is starkest for that of writers, where 65.4% of writers on female-directed projects are women compared with just 7.4% on male-directed films.

Female representation in key creative roles by gender of the director, UK films 2005-14



Female representation in major departments by gender of the director, UK films 2005-14



This report has focused on crew employment, but a cursory look at all credited cast members on UK films shows the same pattern. Actresses accounted for 37.8% of cast members of films with female directors and 31.3% of cast members on male-directed films.

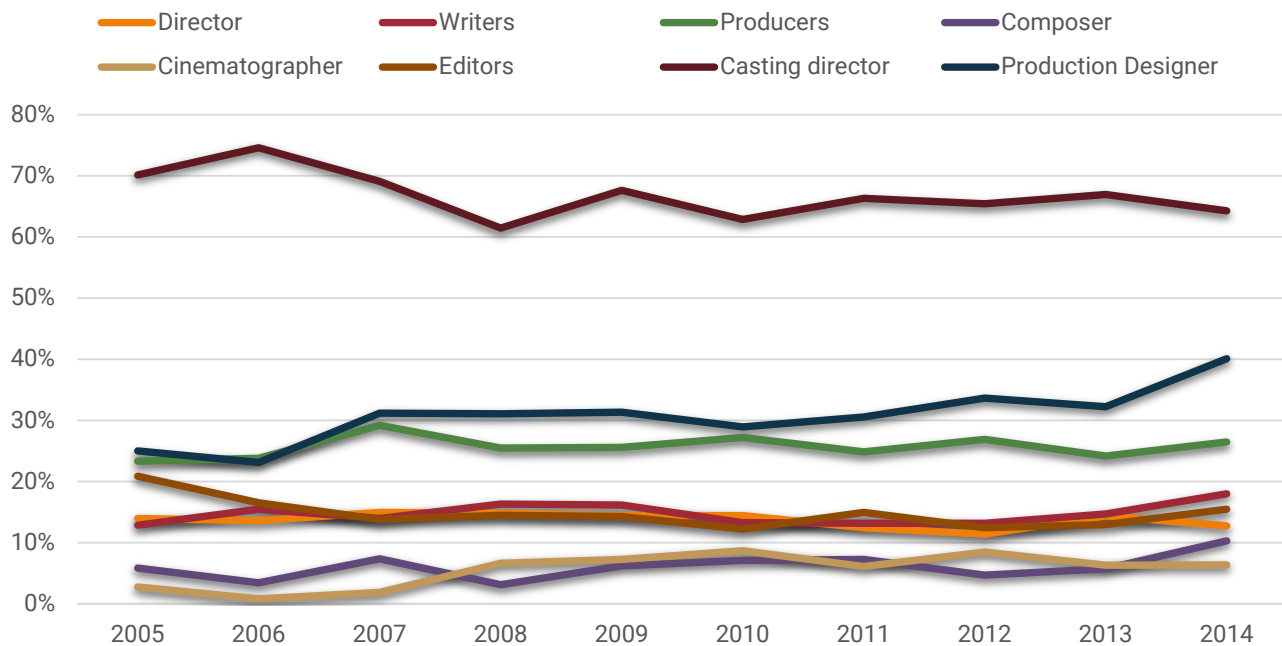
This could explain why the percentage of women stunt performers also dramatically increases on female-directed films, compared to male-directed files (18.2% vs 10.3%).

4.6 Changes in female representation on UK feature films over time

- There is no meaningful trend towards improvement in female representation in the UK film industry.

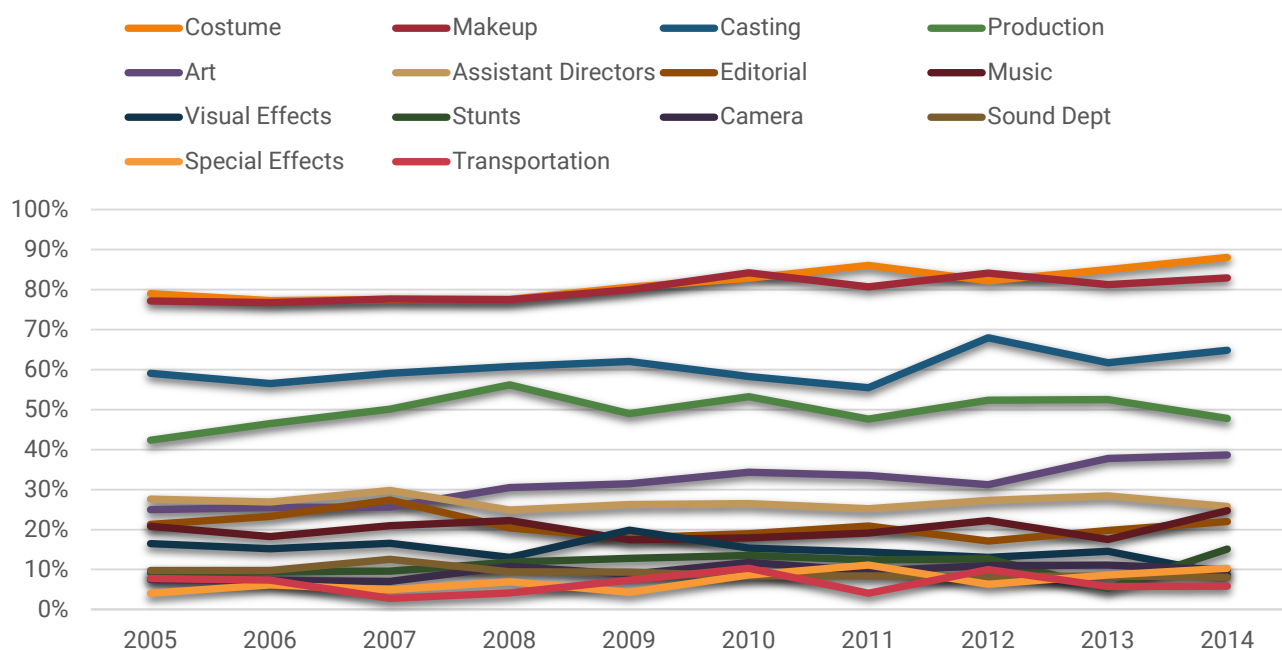
The graphs below serve to show that the trends shown above have not altered meaningfully in the last decade.

Women in key creative roles, UK films 2005-14



Just as Section 3.2 illustrated in respect to directors, although there are subtle variations throughout the period, there is no significant increase or decrease in the employment of women across departments.

Female crew of major departments, UK films 2005-14



Hence, although it is fair to say that the broad trend is towards greater employment of women, this shift is limited, both with respect to consistency across the industry and, crucially, in terms of the scale of improvement and the speed of change.

Two broad yet important conclusions can be drawn from this research:

1. **The issue of underrepresentation of women in the industry affects the majority of departments, crew positions, and key creative roles.** By extension we can conclude that the disparity between male and female employment affects the majority of the industry.
2. **There is little evidence to suggest a meaningful trend toward improvement.** Although in certain areas there have been improvements, they have, in the vast majority of cases been neither significant nor consistent. By extension, we can conclude that there is no momentum to redress the imbalance between men and women's employment more broadly across the industry, nor any reason to believe it will change adequately without external pressure.

5. Female directors in publicly-funded films

Female directors within UK publicly-funded feature films

- 25% of UK films 2005-14 received some form of public funding.
- 21.7% of the films with UK-based public funding had a woman director.
- Public funding support for films with female directors has fallen dramatically in the seven years.
- In 2008, 32.9% of films with UK-based public funding had a woman director whereas in 2014 it was just 17.0%.

Female directors within UK Regional Film Funding Schemes

- 37.3% of funding awards via Northern Ireland Screen (April 2007 to March 2015) went to female applicants.
- 49.7% of funding awards via Creative England (Jan 2011 to October 2015) went to female applicants.
- Women applying to Creative England have a much higher success rate (16.6%) than men applying (10.1%).
- 29% of funding awards via Ffilm Cymru Wales (Jan 2014 to May 2015) went to female applicants
- The BFI, Creative Scotland and Film London could not provide gender statistics for their funding applications.

More than one out of every five feature films made in the UK has been supported in some way by a public funding body. This serves to highlight the significant role the public funding bodies play in the UK film economy and is why we spent time studying how the employment of female directors differs between films which did and did not receive public funding.

5.1 Female directors within UK publicly-funded feature films

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- In 2008, 32.9% of films with UK-based public funding had a woman director whereas in 2014 it was just 17.0%.

Of the feature films in our initial dataset, 649 received some form of public funding (25.0%). We counted a total of 386 different public (and public-type) bodies²¹ which backed the films in the study in some way. We narrowed the focus to look at films supported by UK-based public bodies, which consisted of 563 films (21.7% of UK films).

²¹ Our definition of "public body" is quite broad, including dedicated film-funding bodies (e.g. the BFI), other arts bodies (e.g. the Arts Council of England), regional film funding (e.g. Film London), state-owned bodies (e.g. the BBC), local councils (e.g. Bristol City Council), foreign governmental organisations (e.g. the Irish Film Board), and charitable film funding bodies (e.g. the Bertha Foundation).

The table below shows the top twelve UK-based public funding bodies who backed UK feature films, 2005-14, ranked according to the number of UK films they have backed²².

UK-based Public Body	UK films backed	% of all UK films	% of UK films with UK-based public funding	% of films backed with a female director
BFI / UKFC ²³	244	9.4%	43.3%	20.1%
BBC ²⁴	95	3.7%	16.9%	27.4%
BBC Films ²⁵	84	3.2%	14.9%	16.7%
Creative Scotland ²⁶	64	2.5%	11.4%	18.8%
Ffilm Cymru Wales ²⁷	38	1.5%	6.7%	21.1%
Northern Ireland Screen ²⁸	33	1.3%	5.9%	18.2%
EM Media ²⁹	28	1.1%	5.0%	17.9%
Screen Yorkshire ³⁰	26	1.0%	4.6%	7.7%
Northern Film + Media ³¹	25	1.0%	4.4%	24.0%
The BRITDOC Foundation ³²	20	0.8%	3.6%	30.0%
Creative England ³³ .	19	0.7%	3.4%	42.1%
Screen East ³⁴ .	16	0.6%	2.8%	0.0%

²² Channel Four and Film4 Productions are not included in this list as they are not classified as a "Public Investor" within the BFI data. See Section 10.11 for more data relating to Channel 4 and Film4.

²³ BFI / UKFC: The UK Film Council was established in 2000 and was closed at the end of March 2011. Their funding duties were passed over to the British Film Institute. Schemes include *Film Fund*, *Premiere Fund*, *New Cinema and Development Fund*, completion funding, and locked box scheme.

²⁴ BBC: Including BBC, BBC Scotland, BBC Northern Ireland, BBC Storyville, BBC Alba, BBC Arts, BBC Worldwide, BBC North, BBC Wales, and BBC4.

²⁵ BBC Films: Feature-film arm of the publicly-owned BBC. We have separated this from the other forms of BBC funding as they appear to operate as an independent organisation from the main BBC.

²⁶ Creative Scotland: Scottish Screen was formed in 1997, taking on duties from the Scottish Film Council, the Scottish Film Production Fund, Scottish Screen Locations, and Scottish Broadcast and Film Training. In 2010 it merged with the Scottish Arts Council to form Creative Scotland.

²⁷ Ffilm Cymru Wales: The Film Agency for Wales was established in 2006 and changed its name to Ffilm Cymru Wales in May 2014.

²⁸ Northern Ireland Screen: Established as the Northern Ireland Film & Television Commission in 1977 and renamed to become Northern Ireland Screen in August 2005.

²⁹ EM Media: Regional screen agency for the East Midlands region, funded by the UKFC. Established in 2001 and closed in 2012. Its duties were taken up by the newly-formed Creative England.

³⁰ Screen Yorkshire: Regional body for the Yorkshire and Humber region. Funded as a regional screen agency by the UKFC between 2001-11 and since operating as an independent body.

³¹ Northern Film + Media: Regional body for the North-East region. Funded as a regional screen agency by the UKFC between 2001-11 and since operating as an independent body.

³² BRITDOC: Non-profit documentary organisation founded in 2005 and formerly known as the Channel 4 BRITDOC Foundation. Funded by Channel 4, NGOs (such as the Bertha Foundation), and commercial partnerships (such as with Puma).

³³ Creative England: Formed in 2011, taking over the duties of the English regional screen agencies (apart from Film London). Funded by the BFI and also supported partnerships with commercial organisations (such as Google, Microsoft, and Facebook). Responsible for supporting businesses across games, film, creative, and digital media

³⁴ Screen East: Regional body for the east of England region. Funded as a regional screen agency by the UKFC between 2001-10. Closed amid reports of financial irregularities. "Regional film agency Screen East folds amid reports of financial irregularities" The Guardian 13 September 2010 <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2010/sep/13/film-agency-screen-east-folds>

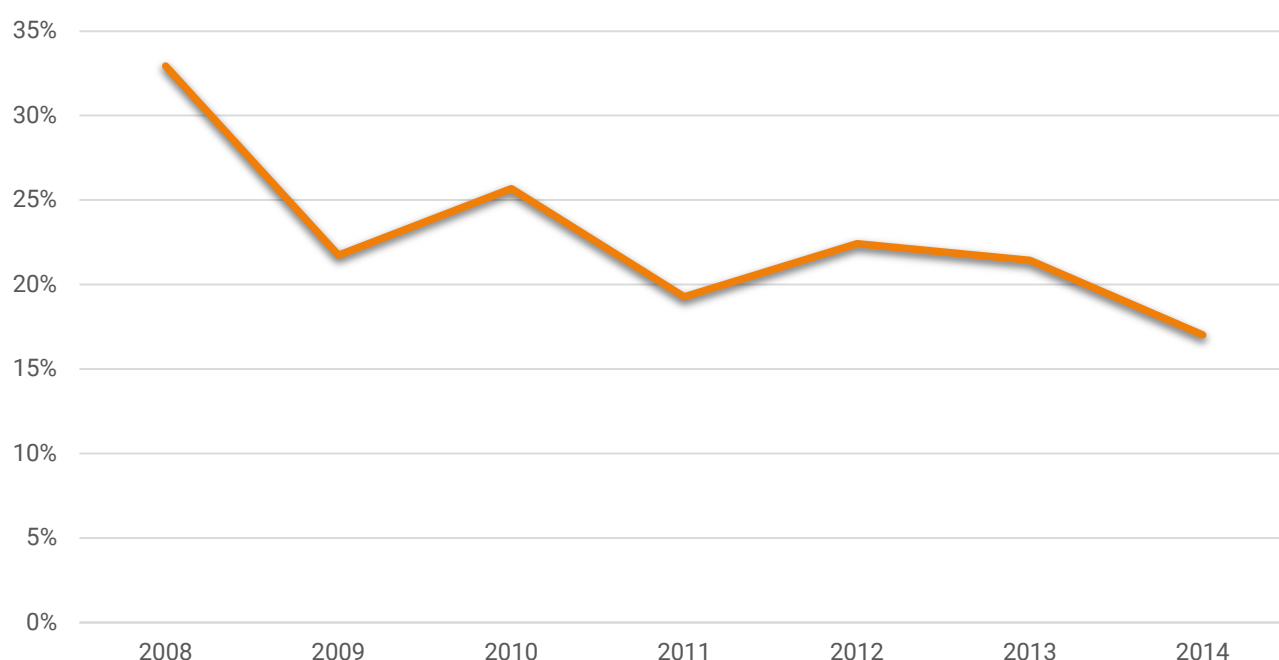
43.3% of films with some UK-based public funding were supported directly by the *BFI* (and *UK Film Council* before that). This understates the true influence of the *BFI* as they are also responsible for funding the national screen agencies, i.e. *Creative England*, *Film London*, *Creative Scotland*, *Ffilm Cymru Wales* and *Northern Ireland Screen*.

Other UK-based organisations who support UK films include *Arts Council of England*, local councils, *Film London*, *Screen South*, *Screen West Midlands*, *Isle of Man Film*, *North West Vision* and *South West Screen*. They did not appear in the previous table as they supported fewer than sixteen films in our dataset.

Over the ten-year period we studied, 21.7% of the films with UK-based public funding had a woman director. Of the 244 films directly supported by the *BFI* / *UKFC*, 20.1% had a woman director.

However, the overall average hides a clear decline in the support of female directors. As the chart below shows³⁵, in 2007, 32.9% of films with UK-based public funding had a woman director, whereas by 2014 that had dropped to just 17.0%.

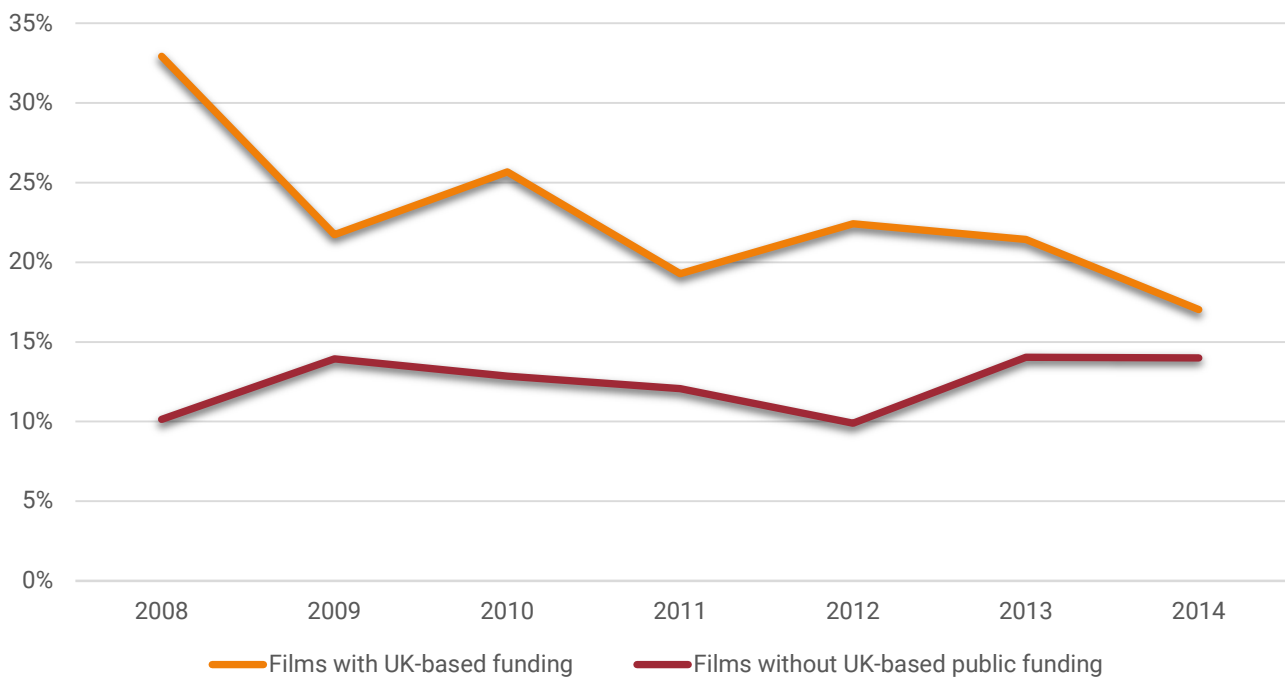
Percentage of UK films with UK-based public funding which had a female director



Even with this steep decline, publicly-supported films during our study period had better representation of female directors than the UK film industry as a whole.

³⁵We have excluded the years 2005-7 because the different method for data gathering during that period means that the number of films funded by a UK-based public body and with a female director were too small to include (i.e. 2005 = 5 films, 2006 = 7 films and 2007 = 3 films). See Section 10 for details.

Percentage of UK Films with a female director, split by level of support from a UK-based public funding body



In 2008, 32.9% of films supported by UK-based funding bodies were directed by a woman, in 2014 only 17% were. Across the same time period, the percentage of female-directed films without UK-based public funding increased from 10.1% to 14%.

If the current decline continues, then within a few years, publicly-funded films will no longer be supporting female directors more than the fully independent sector. Indeed, if funding for female-directed films continues to decline at the same rate it has between 2008-14, independent films and publicly funded films will reach the same level of female representation later this year³⁶ (i.e. 2016).

Recent policy changes

The BFI have recently implemented a number of new measures to promote diversity in the films they finance. Most recently their diversity standard outlines a set of required diversity criteria which applicants must meet to receive financing, and the new Screen Diversity mark of good practice will be awarded to projects which meet a higher level of diversity representation. It is too early to know what impact these new measures will have.

³⁶ This is not a prediction; it is simply the extension of the statistical trend. Many factors influence which films and which directors receive public funding. Most notably, the BFI's Three Ticks system began after our study period and so we would expect to see its effects in this type of analysis for the coming years (especially as almost half of the UK-based publicly backed films are directly supported by the BFI).

5.2 Female directors within UK regional film funding schemes

- 37.3% of funding awards via *Northern Ireland Screen* (April-07 to March-15) went to female applicants.
- 49.7% of funding awards via *Creative England* (Jan-11 to Oct-15) went to female applicants.
- Women applying to *Creative England* have a much higher success rate (16.6%) than men applying (10.1%).
- 29% of funding awards via *Ffilm Cymru Wales* (Jan-14 to May-15) went to female applicants
- The *BFI*, *Creative Scotland* and *Film London* could not provide gender statistics.

We sent Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to the major UK public funding bodies, asking them for details on the gender of applicants to their funding schemes. The results were as follows:

- **Northern Ireland Screen** were the most forthcoming³⁷, providing full gender details of applicants on thirty-three of their schemes³⁸ in the eight years between 2007-08 and 2014-15. See below for the results of this data.
- **Creative England** provided top-level data from 2011 onward (see below).
- **Ffilm Cymru Wales** provided information from January 2014 to May 2015. There were twenty-four production applications received, of which seven had female directors attached, which is 29% of applicant directors.
- **British Film Institute (BFI)** could not provide the data. They said: *"The BFI Film Fund reviewed and updated the diversity form attached to application forms just over 2 years ago. This was due to applicants not filling in the diversity questions. Despite our efforts we continue to receive less than 30% of applications with the diversity section filled thus making it difficult to get a true picture of applicants. As you may know, there is no legal obligation for applicants to divulge the information at the point of application. Unfortunately, due to the incomplete data we are unable to share any data as this would not be a true reflection of applicants"*.
- **BBC Films** could not provide the data. They said: *"I can confirm that the BBC does not hold this information. BBC Films has financially supported several film funding schemes. However, it doesn't administer these schemes and does not therefore hold any information about the applicants"*.
- **Creative Scotland** could not provide the data. They said: *"The equalities monitoring form is not a required part of the application process and although take-up is reasonably high the forms are separated from the original applications in order to anonymise the data therefore we have no way of filtering the stored information to relate specifically to film funding applications"*.
- **Film London** could not provide the data. They said: *"As a charity, we are not subject to FOI requests but as a transparent organisation comply with requests for information whenever we can. However, in this instance the information requested would unfortunately require significant deployment of internal resources and is therefore unavailable"*.

³⁷ One reason why *Northern Ireland Screen* released the most comprehensive data of all the screen agencies is that Chapter 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 commands them to "have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between persons of different religious beliefs, political opinion, racial group, age, material status or sexual orientation; between men and women generally; between persons with a disability and persons without; and between persons with dependants and persons without".
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/47/Chapter/75>

³⁸ They could not provide details for their largest film fund (Screen Fund) as it is not open to individuals and therefore they don't monitor gender data.

Northern Ireland Screen data

From the data they gave us (covering 2007-14), *Northern Ireland Screen* received 2,014 applications for funding, of which 749 were women (37.2%)³⁹. Across all schemes, 39.6% of applicants were successful and 37.3% of awards went to women.

The table below gives the headline results for all funding schemes from *Northern Ireland Screen* with at least ten applicants (between funding years 2007-18 and 2014-15).

Scheme	Applicants	% of applicants who were female	% of successful applicants who were female
Skills Development Bursaries / Skills Bursary Fund	648	36.1%	33.2%
Skills Focus	420	49.7%	48.3%
Skill Development - GoT Craft and Technical	138	23.9%	56.9%
National Lottery Funding (individuals) - production	129	21.9%	18.6%
Digital Shorts	94	16.2%	15.1%
ILBF New Entrants Scheme	76	63.8%	61.5%
Skill Development - Post Production	71	23.4%	8.5%
Skill Development - Craft and Technical	62	39.3%	50.0%
Screen Skills	58	47.4%	38.1%
Screen Skills Workshops	55	42.1%	37.0%
Skill Development - Dracula Craft and Technical	30	48.1%	57.1%
Short Steps and Deviate	28	25.8%	54.6%
Digital Nation	22	15.0%	33.2%
National Lottery Funding (individuals) - development	21	31.9%	28.6%
Skill Development - Drama Directing	21	31.0%	33.3%
Skill Development - Motion Graphics	20	55.0%	61.9%
ILBF Trainee Producer Scheme	19	46.1%	76.1%
Skill Development - Script	19	24.1%	50.0%
Skill Development - VFX	11	9.1%	11.1%
Skill Development - Sound Post Production	11	9.1%	0.0%
Skill Development - Casting	10	20.0%	0.0%

We were not given details of the amounts awarded so we cannot report how the money was allocated.

³⁹The overall averages may be ever so slightly out due to a number of factors including rounding in their published data, changes in how *Northern Ireland Screen* has reported the data over the eight years and a couple of typos we found in their reports. In addition, despite the best efforts by *Northern Ireland Screen* (they have a high data capture rate), it is not realistic to get demographic data on every single applicant. Therefore, the raw numbers of applicants are actual numbers whereas the demographic percentages only relate to people who have completed monitoring forms.

Creative England data

Of the applications *Creative England* received between January 2011 and October 2015 inclusive, 37.6% were from women⁴⁰.

Gender	Number of applications	Percentage of applicants with known gender
Female	1,751	37.6%
Male	2,905	62.3%
Transgender	4	0.1%
Gender not given	822	
Total no. applicants	5,482	

Female applicants have a much higher success rate (16.6%) than male applicants (10.1%).

	Applicants	Awards	Awards with known gender	Success rate
Female	1,751	290	49.7%	16.6%
Male	2,905	293	50.2%	10.1%
Transgender	4	1	0.2%	25.0%
Gender not given	822	198		24.1%
Total	5,482	782		14.3%

It is encouraging to note that both in the data above and in the previous section, *Creative England* appear to be extremely supportive of female directors⁴¹. 42.1% of the films they supported in development and/or production had a woman director and roughly half of their funding awards go to female applicants (see above).

⁴⁰ *Creative England* received 8,482 applications, of which 822 were listed as "Gender not given". Therefore, the 37.6% figure relates to the 1,751 applications they received from women within the 4,660 applications of which the applicant's gender is known.

⁴¹ Only *Film London* had a higher representation of women among their backed films, with half of all *Film London*-backed films in our dataset being directed by at least one woman. However, they were not in the top twelve UK-based public funding bodies by volume (only having backed 12 films in our study) and did not provide us with gender data on their funding award applicants for this section.

6. Female directors in related sectors

Female directors of British short films

- Women make up 27.2% of directors of the 4,388 short films in the *British Council's* British Film Database.

Female directors of films shortlisted at major international film festivals

- Within our sample of major international film festivals, female directors are better represented within short films (25.4% of directors) than within feature films (15.9%).
- *Sundance* had the highest female representation within feature films (32.6% of directors) and *Cannes* had the lowest (8.5%).
- Film festival juries with male majority are more likely to give awards to male directors.

Female directors within the UK television industry

- There is compelling evidence for the existence of gender stereotyping of television programmes directed by women across genres, particularly in factual television.
- Only 14% of drama television programmes are directed by women.
- Production executives responsible for hiring were (in 2013) unaware of low figures for female directors.

Women within the UK theatre industry

- Women are under-represented in senior positions in the UK theatre industry.
- The larger the organisation, the harder it is for women to progress to senior roles.
- There is an issue with career progression for women as artistic directors in UK theatre.
- It's not the result of a lack of supply of women candidates.

Female directors in European film

- Between 2003 and 2012, 16.3% of European films had a woman director.
- The majority of top female-directed films had female protagonists, were told from a women's point of view and dealt mostly with romance and relationships.
- Very few films by male-directors had these elements.

Women within UK film degree courses

- Women account for roughly half of all film students.
- The percentage of women applying for film-related degree courses is increasing.
- For each specialism, women are better represented in UK film degree courses than within crew employment in the UK film industry.
- On average across all film-related degree programmes (2007-14) each course received 337 applications for sixty-six student places, meaning that one in five applications were successful.

Widening the focus briefly, we looked at female representation in related fields in order to help us understand why there are so few female directors hired to make feature films within the UK film industry.

6.1 Female directors of British short films

- Women make up 27.2% of directors of the 4,388 short films in the *British Council's* British Film Database.

Short films are extremely difficult to track en masse as there is no single register or database. Therefore, we chose two methods of sampling gender within short films: using the *British Council's* directory of British short films (see below) and tracking short films short-listed at major international film festivals (see Section 6.2)

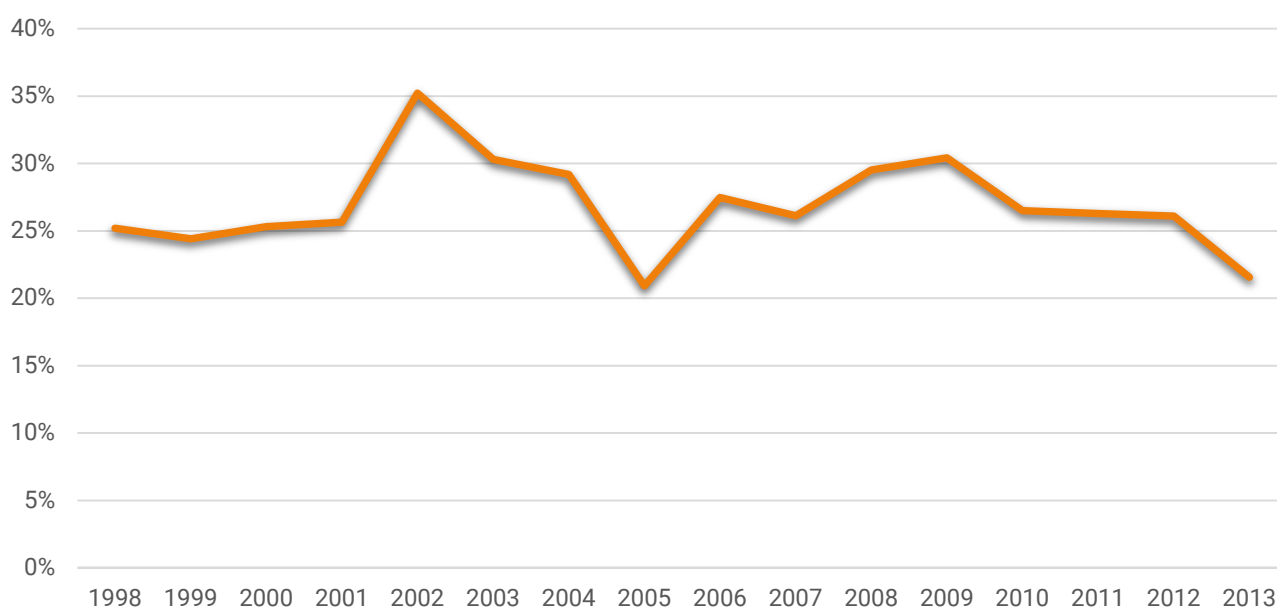
Of the *British Council's* online '*British Film Directory*', 4,388 are short films, the vast majority of which were made between 1998 and 2013. See Section 10.9 for a full breakdown of the films.

Women make up 27.2% of directors of the short films in the *British Film Directory*⁴².

The representation of female directors changed significantly between years (35.2% in 2002 and 20.9% in 2005) although this is likely to be due more to the data-gathering methodology of the database than the result of any great shift in the overall number of female short film directors.

The chart below shows the percentage of female directors of short films on the database⁴³.

Female representation among directors of films listed in the British Council's British Film Directory



The aim of the *British Council* database is to catalogue British short films which are 'professionally made' and 'have, or are likely to achieve, theatrical or festival distribution'. However, the database cannot be seen as a 'complete' record of UK short films due to its reliance on self-reported data from filmmakers.

In addition, there was no reliable method for verifying the quality of the films, as the *British Council* cannot be reasonably expected to verify the quality of each film themselves.

Therefore, in order to get a sense of the female representation among the very best films, we looked into a number of film festivals.

⁴² The *British Council* actually has a genre classification of 'Woman Director', however we have found that it's not always applied correctly. 18.9% of their short films have this classification but our research reveals the true figure to be higher (27.2%)

⁴³ Due to the significant drop in new entries in 2014 and 2015, these years have been excluded from the chart.

6.2 Female directors of films shortlisted at major international film festivals

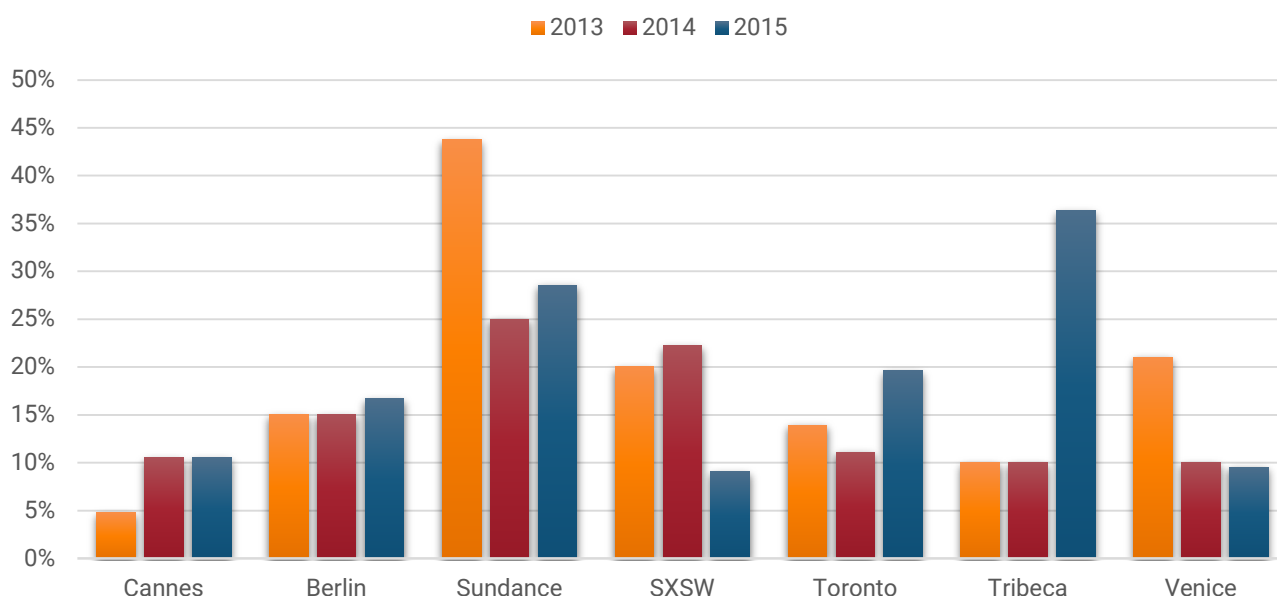
- Within our sample of major international film festivals, female directors are better represented within short films (25.4% of directors) than within feature films (15.9%).
- *Sundance* had the highest female representation within feature films (32.6% of directors) and *Cannes* had the lowest (8.5%).
- Film festival juries with male majority are more likely to give awards to male directors.

We studied 1,145 films (feature and short films) shortlisted at eight International film festivals⁴⁴ between 2013-15, namely *Aspen ShortsFest*, *Berlin International Film Festival*, *Cannes Film Festival*, *Sundance Film Festival*, *South by Southwest (SXSW)*, *Toronto International Film Festival*, *Tribeca Film Festival*, and *Venice Film Festival*. See Section 10.10 for more on our methodology.

Between 2013 and 2015, our festivals⁴⁵ short-listed 488 feature films from 501 individual directors. 15.9% of the feature film directors were women.

Over our three-year period, Sundance had the highest representation of women feature films directors (32.6%), followed by *Tribeca* (19.4%), *SXSW* (16.7%), *Berlin* (15.5%), *Toronto* (14.5%), *Venice* (13.3%), and finally *Cannes* (8.5%).

Female representation among directors of feature films shortlisted at major international film festivals



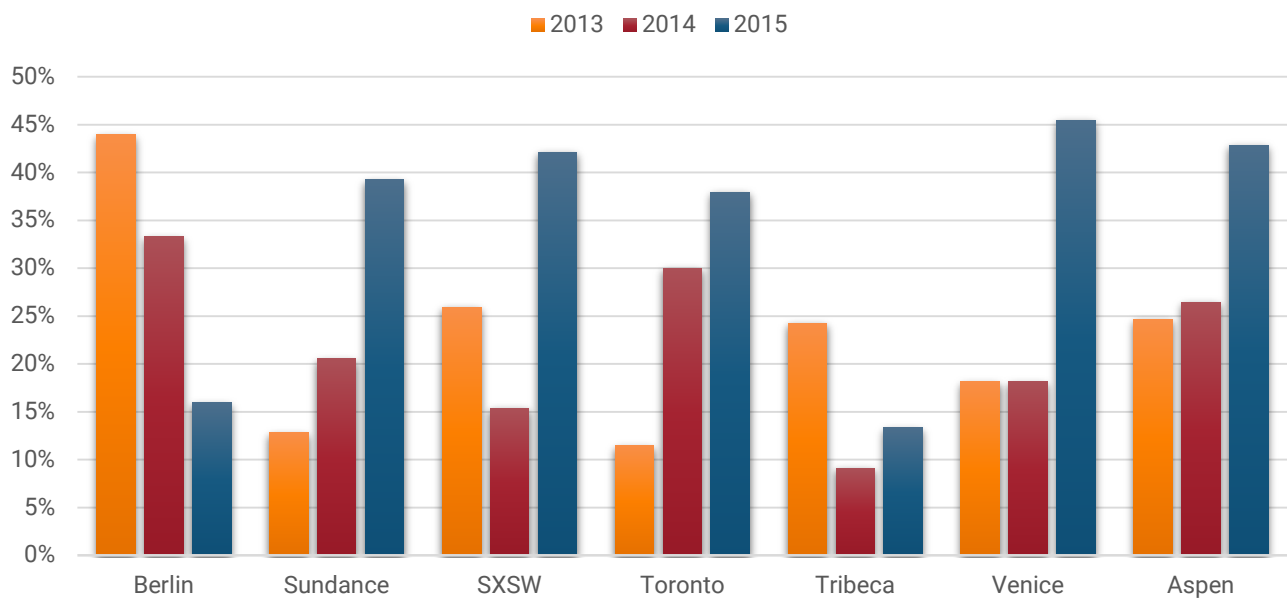
Within the 714 short-listed short films over the same period, 25.4% of directors were women.

Each year saw a rise in the overall representation of female directors: 2013 (22.7%), 2014 (23.1%), and 2015 (31.3%). You would need to go back much further than we were able to in order to infer whether this is part of a broader trend or not.

⁴⁴ These festivals were selected on the basis that they represent highly-regarded film festivals where being short-listed would significantly add to a director's credibility, they are reasonably accessible to new filmmakers without existing industry connections and where complete data was available. See subsection 10.10 for more details.

⁴⁵ The *Aspen ShortsFest* does not screen feature films so was excluded from the feature film data

Female representation among directors of short films shortlisted at major international film festivals



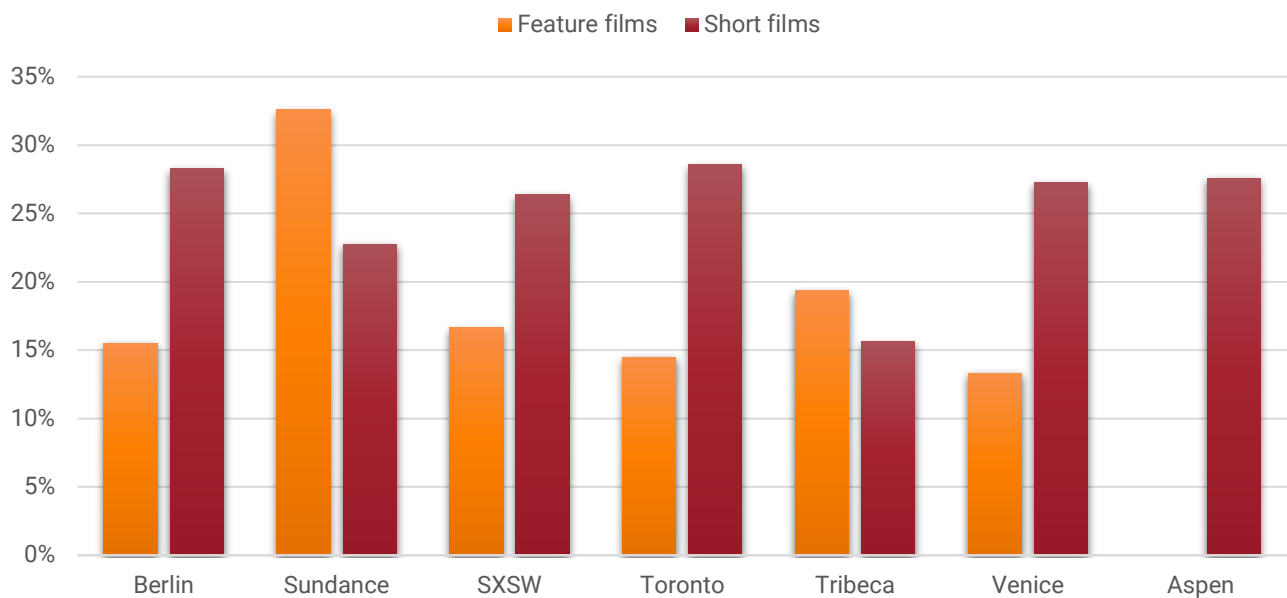
Crucially, there does not appear to be any significant difference between the percentages of women directing short films at film festivals and the percentage of short films directed by women more generally (as seen in the previous section).

This suggests that there is no significant issue for women getting early work selected for film festivals, hence the restriction on career progression does not occur at this initial stage.

When averaged over a three-year period, we can see that five out of the six studied festivals which screen feature films had a much healthier representation of women among their short films than they did from their feature films.

The only exception is *Sundance*, due in large part to 2013, when they had an unusually high proportion of women feature film directors (43.8%) and unusually low proportion of women short film directors (12.8%).

Female representation among directors of shortlisted films at major international film festivals, 2013-15



This further supports our finding that female directors find it disproportionately difficult to progress at each stage of their career.

Film festival juries

A big part of the film festival experience is how the winning films are selected. A study⁴⁶ of the effects of the jury at the *International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam* between 2003 and 2013 found:

- Juries with male majority are more likely to give awards to male directors
- 35 male majorities juries appointed 28% women winners
- 18 women majorities juries appointed 48% women winners
- The audience appointed 36% women winners

⁴⁶ "Female Filmmakers at the IDFA over the last decade" <https://www.idfa.nl/industry/daily/2014/in-depth/the-female-gaze-idfa-statistics.aspx>

6.3 Female directors within the UK television industry

- There is compelling evidence for the existence of gender stereotyping of television programmes directed by women across genres, particularly in factual television.
- Only 14% of drama television programmes are directed by women.
- Decisions on hiring of television directors are influenced by the opinions (or perceived opinions) of commissioners, and occur in a risk-averse culture that keeps hiring the same directors.
- Production executives responsible for hiring were (in 2013) unaware of low figures for female directors.
- 26.9% of Directors UK members are women.

Directors UK's May 2014 report into female television directors⁴⁷ examined programmes made in-house by BBC and ITV Studios, as well as those made by six leading independent production companies: *All3Media*, *Endemol*, *Fremantle*, *Kudos*, *Shed*, and *Zodiak*. Together, these independent production companies accounted for 43.6% of the total business turnover generated in 2013 by the top 100 independent production companies⁴⁸.

This report covers programmes monitored up to and including 2012. The research was compiled during 2013. The data is drawn from their database of broadcast credits which have been comprehensively monitored since 2003. The overwhelming majority of programmes included in the study fall within the monitoring period of 2003-2012.

For reference, 26.9% of *Directors UK's* 5,260 members are women, although the figure is much higher for younger directors (39% of their members aged 35 to 44 are women).

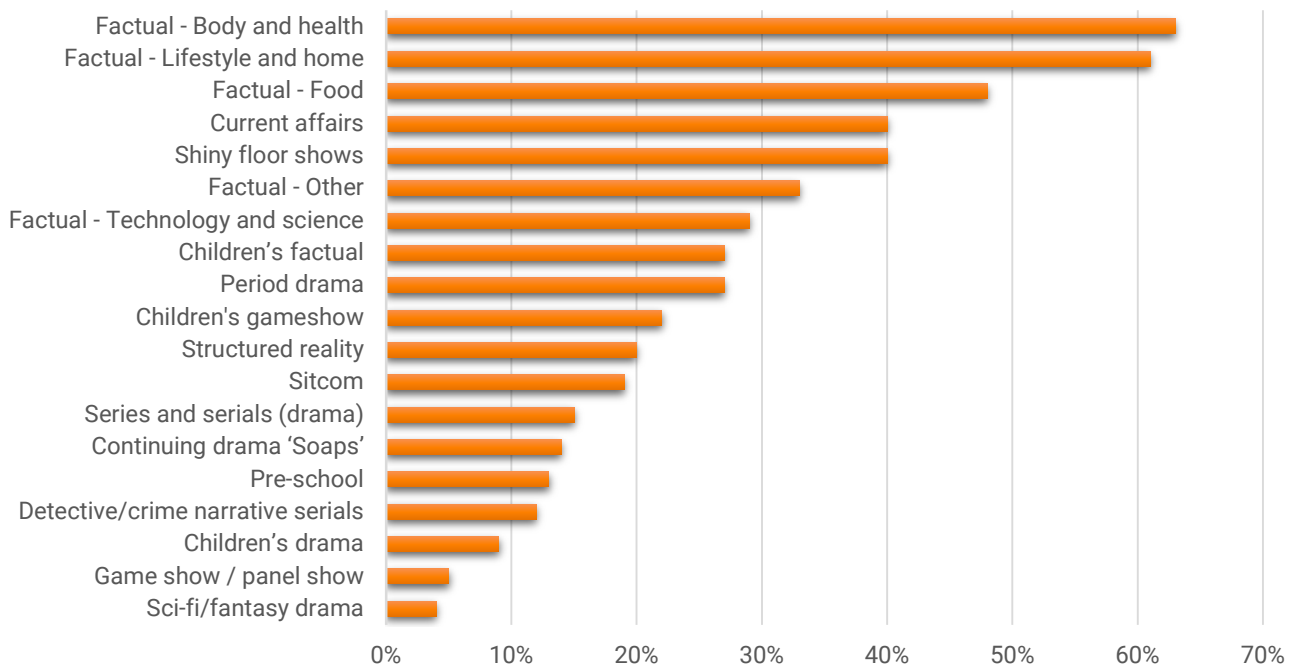
Women were best represented in factual television, where they accounted for 50% of the directing credits. On average, women directed 16% of programmes aimed at children, 14% of drama programmes, and 12% of entertainment and comedy programmes.

Directors UK also discovered compelling evidence for gender stereotyping of the programmes directed by women across genres, particularly in factual television. Women are more likely to direct factual programmes concerned with body issues, food, or homes. 29% of all factual programmes about technology and science in the total sample were directed by women.

⁴⁷ "Female directors – Who's Calling The Shots?" report May 2014 *Directors UK* <https://www.directors.uk.com/campaigns/women-directors-campaign>

⁴⁸ According to the 2014 Broadcast Indie Survey <http://www.broadcastnow.co.uk/indies/the-indie-survey/>

Percentage of episodes with a female director, within major UK television genres



Note: "Shiny floor" is an industry term for shows such as 'Strictly Come Dancing' and 'X Factor' (defined by the New York Times as "bold, brash light-entertainment TV shows"⁴⁹).

The report concluded that the main reasons behind this inequality were:

1. Decisions on hiring are influenced by the opinions (or perceived opinions) of commissioners, in a risk-averse culture that keeps hiring the same directors.
2. Production executives responsible for hiring are unaware of low figures for female directors.
3. There is no uniform or consistent monitoring of the freelance workforce throughout the industry.
4. Beyond a trusted few, there is a lack of awareness of a large number of highly qualified and experienced women drama directors.
5. Gender stereotyping is prevalent when hiring in specific genres: drama, factual, and comedy

Following the analysis, *Directors UK* met with many of the Executives and Commissioners behind these shows. Their report comments:

Both broadcasters and independent production companies expressed shock at the findings. All companies approached have equal opportunities statements and strategies in place, yet these results are in direct contradiction to a corporate ethic uniformly expressed on company websites and in mission statements, which promote equality of opportunity for all.

The sense of shock was also a response to the fact that senior executives in these companies did not know this information. They had not been in a position to monitor and evaluate this data about their freelance directors, or other freelance production crew members.

All expressed an appetite to work with Directors UK to create more job opportunities for female directors as a priority, as it's clear that women can – and when given the opportunity, do – direct any programme type.

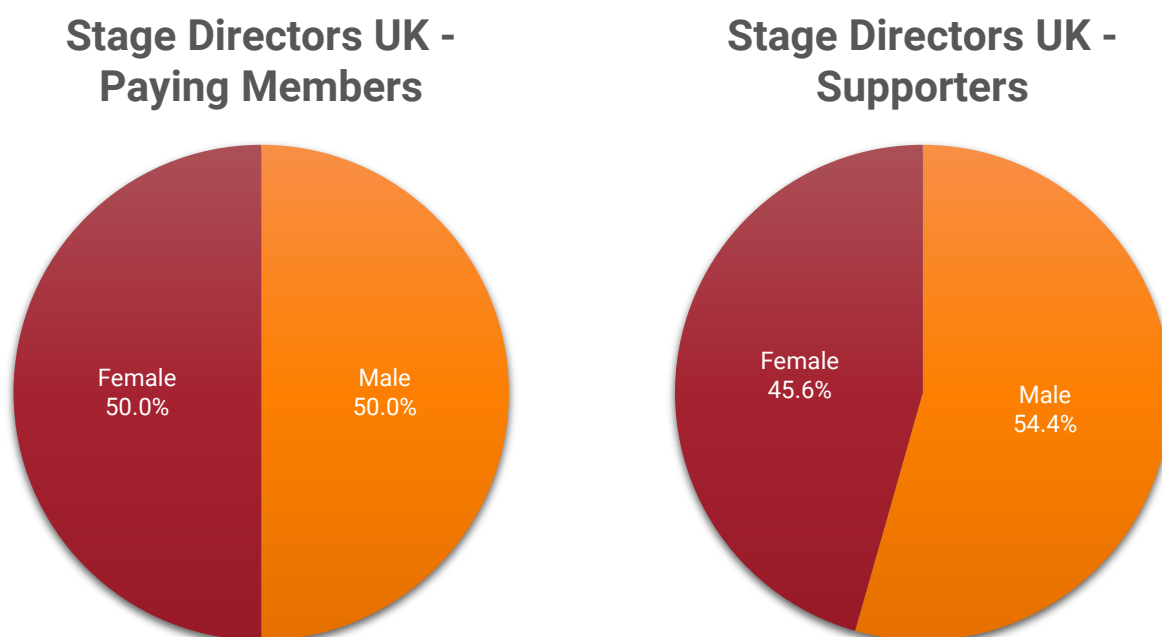
⁴⁹ "Shiny Floor Shows" April 2010 New York Times <http://schott.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/04/01/shiny-floor-shows/>

6.4 Women within the UK theatre industry

- Women are under-represented in senior positions in the UK theatre industry.
- The larger the organisation, the harder it is for women to progress to senior roles.
- There is an issue with career progression for women as artistic directors in UK theatre.
- It's not the result of a lack of supply of women candidates.

It is useful to briefly study female representation in the UK theatre industry as it is a common training ground for UK film directors.

Stage Directors UK are the only body which represents UK theatre and opera directors and they were able to provide detail on their 224 paying members and 831 supporters⁵⁰.



These numbers are useful; however they do not tell us about the type or frequency of work each director performs. It is certainly possible that the situation differs for male and female directors, as we showed it does in the UK film industry with regard to genre, budget, and career prospects (see Chapter 3).

In order to see how industry opportunities differ by gender, we turned to *Tonic's Advance* programme⁵¹ six-month study of 641 senior members of the theatre industry. Their key findings were:

1. **Women make up just a third of artistic directors.** Just 36% of the 188 artistic directors⁵² of the 179 theatres or theatre companies in *Arts Council England's* National Portfolio are women.
2. **And it's worse within larger organisations.** Of the forty-six artistic directors working across organisations in receipt of £500,000 or more, just 24% are women.
3. **There is an issue with career progression for women as artistic directors.** Female artistic directors at smaller organisations (in receipt of less than £500,000) are better represented, but still only make up 41% of the total. This points to a similar problem we observed in the film industry,

⁵⁰ *Stage Directors UK's* "supporters" are people who have signed up to follow what *SDUK* are doing, but aren't paying subscriptions.

⁵¹ *Tonic's Advance* programme: <http://www.tonictheatre-advance.co.uk/>

⁵² It should be noted that the role of an artistic director in theatre and that of a film director differ in several ways. An artistic director is responsible for running a theatre building, including devising the creative programming and balancing budgets, so some of the responsibilities of an artistic director would be closer to that of a film producer or studio executive.

where female directors not only struggle to break into the industry, but also find it harder than their male counterparts to progress once within the industry.

4. **Plays by women writers are typically placed in the smaller venue.** In theatres with multiple spaces, 74% of plays written by women were programmed in the smaller space, with just 24% in the larger space. Of the full productions in 2013 across eleven London theatres, large venues/spaces showed just 24% shows written by women, but in smaller/secondary spaces, 64% showed plays by female playwrights.
5. **It's not the result of a lack of supply of women candidates.** The inequality between male and women theatre directors also does not appear to simply be the result of a greater number of men wanting to be directors. *Tonic* found that of those registered as part of the *Young Vic Theatre's Directors Network*, 60% are women.

Although it is primarily an issue for the theatre industry, these results also create an additional issue for the film industry as many film directors made their start in theatre (see Chapter 7 for details). If female directors do not receive equal opportunities in the theatre, then that will necessarily hamper the number of female film directors, as it will be harder for them to progress to a point where the transition across from one industry to another is possible. This further limits the number of female film directors, as well as their opportunities.

6.5 Female directors in European film

- Between 2003 and 2012, 16.3% of European films had a woman director.
- The majority of top female-directed films had female protagonists, were told from a women's point of view and dealt mostly with romance and relationships.
- Very few films by male-directors had these elements.

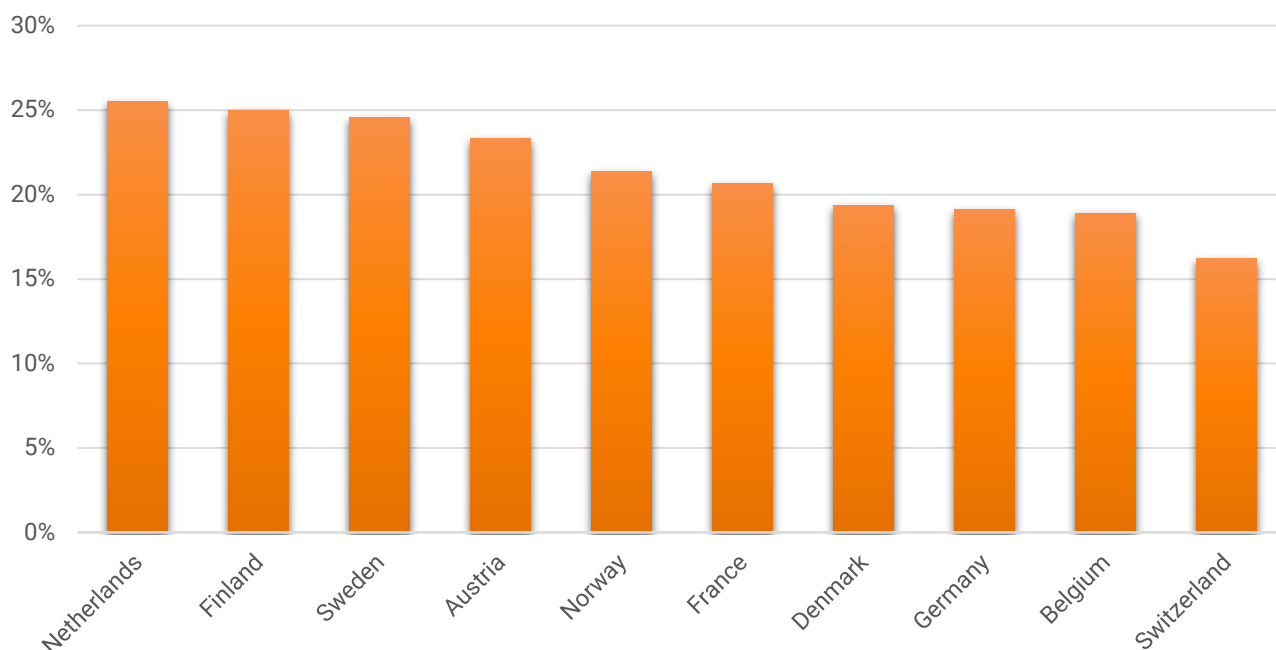
A 2014 report⁵³ from the *European Audiovisual Observatory* (EAO) used their *LUMIERE* database to study 9,072 European films produced and released between 2003 and 2012.

They found that during this period, 16.3% of European films had been directed by women.

Female representation increased slightly across the period, although at the current rate there would not be gender equality within European film directors until the year 2065.

The report does not provide full details for each European country, but did provide the ten-year average for countries above the European average (see chart below). The UK, Italy, Spain, and Turkey all ranked below the European average.

Percentage of films with a female director, 2003-12



They went on to study in more detail the top grossing 1% of films in their dataset (90 films in total⁵⁴). They found that the vast majority of top films directed exclusively by women had the following elements in common:

1. A woman protagonist (or concentrate characters who are women).
2. The story is told through the eyes of a woman narrator (be it the protagonist, another character, or a third-person narrator).

⁵³ "Female directors in European films: State of play and evolution between 2003 and 2012" by Julio Talavera Milla, *European Audiovisual Observatory* http://www.obs.coe.int/en/shop/allpub/-/asset_publisher/A8yB/content/female-directors-in-european-films

⁵⁴ This included 75 male directed films (approximately 1% of 7,479 male-directed films in their study) and 15 female-directed films (approximately 1% of the 1,479 films by female directors).

3. The film deals with romance and relationships.

Very few top films by male directors featured these elements. The report's author commented:

This would be an argument in favour of the hypothesis that female directors are not given the opportunity to direct those films which appear to have more prospects of becoming blockbusters, but only projects that are supposed to be aimed at a women. Whether this happens because women are not entrusted with the directing of such high-budget projects or is the result of prejudice as to the kinds of stories women can tell is well beyond the scope of our analysis.

Sizable and sustained improvement for female directors in Sweden

An interesting footnote to these findings is that in the years since this report's study period (2003-12), the representation of female directors in the Swedish film industry has almost doubled, to close to 50%.

This is covered in more detail as a case study in Section 12.

6.6 Women within UK film degree courses

- Women account for roughly half of all film students.
- The percentage of women applying for film-related degree courses is increasing.
- For each specialism, women are better represented in UK film degree courses than within crew employment in the UK film industry.
- On average across all film-related degree programmes (2007-14) each course received 337 applications for sixty-six student places, meaning that one in five applications were successful.

Using data from *Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)*, we tracked the gender of students applying to UK film-based degree courses⁵⁵, as well as the gender of the students eventually accepted and enrolled.

It is important to investigate the number of women film students, because the argument is frequently voiced that there are fewer female film directors due to a lack of interest. If we can prove that there are a higher number of women applying for, and being accepted into film degree courses, than working in the UK film industry, then, at the very least, this shows that there is a greater desire among female students to work in film, than is being answered by the industry.

The *UCAS* data provided the gender of applicants and accepted students on 1,874 different degree programmes loosely related to film⁵⁶ (2007-2014, inclusive).

We divided the degree courses into sub-categories depending on their declared focus. Some courses were included in multiple sub-categories due to combined honours, with the average course appearing in 1.47 sub-categories.

Across the 1,874 courses, there were 631,890 applications made by students and 123,875 students were eventually enrolled (presumably, most students applied to a number of courses but accepted just one offer).

On average, for each course 337 applications were made for sixty-six student places, meaning that one in five applications were successful.

⁵⁵ We were only able to track students who applied for degree courses via the *UCAS* system. This means that this will not include non-accredited courses at some private film schools. We were unable to find an independent measure of gender within private film schools but from 'off-the-record' conversations with a number of such schools, we are confident that the overall picture is extremely similar to that illustrated here via the *UCAS* data.

⁵⁶ Our criterion was all UK-based degree courses listed by *UCAS* within their P3 (Media Studies) and W6 (Cinematics and photography) categories, as well as courses with the word 'Film' in their title. We then manually removed the erroneous courses.

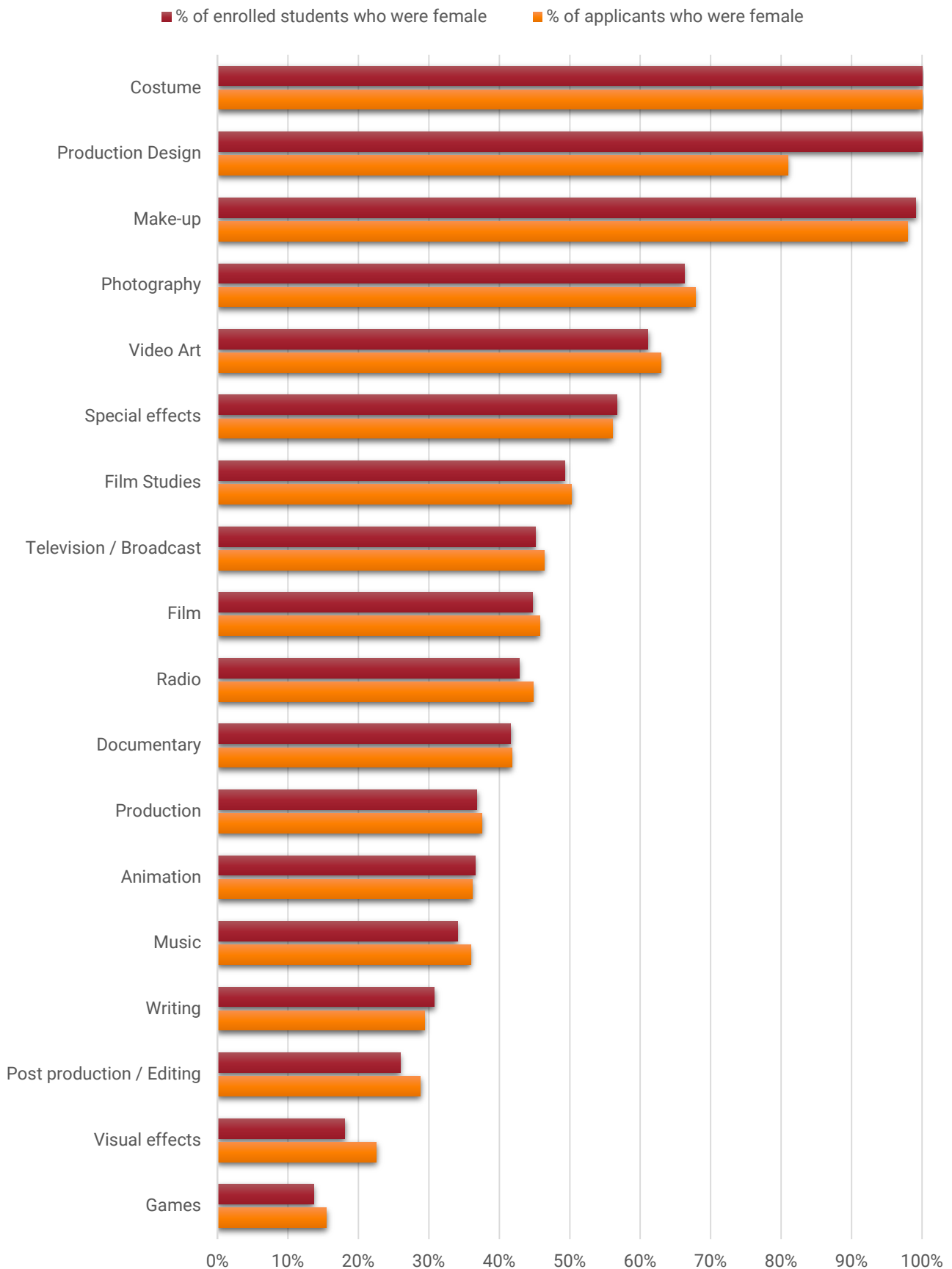
	Degree programmes	Applications made	Students enrolled	Acceptance rate
Film	1,144	302,525	53,690	17.7%
Television / Broadcast	413	122,920	22,780	18.5%
Film Studies	401	84,110	13,505	16.1%
Production	305	145,795	29,095	20.0%
Photography	165	141,290	28,495	20.2%
Animation	78	32,895	6,765	20.6%
Radio	78	10,710	2,395	22.4%
Music	74	6,620	1,395	21.1%
Post production / Editing	20	2,760	810	29.3%
Visual effects	19	3,260	775	23.8%
Games	15	2,360	550	23.3%
Special effects	11	1,750	485	27.7%
Make-up	9	4,115	545	13.2%
Production Design⁵⁷	5	105	5	4.8%
Documentary	5	2,250	625	27.8%
Writing	4	1,770	390	22.0%
Video Art	2	405	90	22.2%
Costume	2	150	50	33.3%

Overall, 51.6% of all applications were made by women and 50.1% of enrolled students were women.

However, there were some topics which had an extremely high proportion of applicants were women, such as Costume (100%), Make-up (97.9%), and Production Design (81%), while others had very low female representation, e.g. Post Production (28.8%), Visual Effects (18.1%), and Games (13.6%).

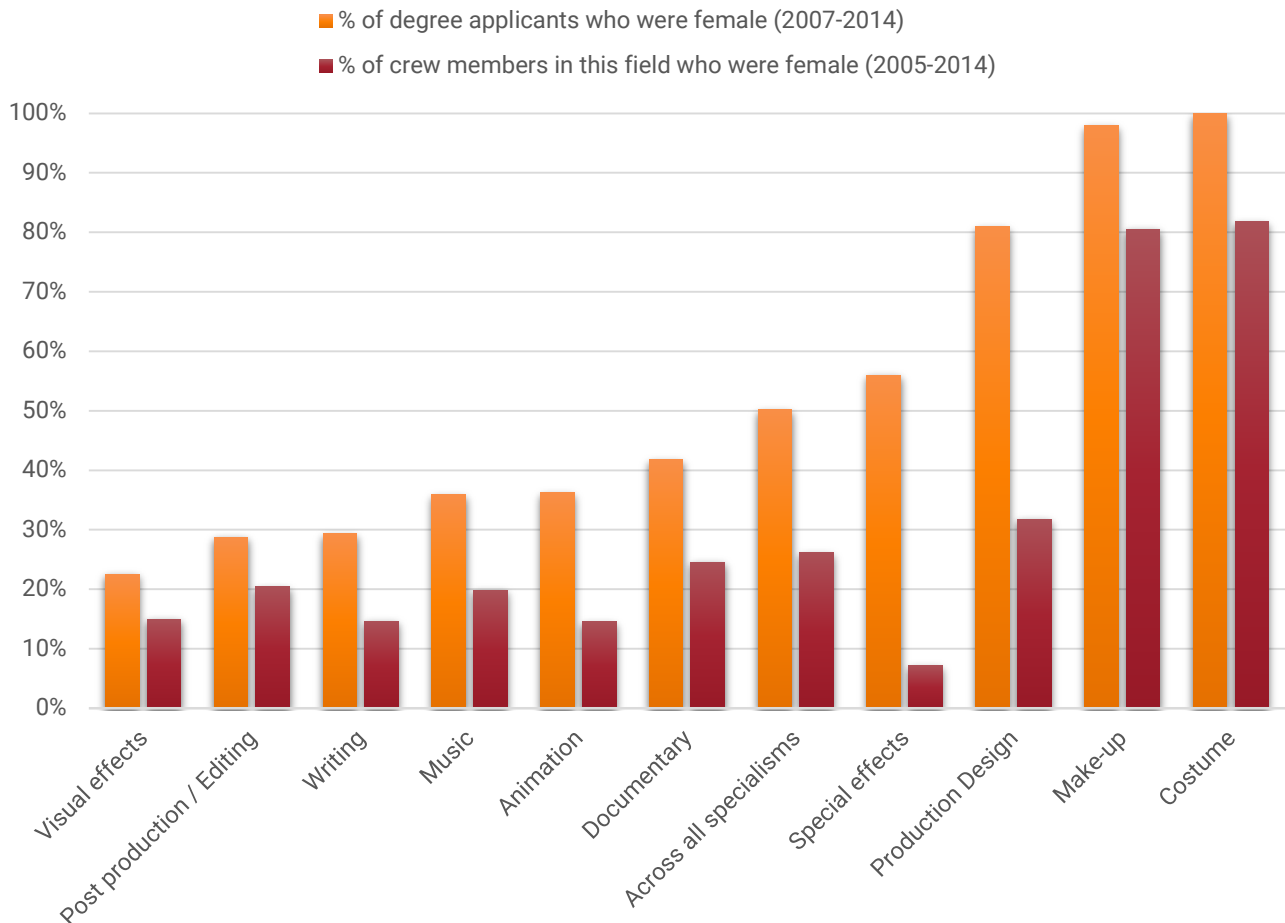
⁵⁷We suspect that some of the advertised courses which received applicants were cancelled before the start of the course. For example, there are five degree courses related to Production Design and over the eight-year period we studied they received a total of 105 applications. However, only one of those five courses is listed as ever having enrolled students.

Gender trends amongst students applying for and attending film-related degree courses, 2007-14



Assuming the number of applications made by students is a reasonable, rough indication of interest in each specialism, then we can cross-reference the female representation of student applications with the UK film industry employment statistics⁵⁸ reported in Chapter 4.

Comparison of students gender taking film degree courses vs. their corresponding film industry sector



In every specialism, women are far better represented in the film student population than in the UK film industry, suggesting that it is only at some point after graduation that the disparity begins to occur. On average there is a drop off of 44.5% in the percentage of female applicants for a specific field of study, and the actual corresponding sector. Given the lack of difference between the percentage of male and female students, it seems unlikely that there is any difference between male interest in working in the film industry and female interest. Rather, it appears likely that soon after graduating, presumably in entering or after having entered the film industry itself, women struggle to progress more than their male counterparts.

⁵⁸ The overall female representation for UK film employment figure for 'Across all specialisms' relates to UK films made 2009-13 as reported in 'Gender in UK Film Crews' report by Stephen Follows Aug 2014 http://stephenfollows.com/reports/Gender_Within_UK_Film_Crews-stephenfollows_com.pdf. The "Documentary" employment figure relates to documentary directors, as reported in Section 3.5.

Section B:

Why Are So Few

Female Directors

Hired?

7. Routes into Directing

The path to becoming a professional film director in the UK

- When we asked a number of working UK film directors about their route into directing, the most common responses were that they studied a film-related course, worked in television, made short films, and/or worked in other crew roles.

Education

- Four out of five working film directors have a degree, although only 23.1% of directors have a film degree.

Entering the film or television industry

- 49.4% of Runners and Production Assistants in the UK Film Industry are women.
- The principal method of advertising an entry-level job in the UK film industry is Facebook.
- In employability terms for new entrants, owning a film degree is significantly less important than owning a driving license.

Gaining credibility

- All of the six most common proving grounds for future-directors have an underrepresentation of women.
- The crew roles which are the most useful to a director's early carer are all male-dominated, including editing (14.4% women), producing (25.7%) and the camera department (9.8%).

The first directing gig

- First films are typically on the lower budget range.
- Most public funding schemes aimed at early filmmakers require the director to have a portfolio of work.
- Success with a debut feature film can be measured in the film's quality, box office performance and in the intangible 'industry reputation'.

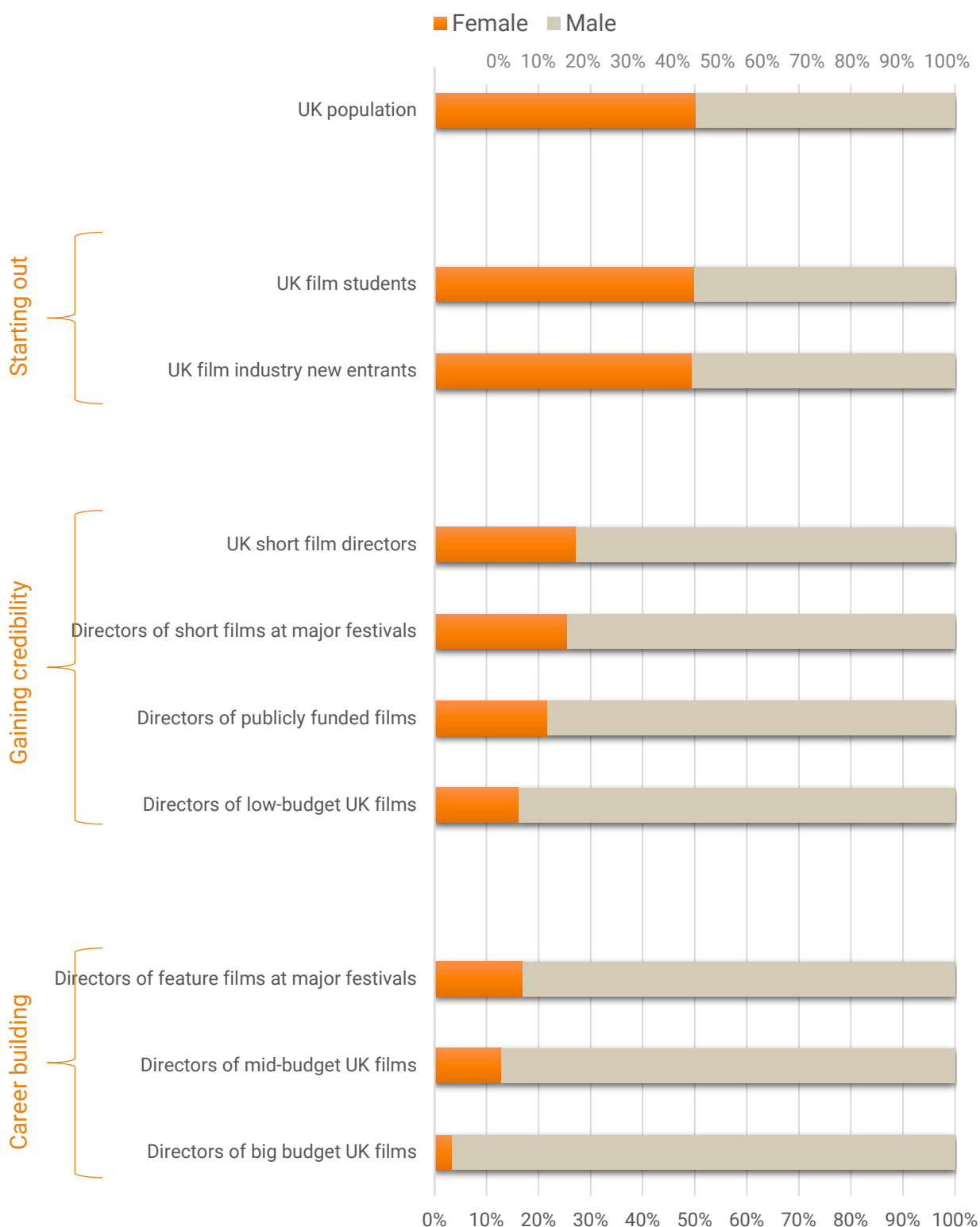
Career development

- Making a second feature film is often harder than the first.
- The most commonly cited reasons why a director failed to make a second film are not gender specific.
- And yet, fewer female directors make a second film than their male counterparts.
- Many of the directors who do have opportunities to make subsequent films feel severely limited in the types of films the industry will support them to make.

In order to understand why this gender inequality exists, we need to explore how film directors are created and hired.

7.1 The disappearance of women film directors

As we have seen in Section A, at almost every stage of the process from entering the industry to have a career as a professional film director, women are leaving the industry. See below for a collection of statistics⁵⁹ from this report, placed roughly in chronological order for an aspiring director.



⁵⁹ For the purposes of this chart, we have classed films budgeted under £500,000 as "low-budget", films budgeted between £1 million and £10 million as "mid-budget", and films budgeted over £30 million as "big budget". For the full statistics see section 3.4.

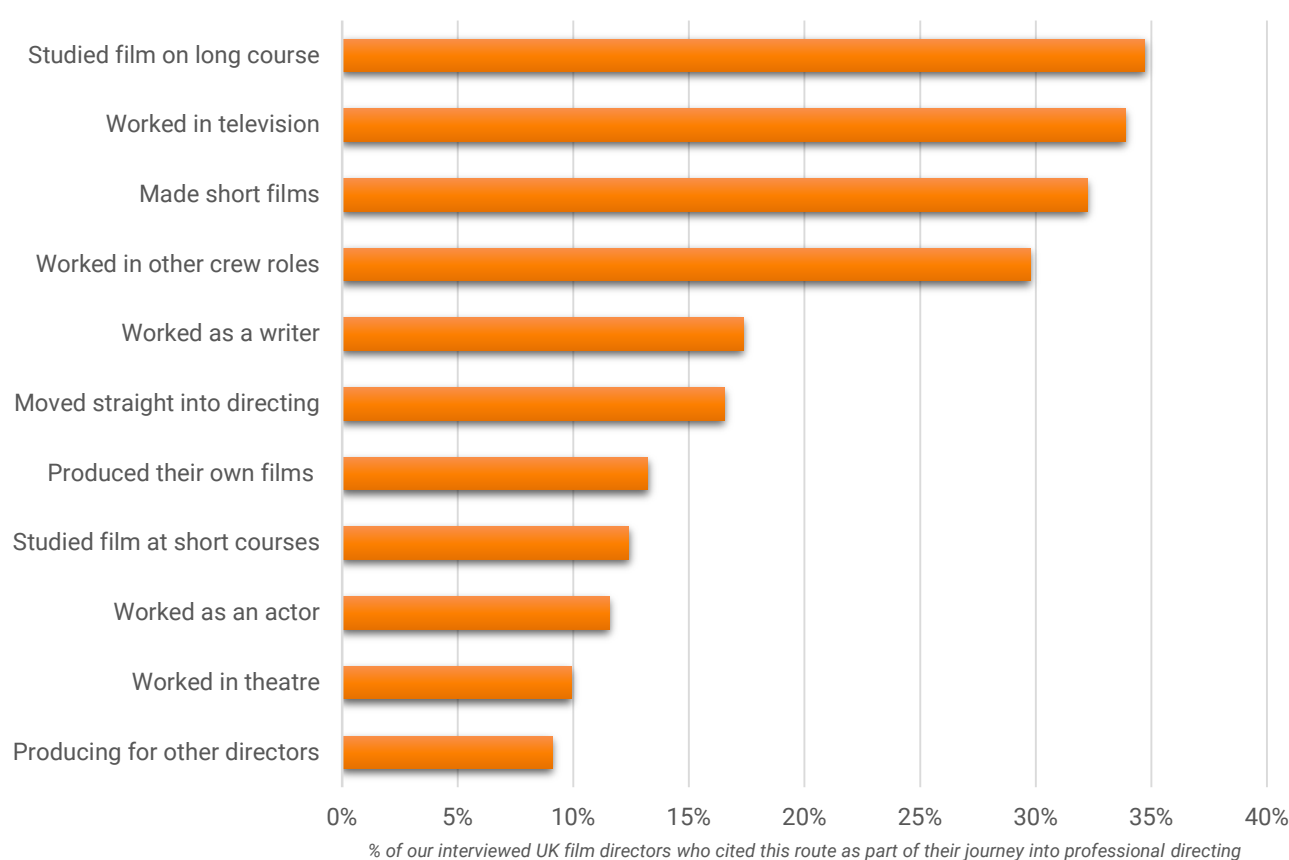
7.2 The path to becoming a professional film director in the UK

- When we asked a number of working UK film directors about their route into directing, the most common responses were that they studied a film-related course, worked in television, made short films, and/or worked in other crew roles.

Our initial plan with this study was to identify and catalogue the common routes by which people become film directors. To achieve this, we interviewed 174 UK film directors, of which 121 had directed at least one of the films in our study criteria⁶⁰ (UK feature films shot 2005-14 inclusive).

However, it quickly became apparent that there are as many routes into directing as there are directors. By classifying each director's path we were able to pick out a number of different commonalities⁶¹ about their journey into the industry, with many directors citing multiple routes.

UK film directors: "What was your route into professional directing?"



Based on our interviews and other industry research, we have very broadly broken down the path most directors take into professional film directing into five distinct rites of passage:

1. Education
2. Entering the industry (film or television)
3. Gaining credibly
4. The first directing gig
5. Career development

⁶⁰Data from the remaining fifty-three respondents was used anecdotally for background research but not included in the analysis.

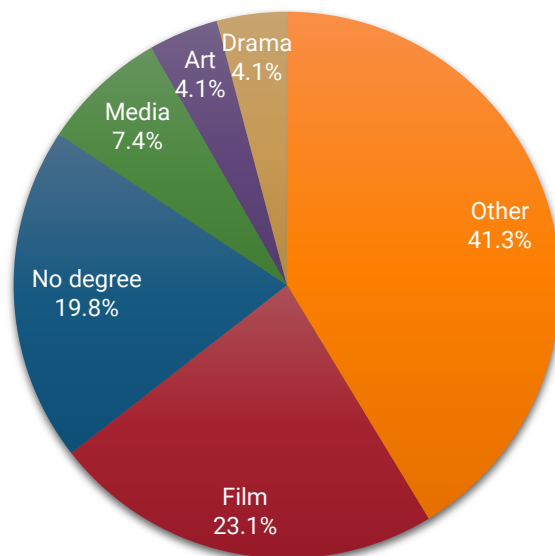
⁶¹ We identified thirty general commonalities, of which the eleven most widespread are displayed in the graph on this page.

7.3 Education

- Four out of five working film directors have a degree, although only 23.1% of directors have a film degree.

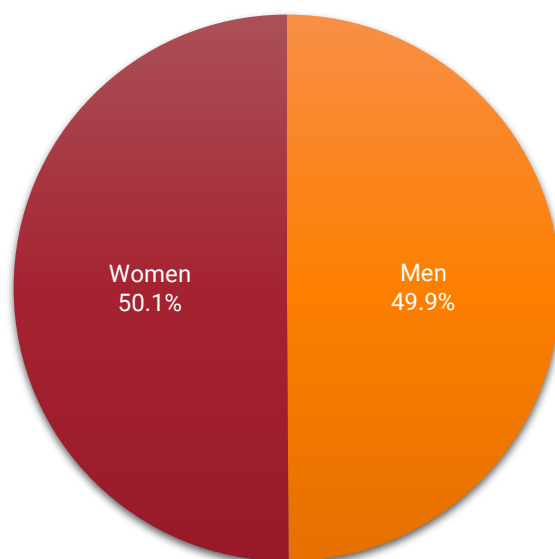
Four out of five of our directors had a formal degree qualification, although of those, most studied a topic not directly related to directing.

Degree education of UK film directors



In Section 6.6, we provided a detailed breakdown of the gender of students of film-related degree courses in the UK. The main conclusion was that film students are evenly balanced, with women students taking up 50.1% of the places on courses started between 2007 and 2014.

Gender of students on UK film degree courses, 2007-14



7.4 Entering the film or television industry

- 49.4% of Runners and Production Assistants in the UK Film Industry are women.
- The principal method of advertising an entry-level job in the UK film industry is *Facebook*.
- In employability terms for new entrants, owning a film degree is significantly less important than owning a driving license.

Once a future-director has completed formal education (most often with a degree-level qualification) they seek out their first job in the film or television industry. For most directors, this is an entry-level position such as runner or production assistant. Their aim is to start learning how the industry works, make connections, and move their way up through the ranks of a chosen department.

For those who started out in other fields, entry to the film world comes much later, after they have proved themselves in their primary field. However, when they do finally enter the film or television industry they normally skip entry-level positions.

For example, a director who has directed successful theatre productions may enter the film industry as a director, although in the vast majority of cases this will be on a short film rather than moving directly to feature films. In television, shows such as *EastEnders* run short conversion courses which allow directors from other fields (such as theatre) to transition straight into directing broadcast television. However, these are the exception rather than the rule.

The hiring of film and TV new entrants

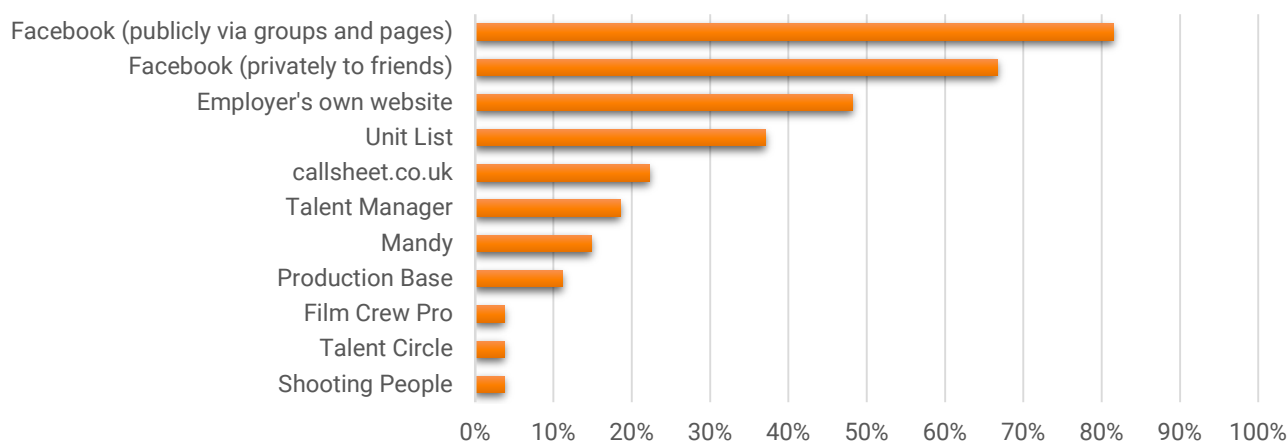
The hiring process for entry-level positions is often *ad hoc* and informal, especially in the film industry. Major television broadcasters have increased efforts in recent years to crack down on nepotistic hiring practices for new entrants⁶², but it is much harder to monitor and regulate the film industry as there are a far greater number of small production companies operating independently of each other (see Section 12 for a more detailed breakdown of the structure of UK film production companies).

In a previous research project⁶³, we interviewed twenty-seven UK film and television employers, all of whom have hired new entrants to their industries. The principal method of advertising new entrant jobs was on *Facebook*.

⁶²'BBC staff broke rules after they 'traded unpaid internships for teenagers with other leading companies who could help their own children' 24 June 2015 *Daily Mail* <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3137056/BBC-staff-broke-rules-traded-unpaid-internships-teenagers-leading-companies-help-children.html>

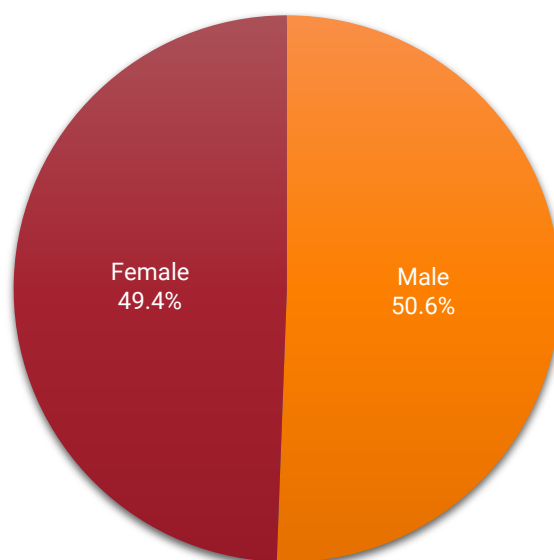
⁶³'How to find a job in Film and TV' Stephen Follows <https://stephenfollows.com/how-to-find-a-job-in-film-and-tv>

UK film employers: "Where do you advertise job vacancies for new entrants?"



Within our dataset of 2,591 UK films (2005-14), we identified the 465 credits which related to the most basic entry level jobs (i.e. runner and production assistant). Of those for whom we could reliably determine gender⁶⁴, 49.4% were women.

Gender of new entrants in the UK film industry



As such, at the point of entrance into the UK Film Industry there is no significant disparity between male and female entrants. Hence, it must be the case that this disparity emerges later on in their career progressions.

In conclusion, although the hiring practices of the film industry are poorly designed and skewed in a way which could foster many forms of discrimination (age, class, race, existing connections, and background), gender discrimination does not seem to be one of them.

⁶⁴ This was achieved via their first name, as credited on the film. This method allowed us to define a gender for 91% of the new entrants we studied. The lack of biographical information resulted in us having 42 people without a specified gender.

7.5 Gaining credibility

- All of the six most common proving grounds for future-directors have an underrepresentation of women.
- The crew roles which are the most useful to a director's early carer are all male-dominated, including editing (14.4% women), producing (25.7%) and the camera department (9.8%).

Once professionally employed in the film or television industry, new entrants now need to hone their craft and find ways to convince producers and/or investors that they are a "credible" choice as a director⁶⁵. Obviously, this is an extremely nebulous definition and in practice the way someone becomes a director will differ greatly between individuals.

However, in the broadest terms this has traditionally come down to a few factors:

- Proof of directing talent via short films
- Proof of directing talent via other industries (e.g. theatre, advertising, music videos, etc.)
- Performance in other roles in the film and/or TV industries

This is the first step in the journey from pre-university student to professional director where we see the situation differ for male and women entrants.

Using data from our interviews and data already presented in previous chapters of this report, we have identified that the six most common routes to gaining credibility as a director are all heavily skewed against women.

- **Television** - 33.9% of directors worked in television before directing film. Women are underrepresented among television directors, for example only 14% drama television episodes were directed by a woman and 12% for entertainment and comedy programming (see Section 6.3).
- **Short films** – 32.2% of directors cited short films as key to their route into directing. Of the 4,388 short films catalogued by the British Council, 27.2% were directed by female directors, and only 25.4% of short films at international film festivals were directed by women (see Sections 6.1 and 6.2).
- **Worked in other crew roles** – 29.8% of directors worked in the film industry in other roles and yet we have already shown how women make up around a quarter of UK film crews. Furthermore, fewer women make it to the senior position in almost every department (see below and Chapter 4).
- **Writing** – 17.4% of directors got their start through writing. Just 14.6% of writers of UK feature films shot between 2005 and 2014 are women (see Section 4.1).
- **Acting** – 11.6% of directors had experience as an actor on their path to being a director. Although we have not addressed it directly in this report, there is much evidence to prove that actresses have a harder time in the film industry than male actors, are often paid less and are dropped quicker as they get older.
- **Theatre** – 9.9% of our directors worked in theatre. Although *Stage Directors UK* has gender parity among its members, the UK theatre industry has an underrepresentation of women in senior roles, especially that of artistic director, where 36% are women (see Section 6.4)

⁶⁵ An obvious exception to this is if the director can self-finance their own film. As film budgets fall and new technology makes it ever easier to make a feature film, we assume that more directors are self-financing their own films. However, we could not find or create any data on the level to which directors self-finance their first feature film and so cannot include in this breakdown.

In our director interviews, we asked what other jobs they had performed in the film or television industries before becoming a professional director. We tracked 57 different positions and we are sure that others exist⁶⁶. The most common were as follows:

Previous film / TV industry role	% of directors who said this role helped them become a director	% of female crew members in this department
Editor	16.5%	14.4%
Producer	14.9%	25.7%
Camera	14.9%	9.8%
1st Assistant Director	14.0%	15.8%
Production Assistant / Co-ordinator	13.2%	49.4%
Writer	12.4%	17.4%
Actor	12.4%	n/a
Editor	12.4%	14.4%
3rd Assistant Director	11.6%	30.9%
Sound	9.9%	9.0%
Researcher	9.9%	n/a

Note: 17.4% of our professional film director interviewees were women. However, we have not split the results above by gender due to the fact that there are so many different paths into directing and so few female directors that we do not feel that the results would be reliable or useful.

⁶⁶ For the sake of brevity, it is common for people to leave out some of their steps towards directing, especially if their path took a number of years. Therefore, the catalogued roles should be seen as a list of roles which the directors felt were the most significant or note-worthy in their path to professional film directing, rather than as an exhaustive list of every role performed.

7.6 The first directing gig

- First films are typically on the lower budget range.
- Most public funding schemes aimed at early filmmakers require the director to have a portfolio of work.
- Success with a debut feature film can be measured in the film's quality, box office performance and in the intangible 'industry reputation'.

Once the wannabe-director has convinced enough gatekeepers that they are a credible choice, they will get to direct their first feature film.

First-time films are typically made on the lowest budget range (i.e. under £500,000) and funding is most likely to come from personal funds (i.e. friend and/or family of the key players) or private investors (i.e. high net-worth individuals⁶⁷). Almost all films shot in the UK are eligible for the Film Tax Relief (FTR), which provides up to around 20% of the production budget. See Section 11.1 for a full breakdown of the FTR.

Therefore, it is not uncommon for debut feature films to be created, funded, and completed without interacting much with the 'establishment' side of the UK film industry. The closest connection is likely to be the crew members, many of whom work both of big budget films and smaller, independent productions.

It is interesting to note that these low-budget productions have a much higher representation of female directors than the larger, more established productions. As shown in Section 3.4, 16.1% of films made under £500,000 had a woman director, compared with just 3.3% of those budgeted over £30 million.

It appears that as there is increased involvement from traditional industry personnel, the percentage of female directors decreases.

Low and micro-budget funding schemes

The majority of low and micro budget filmmaking funding schemes in the UK are aimed at first-time filmmakers. However, they all require the director to submit examples of their previous creative work, such as short films, television, or music videos.

- **BFI Production funding for first features** limits budgets of first-time filmmakers to under £2 million. In the initial application, the producer is required to "*express in your application the reasons why you feel the director is ready to make their first feature film, and we would ask you to describe the experiences they bring with them*"⁶⁸. Directors are expected to submit a body of work, which includes "*short films, music videos, pilots, or whatever is applicable to their previous experience and supports your reasons for applying to this strand of the Fund*".
- **Creative England's low-budget scheme, iFeatures**, awards budgets of £350,000 and is aimed at filmmakers with some professional experience and whose work has "*already garnered positive industry and/ or public attention. Applicants should be able to evidence a successful track record in shorts, television/online drama, theatre, commercials, music promos, documentary, Artist Film & Video and/or other related media*"⁶⁹.
- **Screen Academy Scotland's Lo-Fi** is a micro-budget production scheme to make contemporary Scottish stories. The scheme is targeted at "*up-and-coming filmmakers*"⁷⁰ but also requires that applicants have a "*track record in writing/directing for theatre or television*"⁷¹.

⁶⁷ A large number of film investments from high net worth individuals will be the *Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS)* and/or the *Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS)*, which provides high levels of tax relief for eligible investors. These schemes are not unique to the film industry and take no account of the film being made, and therefore do not influence the gender of the key creatives.

⁶⁸ "Production funding for first features" BFI <http://www.bfi.org.uk/film-industry/funding-first-time-directors>

⁶⁹ "About iFeatures" <http://www.ifeatures.co.uk/about.html>

⁷⁰ "Lo-fi, the low budget Scottish feature film initiative" Screen Academy Scotland <http://www.screenacademyscotland.ac.uk/lofi>

⁷¹ "Screen Academy Scotland launches second talent search" Screen Daily 4 July 2013 <http://www.screendaily.com/news/screen-academy-scotland-launches-second-talent-search/5058026.article>

- **Film London's Microwave scheme** support projects budgeted up to £150,000. Applicants are expected to have "an existing track record in production in at least one of the following: short films, 'no budget' fiction (unreleased theatrically in the UK) and non-fiction feature films, commercials, artists' films or music videos, television and theatre"⁷².

These requirements underline the importance of the 'Gaining Credibility' stage, as outlined in the previous section. It seems highly unlikely that any first-time director would secure production funding through one of these schemes without an existing body of film-based work.

Pressure to perform

A 2015 study⁷³ by Olsberg SPI looking at debut feature films by UK directors (2005-11) found that debut filmmakers experienced a significant pressure to perform on their first feature film:

In considering career sustainability ... success of a debut is critical. Film-making can be an expensive and high-risk undertaking and some consultees pointed to natural selection at play: if a film-maker did not perform with a first film, funders are unlikely to want to risk their money on a second.

When looking at the odds of a debut director to be able to make a second feature film, the study found that quality of the film (as judged by audiences and critics) and the financial performance at the box office were both important. However, it also noted a third category of 'debut success', which could aid a filmmaker in making subsequent films: industry reputation.

Consultees pointed to the fact that some film-makers can draw ongoing interest from the industry even if their debut film did not perform to above average levels.

This is partly due to key UK funders seeking to develop relationships with career film-makers outside of commercial pressures. This can afford a director some degree of insulation from the realities of the performance-led funding approach of the commercial marketplace, instead able to fund a second (and sometimes further films) based on perceived artistic value or latent promise.

This echoes the importance of industry credibility, as discussed previously. Decisions about whose second and third films to back are not made purely objectively on past performance but also on where they 'seem' successful. This means that a woman director seeking support to create a second film will be disadvantaged, if they are faced with an industry with a general bias towards male directors.

The report also noted the important role played by public funding bodies in supporting filmmakers making additional films:

Public funding can be more tolerant of mistakes than private finance and directors with such investment can be successfully developed across several films. However, several director consultees spoke of their frustration at finding themselves operating outside of such patronage. As one director consultee said, it is possible to feel out in the cold.

⁷² "Microwave guidelines" Film London <http://core.filmlondon.org.uk/library/documents/MWGuidelines.pdf>

⁷³ "Career sustainability for directors in the UK independent film sector" Olsberg SPI

- Making a second feature film is often harder than the first.
- The most commonly cited reasons why a director failed to make a second film are not gender specific.
- And yet, fewer female directors make a second film than their male counterparts.
- Many of the directors who do have opportunities to make subsequent films feel severely limited in the types of films the industry will support them to make.

After completing their first film, the director is at the final stage of the path to a film directing career - securing further directing jobs. A very small number of directors make it this far, with only 388 directors in our study of 2,329 individuals making a second film (18.3%).

However, as we saw in Section 3.3, even at this stage of the journey, female directors are disadvantaged, with only 14.6% making a second film, compared with 18.9% of male directors.

Turning the first directing gig into a professional directing career

The turnover for directors in the UK Film Industry is pretty high, with only one in five directors making a second film (see Section 3.3). From the industry professionals we interviewed, this appears to be due to a number of factors, including:

- **Success with a low or micro-budget film does not equate to success with larger scale projects.** The process, economics, and audience for a £150,000 film will differ significantly from that of a £10 million film. Therefore, producers and financiers will often disregard moderate success of a low- or micro-budget project when assessing who to trust with their big budget production⁷⁴.
- **It's a lot harder to make a feature film than it seems at the outset.** 'Making your first feature film' is seen by many filmmakers as a rite of passage they need to take to become a 'proper' writer/producer / director. At the start of their journey they have a large amount of naivety about the process and learn much on-the-job. However, when the time comes to consider embarking on the process again for their second film, the novelty has worn off and they are much more cognisant of the challenges ahead.
- **The 'Favour Well' is dry.** Due to the drive many filmmakers have to make their first feature, they pull in every favour they can and push everyone the extra mile. Once their first film is complete, they are often unable to take the same path to make a second film and so have to find alternative methods. For example, their friends and family may be willing to financially contribute towards a filmmaker's all-important 'First Film' but cannot be relied upon to fund the rest of the filmmaker's career.

None of these factors are linked to gender and so in theory should not affect female directors any more than they do male directors. However, as we saw in Section 3.3, male directors are 20% more likely to make a second film than female directors. And with each successive project after that, male directors are more likely to make an additional film than their women counterparts, which seems to suggest some individual bias, created or allowed by the structure of the film industry is responsible.

⁷⁴ There are a few exceptions to rule but they are very much the outliers.

Moving towards bigger budget films

The data in Section 3.4 showed how, as the budgets rise, women become less likely to direct the project (i.e. 16.1% of directors of films budgeted under £150,000 were women, compared with just 3.3% for films over £30 million).

Films with small and micro budgets are largely funded via sources external to the film industry, such as personal money, crowdfunding and private investors, whereas films made on large budgets require significant industry involvement from an early stage, such as a sales agent attachment, pre-sales, and powerful industry supporters. Therefore, it is interesting to note that female directors are best represented when the project has the least formal industry involvement, reinforcing the notion that there are structural impediments which female directors face, whilst male directors do not.

Just as it became successively harder for a woman director to helm each additional project, it is progressively more difficult for them to direct a film with a larger budget.

The problem of labelling

As shown in Section 3.5, women are more commonly hired to make films in genres that have traditionally been viewed as “female”. This labelling of female directors as only equipped to direct a certain sort of film greatly limits both their individual careers and the variety of films produced by the industry. Furthermore, this labelling is not reinforced by any evidence.

As with most positions in the majority of industries, directors, broadly speaking, are hired based on the best estimate of their ability to effectively helm a given project or do a certain job. For this reason the film industry does, justifiably, hire based on previous work. However, this means that directors often find themselves labelled as able to direct certain types of film, simply because they have direct experience of those genres. They are viewed as lower risk propositions, because they have already demonstrated success with a closely related project.

There is no inherent issue with employment based on an individual’s past performance. However, if these presumptions become delineating and the dominant form of assessment they can stagnate an industry, as it becomes impossible to break into certain types of roles or to move between different types of roles.

However, there is a second and more dangerous issue with these sorts of presumption. The talents of individuals and the genres they are viewed as equipped to direct can become based not on their own past work, but on beliefs about a group as a whole.

This is precisely the issue for female directors: they are labelled based on the views held about the entire group of female directors, whilst for male directors any beliefs of this sort are based on individual past experience.

Section 3.5 noted that women are particularly poorly represented among the directors of thrillers (8.1%), adventure films (6.0%), horror (5.1%), crime (4.3%), action (3.6%), and sci-fi (2.9%) and fare best in documentary (24.8%), music (21.1%), and romance (18.2%).

The alternative explanation for the differences in female representation across genres is the preference of female directors. It is possibly the case that female directors do simply wish to direct in certain genres proportional to their actual representation. However, the extent of the difference suggests that for every woman who wishes to direct action films there are nearly twenty-eight men, for every woman who wishes to direct a thriller there are over twelve men and for every woman who wants to helm an adventure film there are nearly seventeen men. It would also require us to believe that it is six times as likely that a woman would want to direct a romantic film than a sci-fi one.

The justification for generalised labelling of this sort would be if female cinema-goers preferred those genres female directors find themselves limited to.

However, although women cinema-goers prefer some genres more than others, the extent of this preference is not as stark as the employment of women as directors in each genre. Meaning female directors are disproportionately limited in their choice of genre. Furthermore, Section 3.6 found that male audiences actually prefer women directed films, giving them an average of 6.00 on *IMDB* as opposed to just 5.87 for male-directed films. Hence, there is no justification for this generalised gender labelling.

The issue of labelling (or 'pigeonholing') has been noted by a number of other reports into the issue. The 2014 report from the *European Audiovisual Observatory* (see Section 6.5) also noted that:

Female directors are not given the opportunity to direct those films which appear to have more prospects of becoming blockbusters, but only projects that are supposed to be aimed at a women audience.

Whilst a 2015 study⁷⁵ by *Olsberg SPI* for *Directors UK* entitled 'Career Sustainability Report for UK Directors' suggested this sort of labelling is present in other hiring decisions in the industry:

Another issue for first-timers is pigeonholing – with film-makers describing receiving a glut of similar projects to a debut or being expected to continue working in a similar mode. This is linked to the industry's cautious focus on track record and can help with sales estimates – but can make it difficult for directors to explore diverse work.

We heard similar complaints from the female directors we interviewed, although it is hard to measure empirically to what extent this differs between male and female directors. All directors face expectations for subsequent projects to echo their earlier successes, however anecdotally it seems to be stronger among female directors than among male directors.

It is worth noting labelling causes a further issue. Beyond the obvious demands for equality and fairness one of the best arguments for gender equality is to increase the variety of the films the industry produces. In restricting who gets to tell the stories we watch we limit the range of films we are exposed to, as we exclude individuals with unique voices and experiences. Furthermore, this exclusion also limits the pool of qualified and talented creators.

⁷⁵"Career sustainability for directors in the UK independent film sector" Olsberg SPI

7.8 Summary of the route

In the previous five sections we have shown the steps needed in order to build a successful career directing UK films. By way of a summary, below are the key statistics from these five steps.

1. Education	
50.1%	UK film students
2. Entering the industry	
49.4%	New entrants to the UK film industry
3. Gaining credibility	
36%	Artistic directors within the UK theatre industry
27.2%	British short film directors
15.8%	1 st Assistant Directors in the UK film industry
14.6%	Screenwriters in the UK film industry
14.4%	Editors in the UK film industry
14%	Drama television directors
9.8%	Crew within the camera department in the UK film industry
4. The first directing gig	
16.1%	Low-budget UK film directors ⁷⁶
12.8%	Mid-budget UK film directors
3.3%	High-budget UK film directors
5. Career development	
12.5%	Directors who have made two films ⁷⁷
9.3%	Directors who have made three films
4.0%	Directors who have made four or more films

⁷⁶ For the purposes of this table, we have classed films budgeted under £500,000 as "low-budget", films budgeted between £1 million and £10 million as "mid-budget" and films budgeted over £30 million as "big budget". For the full statistics see section 3.4.

⁷⁷ UK films shot between 2005 and 2014 inclusive

8. Why the gender disparity exists

Individual Bias

- We have found no evidence that gender inequality is the result of any conscious or deliberate effort to keep women out of the film industry.
- There is no indication that the kinds of people attracted to work in film are disproportionately misogynistic or anti-women compared with the general population.
- It is our belief that the gender imbalance is due in large part to unconscious bias, rather than considered actions by industry insiders.
- We believe that this bias is created and sustained by a number systemic issues within the UK film industry.

Systemic Issues

- Meritocracy tends to depend on either strictly enforced regulation or balancing market principals. Neither is clearly apparent in the UK Film Industry.
- Only 7% of theatrically distributed British films return a profit, which undermines the ability of market forces to be the engine which drives change away from anti-commercial over-reliance on male directors.
- The lack of certainty in the film business creates two major undesirable outcomes: firstly, a fear of doing something different resulting in the veneration of rituals and conventions over facts or reason. And secondly, a reliance on 'on the job' training resulting in a lack of progress based on new ideas and methods.
- These, in combination with the pressured environment decisions are made under, have led to and maintained a reliance in the film industry on preconceived notions of the archetypal director, rather than on actual evidence of ability.
- An issue further protected by permanent short-termism in the industry.
- Film audiences do not care about the gender of the director, meaning that hiring a woman director is not negative from a film sales perspective.
- Films that women chose to watch tend to have an above-average proportion of women writers, producers and directors, suggesting that if producers wish to target women cinema-goers then hiring a woman director can be advantageous.
- There currently exists a vicious circle, whereby the lack of female directors leads to the image of a typical director being that of a man, which creates the unconscious assumption that men are better at directing, which leads to fewer female directors.

In this chapter, we will outline a number of explanations for our findings in Part One of this report, in particular, examining the reasons behind the disparity between the number of male and female directors and between their relative career progressions.

We believe that the current gender imbalance is largely due to two factors:

- **Individual bias**
- **Systemic issues**

8.1 Individual Bias

- We have found no evidence that gender inequality is the result of any conscious or deliberate effort to keep women out of the film industry.
- There is no indication that the kinds of people attracted to work in film are disproportionately misogynistic or anti-women compared with the general population.
- It is our belief that the gender imbalance is due in large part to unconscious bias, rather than considered actions by industry insiders.
- We believe that this bias is created and sustained by a number systemic issues within the UK film industry.

As we have seen in the previous section, there does not appear to be any significant difference between the gender of UK film students (50.1% women), or between the gender of new entrants to the UK film industry (49.4% women). This suggests that there is no significant initial difference between genders, either in their interest in film (or in becoming a director) or their initial ability to enter the film industry.

However, just 27.2% of British short film directors are women and as we have seen in Section 4.1 and 4.2 the vast majority of key creative roles and crew roles are held by men. Hence, at some point between these two points it appears some cause, or set of causes, whether they are justifiable or not, is responsible for an initial drop off in the representation of women in the industry.

Similarly, a further drop off occurs between the key creative roles and becoming a fully-fledged director, where, as we saw in Section 3.1, just 13.6% have been women over the last decade. Given at both points women seem disproportionately disadvantaged, it seems likely that a similar cause is responsible in both cases.

This section will suggest that by far the most plausible explanation for this is individual, unconscious bias. Firstly, because it is supported by the data in the previous two sections and second, because there are a lack of other plausible alternatives. However, it will not conclude that the primary issue is this individual bias, but rather the systemic issues which create, protect, and propagate it. In essence, any bias is a symptom of the broader issue, rather than a cause in and of itself.

Could personal choice be responsible for the low numbers of female directors?

It is conceivable that fewer women than men want to become professional film directors. By definition, it is difficult to measure this type of changing preference over time. We know that men and women are represented fairly evenly in both film students and new entrants to the film industry, but we cannot measure their intent to become a director at any stage. Nonetheless, we have found no indication from any quarter of the industry to lead us to believe that women are six times less interested in becoming directors than men⁷⁸.

The issue with the explanation of personal choice is not just the sheer scale of the disparity. As we saw in Section 7.8, the drop-off at each stage of the career progression is relatively consistent, meaning that, throughout their progression through the industry, women are comparatively far less likely to develop from one stage to another

The average percentage drop-off in the percentage of women between film school and the industry is 1.4%. However, the percentage drop-off between the average of our markers for entering the film industry⁷⁹ and the average of our markers for 'Gaining Credibility'⁸⁰ is 62.5% or in real terms, on average,

⁷⁸i.e. 13.6% of directors are women and 86.4% are men as shown in Section 3

⁷⁹Film students and new entrants

⁸⁰Artistic directors within the UK theatre industry, British short film directors, 1st Assistant Directors in the UK film industry, Screenwriters in the UK film industry, Editors in the UK film industry, Entertainment and comedy TV directors, Crew within the camera department in the UK film industry.

there are over 30% fewer women holding roles where they might gain credibility within the industry than there are in UK film courses or entering the industry.

In other words, there is no evidence of this personal choice when women are learning about film and entering the industry, but there is a drop off nearly forty-five times greater once they have entered the industry⁸¹. It seems difficult to attribute this to any large degree to the sudden emergence of personal choice once entering the industry.

Similarly, the percentage drop-off between Gaining Credibility and the average of our markers for The First Directing Gig⁸² is 42.1%, and the drop off between The First Directing Gig and the average of our markers for Career Development⁸³ is a further 19.9%.

Additionally, the personal choice explanation would have to explain why this drop off seems to occur consistently across the hugely varied and disparate areas of the film industry. In Section 4.1 we found only two out of nine key creative roles have above 50% female representation and just three crew departments have a majority of women crew, the same number as have under 10% women crew.

Finally, this theory would also need to explain why those women who do remain in the industry choose to direct fewer films (as we saw in Section 3.3), on smaller budgets (as we saw in Section 3.4), and in only a select few genres (as we saw in Section 3.5). Once again if this really is a matter of personal choice these further inequalities seem inherently problematic.

In summary, the personal choice explanation might plausibly account for a percentage of the disparity; for example, many women might reasonably decide to leave the workforce. However, it seems highly unlikely the sheer scale and scope of the inequality for the following reasons:

- The lack of evidence for it prior to and upon entering the film industry.
- Its extension across the industry and through individuals' careers.
- Its impact on the number and type of film women direct.
- And the consistency of the disparity, over the last decade.

The lack of female directors influencing personal choice

It is also worth considering the effect perceived achievability can have on personal choices, known as 'Stereotype Threat'.

Introduced as a theory in 1995 and subsequently repeated in over 300 published papers, Stereotype Threat has been shown to be a contributory factor in long-standing racial and gender gaps in academic performance. 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 to achieve that goal, than someone from another group for whom the odds are better.

As we have seen, women entering the film industry already have a significantly reduced chance of becoming a director than their male counterparts, regardless of ability. Because this knowledge is now relatively widespread it seems reasonable that it might impact those potential female directors' decision-making processes.

In particular, given the significant effort, work and sacrifice that has to be made to become a director, a woman facing far lower odds of success, based purely on gender, might reasonably decide not to make the same sacrifices given they do not have the same chance of the return they want. In short, before

⁸¹ $62.5/45=1.39$

⁸² Low Budget UK Film Directors, Mid-Budget UK Film Directors, High-Budget UK Film Directors.

⁸³ Directors who have made two films, directors who have made three films, directors who have made four or more films.

personal choice can be reasonably defended we should consider whether differences between personal choices in this area are really an explanation, or rather simply a broader problem themselves.

If it is not personal choice, what remains?

If it seems highly unlikely that it is the personal choice of women who enter the film industry that results in the dramatic difference in the numbers of men and female directors, then, to some extent, it must be the preference on the other side of the hiring system.

Individual decisions and contacts are in essence the gatekeepers to career progression and success within the industry. Hence, whatever the root causes of the inequality are, the point at which they are realised must involve career defining decisions being taken by individuals with power in the industry.

In surveying members of the film industry we found a high percentage of concerns relating to individual, unconscious bias impacting the hiring process:

It is important to note that we have found no evidence of any organised, conscious, or deliberate effort to keep women out of the film industry, nor is there any indication that the kinds of people attracted to work in film are disproportionately misogynistic or anti-women compared with the general population.

Therefore, it is our belief that the gender imbalance is due in large part to unconscious bias, rather than considered actions by industry insiders.

Differences in Hiring Men and Women

Our findings detailed in Sections 4.4 and 4.5 suggest the existence of reasonably widespread individual bias effecting the hiring of women across the industry. We found that if a film is directed by a woman then the representation of women amongst the crew grows significantly (from 24.1% on male-directed films to 30.9% on female-directed films). In addition, in the vast majority of cases, when a department is led by a female director, it hires more women.

Two further conclusions are suggested by this data: firstly, it appears that the closeness with which individuals work with each other and the seniority of the role increases the chance that an individual will hire someone of their own gender. Female directors are proportionately more likely to hire women as cinematographers and editors than they are an art director or set designer for example. This lends further credence to the notion of individual, unconscious bias being central to personal decisions in the film industry.

Secondly, the fact that both men and women hire differently depending on the gender of the applicant suggests that gender bias at an individual level is playing an important part in who gets hired and who gets to progress in the film industry.

It might reasonably be the case that women are going out of their way to hire more women employees, but it seems just as likely, if not more so, that both men and women are making hiring decisions in which gender is a determining factor. In such cases it tends to be that both options are to some extent true, and the widespread nature of the disparity suggests that the impact of such preferences is disproportionately damaging women's opportunities.

The bias favouring men as directors cannot be justified

There are no justifiable reasons for consistently choosing to hire a disproportionately higher number of men than women throughout the industry, and in particular as directors.

The concern that films directed by women are neither as good nor as profitable as those films made by men might lead to the view that female directors are a riskier proposition than those made by a man. A concern recognised by a number of the female directors we interviewed.

However, the idea that films directed by women are lower in quality or popularity was challenged in Section 3.6. There are two possible measures for the quality of films, firstly, ratings given to it by audience members and second, ratings given to it by critics, whilst audience ratings also serves as the best available measure for popularity. In both categories films directed by women not only matched but outscored those directed by men films.

The average *IMDb rating* for a film with a woman director was 5.91, whilst for films without a woman director it was 5.77. The average Metascore for a film directed by a women was 63.5 and but for a film directed by a man was 58.3. . On *Rotten Tomatoes*, the average for a female-directed film was 68.4 and for a male-directed film was only 60.2.

These are differences of 2.4%, 8.9% and 13.6% respectively. They suggest that films directed by women are actually preferred by audiences overall and certainly seems to remove the possibility of supporting the superior quality or popularity of films directed by men, either according to audiences or critics.

Section 3.7 noted the difficulty in using box-office revenue as a strict measure of the profitability of films due to the lack of widely available data. In general it suggested that films directed by men are in general more profitable than those made by women, but it also noted the significant disparity between the average budget men and women were working with. Films directed by women are highly likely to be at the bottom of the budget banding, and lower budget films tend, on average; to turn lower profits, lacking bigger cast names, smaller marketing budgets and more limited access to distribution networks. The evidence covered in the section certainly lacks the force to justify any claim about the comparative profitability of films directed by each gender.

Furthermore, 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 profit⁸⁴. This study looked at 613 British films made in the UK between 2003 and 2010. Films budgeted at £0.5m-£2m made a profit in just 4.1% of cases, films budgeted at £2m-£5m made a profit in just 4.6% of cases, films budgeted at £5m-£10m made a profit in just 12.1% of cases, and films budgeted at over £10m made a profit in just 17.4% of cases⁸⁵. Given that the UK film industry continues to thrive and investors, producers, and filmmakers continue to be undeterred, it seems odd that profitability would have such a disproportionately large say in the hiring of women.

Hence, there does not appear to be adequate evidence to suggest that films directed by women are either less profitable or of lower quality, nor that female directors are riskier propositions. By extension there does not appear to adequate evidence to conclude that any gender bias against female directors is justified.

Conclusion

Hence, there does not appear to be evidence for any justifiable basis to the bias we've seen in the previous sections. Given audiences and critics prefer films directed by women, it seems difficult to claim they are lower in quality than those made by male directors. And given the lack of widespread data on profitability and the industry's secretiveness towards revealing true profits or losses, let alone the number of variants involved, there is no way to justify the claim that they are less profitable, particularly in an industry for which profit is not the primary driving concern. Therefore, the gender bias appears groundless, services no legitimate purpose and it can be argued is actually stifling the industry both creatively and commercially.

Individual Bias and Systemic Issues

Above, we've argued for a widespread, unconscious bias in the industry towards men over women. Additionally there does not appear to be any justifiable reason for this bias. However, we have found no evidence that there is any conscious or deliberate effort to keep women out of the industry. Nor have we

⁸⁴ "BFI: Only 7% of UK films make profit" <http://www.screendaily.com/news/only-7-of-uk-films-make-profit/5064187.article>

⁸⁵ Further discussion of these statistics and their relation to the structure of the UK film industry can be found in Section 8.2 Part 2: Profit is largely an irrelevance in the UK film industry.

found any evidence of the individuals who make key decisions openly hold any views to support this bias and there is no indication that the kinds of people attracted to work in film are disproportionately misogynistic or anti-women compared with the general population. Hence the bias appears largely unconscious.

The consistency of the issue over time suggests that rather than being about the individuals who come and go, the problem is a product of the industry itself. As we saw in Section 4.4 there is no meaningful improvement in female representation in the UK film industry over our studied period. No department has seen the percentage of women in employment increase by more than 13.7%, no key creative role has improved by more than 15.1%, and many departments and roles have seen decreases in the number of women employed.

Without any meaningful trend towards improving female representation, despite a change in the decision-makers behind it, it must be that the industry suffers from systemic issues which are sustaining these biases.

In the following section we will suggest that it is the structure and nature of the film industry which ultimately produces and sustains this bias.

8.2 Systemic Issues

- Meritocracy tends to depend on either strictly enforced regulation or balancing market principals. Neither is clearly apparent in the UK Film Industry.
- Only 7% of theatrically distributed British films return a profit, which undermines the ability of market forces to be the engine which drives change away from anti-commercial over-reliance on male directors.
- The lack of certainty in the film business creates two major undesirable outcomes: firstly, a fear of doing something different resulting in the veneration of rituals and conventions over facts or reason. And secondly, a reliance on 'on the job' training resulting in a lack of progress based on new ideas and methods.
- These, in combination with the pressured environment decisions are made under, have led to and maintained a reliance in the film industry on preconceived notions of the archetypal director, rather than on actual evidence of ability.
- An issue further protected by permanent short-termism in the industry.
- Film audiences do not care about the gender of the director, meaning that hiring a woman director is not negative from a film sales perspective.
- Films that women chose to watch tend to have an above-average proportion of women writers, producers and directors, suggesting that if producers wish to target women cinema-goers then hiring a woman director can be advantageous.
- There currently exists a vicious circle, whereby the lack of female directors leads to the image of a typical director being that of a man, which creates the unconscious assumption that men are better at directing, which leads to fewer female directors.

Systemic issues encourage bias and prevent meaningful change from occurring. The principal four systemic issues are:

1. **There is no effective regulatory system** to police or enforce gender equality.
2. **The pervasive nature of uncertainty**, which creates a climate of insecurity, leading to illogical and ritualistic behaviours, resulting in the industry operating based on preconceived notions of the archetypal director, rather than on their individual abilities and talents.
3. **Permanent short-termism in the film industry** discourages long-term thinking and prevents positive HR practices, best exemplified by the un-family-friendly nature of the industry.
4. **The vicious cycle** of individual bias leads to systemic issues and vice versa, so the system is self-sustaining.

Our suggested solutions are presented in Chapter 8. The following sections address in detail the four systemic issues listed above.

1. There is no effective regulatory system to police or enforce gender equality

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 2010⁸⁶. 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, it is extremely hard to prove that a key creative position was awarded on the basis of discriminatory behaviour because:

- **Much of the hiring is conducted privately** and without an objective standard to compare the process against.
- **Each creative will provide a different vision for the role**, thereby giving the employer a large number of reasons to cite for their choice.
- **It requires the discriminated party to file a complaint**, which is often perceived to be harmful to one's future opportunities in the industry.
- **The vast majority of directors are 'freelance' employment status**, as is the case with most other roles involved in UK film production⁸⁷.

It is clear that there is currently no effective regulatory system to enforce or police gender equality within the UK film industry as a whole. Hence, discriminatory practices can continue unchallenged and unaltered.

The impact of this lack of a regulatory framework is particularly problematic in the film sector because profit is also not a key driver of decision-making in the UK film industry.

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. 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 you take away adequate competition and there isn't a pre-existing, artificial regulatory framework, there is nothing enforcing or driving change. There is no reason to change, so nothing improves - be it the quality of the product or the hiring practices of the industry. People can be successful not by being better, but by being in a position to take advantage of bias, at which point the bias is in their interest, which is why the market needs an external guiding principle such as profit.

With there being no clear commercial reason for disproportionately high numbers of film directors being men, one would assume that over time a system free of other interference would automatically self-balance by rewarding those who hire over-looked talented female directors (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 Section 3.2 for evidence).

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 profit⁸⁸. This study looked at 613 British films made in the UK between 2003 and 2010.

⁸⁶ The Equality Act 2010 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

⁸⁷ It should be noted that we could find no evidence to support the theory that taking someone to task for discriminatory behaviour hurts one's future chances of employment (despite this belief being widespread in the industry). However, in an industry where careers are built on individual reputation and your last job working as a freelancer is a precarious existence, directors, as freelancers, have to move from project to project to stay in work and to build experience, therefore industry's gender bias creates yet another layer of additional challenge for female directors progressing their careers.

⁸⁸ "BFI: Only 7% of UK films make profit" <http://www.screendaily.com/news/only-7-of-uk-films-make-profit/5064187.article>

Percentage of theatrically-released films which made a profit, UK films 2003-10



The situation could in fact be worse as this study only looked at films which were theatrically released. Of the 2,591 films we studied in our ten-year period (shot between 2005-14), only 854 were released in commercial cinemas anywhere in the world (according to the Rentrak data). This represents just 32.9% of our dataset. As it can take a while for films to be released after they have been shot, it's possible that in the fullness of time the final figure will be slightly higher. Even so, if we generously assume that 35% of UK films reach cinemas, and of those 7% turn a profit, then we are looking at around 1 in 40 UK films returning their investment.

When avoiding poor financial performance at all costs is not the primary driver then there is often not extensive examination of how a more profitable product can be created, which would include the selection of the key creatives on the film. Hence, the lack of rigorous regulatory framework is compounded by the weakness of the traditional regulatory effect of market forces on the product (the film). The film industry is notably devoid of the factors that usually influence decision-making and drive positive change within an industry.

The long-standing and pervasive nature of the gender inequality in UK film confirms that the industry cannot rely on weak market forces within the UK film industry to deliver the significant level of self-correct required.

2. The pervasive nature of uncertainty

In his book 'Adventures in the Screen Trade', Hollywood screenwriter William Goldman famously said *'Nobody knows anything..... Not one person in the entire motion picture field knows for a certainty what's going to work. Every time out it's a guess and, if you're lucky, an educated one'*.

Despite constant efforts to provide reliable methods of predicting the success of a film, filmmakers continue to see each film as a gamble. The smartest, highest paid and most ruthless producers of feature films (i.e. the Hollywood studios) still continue to lose epic sums of money on unexpected flops⁸⁹.

This uncertainty impacts decision-making in the film industry in a number of ways:

First, it creates a fear of doing something different. If you are creating products in an already risky environment, then going against the conventional practices could be perceived as adding unnecessary personal risk to any decision made. The lack of a robust regulatory framework applied across the industry as a whole means few are challenged for failing to use closed and arguably unfair practices. This leads to individuals involved in hiring within of the film industry using the same methods of finding and selecting

⁸⁹ List of box office bombs https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_box_office_bombs

directors, regardless of their efficacy in the past. Logically, it would make sense to cast the net as wide as possible, which would involve considering men and women equally, but instead the same methods which have “always been used” continue to be relied upon.

Secondly, a reliance on ‘on the job’ training leads to the continuation of existing systems and biases. 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.

Collectively, these causes, like the lack of any regulatory systems, prevent change, as new information drives new action, hence the pervasive nature of uncertainty and the mind-sets it creates help maintain the status quo.

When you consider that the film industry has few reliable methods or systems for ensuring success, it seems unsurprising that they retain the vast majority of methodologies from a previous era and many of the values.

These effects are also apparent in the theatre industry, as noted by the *Tonic Theatre Advance* study. One of their conclusions reads as follows⁹⁰:

There are some really ingrained things in how we in our industry think, work, and make decisions, most of which have been handed down to us from a time when women weren't anticipated to be equal in the workforce, let alone having their voices and ideas amplified on the public stage. Consequently, many of the barriers to women today are a result of these now outmoded structures. While we don't need to tear the whole thing down and start again, if we're going to make changes so we can have a better, more effective and equitable way for our industry to function, we will need to be self-reflective, analytical, and not settle for saying "but we've always done it like this".

One of the most damaging conventions that appears to have grown due to the prevalence of uncertainty in the industry, and then is protected by the industry's training structure, is the preconceived notion of the archetypal director.

This preconceived notion of an archetypal director is based problematically on appearance. A recent New York Times article⁹¹ on women in Hollywood noted that despite the calls for a fairer treatment of women in the industry ‘*Hollywood continues to push the archetype that feels familiar: white, male, ball cap*’.

This provides an initial explanation for the issue of unconscious bias discussed in section 8.1. Under immense time pressure and with a large number of decisions to make, and in an industry where certainty is in short supply, it is understandable, if not excusable, that individuals will increasingly make hiring decisions based on their own notions of the archetypal hire for a given role. Particularly if there is no regulatory framework to prevent this.

An industry which by design rewards appearance over content will generate these issues. Sectors with gender representation issues tend to be those with a focus on appearance or which are client-facing (although this it is not limited to these sectors).

Advertising, theatre, film, sales, finance, and law all have clear preconceptions of what their workers are ‘supposed to look like’. Because they are client-facing industries (and, crucially, not product based – the people don’t sell things, they sell themselves and their ideas) the notion of what their employees look like is important.

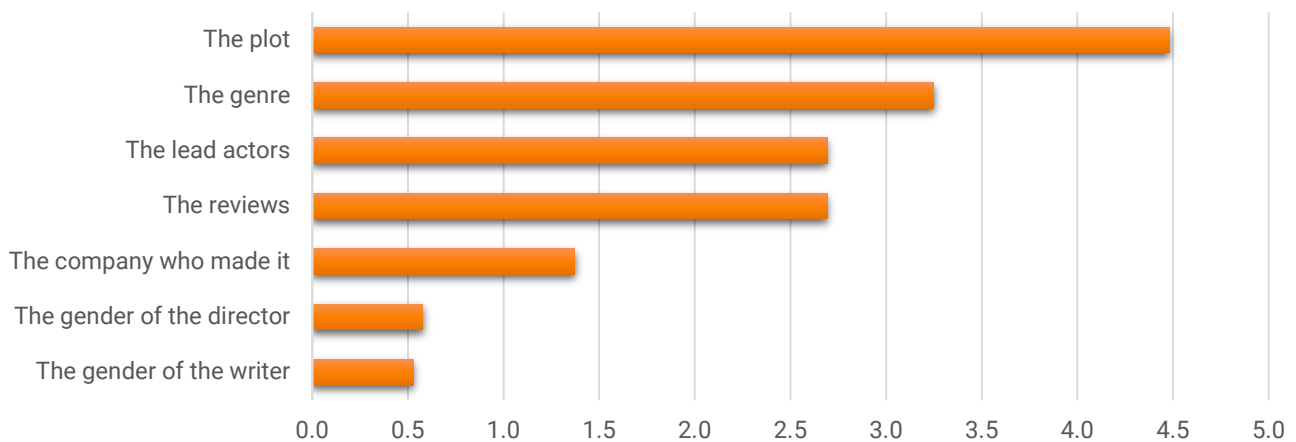
However, the industry’s own preoccupation with the archetype of the director is not generally mirrored by audiences. To underline this point, we conducted a survey of 104 cinema-goers in the UK. The respondents

⁹⁰ Tonic Theatre’s Advance study “10 Key Things We Learnt” <http://www.tonictheatre-advance.co.uk/learning/#key-learning>

⁹¹ ‘The Women of Hollywood Speak Out’ Maureen Dowd New York Times 20 Nov 2015 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/22/magazine/the-women-of-hollywood-speak-out.html>

were randomly selected via *Facebook* adverts, aimed at the entire adult UK population. The survey asked how they choose films to view in cinemas and at home.

Importance of various factors in how UK cinema-goers select which film to watch



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 were by far and away the least important factor in how they choose which film to watch. 78.8% of respondents selected the lowest possible score for the gender of the director, which was labelled 'I don't care'.

It is clear that film audiences do not outwardly care about the gender of the filmmakers.

However, obviously audiences do take account of the contents of a film, which is heavily influenced by the people in the key creative roles. In previous research⁹², we have shown that the films watched by the highest proportion of women tend to be made by women writers, producers, and directors. See Section 11.2 for full details of this study and its findings.

This suggests that audiences feel that the gender of the filmmakers is irrelevant, but they do unconsciously recognise and value the contribution which different creative voices bring to each film.

Sadly, the UK film industry, due to its traditional nature, seems to be mostly operating in the opposite manner – caring deeply about whether the director fits their stereotype, but ignoring the fact that female directors bring different perspectives to the final product, which audiences appreciate.

Our conclusion is that faced with the pervasive uncertainty of the industry, hiring decisions have come to rely on preconceived notions of archetypal directors which are based not entirely on talent, but other factors such as appearance.

3. Permanent short-termism in the film industry

These structural issues are then compounded by permanent short-termism in the film industry.

The vast majority of producers work film-to-film and therefore build their team and structures anew for each project. Once the financing is complete, there is strong pressure to get the production moving, in order to bring the project to market as quickly as possible and recoup the investment. The process of production is similarly short-term focused, with the emphasis being placed on keeping to the budget and on schedule.

⁹²'Gender in UK Film Crews' report by Stephen Follows http://stephenfollows.com/reports/Gender_Within_UK_Film_Crews-stephenfollows_com.pdf

In a situation where hiring decisions need to be made fairly quickly, and without adequate time for reflection, it is not surprising that many producers are falling back on quick fixes, such as relying on heuristics and hiring people who fit their pre-conceived notions or who they have already worked with.

Across our dataset of films, the average UK feature film employed 133 crew members. Outside of the film industry, most companies with a workforce of 133-odd staff will have human resources solutions in place, which act to consider the long-term effect of their employment practices, and which can be relied upon to assist when short-term hiring decisions need to be made. The film industry's lack of HR processes and almost-permanent focus on short-term results combine to allow bias and unfairness to develop unchecked.

One illustration of the way short-termism can in particular damage women in the industry, is the un-family-friendly nature of film work.

The work patterns of the film industry are not particularly conducive to raising a family, with unpredictable employment, long-hours and frequent last minute changes. In addition, the nature of the work means that key creative roles are difficult to find last-minute cover for. For example, if a film director is unable to work for a day due to a family emergency, it can be extremely hard to find someone to adequately cover their day's work on set. A more "long-term" industry would, by necessity, have to build up frameworks to resolve these issues and to protect its employees. With film-projects operating on a time-limited basis the HR processes put in place are often basic, and without a proper employment framework employees suffer and this the disproportionately impacts women employees.

Skillset's 2010 Creative Media Workforce Survey⁹³ found that 29% of those working in film production have dependent children, compared with the UK population average⁹⁴ of 42.8%. Sadly, the *Skillset* figure is not split by gender but across all areas of 'Creative Media'⁹⁵, 29% of male workers had dependent children, and 19% of women workers.

Although, we feel that while many of the UK film industry's employment practices are certainly not conducive to being a primary care-giver (which disproportionally affects women⁹⁶) and this is not a large enough factor to account for the huge disparity in the employment of women film directors, as shown in Section 3, it does suggest a lack of child care opportunities, and of HR frameworks more generally, that can disproportionately affect women employees.

4. The vicious cycle

Inequality in the film industry appears to be symbiotic – the various elements of inequality across different areas of the industry reinforce and facilitate each other. There are a number of ways this seems to occur:

1. **Promotion and progression.** Female directors are proven to hire more women employees (see Section 4.3), so, given the chance, they would increase the pool of potential future female directors. However, there are so few female directors being employed, the reverse is currently true. Men hire men, so fewer women are hired to the key creative roles (and therefore into the departments below them) reducing the number of women with adequate experience to break into directing. It's a vicious cycle.
2. **Visibility.** A lack of female directors propagates the view among other women that directing is harder to break into for women: they lack role models and come to see it as a boys' club. This is likely to be disheartening in an area where self-belief is key.

⁹³ '2010 Creative Media Workforce Survey' *Creative Skillset*

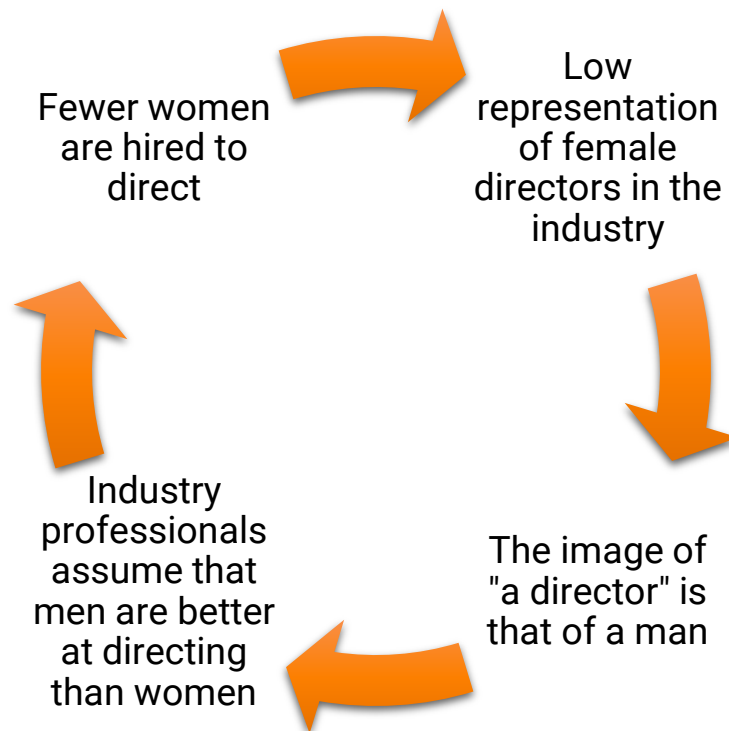
http://creativeskillset.org/assets/0000/6239/Skillset_Creative_Media_Workforce_Survey_2010.pdf

⁹⁴ We calculated this via data from the *Office of National Statistics*.

⁹⁵ The 2010 *Creative Skillset Workforce Survey* included data from those working in television, radio, film, publishing, animation, interactive media, computer games, archives libraries and photo imaging.

⁹⁶It should also be noted that single-parent households in the UK are still hugely female centric, with women accounting for 91% of the 2 million lone parents with dependent children. "Families and Householders, 2014: *The Office for National Statistics* <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/family-demography/families-and-households/2014/families-and-households-in-the-uk-2014.html>

The vicious cycle which makes it harder for women to become directors



Section C:

Fixing the Gender Inequality issue

9. Moving forward

- The under-representation of female directors in the UK film industry has a number of negative externalities; for the industry, for film audiences, and, above all, for overlooked female directors.
- The under-employment of women in the UK film industry has been reported on for decades.
- The film industry shows no signs of self-correcting the current gender imbalance.
- Film industry professionals do not believe they are consciously using gender as a factor when assessing directors.
- Our suggested solutions target the two main causes of the gender imbalance; unconscious individual bias and the systemic issues which allow this to continue.
- The current vicious circle which perpetuates the under-employment of female directors can be used as the engine of change, becoming a virtuous circle.
- We propose:
 - 1. A target of 50/50 gender parity within public funding by 2020.
 - 2. Amend the Film Tax Relief to require all UK films to take account of diversity.
 - 3. A co-ordinated, data-lead campaign for gender equality across the UK film industry.
- We also believe that it is worth investigating amending the UK Film Tax Credit to reward female-directed productions, although this suggestion requires further study.
- We do not feel that naming and shaming producers or production companies who hire few / no female directors will be an effective route to improving the situation, and could even harm the cause.
- We advise against campaigning on the suggestion that female directors are, by definition, better than male directors.
- While the campaign for gender equity among film directors should be promoted loudly and widely, there is a real danger in championing minor (or invented) successes as it could lead to the perception that the situation is 'in hand', despite the lack of actual change.

9.1 The impact of female directors

- The under-representation of female directors in the UK film industry causes numerous negative implications; for the industry, for film audiences, wider society and, above all, for those female directors being overlooked.

There are many reasons why the gender inequality within film directors matters, including:

- **Fairness.** It is patently unfair that one gender has a significant advantage over the other in securing a job in the film industry. The industry has yet to tackle its entrenched gender inequality with the scope and scale required to have any real impact.
- **Stories will be told differently by men and women, this is about individuality regardless of gender.** Female-led stories are more likely to be told by female directors. Because stories are often drawn from the filmmaker's own experiences, with men dominating the pool of directors, 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 directors will provide a new take on other stories, widening the pool of films, stories and perspectives that audiences are exposed to.
- **The film industry needs 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 (i.e. those who rely on a director's leadership and creative vision) and in the case of film far beyond it (i.e. film audiences who are not offered the best possible products to watch).
- **Hiring female directors (and other department heads) results in a higher overall proportion of women being employed.** As we have shown in Section 4.3, when women are hired in senior roles within the film industry, the representation of women in the corresponding department increases. Therefore, the issue of under-representation of women among directors is also a relevant issue for writers, producers, and everyone who works in the UK film industry.
- **Without a sufficient number of female role models, the next generation of directors are more likely to be male.** In the words of Gena Davis, actress and founder of gender-equality campaign institute 'See Jane', puts it⁹⁷: 'If she can't see it, she can't be it'. This is a point powerfully illustrated in the previous chapter's 'vicious cycle'.

⁹⁷ 'If she can't see it, she can't be it: why media representation matters' 12 Nov 2013 The Guardian <http://www.theguardian.com/women-in-leadership/2013/nov/12/media-representation-matters>

9.2 Why action is needed

- The under-employment of women in the UK film industry has been reported on for decades.
- The film industry shows no signs of self-correcting the current gender imbalance.
- Film industry professionals do not believe or are unaware that they are consciously using gender as a factor when assessing directors.

As inequality in the industry is not the result of deliberate, concerted actions (see Chapter 8), then one may assume that half the battle is simply revealing the unconscious bias of decision makers, and then, over time, the industry will self-correct the gender bias. However, we believe that the industry is extremely unlikely to correct the gender balance organically, for a number of reasons:

1. **This is not a new finding.** The heavy bias towards male directors has been public knowledge for many years. Organisations such as *Women in Film and Television* (founded in 1989) have been gathering data and generating headlines on the topic way before our study period began (2005-14). See below for two such articles from 14 years ago^{98/99}, highlighting the widespread bias towards male directors and reporting data from studies by *Women in Film and Television* and *San Diego State University*.



2. **There has been no credible improvement in the employment of female directors.** As shown in Section 3.2, in the past decade there has been no indication that the industry is self-correcting.
3. **People do not believe they are unconsciously or consciously using gender as a factor when assessing directors.** Despite the clear, sustained, and sizable gender imbalance within the industry, the reasoning people give for why they select directors almost never include gender as a factor.
4. **There is no precedent for a comparable industry self-correcting such a high degree of inequality** without industry wide action through specific, targeted interventions.

⁹⁸ 'Female film-makers 'face struggle' BBC News 5 July 2002 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/2098046.stm>

⁹⁹ 'Female directors fight back' BBC News 8 November 2002 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/film/2420713.stm>

9.3 Recommended solutions

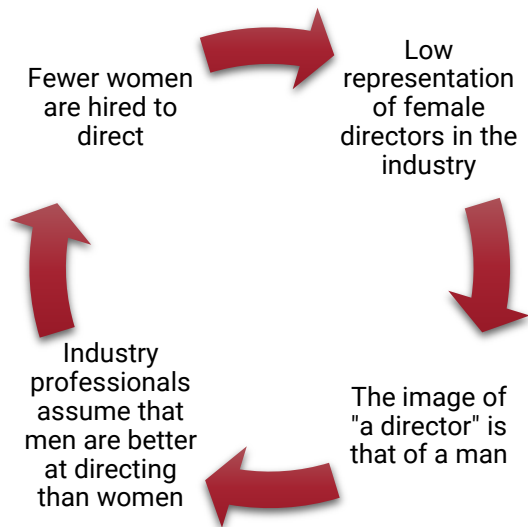
- Solutions will need to target the two main causes of the gender imbalance; unconscious, individual bias and the systemic issues that protect and promote inequality.
- The current vicious circle which perpetuates the under-employment of female directors can be used as the engine of positive change, becoming a virtuous circle.
- We propose:
 1. A target of 50/50 gender parity within public funding by 2020.
 2. Amend the Film Tax Relief to require all UK films to take account of diversity.
 3. A co-ordinated, data-lead campaign for gender equality across the UK film industry.

As we laid out in the previous chapter, the cause of the gender imbalance is a combination of unconscious individual bias and systemic issues which sustain and protect these biases. Therefore, the proposed interventions respond directly to the two causal factors responsible for creating and sustaining gender inequality:

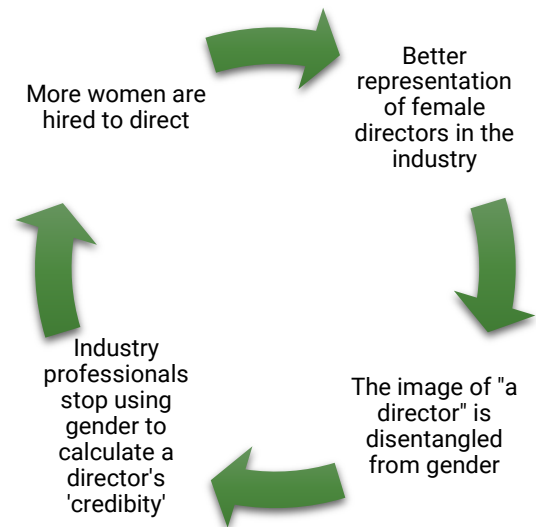
- **Unconscious individual bias** can be addressed directly through campaigns to actively address incorrect behaviours and beliefs and keep gender equality in the forefront of people's minds. Addressing unconscious bias will require a consistent and coordinated approach across the industry to inform 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 is not leading to real change. See Section 9.6 explore this issue in more detail.
- **The Systemic Issues** that currently perpetuate and reinforce the industry's gender bias could be converted into a vehicle for positive change. Directors are commonly selected on the basis of how credible they seem. Currently, a large number of industry players are using gender as one of a number of unconscious indicators of credibility and so focus should be placed on identifying and targeting what factors cause female directors to be viewed as 'less credible' than their male counterparts.

These two 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. The aim would be to **turn the current vicious cycle** (low representation women of leading to low regard for female directors leading back to low female representation) **into a virtuous circle** (increased awareness of female directors, leading to more deciding to employ women, resulting in more role models and increased awareness of female directors).

The current vicious cycle



The possible virtuous cycle



Our suggestions are:

1. A target of 50:50 gender parity within public funding by 2020.
2. Amend the Film Tax Relief to require all UK films to take account of diversity.
3. A co-ordinated, data-driven campaign for gender equality across the UK film industry.

1. A target of 50/50 gender parity within public funding by 2020

We propose a target of 50% of the films backed by UK-based public funding bodies to be directed by women by 2020.

Currently, public funding bodies in the UK offer better support to female directors than the UK film industry at large. However, across all films backed by UK-based public funding bodies female representation among directors is still only at 21.7%.

- Percentage of films backed by major public funding bodies (2005-14) with a woman director:
 - 50.0% - *Film London*
 - 42.1% - *Creative England*
 - 27.4% - *BBC*
 - 21.1% - *Ffilm Cymru Wales*
 - 20.1% - *BFI / UKFC*
 - 18.8% - *Creative Scotland*
 - 18.2% - *Northern Ireland Screen*
 - 16.7% - *BBC Films*
- Funding awards by national screen agencies (see Section 5 for details) :
 - 49.7% - *Creative England*
 - 37.3% - *Northern Ireland Screen*
 - 29.0% - *Ffilm Cymru Wales*

With a three-year run-up period to give filmmakers, producers, and investors enough time to create and foster suitable projects, shrewd investors will be looking for female-led projects and smart producers will start forming relationships with female directors to build creative collaborations.

Case study – Swedish Film Institute

In 2011, when Anna Serner took over as CEO of the *Swedish Film Institute* she announced that she would seek equal gender funding on all the productions they were involved with. Their aim was to achieve their target by 2015, but in the end it took them just two and a half years. The Swedish film industry had seen that Ms. Serner was serious and committed.

At the time she took over it had been government policy to aim for at least 40% female representation, although the actual figure was 26%. Anna Serner said¹⁰⁰: *'When I took over, we had 26% of funding going to female directors. I said that was a catastrophe. I used that word. I wanted the business to realise that there was a new sheriff in town. They are not stupid. They realise I am the head of the funding body, so maybe things are going to happen. I said in my opinion 40-60 is rubbish. It should be 50-50 over time. One year you might have 70-30, but over time you should be able to balance it equally. Talking makes no difference. You have to act. Whatever you do, they will criticise, but you just have to live with that'*

Of the films backed by the *Swedish Film Institute* in 2014, 50% had a woman director, 55% had a women writer and 65% had women producers. In addition, women now dominate the Swedish film awards, taking 69% of the prizes. Internationally, they take about 40%.

The rapid success of Swedish Film Institute in equalising their film funding does suggest that even in the short term concerted efforts to redress the balance of film funding can have a sizeable effect. The change at the film awards also suggests that this policy may well have been adequate to pull the Swedish Film Industry 'over the hump', although further data over the next few years will be necessary to confirm this.

¹⁰⁰"How Sweden hit its 50:50 gender target for film production in record time" 24 May 2015 Sydney Morning Herald <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/movies/how-sweden-hit-its-5050-gender-target-for-film-production-in-record-time-20150519-gh489a.html>

Public funding bodies should be required to gather and publish gender data

We propose that all bodies which disperse public money within the UK to films or filmmakers are required to provide full details of the gender of applicants, grantees, and key creatives on each production.

For our research on publicly-funded films in Chapter 4, we submitted Freedom of Information requests to the national screen agencies (*Creative England, Creative Scotland, Northern Ireland Screen, and Ffilm Cymru Wales*), *Film London* and the *BFI*. We asked about the gender of applicants and grantees for their funding schemes.

The results were patchy, with only *Northern Ireland Screen* providing full data.

Provided full data	Provided topline data	Could not provide data
Northern Ireland Screen	Creative England Ffilm Cymru Wales	British Film Institute (BFI) Film London Creative Scotland

The principal reason why *Northern Ireland Screen* was able to provide such comprehensive data is that they are required to “have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between... men and women” by the *Northern Ireland Act 1998*.

We suggest that the statistics tracked and shared by public bodies should follow the example set by *Northern Ireland Screen*, rather than the topline data provided by *Creative England* and *Ffilm Cymru Wales*.

2. Amend the Film Tax Relief to require all UK films to take account of diversity

We propose an additional ‘diversity’ dimension to the requirements all films must fulfil in order to be eligible for Film Tax Relief, within which gender would be specified group.

The most significant way the UK government 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.

The effect of the UK Film Tax Relief

The FTR is one of the principal reasons why the UK Film Industry has experienced significant growth in the past decade¹⁰¹. A recent government statement summarised summed its growth as follows¹⁰²:

The Chancellor hailed a ground-breaking year for independent and big budget international films today [Wednesday 23 December], as he confirmed government support for the UK film industry through film tax relief had reached £251 million this year, generating over £1 billion worth of direct investment in the UK in the last year alone.

This is the most generous support ever provided by the government, reaping huge returns for the UK through a system which ultimately generates £12.49 for the UK economy for every £1 of tax relief granted.

The official statistics released by HMRC also confirmed that £1.5 billion was secured by the UK film industry through the government’s film tax relief and led to over £6.9 billion investment from the film industry across the UK since 2007.

This investment has led to 260,000 full-time creative sector jobs in the UK and critical acclaim for the movies made here.

Of the FTR, Adrian Wootton, chief executive of the British Film Commission, said¹⁰³:

The UK’s creative sector tax reliefs have been a tremendous success, attracting inward investment through film, television and animation while stimulating growth in jobs and infrastructure across the UK, from London, Bristol and Manchester to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The boost they give our domestic screen industries is crucial, since the money generated by major inward investment titles helps create further training and business opportunities which allow our own independent productions to thrive, thus maintaining the UK’s status as a cultural powerhouse that is both creative and highly profitable.

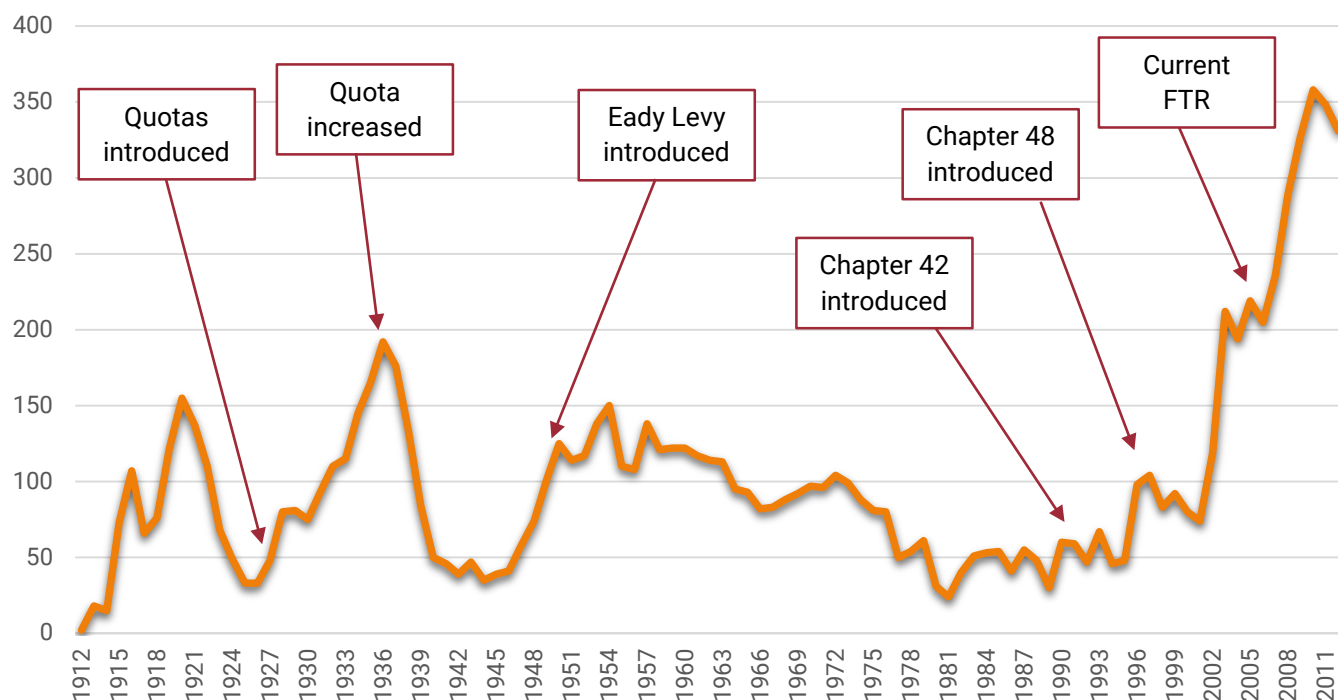
In fact, government action has been behind the majority of booms in the history of the UK Film Industry. See below for a timeline of the UK film industry, along with the most significant government fiscal inventions.

¹⁰¹ Other reasons include technological changes in how films are made, distributed and exhibited.

¹⁰² ‘Record year for UK film industry tax relief’ 23 December 2015 <http://www.wired-gov.net/wg/news.nsf/articles/Record+year+for+UK+film+industry+tax+relief+23122015120500>

¹⁰³ ‘Film tax relief reaches \$372m in 2015’ 23 December 2015 *Screen Daily* <http://www.screendaily.com/news/uk-film-industry-tax-relief-reaches-372m-in-2015/5098378.article>

Number of feature films made in the UK



See Section 11.1 for more details on these government actions.

How the current Film Tax Relief scheme works

In order to qualify for the relief a film must:

- Be intended for theatrical release
- Have spent a minimum of 10% of its qualifying UK production expenditure¹⁰⁴ within the UK
- Have either passed the *Cultural Test for Film* or be certified as an official co-production
- Be made by a production company within the UK Corporation Tax net.

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.

¹⁰⁴ 'Qualifying UK production expenditure' is defined as expenditure incurred on production activities (pre-production, principal photography/animation shooting/designing/producing and post production) which take place within the UK, irrespective of the nationality of the persons carrying out the activity.

Points available	Chapter
	Chapter A - Cultural Content
4	Film set in the UK or European Economic Area (EEA)
4	Lead characters British or EEA citizens or residents
4	Film based on British or EEA subject matter or underlying material
6	Original dialogue recorded mainly in English or UK indigenous language or EEA language
	Total Chapter A = 18 points available
	Chapter B - Cultural Contribution
4	The film demonstrates British creativity, British heritage and/or diversity
	Total Chapter B = 4 points available
	Chapter C - Cultural Hubs
2	(a) At least 50% of the principal photography or SFX takes place in the UK
2	(b) At least 50% of the VFX takes place in the UK
2	(c) An extra 2 points can be awarded if at least 80% of principal photography or VFX or SFX takes place in the UK
1	Music Recording/Audio Post Production/Picture Post Production
	Total Chapter C = 5 points available (Maximum 4 points in total in C1)
	Chapter D - Cultural Practitioners (UK or EEA citizens or residents)
1	Director
1	Scriptwriter
1	Producer
1	Composer
1	Lead Actors
1	Majority of Cast
1	Key Staff (lead cinematographer, lead production designer, lead costume designer, lead editor, lead sound designer, lead visual effects supervisor, lead hair and makeup supervisor)
1	Majority of Crew
	Total Chapter D = 8 points available

Upon receiving their completed certification, producers can claim money off their next Corporation Tax bill, or, if insufficient Corporation Tax is due, a rebate.

The value of the FTR is usually just under a fifth of the money spent in the UK. The exact formula is as follows:

First, relief can be claimed on 25% of either the UK core expenditure or of 80% of total core expenditure, whichever is lower.

And second, a further benefit is given to companies which have a Corporation Tax liability in the same year (and so the FTR can be offset against tax they owe rather than being paid out as a cash rebate). Their relief is set to 28%, in place of 25%.

Films budgeted over £20 million used to receive a lower FTR rate of 20% but in March 2015 this was increased to match that of films budgeted under £20 million (25%)¹⁰⁵.

Just amending the Cultural Test is not enough

A minor amendment could be made to the current FTR system by changing the Cultural Test to greatly reward productions with a woman director. For example, in Chapter D ("Cultural Practitioners"), four points could be given to films with a woman director.

¹⁰⁵Budget 2015 - Extension to film and TV tax credits' 23 March 2015 Jacqueline Hunt www.olswang.com/articles/2015/03/budget-2015-extension-to-film-and-tv-tax-credits-1/

However, although this would be a positive step in the right direction, it is unlikely to have a big enough effect. The Cultural Test is written in a way which makes it extremely hard for a home-grown UK film to fail. For example, a film based on a British script, with British characters, set in Britain and in English will already be able to pass, no matter what their employment statistics are.

Therefore in order to effect real change, we don't need to increase the eligibility for films, but instead to provide a mechanism which forces filmmakers to take some account of diversity within their cast and crew.

Adding a 'Diversity Test' to the process of applying for Film Tax Relief

We propose a second test which all films will have to pass, in addition to the Cultural Test, in order to be eligible for money via Film Tax Relief.

In designing the test we need to consider the way it is administered; the test will be applied to each film in succession, rather than en masse to a collection of films. Therefore we cannot use a single target for female representation, such as the 50/50 target we propose for public bodies. For example, it would not be fair to require every second film which applied for tax relief to be directed by a woman director as it would add an element of luck, relating to exactly when each project was assessed.

However, it is entirely reasonable to require filmmakers to take some account of diversity within their cast and crew. Therefore we suggest a new 'Diversity Test', which would allow filmmakers a degree of freedom as to how they reach the pass mark.

The exact wording and criteria for the 'Diversity Test' will need to be drafted in consultation with representatives from all stakeholders.

3. A co-ordinated, data-lead campaign for gender equality across the UK film industry

We propose an industry wide campaign to rebalance gender inequality within UK film, whereby different parts of the film industry take responsibility for the respective roles they have to play in tackling gender inequality and enabling more women to become directors and direct films.

Public bodies and agencies should continue to lead a coordinated campaign raising awareness and promoting action and intervention, including: funding, career support, unconscious bias training and challenging industry myths.

The industry, sections within it and individual organisations, should explore the use of data and research to ensure they are systematically targeting the causes of gender inequality, rather than just the symptoms.

In Section 12 we provide detailed suggestions the industry wish to consider, along with case studies of similar existing projects. In summary, these include;

- Make a clear commitment to tackling gender inequality, supported by specific aims and objectives that target the causes.
- Incentivise private investors to back female-directed films.
- Encourage and support women-only funding schemes.
- Build further support networks for female directors and provide career development opportunities specifically for women in the industry.

9.6 A word of caution

- On-going industry debate and discussion on the issue of gender inequality amongst UK film directors and the industry more broadly cannot be taken as any measure of meaningful change

It is important that the debate around gender equality in directing, and more generally in the film industry, is focused on measureable outcomes and tangible changes to hiring practices, not on rhetoric and the volume of gender related events.

The evidence on gender inequality is overwhelming, the movement is gathering pace, and key decision-makers and bodies have committed to effecting real change. However, there is a significant danger that increased awareness is mistaken for actual change.

Last year, the London Film Festival declared 2015 the 'year of the strong woman' and held a number of great events and screenings which championed women in film. There is no doubt that *The London Film Festival* should be commended for seeking to address the under-representation of women in the UK film industry. However, as *LFF* festival director Clare Stewart pointed out, there is still a long way to go. 'I think we have a strong track record. But when I say that we've got 46 films directed by women in this year's programme, which sounds great, looking at the overall context of the festival, it's still only 20 per cent of the films¹⁰⁶'.

There is an inherent danger that in raising the awareness about female directors you inadvertently present the issue as either 'in hand' or solved.

This argument follows from the fact that we believe a major cause of the current gender inequality is unconscious individual bias. We've noted throughout this study that none of those perpetuating the inequality in the industry believe that they are discriminating against individuals. Therefore, a narrative which suggests that the problem is solved fits extremely comfortably into their pre-existing beliefs.

This passive model that prevents any direct action and real change might be captured as follows: 'the industry is changing and tackling gender inequality, without the need for specific action from this organisation/individual, we have no gender bias present here to begin with and so don't need to make changes'. This mind-set not only prevents individuals from feeling they need to implement changes but also cements the notion that there was no problem with their actions or practices in the first place.

Public noise is vital in galvanising support but only to the extent to which it causes real, systemic change in the UK film industry. Noise without real action is worse than nothing at all. It falsely suggests that the situation is improving which allows everyone to relax, safe in the knowledge that it's 'in hand'. However, this would do nothing to improve the environment for women who want to join the industry and/or become film directors.

The most helpful thing we can do is to redirect the undeniable passion and influence of the industry leaders, key decision-makers, celebrities, festival organisers, producers, and campaigners towards functional change.

Nothing that is taking place currently is likely to fix the gender inequality issue in the UK film industry. That's not to say that there are not positive efforts being made or that campaigners are not helping to increase awareness of the issue. But if we continue doing what we've always been doing then we'll keep getting what we've always got.

¹⁰⁶ 'London Film Festival: Why 2015 is the year for strong women' Daily Telegraph 5 October 2015
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11907336/London-Film-Festival-Why-2015-is-the-year-for-strong-women.html>

Section D: Appendix

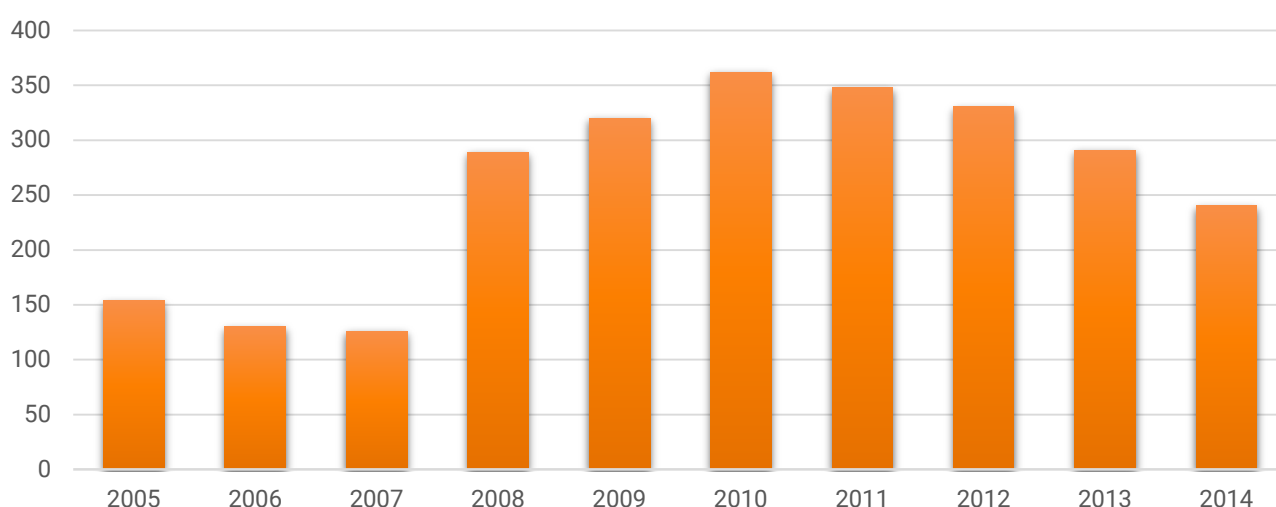
10. Methodology

10.1 Film Dataset

The dataset began as a list of feature films shot in the UK between 2005 and 2014 (inclusive) supplied by the *British Film Institute (BFI)*. We built upon, adapted, and expanded this to build our dataset of 2,591 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. This explains the big increase in films between 2007 and 2008.

Feature films shot in the UK, 2005-14, by shoot year



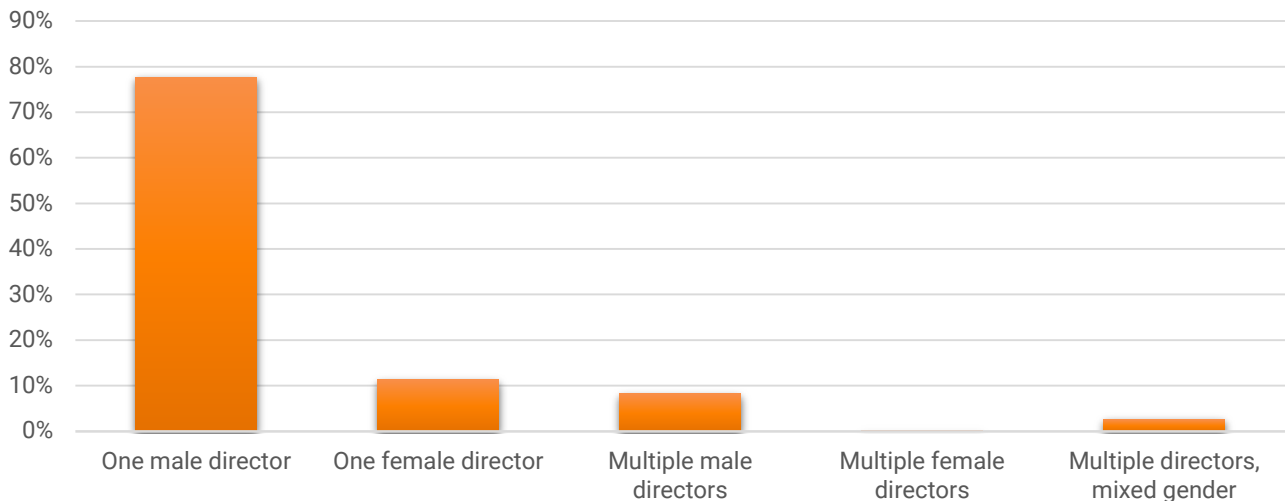
As our focus is the traditional film director, we excluded the following types of films:

- Films with more than five directors
- 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
- Concert films

Directing teams

77.7% of films were directed by an individual male director with just 11.3% by an individual woman director. 8.2% were directed by teams of men, and 2.6% were directed by teams with mixed genders. Only five films in our ten-year study (0.2%) were directed by teams of women.

Combinations of directors for UK films 2005-14



88.5% of films had at least one male director, whilst 14.0% had at least one woman director. In total, 13.6% of films had a woman director, but only 11.5% were directed exclusively by women.

10.2 Data Sources

Our data sources included:

- *The British Film Institute (BFI)*
- *Internet Movie Database (IMDb)*
- *Directors UK's own database of individuals and productions*
- *Rentrak*
- *Rotten Tomatoes*
- *Metacritic*
- *The Numbers*
- *The British Council*
- *Wikipedia*
- *UCAS¹⁰⁷*
- *The UK government*
- *OBS LUMIERE*
- Websites, social profiles and agent pages of individual directors (in order to verify credits and determine gender)

Thanks to the *BFI* data, we were able to perform basic analysis on all 2,591 films, such as the genre of the director(s), writer(s), and producer(s). However, many of these films have not been completed or released and therefore we could not find public information for every film.

Within our dataset we found:

- 93.9% of films had an *IMDb* page
- 32.9% of films had *Rentrak* box office data anywhere in the world
- 32.0% of films had *Rentrak* box office data in the UK
- 17.6% of films had a *Metascore*

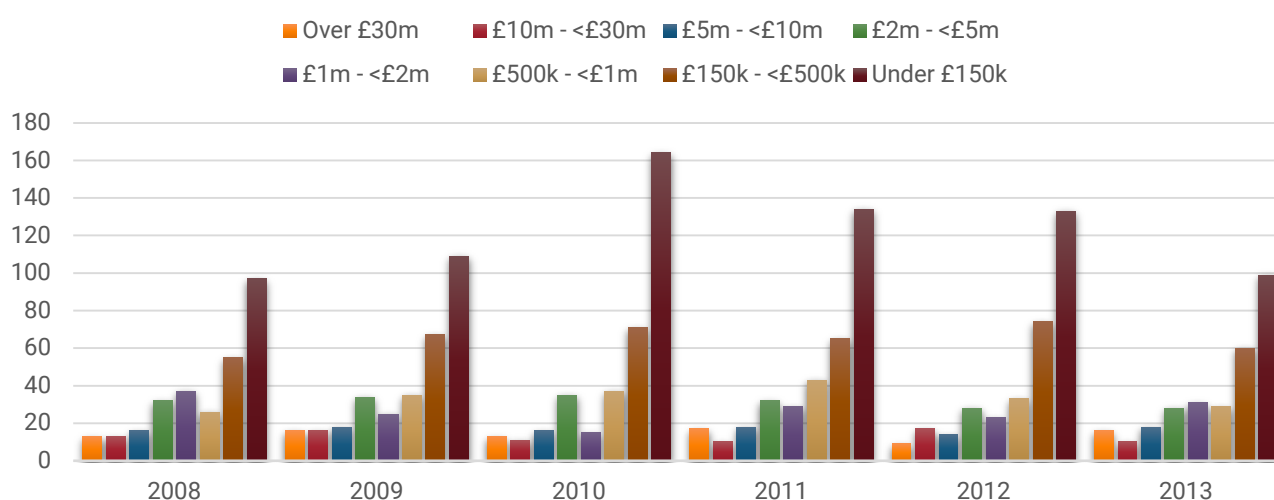
¹⁰⁷ Unfortunately, *UCAS* have limited the number of data points we are permitted to publish.

10.3 Budget Data

The *BFI* supplied budget ranges for films shot between the start of 2008 and the middle of 2014. 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.

For films shot before 2008 and during the second half of 2014, it is not possible to find other reliable sources for budget data. Therefore, in this report, when we break down findings by budget level, it refers to UK films shot between January 2008 and July 2014.

Feature films shot in the UK 2008-13, by budget range



10.4 Career Progression and Genre

Calculating Career Progression

In Section 3.3 we noted that: Even after directing two films, it becomes comparatively harder for a woman director to direct her third film than it is for a male director to direct his third. A male director has a 28.3% better chance of directing a third film after their second, and a 70.6% better chance of making a fourth after their third, compared to his women counterparts. It is worth briefly outlining how these percentages were calculated.

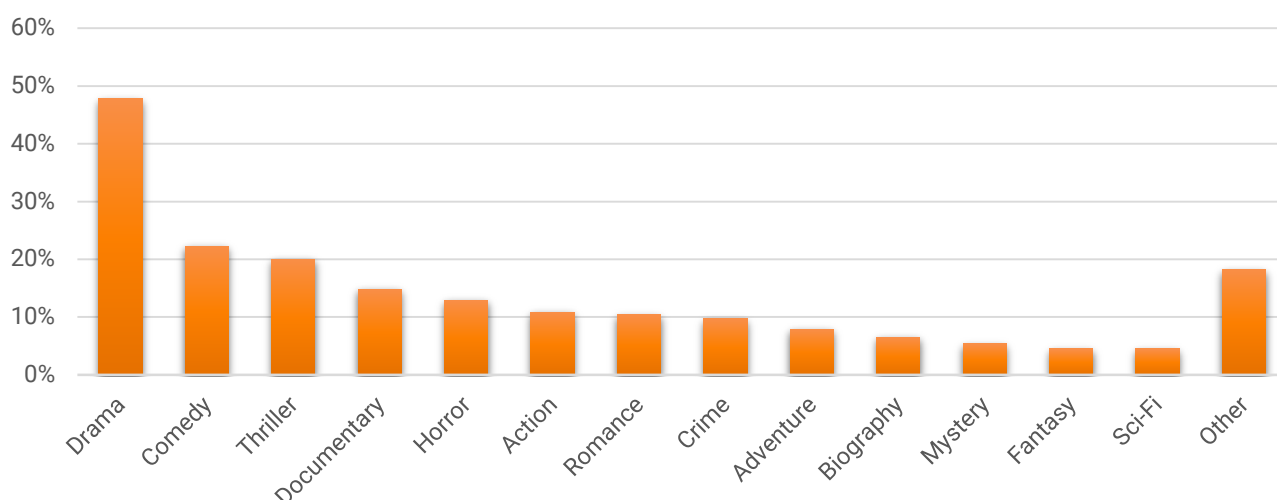
For example, the statistic for the progression from the second to first film is the percentage difference between the probability a male director directs a third film given he has directed two already and the probability a woman director directs a third film given she has directed two already. The table below displays the raw statistics and calculations for this:

Chances of making one more film	Male directors	Female directors	Diff
% of directors who have made three films who also made a fourth film	48.5%	14.3%	70.56%
% of directors who have made two films who also made a third film	29.6%	21.2%	28.25%
% of directors who have made one film who also made a second film	15.5%	13.5%	13.09%

Genre

Genre is a concept which is extremely simple in theory but which often proves hard to define scientifically. For this report we relied upon the genres given to films by *IMDb*¹⁰⁸, which allows up to three principal genres per film. On average, films in our dataset had an average of 1.73 genres, with the most common being drama, comedy, and thriller.

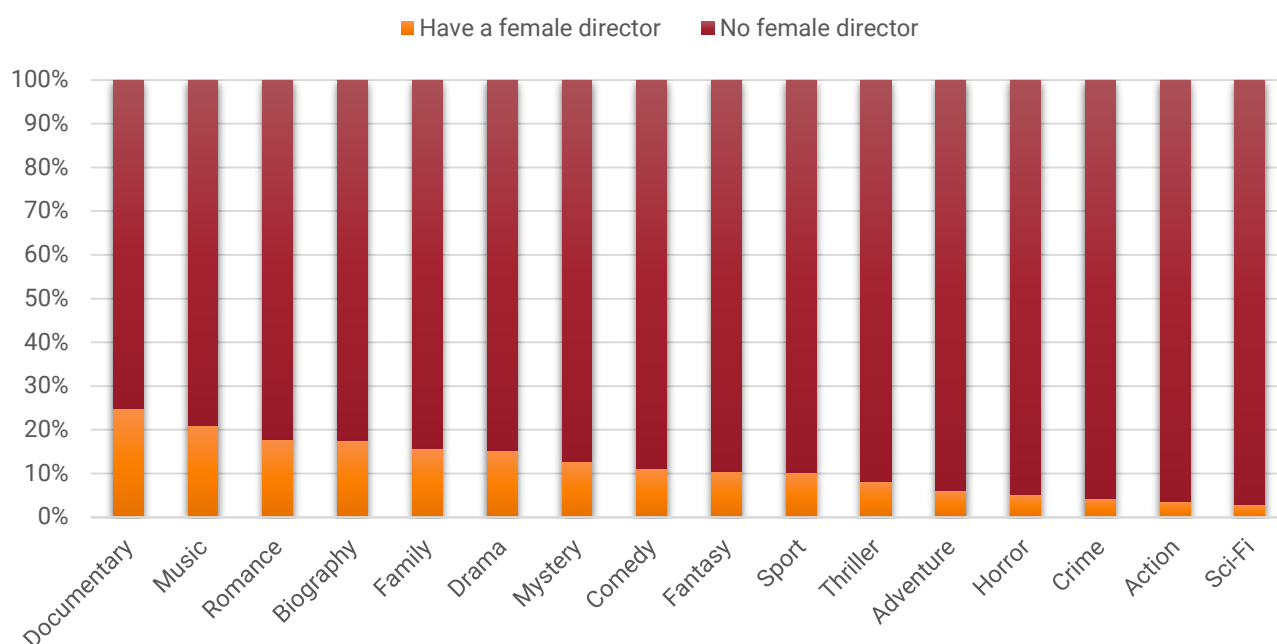
Genre of the UK films in our dataset (2005-14)



In Section 3 we reported on our findings relating to the genre of UK films, showing how female directors are also restricted in the genres they tend to direct. Below is the longer breakdown of our process and of the resulting findings.

Female directors are best represented within documentaries (24.8% women), music (21.1%), romance (18.1%), and biographical films (17.5%). The most male-dominated genres are science fiction (2.9% women), action (3.6%), crime (4.3%), and horror (5.2%).

Gender of the director of UK films (2005-14), by genre



¹⁰⁸ IMDb genre breakdown <http://www.imdb.com/genre/>

The other genres with a relatively high proportion of female directors are family (15.7%) and drama (15.2%). There is a clear trend across these genres: namely, they fit into traditional (and now defunct) views of women professions and interests.

Similarly, traditionally male genres such as thrillers (8.1%), horror (5.2%), action (3.6%), crime (4.3%), and sci-fi (2.9%) are disproportionately directed by male directors.

Fiction productions are harder for female directors to break into than documentary, although with less than a quarter of all documentary directors being women, documentaries are still under-represented.

Comparison with genre tastes within the UK women population

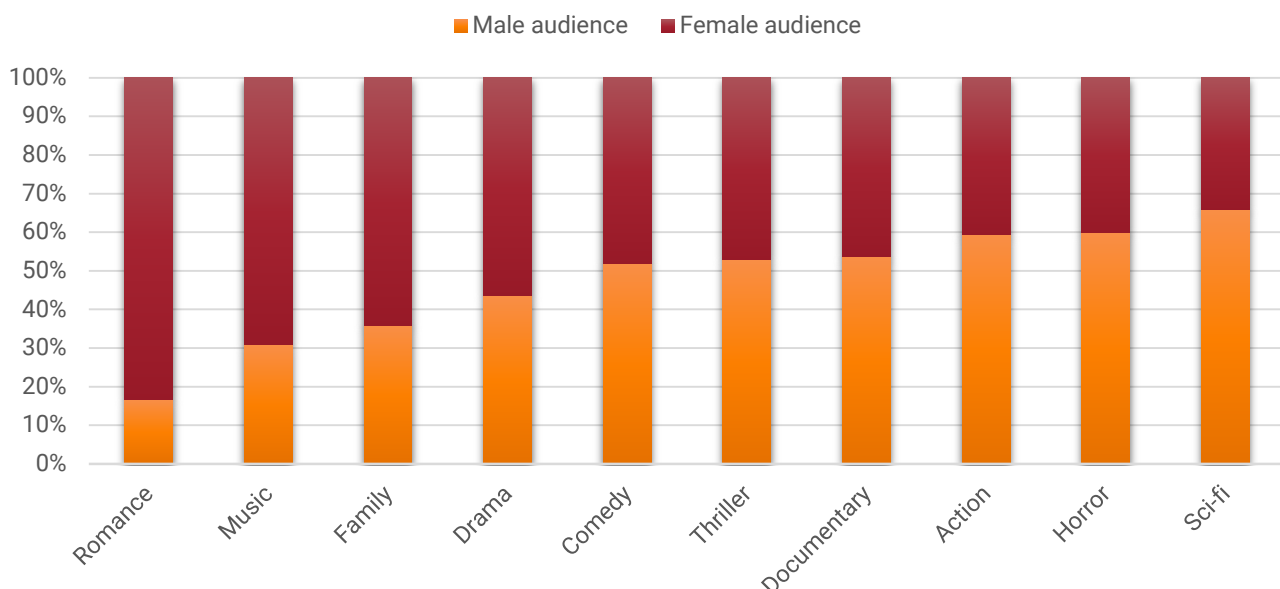
The main counter-argument to this issue is that these results come from women preference rather than industry delineation - both in that female directors would prefer to direct within these genres and that these are the films women audiences particularly want to watch.

We found no evidence from our survey of working directors that this is a product of women preference. In fact, many respondents suggested that they want to move beyond this sort of labelling.

The exact percentage of female directors within each genre is not the key factor here, but the level to which female directors are prevented from following their tastes in the films that they direct.

To get an understanding of women cinema-going tastes, we combined the above data with a measure of interest for each genre in the wider UK population. This came from a 2011 *BFI* report entitled 'Opening Our Eyes'¹⁰⁹ which examined the cultural contribution of film in the UK. As part of their research, they conducted an *Ipsos MORI* poll of 2,036 UK adults aged between fifteen and seventy-four years old and asked them which genres they preferred watching. Using these results, we built up a visualisation of gender preferences within the UK population.

Relative interest in film genres of the UK population (July 2011) split by audience gender

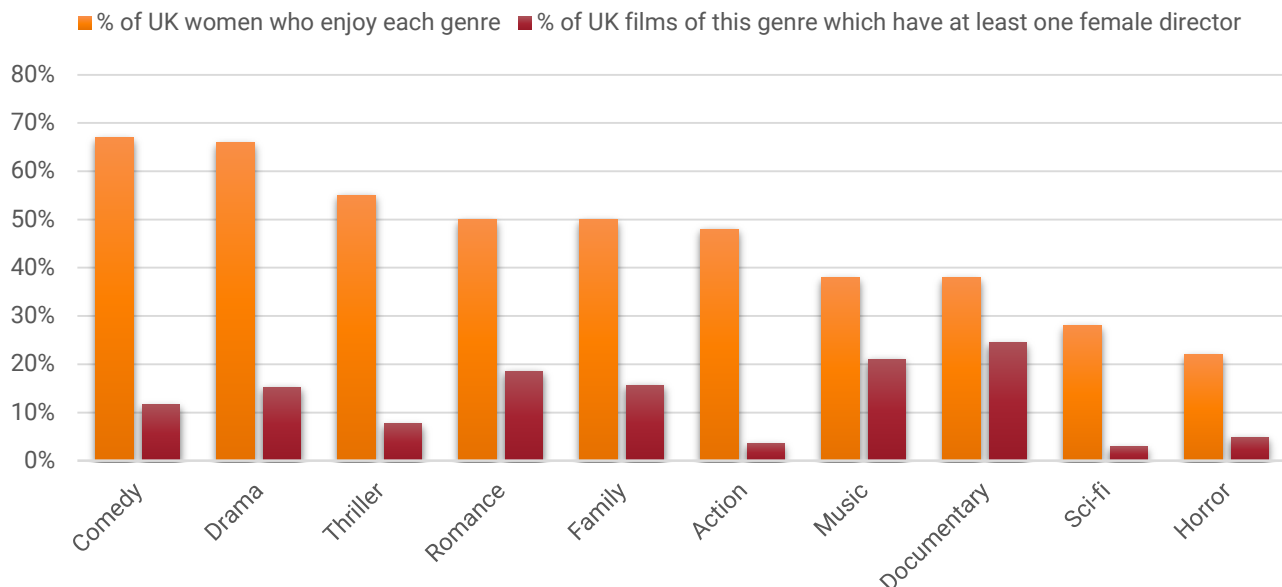


At either end of the spectrum, audience preferences loosely match the employment of female directors, with romantic and music-based films being women favourites and action and science fiction being the most popular with men.

¹⁰⁹ Opening Our Eyes (BFI/Northern Alliance/Ipsos Media CT 2011 <http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-opening-our-eyes-2011-07.pdf>)

However, this data also shows that gender preferences within genres are not as stark as the employment of female directors. For example, 28% of UK women say they prefer science fiction films, yet only 2.9% of science fiction films have a woman director. Similarly, this holds true on other genres traditionally seen as the preserve of the male directors such as thrillers (55% of UK women enjoy thrillers yet only 8.1% have female directors) and action films (48% of UK women like action films vs 3.6% of directors are able to direct them).

Comparison of female audience preferences and the employment of female directors



10.5 The quality of UK films

The quality of a film is a highly subjective topic and it's not possible to objectively use data to prove that one film is "better" than another. However, it is possible to find datasets where a large number of people have rated a collection of films, and to see how each variable effects the ratings given.

We chose to explore this topic using three measures:

- **Film audiences** as illustrated by the ratings users have given on *IMDb*¹¹⁰ (out of 10).
- **Film critics** as illustrated by:
 - **Metascore** by *Metacritic* (out of 100). *Metacritic* aggregates the scores given by a number of selected film critics and provides a weighted average¹¹¹.
 - **Tomatometer** by *Rotten Tomatoes* (out of 100). The Tomatometer measures the percentage of selected critics¹¹² gave the film a positive review (i.e. at least 3 out of 5).

The two different measures of film critics' ratings illustrate two different aspect of press support. The Metascore takes account of the level to which each critic liked or didn't like the film, whereas the Tomatometer simply measures whether reviews by film critics en masse were positive. For example, a film

¹¹⁰ We only included films which had at least 100 user votes. Most films can rely on their cast, crew and families to cast positive votes, therefore we felt that any film with under 100 votes was too open to manipulation as to be useful in this research.

¹¹¹ 'About Metascores' *Metacritic* <http://www.metacritic.com/about-metascores>

¹¹² 'What is the Tomatometer' *Flixster* <http://flixster.desk.com/customer/portal/articles/62674-what-is-the-tomatometer->

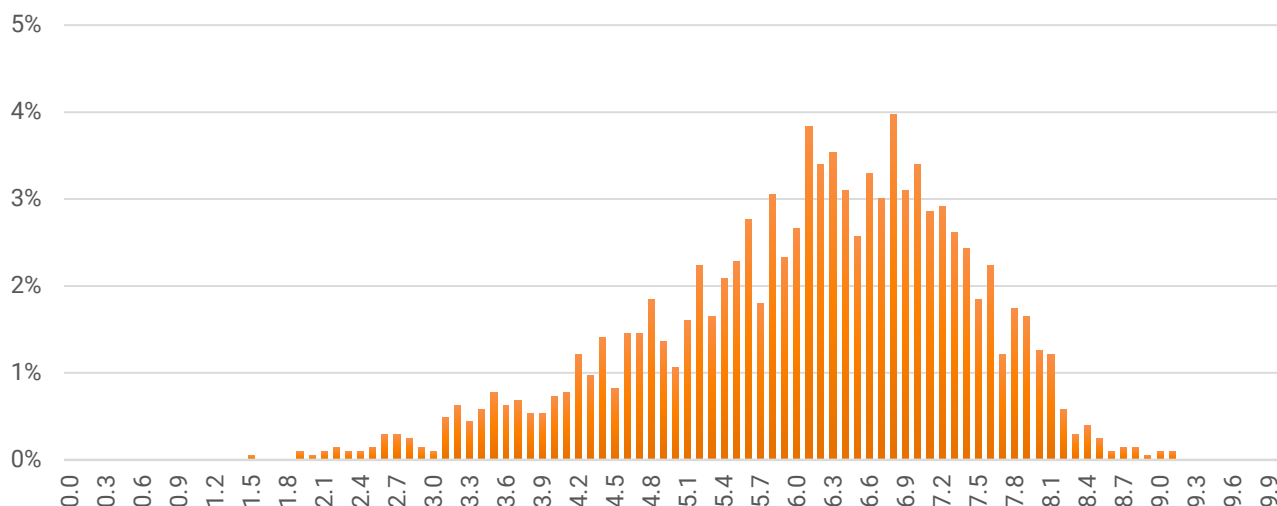
with five reviews, two 4* reviews and three 1* reviews, would receive a Metascore of 22 (i.e. the average of 80, 80, 10, 10 and 10 out of 100) and a Tomatometer rating of 40 (i.e. two positive reviews out of five)

The range of ratings

As we have shown in previous research¹¹³, film audiences and film critics rate films differently. Film audiences give a smaller range of votes whereas critics tend to use more of the spectrum of ratings available to them; a pattern was repeated within the films in our dataset.

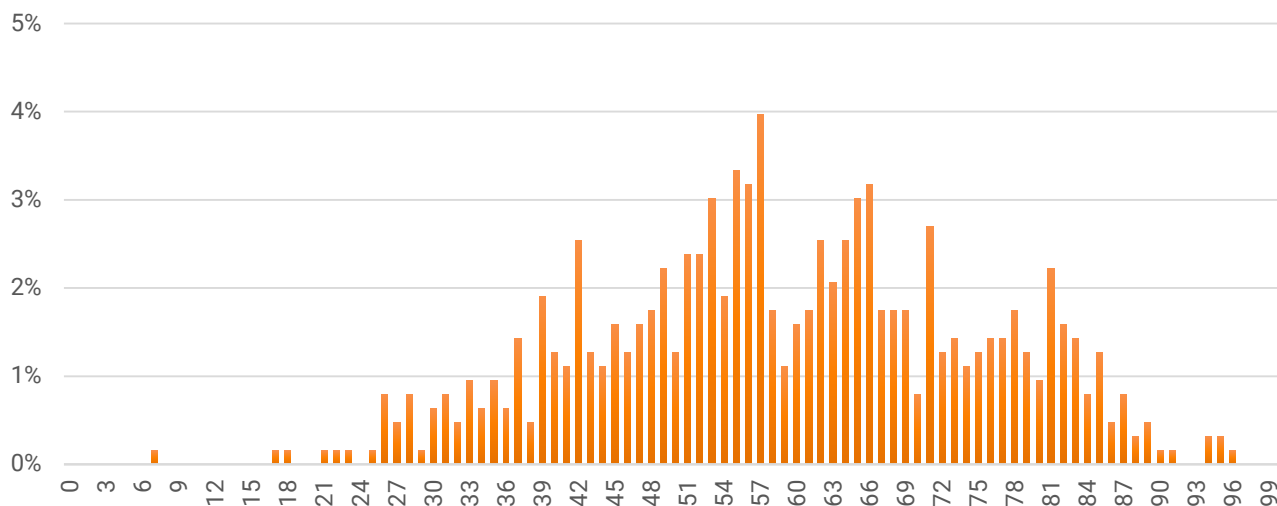
89.5% of films in our dataset received an average of between 4 and 8 from *IMDb* users.

IMDb users



77.3% of Metascore ratings were between 40 and 80 (i.e. the equivalent to a 2* and 4* star review).

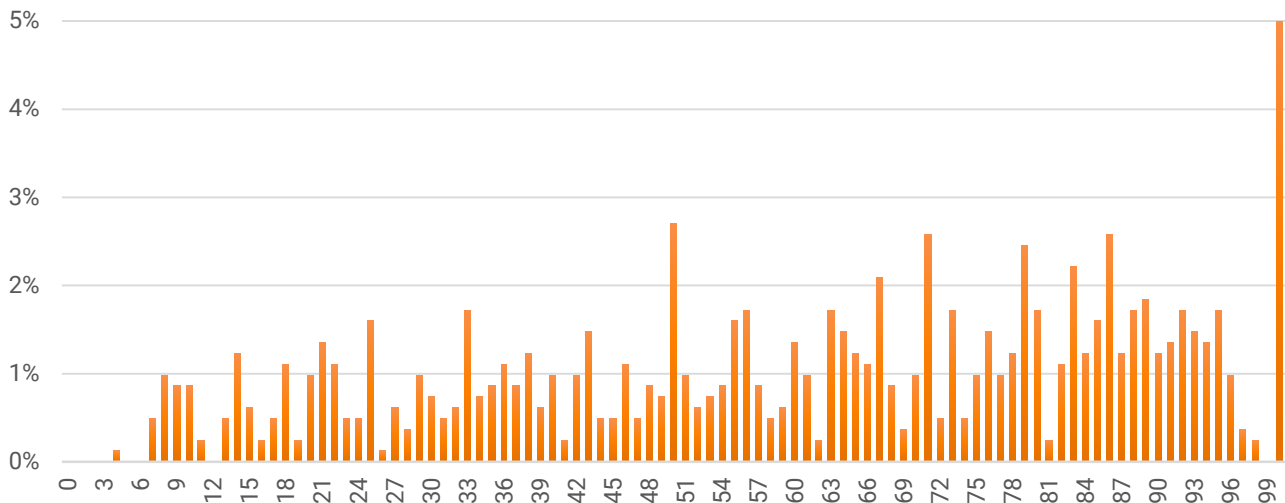
Metascore ratings, UK films, 2005-14



Due to the nature of the Tomatometer, it is not surprising that their ratings were far more spread out across the spectrum, with only 45.6% of films scoring between 40 and 80.

¹¹³"Do film critics and film audiences agree?" 24 March 2014 Stephen Follows <https://stephenfollows.com/do-film-critics-and-audiences-agree>

Tomatometer ratings, UK films, 2005-14



Measuring the effect of a woman director on *IMDb* user ratings

Of our 2,591 British films (2005-14), 79.6% had been rated by at least one *IMDb* user and 55.0% had at least 100 votes (our criteria for inclusion).

The overall average rating was 5.96 out of 10, taking into account 45.5 million user votes. However, the vast majority of votes (by users for whom we know the gender¹¹⁴) were cast by men (80.5%) and so we feel it is necessary to split these results into male and women users.

The average rating given by male users was 5.88 and the women average was 6.12. This is a pattern in found every genre, suggesting women users are more generous with their ratings than men¹¹⁵.

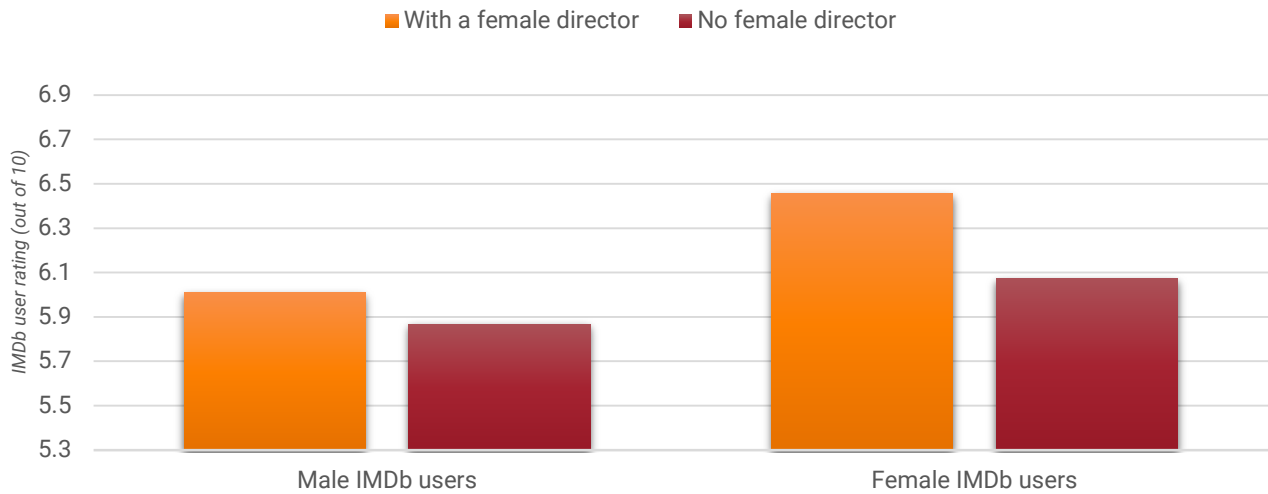
As shown below¹¹⁶, films directed by a woman had higher ratings from both male and women *IMDb* users. Male *IMDb* users gave male-directed films an average of 5.87 and female-directed films 6.00. Women *IMDb* users gave male-directed films an average of 6.07 and female-directed films 6.44.

¹¹⁴ Of the 45,536,242 votes cast, 13.7% were not assigned a gender by *IMDb*.

¹¹⁵ Of the major genres, male and female user votes are closest on family films (male user average is 7.30 and the female average is 7.17) and differ the most on drama films (5.56 and 6.26 respectively).

¹¹⁶ For all charts in this section, the 'y axis' ranges have been set using the middle 50% of votes (i.e. from the 25th percentile to the 75th percentile) in order to provide an objective methodology for displaying the data. Setting the range to the full possible spectrum of votes (i.e. between 0 and 100) makes the differences seem extremely slight, whereas the default created by Excel over-emphasises the differences.

IMDb user ratings for UK films (2005-14), split by gender of the director



Male *IMDb* users prefer films by male directors in all genres, except sci-fi.

	Average rating by male IMDb users for films with a female director	Average rating by male IMDb users for films with no female director	Difference
Sci-Fi	5.83	5.82	0.02
Thriller	5.33	5.46	-0.14
Drama	6.00	6.15	-0.15
Documentary	7.06	7.22	-0.16
Comedy	5.56	5.76	-0.21
Romance	5.81	6.10	-0.29
Horror	4.25	4.67	-0.43
Action	4.96	5.76	-0.81

Women *IMDb* users prefer women to direct their comedy, sci-fi, drama, thriller, and documentary films.

	Average rating by female IMDb users for films with a female director	Average rating by female IMDb users for films with no female director	Difference
Comedy	6.26	6.01	0.25
Sci-Fi	6.10	5.92	0.18
Drama	6.47	6.38	0.09
Thriller	5.68	5.62	0.05
Documentary	7.35	7.34	0.02
Romance	6.26	6.37	-0.11
Horror	4.44	4.79	-0.35
Action	5.21	5.88	-0.67

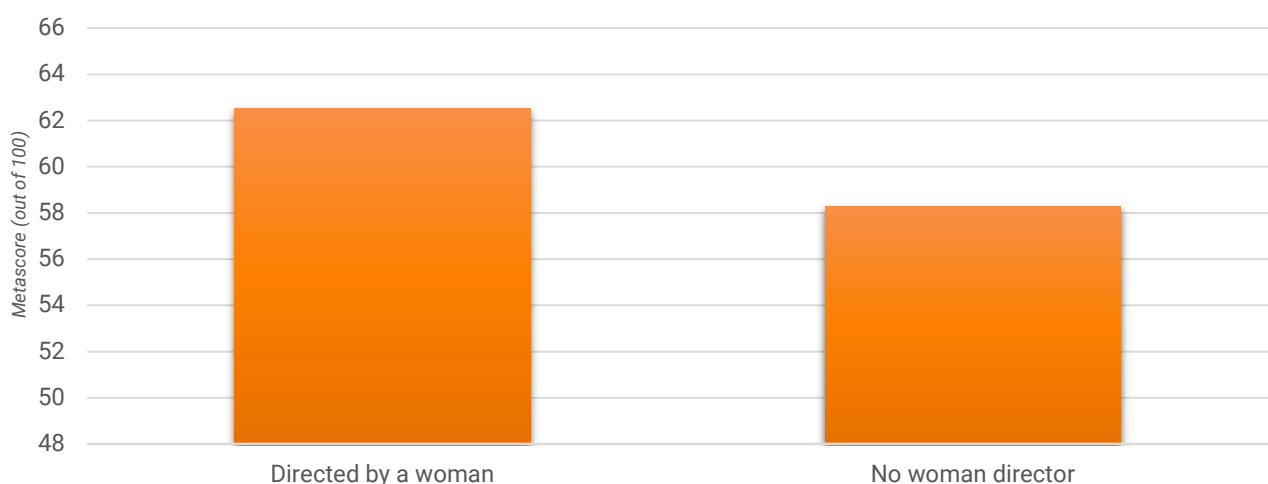
Measuring the effect of a woman director on the Metascore rating

Metacritic's Metascore is a weighted average of reviews from top critics and publications. A film with entirely 5* reviews would score 100.

24.3% of our films had a Metascore, reflecting the fact that not all films made reach cinemas, and of those that do, not all will be reviewed by top film critics.

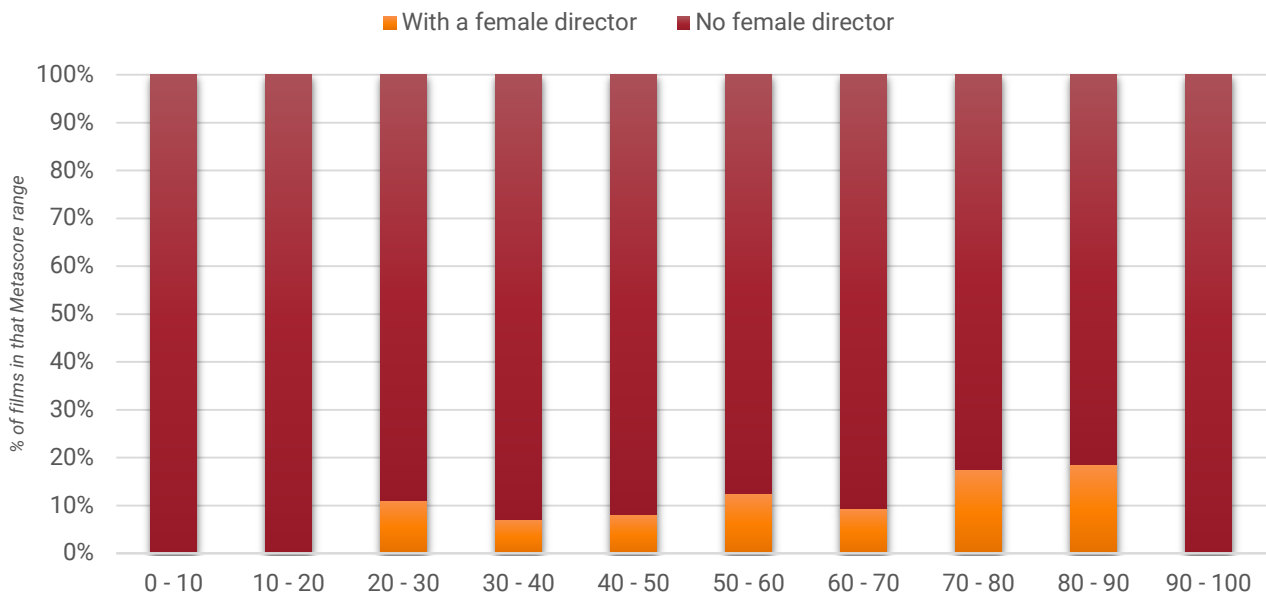
The average Metascore for all our UK films was 58.8, with female-directed films scoring higher than male directed films (62.0 vs 58.3).

Metascore by directors' gender, UK films 2005-14



Female-directed films appeared across the range of Metascore ratings, except for films with the lowest and highest scores (i.e. under 20 or above 90 out of 100).

Gender of directors of UK films 2005-14, split by Metascore

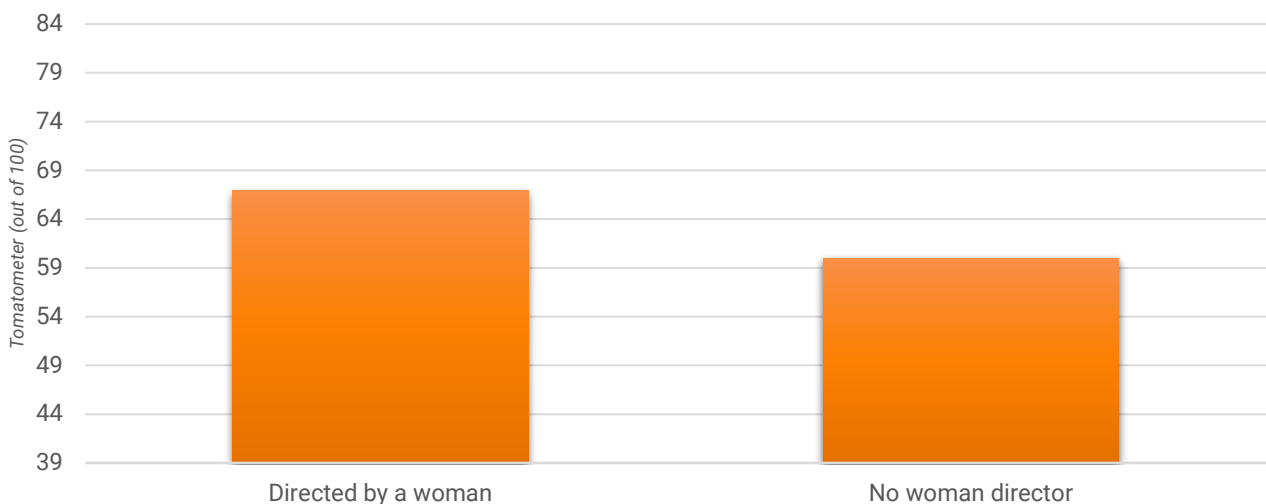


Measuring the effect of a woman director on the Rotten Tomatoes rating

A similar result was found when using *Rotten Tomato's* Tomatometer¹¹⁷. The average rating across all UK films was 60.9, meaning that almost 61% of reviews for UK films were positive (i.e. at least 3* reviews).

As with the Metascore, female-directed films scored higher than male-directed films (66.3 vs 60.1).

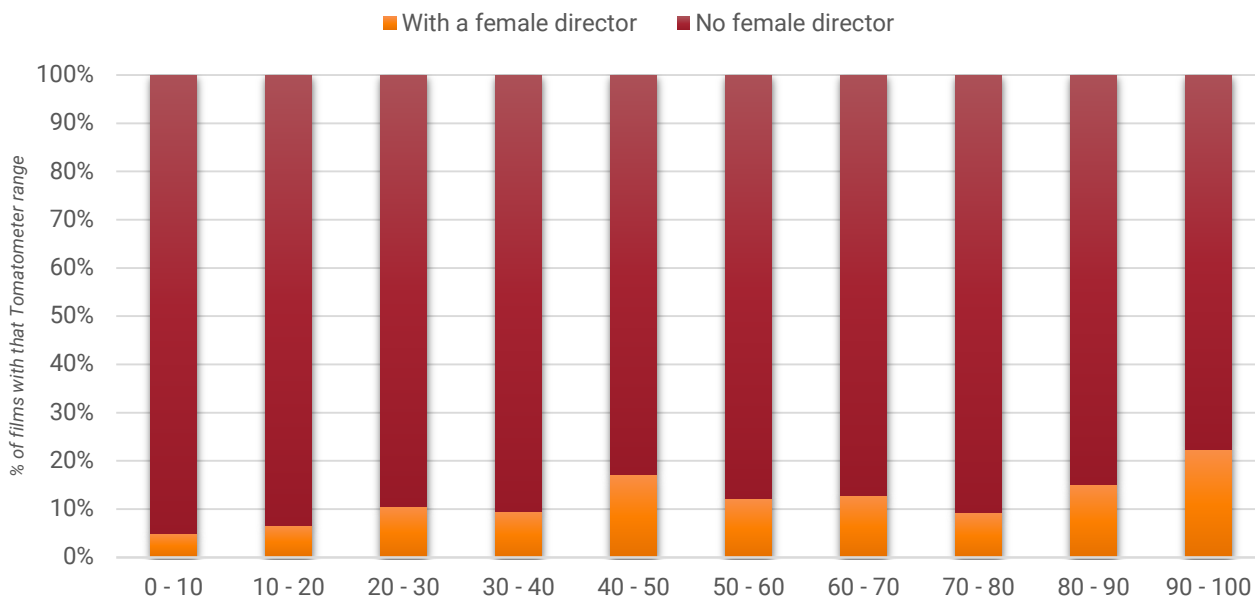
Tomatometer by directors' gender, UK films 2005-14



¹¹⁷ 31.4% of our films dataset had a Rotten Tomatoes rating

Female-directed films appeared across the Tomatometer rating scale.

Gender of directors of UK films 2005-14, split by Tomatometer



Are film critics biased towards male-directed films?

A 2013 report¹¹⁸ for the *Centre for the Study of Women in Television and Film* at *San Diego State University* tracked over 2,000 reviews from 145 critics, all of whom were classed as “top critics”¹¹⁹ on industry review aggregator *Rotten Tomatoes*.

The report found that women accounted for:

- 9% of critics writing for movie/entertainment magazines/websites such as *Entertainment Weekly*
- 10% of those writing for trade publication websites such as *Variety*, *The Hollywood Reporter* and *The Wrap*
- 20% of critics writing for general interest magazines and sites such as *Time* and *Salon*
- 22% of ‘Top Critics’ on *Rotten Tomatoes*
- 28% of those writing for newspaper websites
- 30% of critics writing for radio outlets/sites such as *NPR*

When they looked at the contents of the reviews, they found that a larger proportion of the reviews written by women critics were about films directed by and/or employing a women writer. 36% of the reviews written by women and 21% of reviews written by men were about films directed by and/or written by a women writer.

¹¹⁸ ‘Gender @ the Movies: Online Film Critics and Criticism’ Martha M. Lauzen, Ph.D
http://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/files/2013_Gender_at_the_Movies_Exec_Summ.pdf

¹¹⁹ *Rotten Tomatoes* defines ‘top critics’ as writers who ‘must be published at a print publication in the top 10% of circulation, employed as a film critic at a national broadcast outlet for no less than five years, or employed as a film critic for an editorial-based website with over 1.5 million monthly unique visitors for a minimum of three years.’

A higher proportion of the total reviews written by male critics were about films directed and written exclusively by men. 79% of the reviews written by men and 64% of the reviews written by women were about films with exclusively male directors and/or writers.

Despite the fact that women critics were more likely to review a women-led film, they found that this did not affect the ratings given. Neither male nor women critics award substantially higher ratings to films directed and/or written by those of their same sex.

The report concluded:

The Bottom Line: Popular film criticism remains a predominantly male activity. Films with male directors and writers receive greater exposure as male critics are more likely to review these films than films with female directors and writers. However, while film critics tend to review higher proportions of films directed and/or written by individuals of their same sex, on average, critics do not privilege those films by writing longer reviews or awarding them substantially higher ratings.

In our research into Metascore and Tomatometer ratings, we did not see any obvious bias towards or against the decision to review a female-directed film. 13.6% of films reviewed by *Metacritic* had a woman director, as did 15.4% of films on *Rotten Tomatoes*. This is close to the overall representation of female directors across all UK films made (14.3%)¹²⁰. This is encouraging as it implies that female-directed films have similar press attention as male-directed films.

¹²⁰ Especially considering that female representation among directors falls as the budget rises (see section 3.4) and that smaller films tend to have a harder time getting press attention and reviews from top film critics.

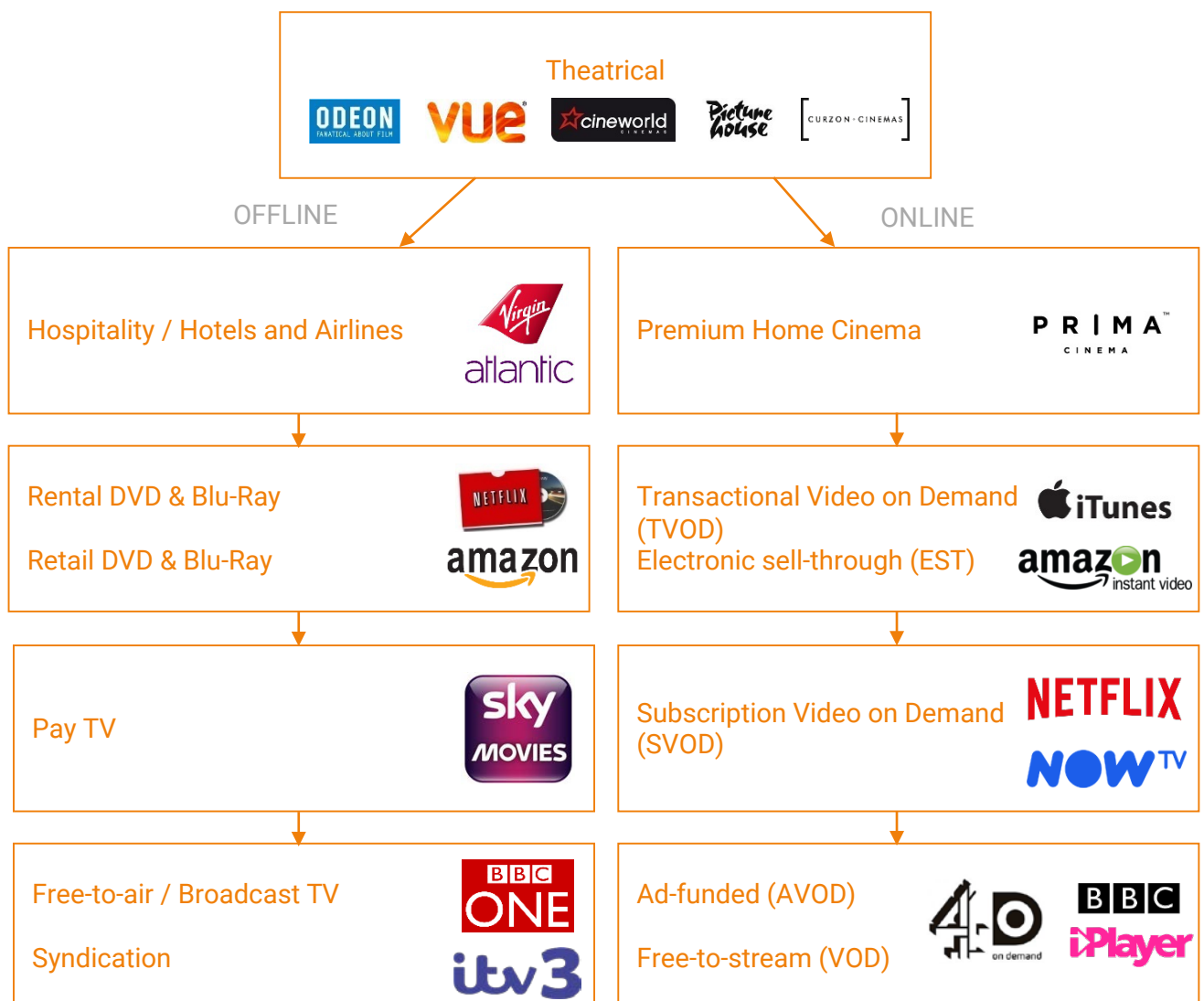
10.6 Box office income for UK films

It is very difficult to calculate the profitability of a film from the outside, as most of the costs and income are hidden from public view.

A successful film will generate income from a variety of sources, including:

- **Cinema tickets** (known as 'theatrical' income or the 'box office')
- **Hotel and airline deals**
- **Physical Home Entertainment** – rental and sales of DVDs and Blu-rays (in shops and online)
- **Transactional Video on Demand** – rental and sales of digital media (i.e. *iTunes*, *Blink Box*, etc)
- **Subscription Video on Demand** (i.e. *Netflix*, *Amazon Prime*, etc)
- **Pay Television** (i.e. *Sky Movies*)
- **Free-to-air Television** (i.e. *BBC*, *ITV* etc)
- **Syndication** (i.e. *ITV3*, *Syfy* channel)
- **Other income** (i.e. soundtrack sales, merchandising, product placement deals, etc).

Recoupment waterfall for a successful feature film



A film's costs could include:

- **The original budget** to make the film
- **Sales agent's fee** (typically around a fifth of income¹²¹)
- **Sales agent's costs** to secure film industry deals, including attending industry events such as Cannes
- **Distributors' fees** (typically around 25%-30%¹²²)
- **Prints and Advertising** ("P&A") which include the cost of getting the film to cinemas, the advertising, trailers and all other marketing & PR activities.
- **VAT** on all tickets and sales
- **The cinema's cut** of the theatrical box office (typically around half of cinema income)
- **Physical distribution costs** of Home Entertainment, such as creating and shipping DVDs
- **Non-physical costs** of deals, including lawyers' fees, etc.
- **Financing costs**, including interest on the money, bonus, and profit for investors
- **Contingent compensation** (i.e. additional salaries paid based on the film's performance)
- **Other costs**, including festival submissions, award campaigns, and talent management.

Of the nine sources of income, we can only be fairly sure of one (cinema box office) and find ways to approximate a few others (such as looking at video sales and RRP). The others need to be estimated using industry norms, which frequently change and for which there is little public data.

Similarly for costs, we can be sure of VAT and use benchmarks for fees charged by sales agents, distributors, and exhibitors but the other costs are shrouded in secrecy.

Without knowing how much was spent and earned by a film, it's impossible to know its profitability. For example, two films of the same budget may perform differently if they've had significantly different amounts spent on their marketing (P&A).

However, it is possible to report on the UK cinema box office totals for films in our dataset.

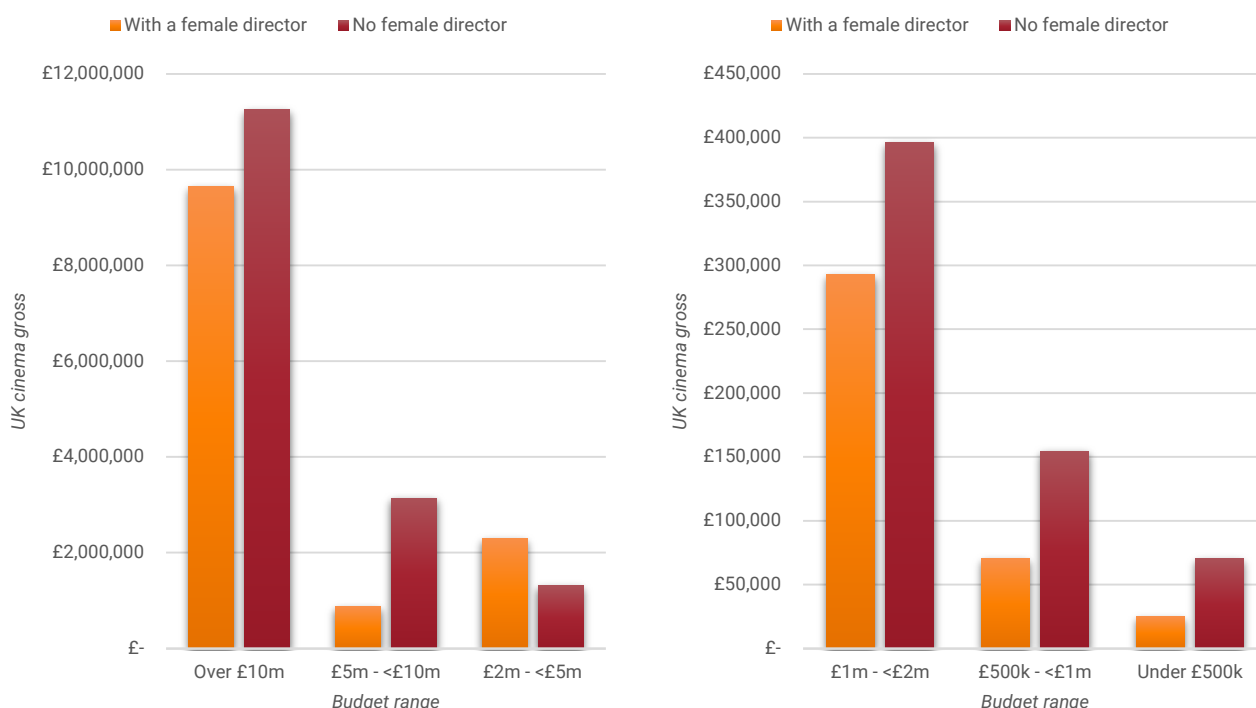
Note: We advise caution in these statistics, as they should not be read as profitability statistics but simply as what they are – the total gross amount of money collected in UK cinemas for each film.

¹²¹What are average film distribution fees? Stephen Follows <https://stephenfollows.com/average-film-distribution-fees>

¹²²What are average film distribution fees? Stephen Follows <https://stephenfollows.com/average-film-distribution-fees>

Using data provided by HMRC (via the BFI) we can split each of the 627 UK films¹²³ shot in 2008-14, which grossed at least £1 at the UK Box Office, into six budget bands.

Average UK cinema gross for UK films 2008-14, by budget range



In all but one of these budget bands, male-directed films have a higher average UK cinema gross than their female-directed counterparts¹²⁴.

One possible reason for this is that female directors are more likely to direct films of smaller budgets than their male counterparts (see Section 3.4). Therefore, within each budget band it could be the case that the female-directed films are disproportionately towards the bottom of each range. The general trend in the film industry is that bigger budgeted films gross higher amounts due to having:

- **Bigger cast 'names'**, which draw audiences.
- **A larger number of audience-pleasing scene or set-pieces**, such as explosions in actions films and lavish sets / costumes in period dramas.
- **Bigger marketing budgets**, as the distributors have a higher confidence in their audience appeal and because they may have paid more to secure the film in the first place.
- **A greater push to perform** due to the larger amount of money being staked in creating the original film. A micro-budget film is unlikely to have well-connected advocates to smooth its path to cinemas, to a secure prime release date in cinemas and within marketing budgets.

Sadly, we do not have enough information to test this theory, nor to be able to start measure profitability.

¹²³ Of these films, 83 were directed by women, representing 13.2% of films in the criteria.

¹²⁴ In the case of the "£2m - £5m" range, just two of the fifteen female-directed films accounted for over 60% of the income, namely *StreetDance 3D* and *Nativity 2: Danger in the Manger*.

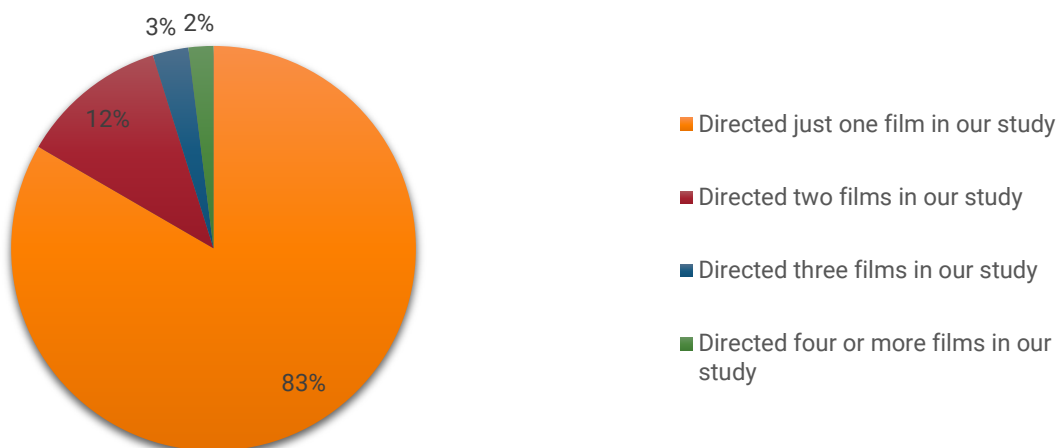
10.7 Directors Dataset

Expanding our films dataset, we created a directors' dataset which contains details of everyone who directed a feature film shot in the UK between 2005 and 2014.

Across the 2,591 films there were 2,899 director credits, meaning that our films had an average of 1.2 directors per film.

Taking into account the fact that some people direct films more than once, we were left with 2,118 individuals. This means that on average, each director directed 1.22 films.

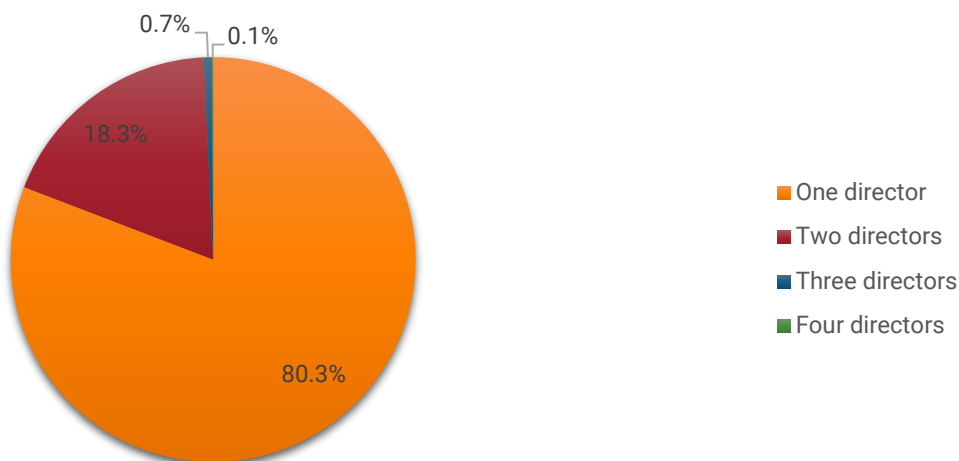
Number of credits per person in our directors dataset



It should be noted that many of these directors may have worked as a professional director in other fields (such as television), in other countries, and before or after our chosen time period (2005-14).

Four out of five of our films only had one director. 18.3% had two directors, 0.7% had three directors, and 0.1% had four directors.

Number of directors per film on UK films, 2005-14



10.8 Director Interviews

We interviewed 174 working film directors, of which, 121 directed at least one of the films in our research dataset.

They were permitted to choose if and how they were credited: their full name, anonymously, or only to be used on background (i.e. not quoted directly).

The average age of our interview pool was forty-nine, with the oldest being seventy-five and the youngest a sprightly twenty-nine years old.

10.9 British Council's British Film Database

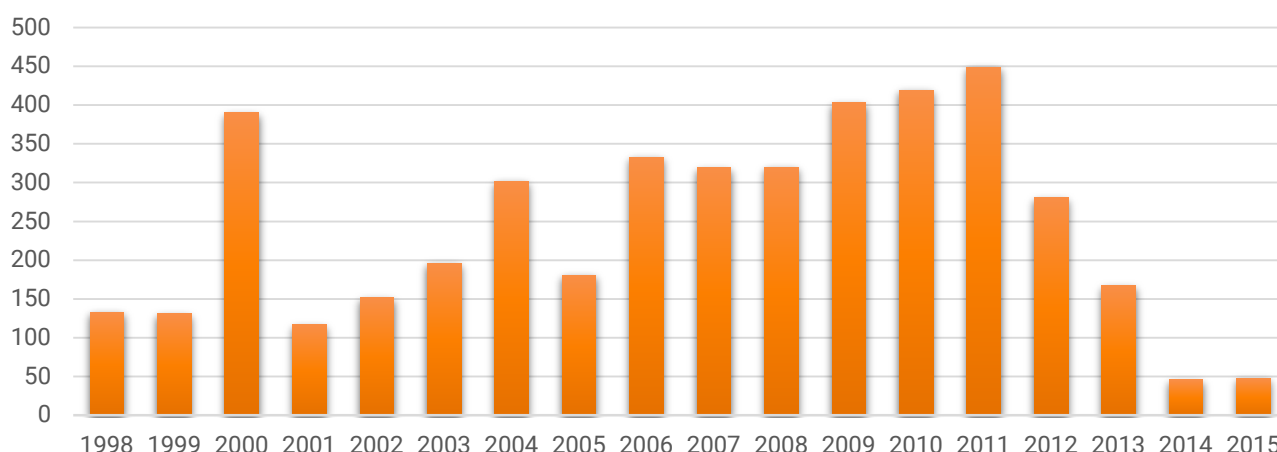
The *British Council's* online '*British Film Directory*' lists 8,366 films, of which 3,332 are feature films and 4,388 are short films. Their database is compiled from user submissions and they require all films to be British. Their criteria for listing includes¹²⁵:

"The British Council Films Directory is intended to provide a comprehensive listing of professionally-made UK feature films and short films that have, or are likely to achieve, theatric or festival distribution. We reserve the right not to include films in the Directory, and to edit, delete or cancel entries at any time without notice. Generally, we will not include corporate or commissioned information films or music videos.

British Film certification is not a requirement for listing, but we will not list films where we cannot verify that the film is 'British' We check submissions and post entries regularly. We won't publish entries without sufficient information, including contact details (for production company and/or sales agent), or without a still."

Using this database, we were able to determine the gender of the vast majority of the short film directors¹²⁶. The database includes short films produced between 1998 and 2014, although the reporting seems slightly erratic and has significantly reduced in recent years.

Production year of short films listed in the British Council's British Film Directory



¹²⁵ *British Film Directory* submission notes <http://film.britishcouncil.org/british-films-directory/suggest-a-new-film>

¹²⁶ This was achieved via their first name, as credited in the *British Film Database* and cross-referenced against a database of 216,286 first names with known genders via genderize.io. This method allowed us to define a gender for 91.1% of the short film directors listed. The lack of biographical information and unisex first names (such as Sam) resulted in us having 614 directors without a specified gender.

We calculated the combined running time of the *British Council's* listed short to be 3,008,044 minutes.

10.10 International film festivals

We studied 1,145 films shortlisted at eight International film festivals¹²⁷ between 2013-15.

- **Aspen ShortsFest** – Described by *Indiewire*¹²⁸ as ‘widely renowned as one of the world’s leading showcases for international and US shorts’. Winning short films are also automatically eligible for an Oscar nomination and their 2014 winner *The Phone Call* won the Live Action Short Film Oscar in 2015.
- **The Berlin International Film Festival** – One of the “big three” film festivals (along with Venice and Cannes) and considered the largest publicly attended film festival worldwide based on attendance rates¹²⁹.
- **The Cannes Film Festival** – One of the “big three” and arguably the most famous film festival in the world, due to the highest level of press coverage it receives each year in the mainstream media.
- **Sundance Film Festival** – The largest independent film festival in the United States¹³⁰.
- **South by Southwest (SXSW)** – A festival on the rise which combines music, film, and new technology. The festival manages to be both a home to true independent filmmakers (in 2016 they are premiering Richard Linklater’s new film) and a testing ground for Hollywood studios films (recent premieres include *Furious 7*, *21 Jump Street*, and *Bridesmaids*).
- **The Toronto International Film Festival** – *Variety* described *TIFF* as “second only to Cannes in terms of high-profile pics, stars, and market activity”¹³¹ and *Time* magazine said *TIFF* had “grown from its place as the most influential fall film festival to the most influential film festival, period”¹³².
- **Tribeca Film Festival** – Co-founded by Robert De Niro and home of the Nora Ephron award for women filmmakers.
- **Venice Film Festival** – The oldest film festival in the world (established in 1932) and one of the ‘big three’¹³³ film festivals along with Cannes and Berlin.

The representation of female directors at the Cannes Film Festival is increasing, although remains considerably below the industry average.

¹²⁷ These festivals were selected on the basis that they represent highly-regarded film festivals where being short-listed would significantly add to a director’s credibility, they are reasonably accessible to new filmmakers without existing industry connections and where complete data was available.

¹²⁸ ‘Aspen Shortsfest’ *Indiewire* http://www.indiewire.com/festival/aspen_shortsfest

¹²⁹ ‘Berlin International Film Festival’ Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin_International_Film_Festival

¹³⁰ ‘The Economic Impacts Of The 2012 Sundance Film Festival’ Jan Elise Stambro http://www.sundance.org/pdf/press-releases/Economic_Activity_Report_Sundance_Film_Festival_2012.pdf

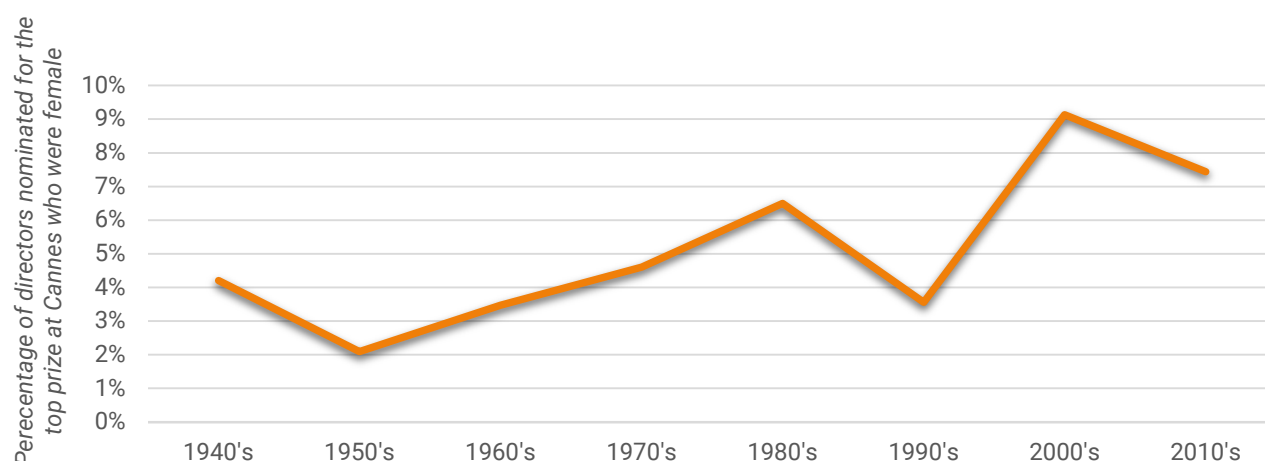
¹³¹ ‘Film festivals: which is top dog?’ *The Guardian* 19 April 2012 <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2012/apr/19/film-festivals-which-is-top-dog>

¹³² ‘Toronto International Film Festival 2007’ *Time* magazine 13 September 2013

http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1661127_1659015_1660225,00.html

¹³³ ‘Film Festivals’ Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_festival#Notable_festivals

Female representation among Cannes-nominated feature film directors, by decade

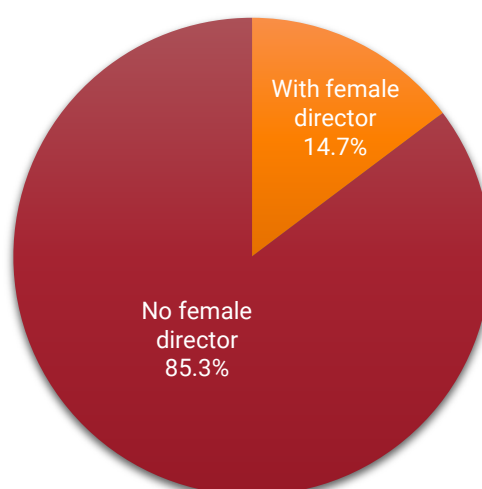


10.11 Channel 4 and Film 4

Within the data provided to us by the BFI, neither Channel 4 nor Film4 were classed as 'Public Investors' and therefore it was not possible to include them in the data and analysis in Chapter 5.

However, a separate analysis of films backed by Film4 reveals that 14.7% of the films they supported¹³⁴, and which appeared in our ten-year dataset of UK films, had a woman director.

UK films within our dataset supported by Film4, 2005-14



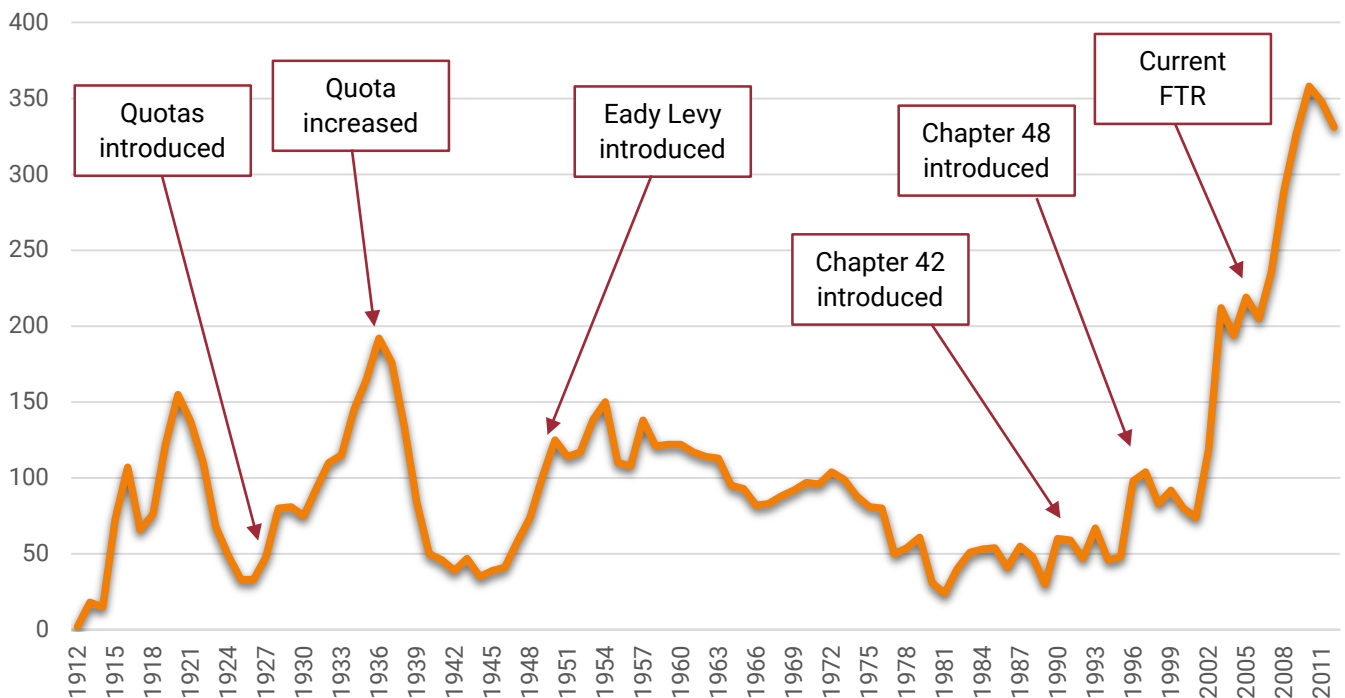
¹³⁴ In this context, 'supported' means feature films which Film 4 funded, produced, sold or distributed.

11. Additional findings

11.1 Overview of government action in UK film industry

In Section 9.3, we discussed the possibility of amending the current Film Tax Credit (FTC) to incentivise production companies to back films from female directors. To provide additional context, below are the most significant government fiscal interventions in the UK film industry to date:

Number of feature films made in the UK



- **1927 & 1938 – The Cinematograph Films Act** required British cinemas to show a certain percentage of British films. Initially the cinema quota was set at 7.5% and then raised to 12.5% in 1936¹³⁵. To be eligible, films had to be made by a British company, any studio scenes had to be filmed in the British Empire/Commonwealth, the screenplay (or source material) had to be British, and at least 75% of the salaries had to be paid to British Subjects (excluding the costs of two people, to allow for international stars).
- **1950 – The Eady Levy** was a tax on UK cinema tickets which funded projects aimed at helping the UK film industry, including the establishment of the *National Film and Television School (NFTS)*. It came into effect in 1950, although it wasn't until 1957 that the law was officially passed. To qualify as a British film, at least 85% of the film had to be shot in the UK (or Commonwealth), and only three non-British individual salaries could be excluded from the costs of the film. Between 1951 and 1967, the *Eady Levy* contributed \$165 million (not inflation adjusted) to the British Film Production Fund¹³⁶.

¹³⁵ 'The history of the British film industry' UK Government
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200910/ldselect/ldcomuni/37/3705.htm>

¹³⁶ 'The Eady Levy: A Runaway Bribe? Hollywood Production and British Subsidy in the Early 1960s' Jonathan Stubbs
https://www.academia.edu/189537/The_Eady_Levy_A_Runaway_Bribe_Hollywood_Production_and_British_Subsidy_in_the_Early_1960s

- **1992 & 1997 – Chapter 42** of the Finance (No 2) Act 1992 provided investors with tax savings for films of any size over at least a three-year period, and **Chapter 48** of the *Finance (No 2) Act 1997* allowed for immediate tax savings but only applied to films budgeted under £15 million. Via complicated partnerships, including “Sale and Leaseback”, investors could gain significant tax benefits for investing in feature film. However, despite numerous anti-avoidance provisions being added, the system was eventually closed (overnight, without warning) after the government concluded that the system was being abused¹³⁷. Between 1997-98 and 2005-06, Chapters 42 and 48 relief paid out a combined total of £1.9 billion¹³⁸ (not inflation adjusted).
- **2007** – The current UK Tax Relief (FTR) scheme was established in 2007 and subsequent revisions have seen the criteria for eligibility widened and an increase in the level of relief available to big budget films (to bring them in line with the smaller productions). As of January 2016, the FTR scheme has paid out £6.9 billion to production companies.

¹³⁷ ‘Sale-and-leaseback funding caught in UK tax clampdown’ 6 March 2007 *Screen Daily* <http://www.screendaily.com/sale-and-leaseback-funding-caught-in-uk-tax-clampdown/4031313.article>

¹³⁸ ‘Tax reliefs for production of British films’ UK Government <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN03927/SN03927.pdf>

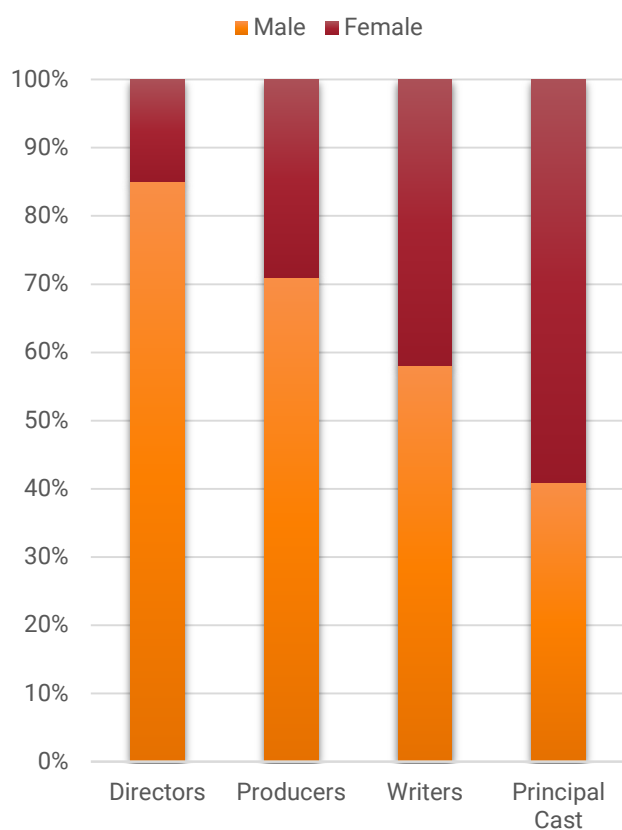
11.2 Do cinema audiences care about the gender of a film's director?

In previous research¹³⁹, we have shown that the films with the highest proportion of women audience members tend to be made by women writers, producers, and directors. Our study looked at *BFI* exit polls¹⁴⁰ of 251 films released between 2003-2012, which showed the gender split of the cinema audience. This revealed the 'Most Male' and 'Most Women' films of the past decade, from the point of view of cinema audiences

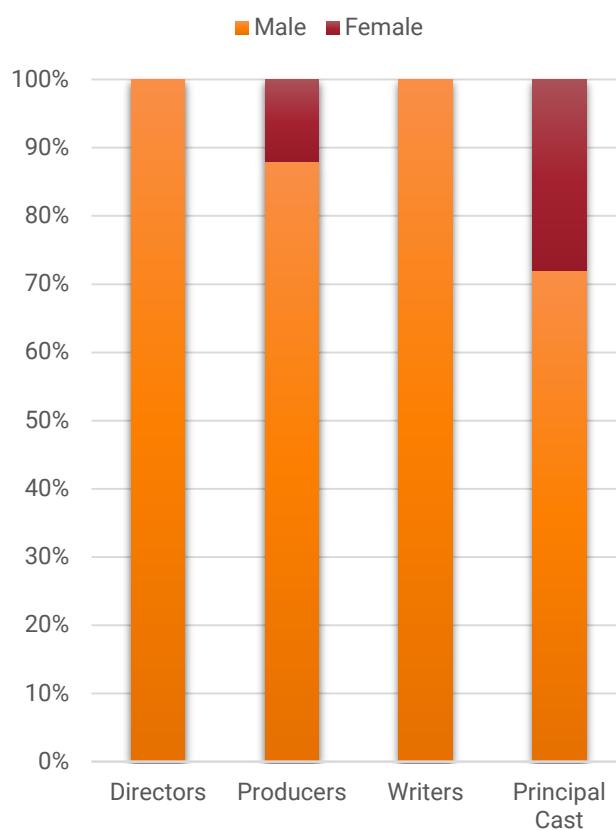
The 'Most Male' films were written and directed exclusively by men, four out of five of the producers are male, and three-quarters of the principal cast (i.e. the top seven names) are also men. In total, 83% of the people involved with these films were men.

However, the pattern is not the same for women. While there are far more women filmmakers in the 'Most Women' chart, men are still the majority at 54%. The only place where women outnumber men is in the principal cast. It should be noted that 42% of the writers for the 'Most Women' chart are women, which is way above the UK average of 12% for all films.

**Gender of key creative roles
on the top 20 'Most Female
Audience' films, UK 2003-12**



**Gender of key creative roles
on the top 20 'Most Male
Audience' films, UK 2003-12**



Our conclusion is that audiences do not care about the gender of the filmmakers, but they do unconsciously recognise and value the contribution that different creative voices bring to each film.

¹³⁹ 'Gender in UK Film Crews' report by Stephen Follows http://stephenfollows.com/reports/Gender_Within_UK_Film_Crews-stephenfollows.com.pdf

¹⁴⁰ *BFI* exit polls <http://www.bfi.org.uk/film-industry/lottery-funding-distribution/insight-reports-case-studies-audience-research/exit-polls>

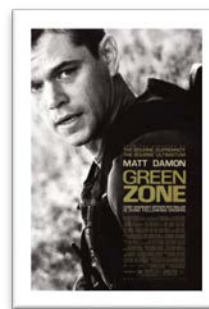
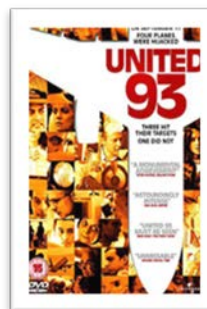
Films with the 'Most Female' Audience in UK cinemas 2003-12

Film	Male	Female
Penelope	10%	90%
Jane Eyre	14%	86%
Wild Child	15%	85%
Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging	16%	84%
Sex and the City	19%	81%
One Day	19%	81%
Bridesmaids	21%	79%
Hairspray	22%	78%
Miss Potter	22%	78%
The Other Boleyn Girl	22%	78%
Marley & Me	22%	78%
The Devil Wears Prada	22%	78%
The Queen	23%	77%
High School Musical 3	24%	76%
Mamma Mia!	25%	75%
Evelyn	26%	74%
Calendar Girls	27%	73%
Sex and the City 2	27%	73%
S Club Seeing Double	28%	72%
Enchanted	29%	71%



Films with the 'Most Male' Audience in UK cinemas 2003-12

Film	Male	Female
United 93	89%	11%
V for Vendetta	82%	18%
Captain America: The First Avenger	78%	22%
Green Zone	76%	24%
Resident Evil: Apocalypse	75%	25%
Severance	74%	26%
Dredd	74%	26%
Alien Vs Predator	74%	27%
Layer Cake	73%	27%
Senna	73%	27%
Transformers: Dark of the Moon	73%	27%
Mission: Impossible Ghost Protocol	73%	27%
300	72%	28%
Terminator Salvation	72%	28%
Alexander	72%	28%
Iron Man	71%	29%
Match Point	71%	29%
Dodge Ball: A True Underdog Story	71%	29%
Wrath of the Titans	70%	30%
Shaun of the Dead	70%	31%



11.3 The relationship between students and industry employment

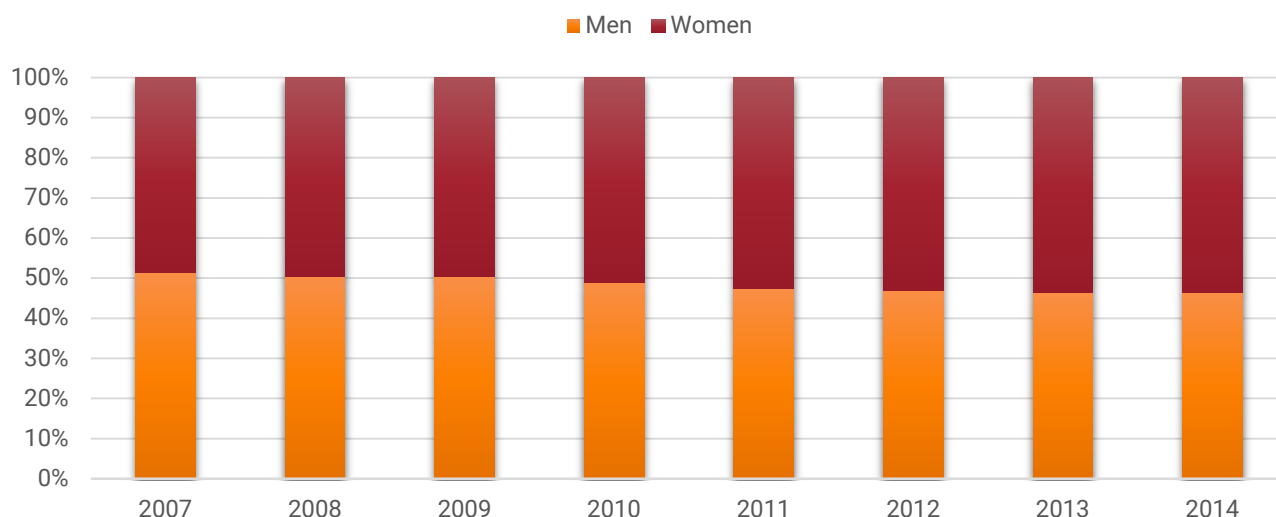
As it takes time for students to study, enter the industry and progress to their chosen field, it could be claimed that the figures in Section 6.6 do not necessarily demonstrate ongoing discrimination in the film industry, as the problem might already have been 'solved' but is yet to trickle down into the industry.

In order to test this theory, we compared the gender statistics for the earliest years we have for student applications (2007 and 2008) with the latest years we have for UK film employment (2013 and 2014).

	Female student applications (2007-08)	Female employment in film industry (2013-14)	Difference
Visual effects	21.6%	11.7%	-9.9%
Post production / Editing	27.0%	20.9%	-6.1%
Writing	26.7%	16.4%	-10.3%
Music	35.1%	21.1%	-14.0%
Animation	30.4%	11.7%	-18.7%
Across all specialisms	49.1%	27.2%	-21.9%
Special effects	25.0%	9.5%	-15.5%
Production Design	72.7%	38.2%	-34.5%
Make-up	99.4%	82.0%	-17.4%
Costume	100.0%	86.5%	-13.5%

Across all courses and all film-related specialism, female representation among film student applications has been increasing, from 48.6% in 2007 to 53.6% in 2014.

Gender balance of students applying for film-related degree courses via UCAS



This suggests it is not the case that the issue has been solved, as the student population has been roughly 50:50 over the last seven years, but we have seen no marked improvement in those years. Instead this seems to confirm the suggestion the issue occurs at some later stage, once applicants have entered the industry.

12. Additional thoughts for the gender equality campaign

12.1 Campaign suggestions

In section 9.3, we proposed an industry-wide campaign to combat gender inequity. The campaign will need to create its own terms of reference and campaign goals. However, we have provided some suggestions of routes they may wish to consider:

- A. Incentivise private investors to back female-directed films
- B. Encourage and support female-only funding schemes
- C. Create clear, understandable campaign guides to help supporters
- D. Build further support networks for female directors
- E. Seek new ways to bring attention to the problem

A. Incentivise private investors to back female-directed films

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 of the following routes for each of their films:

- **Personal**, i.e. friends and family of the key cast and crew
- **Film Tax Relief (FTR)**, as outlined in Section 9.3
- **Private Investment**, i.e. typically high-net worth individuals
- **Crowdfunding**, i.e. raising small amounts of money from a large number of backers via a site such as *Kickstarter*.
- **Grants**, i.e. money provided by public (and quasi-public) funding bodies, as detailed in Section 5.
- **Industry Funding**, i.e. pre-selling of the films' rights, backing from a major US studio, etc.

It is extremely unlikely that any action could affect the gender of the project relying on personal funding as the 'financiers' are directly connected with the filmmakers, rather than comparing the project to others they could back or suggesting personnel changes.

We suggest a method for affecting the Film Tax Credit in Section 9.3 and of affecting grants later in this section. Crowdfunding and industry funding are complicated eco-systems which require further study in order to suggest ways of influencing which projects are backed.

This leaves us with private investment. The vast majority of 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 vast majority of films lose money (see Section 8.2), when films are a breakout success they can recoup far in excess of their original budget. Recent successes include *The King's Speech* (which grossed £289 million in cinemas worldwide on a £8 million budget)¹⁴¹ and *Paranormal Activity* (\$194 million worldwide gross on a production budget of just \$15,000)¹⁴². 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.).

Most investors are involved with film for a combination of these two reasons, as film is not a sensible enough investment for financial reasons alone to attract significant investment¹⁴³, and it would be a rather expensive hobby if the only returns were non-financial.

Therefore, to influence private investors back we suggest a two-pronged approach:

- Promote the uncommercial nature of the current discriminatory hiring practices.
- Make backing female directors more rewarding, outside of financial returns.

Prompting the over-looked potential that some female led projects may offer

Any investor seeking financial returns will want to ensure that the product they're backing is the most commercial version possible. As we have shown repeatedly throughout this report, the over-reliance on male directors in the UK film industry is not a product of sensible business decisions, but rather is the consequence of systemic failings in the smooth operation of the industry.

Put simply, there are female directors and female-led projects being overlooked which could otherwise be more commercial than some of the current male directors and male-led projects.

This message should be marketed towards private investors, along with easy methods for them to find easily female-led projects to consider.

This offers a subtle way to resolve some of the issues noted in Section 8.2, in which it was noted that the lack of influence profit had on decision making undermines the ability of market forces to be the engine which drives change away from the anti-commercial over-reliance on male directors. By promoting actively the benefit of hiring female directors in financial terms, the commercial advantage becomes far more apparent and so the changes in hiring practices are likely to follow.

Case study – Gamechanger Films

Gamechanger Films was established in 2013 through a partnership between female-oriented fund *Chicken & Egg Pictures* and the film-investment group *Impact Partners*.

Gamechanger Films exclusively finances feature films with female directors, budgeted between \$1 million and \$5 million of all genres. To date, they have completed four films, with a further project in post-production¹⁴⁴.

Dan Cogan from *Impact Partners* said¹⁴⁵ of the scheme: 'There's an unconscious prejudice in which people just don't feel confident giving their money to women filmmakers and getting their money back'.

¹⁴¹'Never mind the Baftas ... who will get *The King's Speech* riches?' The Guardian 11 Feb 2011

<http://www.theguardian.com/film/2011/feb/11/baftas-the-kings-speech-riches>

¹⁴²'*Paranormal Activity*' Box Office Mojo <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=paranormalactivity.htm>

¹⁴³'How sensible is a film business investment?' Stephen Follows 5 March 2014 <https://stephenfollows.com/film-business-investment/>

¹⁴⁴'*Gamechanger Films*' IMDb Pro <https://pro-labs.imdb.com/company/co0449042>

¹⁴⁵'New movie fund *Gamechanger Films* is formed to back female directors' Los Angeles Times 27 Sept 2013

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/envelope/cotown/la-et-ct-film-fund-gamechanger-female-directors-20130926-story.html>

The company's present, Mynette Louise said '*Hollywood speaks in terms of money, so our goal is to use that same language*'.

Make backing female directors more rewarding, outside of financial returns

To address the 'Lifestyle' reasons behind private film investment, we suggest finding ways to make backing female-led films more attractive and enjoyable. This could include:

- **Direct appeals to the fun of investing in film**, such as industry events and awards exclusively for those connected to female-led films.
- **Ideological appeals**, aimed at connecting the investor's desire to make the world a better place with the investment decisions they make in film.

We suggested this proposal to a few high-net worth individuals who regularly invest in UK feature films and the response was that they felt it was 'realistic' and 'very doable'.

They noted that in many cases investments are made partly on how it looks to one's peers and being able to mention that they are helping to redress in gender imbalance would look good "when discussing investments over dinner".

The point was made that all directors, no matter their gender, need to be able to prove their abilities via past work and so in order for this approach to be the most effective, it would need to be carried out in tandem to other efforts to increase funding for short films and feature film development for female directors. We provide a suggestion which speaks to this in the next section.

Case study – The Giving Pledge

The ideological appeal would follow a similar route to that of *The Giving Pledge*, established by Bill Gates and Warren Buffett. It encourages wealthy people to pledge to give the majority of their net worth to philanthropy by making the moral case for doing so and publicly celebrating those who have signed up¹⁴⁶.

Within a year of being established, *The Giving Pledge* resulting in \$125 billion being committed to philanthropy by their first 40 pledgers. To date, 141 individuals and/or couples have signed up to the pledge.

B. Encourage and support female-only funding schemes

In Section 7.5, we showed how the first point of the career path between new entrant and professional director where women start to receive a harder time than their male counterparts is in gaining credibility.

Therefore, we propose encouraging and supporting female-only funding schemes which support directors at this critical stage in their careers. Such schemes will help fight the vicious circle illustrated in Section 8.2 by increasing the pool of talent female creatives, as well as making existing female directors more visible.

This includes two distinct areas where money and support from funding schemes can be the most effective:

- **Short films**, where directors learnt their craft, make connections and showcase their talents.

¹⁴⁶ 'Current Pledger' The Giving Pledge <http://givingpledge.org/>

- **Feature film development**, where directors craft viable projects and prove that they can gain support from third parties.

Short film production funding

Our research in Section 6 into short films on the British Council database and at major international film festivals reveal that female directors are under-represented (accounting for 27.2% and 25.4%, respectively). It also found that a third of directors say that short films played an important part in their journey to becoming a professional film director.

Most film public-funding bodies in the UK run some form of short film funding and these schemes provide future directors with:

- **Training and skills development.** Properly funded and supported short schemes provide the vital link between homemade, zero-budget short films and the world of feature films. Directors learn how to work with larger crews, bigger budgets, and tell stories with greater ambition.
- **A showcase for their talent.** For the vast majority of directors seeking for support for their first feature film, short films are the most useful way of showcasing their talents and proving to producers and investors that they can be trusted to helm a feature film.
- **Networking and peer-group building.** Many of the cast and crew members who work on properly-funded short films will also work on feature films, thereby expanding the director's connections within the feature film industry. This provides them with a better understanding of what's to come and increases the chance of making the fortuitous connections they need to reach the next stage in their career. In addition, the key creatives they will collaborate with (i.e. writers, producers, heads of department) will be on a similar path toward professional feature film work, meaning that the director can start to build a network of peers who continue to work together in the future.

A greater number of female focused short film schemes providing these sorts of benefits would help redress the low percentage of female directed shorts and, by extension, help support the career development of female directors.

Case Study – Film London's 'Shakespeare's Sister'

In September 2015, *Film London* launched a short film funding scheme called 'Shakespeare's Sister', which sought applications for short films of up to 15 minutes, based around some aspect of Shakespeare's life, characters, or writing. The scheme provided two awards of £15,000, as well as mentoring and support for the key creatives within each team. Teams had to comprise of female writers, directors, and producers based in the UK.

According to Deborah Sathe, *Film London's* Head of Talent Development & Production, the scheme was expected to attract around 150 applications, but ended up receiving 265. She noted that they 'had to organise extra readers, to accommodate the extra 115! But it was a great problem to have!'.

Feature film development funding

Due to the risk-adverse culture of the film industry (see Section 8.2 for a breakdown), 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.

Development funding is currently provided by both the public and private sectors, with public bodies placing a great emphasis on the creative quality of a project whereas private schemes seek projects with the highest commercial potential. In both cases, relatively small amounts of money are put into the project to move it closer to the point at which it can raise production funding.

This 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.

We propose encouraging and supporting development funding specifically aimed at feature film projects which are to be led by a female director.

As the number and quality of developed female-led feature film project increase, so too should the number of projects which secure funding and reach production.

C. Create clear, understandable campaign guides to help supporters

As is shown in Section 8, many of the causes of the current gender inequity stem from a lack of real information, with industry professionals instead opting to rely on their subconscious biases. Therefore, it is vital that the truth about female directors is made available in such a way as to be easily accessible for everyone.

We should provide easy-to-quote reposts to common fallacies and biases, arming filmmakers with statistics and data points to be used in their presentations to investors, producers and other gatekeepers.

Already in this report, we have shown how there is no evidence whatsoever that women make poorer films (quite the reverse), that film audiences don't want to see female-directed films, or that female directors are any greater 'risk' than a male counterpart.

Information such as this should be shared as widely as possible, to drive home the reality that there is no objective reason why a male director is a 'safer' choice than a female director.

Case study – The Ms. Factor Toolkit

The *PGA Women's Impact Network* and *Women in Hollywood* worked together to create a 32-page PDF guide for people pitching female-driven content. It contains the data and analysis needed to support the fact that female-led content is both popular with audiences and profitable, despite the false industry belief in some quarters to the contrary.

The report's authors, Lydia Dean Pilcher and Melissa Silverstein, say:

We hope that producers and filmmakers will use these statistics as 'tools' when creating financing proposals to counter those who see gender as limiting. When they say, "Less money is made with female leads, female stars, or female-driven properties," or "Women aren't our target audience" - you can now be armed with the stats that show that female audiences are powerful, and that female participation can lead to profitable outcomes.

The Ms. Factor Toolkit aims to raise awareness among decision-makers and to educate industry members by debunking the myths that perpetuate gender bias. This toolkit shows that by not supporting and valuing female-driven content in the entertainment business there is a significant underserved female audience, and consequently a lot of money being left at the door.

D. Build further support networks for female directors

As we have seen through this report, female film directors have to work harder in their careers than their male counterparts, in order to combat the systemic issues within the industry which favour male directors.

Therefore, we suggest that further support networks and resources are needed to support UK female film directors and share experiences. These could include:

- **Networking events** designed to introduce female writers, producers, and directors to each other. This could be both physical (i.e. networking evenings) and/or virtual (i.e. an online space for connection and collaboration).
- **Career advice and consultancy**, where female film directors have access to knowledgeable people who can give personal advice, provide feedback on their career path, and offer possible opportunities for their next steps.
- **Education and training** focused towards female directors which targets the areas they feel least supported or trained in, likely to include financing and distribution.

It should be noted that *Women in Film and Television* already provide a huge amount for support female filmmakers in the UK so it may be a case of helping to spread the word and increase access to their existing programmes, rather than building a new institution shadow-running similar schemes.

Case study – The Sundance Institute

The Sundance Institute is a leading force in America for change in the gender balance of independent filmmakers. Some of their initiatives include:

The **Fellowship programme** provides six female filmmakers with an industry mentor, a professional coach and grant to travel to festivals.

Sundance run **educational programmes in financing**, in which around 100 female filmmakers are taught about how to seek, secure and managing film financing. These include classes, panels, keynotes and discussion groups.

Their **Female Filmmaker Initiative Resource Map**¹⁴⁷ is a user-friendly searchable database of programmes, events, workshops and services aimed at US-based female a. At the time of writing, the site lists fifty-nine different resources and opportunities which could help further careers of female filmmakers.

E. Reach new people who are not aware of the extent of the problem

Most film industry professionals are aware of the gender inequality that exists within the UK film industry but there will be many other related groups who are not as knowledgeable, such as private investors and film audiences.

New projects should be established to communicate the scale of the problem and make it directly relevant to their experiences with film. For example, we have discussed earlier how film investors can be made to feel that the issue of female directors directly relates to them and similar efforts are needed for film audiences.

Case study – The F-Rating

Established by Holly Tarquini in 2014, the F-Rating is designed to encourage film audiences to support films either from female filmmakers or with female-centric stories. Their

¹⁴⁷Female Filmmakers Initiative Resource Map' The Sundance Institute <http://www.sundance.org/initiatives/womenatsundance/resource-map>

manifesto¹⁴⁸ states that a film will receive an 'F-rating of approval' if it achieves just one of the following criteria:

1. The film has a female director;
2. The film has a female writer; or
3. The film includes complex female characters on screen who exist in their own right (not simply there to support to the male lead).

F. Increase the pressure within the industry for change

Currently it is fairly easy for most industry professionals to pay lip service to the issue but ultimately dismiss it as 'not relevant to me'. We should be seeking new ways to either make avoiding the current situation more difficult and damaging (such as increasing the questions private investors ask about the gender of key creatives) or forcing change (such as with public funding quotas).

Case study - Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

In May 2015, the *American Civil Liberties Union* made a formal request to the *Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC)* that they investigate 'the systemic failure to hire female directors at all levels of the film and television industry'.

The EEOC is the US federal body charged with enforcing Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits employment discrimination based on sex, race, colour, religion, and national origin. In addition they enforce the *Age Discrimination in Employment Act* of 1967, the *Equal Pay Act* of 1963 and the *American with Disabilities Act* of 1990.

Their investigation began with the EEOC writing to a number of female directors within Hollywood to arrange interviews¹⁴⁹. The outcome of this investigation has not yet been made public but even the threat of the possible outcomes has increased awareness of the issue and shown that serious change is needed.

Of the action, director Maria Giese said¹⁵⁰: "*Historically we see that legal action seems to be the only thing that creates change in this industry, where women are concerned. For some reason, this industry seems to believe that they're exempt from this particular law. It's very important for the federal agency to set the record straight with them*".

¹⁴⁸'The F-Rating Manifesto' <http://f-rated.com/home/about/>

¹⁴⁹'The Hollywood gender discrimination investigation is on: EEOC contacts female directors' Los Angeles Times 2 Oct 2015 <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/movies/moviesnow/la-et-mn-women-directors-discrimination-investigation-20151002-story.html>

¹⁵⁰'Hollywood prejudice against female directors to have US equal opportunity inquiry' The Guardian 7 Oct 2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/oct/07/us-hollywood-discrimination-prejudice-female-directors-equal-opportunities>

12.2 Rejected solutions

- We do not believe that naming and shaming producers or production companies who hire few / no female directors will be an effective route to improving the situation, and could even harm the cause.
- We advise against campaigning on the suggestion that female directors are, by definition, better than male directors.

During the researching and writing of this report we have engaged in a large number of conversations with industry professionals about possible solutions to the gender imbalance. Some of the best ideas have already been included above, however there are a few which seem to persist in the industry but which we feel harm the case for better female representation. These include:

1. Naming and shaming producers and / or production companies
2. Campaigning on the suggestion that female directors are, by definition, better than their male counterparts

We have addressed them briefly below in the hope that they can be put to rest once and for all.

1. Naming and shaming

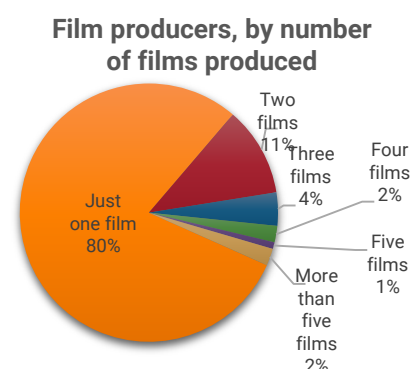
We do not believe that it is sensible to target individual producers or production companies. It would not be hard to create a list of which producers and production companies hire the fewest female directors and 'name and shame' them publically. However, we do not feel that this would work and also, we think that it somewhat misses the point. This is for a number of reasons:

1. **They are not really responsible for the inequality.** In a sense the individuals do create the inequality, through a series of individual decisions. But none of these decisions in themselves are responsible for the sheer scale of the disparity between men and women. That is a product of the system and is, as such, a systemic issue with systemic solutions.

To target Individual bias is to provide a bandage and nothing more to an underlying issue that could produce a wide variety of symptoms. There is no evidence to suggest that producers enter the industry holding biases of this sort, rather it seems far more likely that they are generated by the system. As such it would be neither effective nor particularly fair to target these individuals.

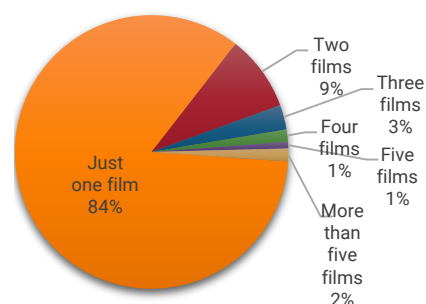
2. **The high churn rate for producers in the UK film industry.** 79.6% of producers in our dataset only produced one feature film during our ten-year study period. Even if we assume that some went on to produce films outside of our research criteria (i.e. working other countries) or produced other formats (such as television shows), this still suggests that the vast majority of film producers are one-time hirers of directors.

Furthermore, if we target the film producers active today without addressing the underlying causes then we shouldn't be surprised if the producers of tomorrow end up falling back into the historic pattern of male bias.



3. **The moving target of production companies.** Across all of the films in our database, we tracked 3,215 production companies, only 1.5% of which produced more than five feature films over the decade. This means that even if naming and shaming film production companies would work, we couldn't possibly hope to name and shame enough to make a measurable impact on the overall UK film industry. The ten most prolific production companies accounted for just 7.1% of the films made.

UK production companies, by films produced



4. **These are the same people we need in order to address the underlying cause.** The most prolific producers and production companies are the very people we need onside to help us cause a widespread, systemic change in the industry. Taking a combative approach could alienate them and result in our cause lacking key powerful allies. Fostering an “us and them” attitude is both dangerous and unnecessary.

The removal of unconscious bias widens the possible pool of talent for the film industry to utilise and it benefits everyone, from the investors, to the creatives, to the audiences and to those prolific producers and production companies. For this reason they should naturally be on the side of greater equality, it is only by targeting them as the problem (which is hardly true in and of itself) that they end up on the other side of the argument.

5. **It is unlikely to work.** Individual opinion, because it's hidden behind whatever system allows it to survive and thrive, is inherently difficult to alter. Add to this people's natural aversion to positions directly opposed to or attacking their own, the lack of self-awareness of those who hold these opinions and the self-serving benefit of it to the perpetrators and it seems apparent that targeting the individuals directly is unlikely to be effective.
6. **It could become a distraction which loses sight of the actual goal.** Imagine someone accused you of a bias you don't believe you hold. Your response, as everyone's is, would be to reject the claim and defend yourself (provide evidence to the contrary, simply flat out reject it, challenge the premise of the argument etc.). The argument then becomes whether or not that individual holds those biases, and meanwhile we totally forget to change anything. Because here's the kicker: it doesn't matter whether you're biased, or whether you believe you are, if it is present in what you do then the effect is there. And it is the effect that actually matters to everyone not present in that argument. Yet this sort of argument will always focus on intent, not your effect.

Despite being easy, this is not the best route to take in order to create widespread, systemic change. Our aim has to be to tackle the underlying cause(s) and not simply to scapegoat the current participants in the vicious cycle.

Note: Obviously, any explicit and deliberate sexism should be followed up and appropriate steps taken. When we advise against 'naming and shaming,' we are specifically referring to publicly attacking a producer's or production company's hiring record as a weapon to correct the gender bias within the industry.

2. Campaigning on the suggestion that female directors are, by definition, better than male directors

Film is a fickle business and if you look hard enough it's possible to find small pockets of data which prove most opinions. We have seen it suggested that the main reason why more female directors should be employed is because women are inherently better at telling stories. Similar arguments have been floated because of leadership, financial, or artistic reasons, however all should be resisted, for a number of reasons:

1. **It's not true.** Each film has its own creative and production requirements and so will need a bespoke set of skills from the director. There are not two types of director in the world. There are as many types of director as there are people. Statistically speaking, the gender of the director is pretty irrelevant when stacked up the director's other attributes. It's just a shame that the industry at large doesn't see it this way.
2. **It undermines the validity of the overall findings.** Our main findings (e.g. 13.6% of directors are women) come from an exhaustive study of all 2,591 feature films made in the UK over a ten-year period. By adding spurious facts based on smaller samples and without the same rigor, we cast doubt on all the campaign's research.
3. **It moves the argument away from the clear, incontrovertible facts to that of a fringe opinion.** The current gender imbalance is quite clearly unjust and so does not need over-egging. Furthermore, in doing so the campaign risks losing a large number of mainstream supporters who feel that this is a step too far.
4. **The case should be made around equity and fairness, not efficacy or outcome.** The case against gender inequality is primarily not one based on the returns. Rather this is one of those rare cases where it seems simply and straightforwardly morally right that we correct this issue. It corresponds too explicitly to a number of the key values (fairness, equality of opportunity, and justice), which our society claims to hold, not to be acted upon. Campaigning on the superiority of female directors, without any evidence for this claim, negates what is arguably the single strongest argument for greater representation for female directors.
5. **It will not work, as it does not reflect how the original opinion was formed.** The view that female directors are a poorer choice than their male counterparts is not a view which can be formed by anything other than bias or anecdotal bad experiences. Therefore, people who hold that view have not formed it after a fair reading of the facts but have formed it emotionally, and post hoc taken to heart any facts which seem to support their opinion (known as 'confirmation bias'). Therefore, facts and reason are not going to sway them. Leading the campaign under the banner 'Female Directors Do It Better' will not change the opinion of any of the people who should be convinced in order to see real change.
6. **It's not needed.** There is more than enough evidence already to make the case very plainly and clearly.

12.3 Suggestions from other bodies

The Sundance Institute

In October 2015, the *Sundance Institute* and *Woman In Film Los Angeles* ran a two-day think-tank with forty-four senior industry leaders – both men and women – from studios, networks, distributors, guilds, and agencies, along with high-profile writers, directors, and producers, to drill into the systemic causes of gender bias in the industry and craft solutions.

This work resulted in four recommendations:

1. **Advocate 'Unconscious Bias' training across the industry.** Leaders in other businesses have determined that unconscious bias creates blind spots and leads to missed market opportunities, and also hinders access to valuable consumer segments limiting profits. Creating more content for women and people of color is not only about equality; it also makes good business sense. An expert unconscious bias educator will be selected to work with executives and creatives across the industry.
2. **Develop and launch a Gender Parity Stamp to recognize films and television shows** – as well as production companies, networks and studios – that show measurable progress to achieving gender equity. Mirrored on the successful work by LGBT advocates and the PGA's producer mark, this recognition for positive progress will be a visible identifier for companies that have prioritized equal gender hiring practice and have financed or supported business opportunities for women in front of and behind the camera.
3. **Sponsor/Protégé Programme.** This high-level pilot programme will identify talented early-to-mid career female film and TV directors for a year-long training and fellowship programme, and pair them with advocates across the industry who will actively help them move to the next level. While many individual companies have training programmes, this unique programme will enable the protégé to work across different networks, studios and agencies. With the support and participation of executives across the industry, this programme will highlight women selected by a panel of leaders and assure they have the tools, relationships, and exposure to launch and sustain their careers.
4. **Ambassadors from the industry leaders at the meeting will spread the word about the solutions to studios, networks and agencies.** Crucially, the participants have committed to staying involved in the project and will enlist an ever-growing group of advocates to work inside their organizations on articulating the business case for making changes in culture and practices to hire more women and people of color.

The Irish Film Board

In December 2015, *The Irish Film Board (IFB)* published a six-point plan¹⁵¹ aimed at addressing gender inequality in Irish film. Their six points were:

1. **Information.** IFB funding statistics are now published on the IFB website. Combined figures for 2010 to 2015 show that 16% of production funding applications came from projects with female writers attached, 14% came from projects with female directors attached and 36% of production funding applications came from projects with female producers attached. For projects which are completed productions in the same period,

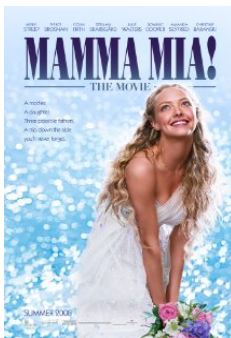
¹⁵¹Statement from the IFB on Gender Equality Six Point Plan' 22 Dec 2015, *Irish Film Board*
http://www.irishfilmboard.ie/irish_film_industry/news/Statement_from_the_IFB_on_Gender_Equality_Six_Point_Plan/2975

21% had a female writer attached, 18% had a female director attached and 55% had a female producer attached. We are committed to continued collection and publication of data to highlight inequalities and enable us to address them. Each IFB Board meeting will review and monitor the latest statistics on gender.

2. **Funding.** There needs to be a holistic and integrated approach to achieve real change. The aim is to stimulate applications for development and production funding with female creative talent attached. The target is to achieve 50/50 gender parity in funding over the next three years. We will engage with production companies who have obtained or are seeking IFB funding with a view to raising awareness about gender imbalance and achieving this target. We will also engage with organisations who will provide training to executives involved in funding decisions in gender equality specifically and on cultural diversity generally. The intention is to address issues of unconscious bias within Irish film.
3. **Training and Mentorship.** This will be organised through Screen Training Ireland (STI) who will be announcing a series of initiatives to provide meaningful development, support and career progression for female talent including emerging talent. This will include two international placements for female writers and female directors as well as mentorships for female directors of TV drama and female directors on feature films funded by the IFB in 2016. STI will also be promoting seminars and conferences as well as panels at events and will be seeking to achieve an ongoing consciousness at these events of the need for gender equality and cultural diversity generally and will be seeking to ensure that the panels and speakers themselves also represent that equality and diversity.
4. **Education.** Early intervention in the education process is an initial part of change of mind-sets. We will be working with the National Film School at IADT organising events for female transition year students to introduce and encourage them to consider courses in film related areas particularly screen writing, screen directing and screen producing.
5. **Enterprise.** We will be working with Enterprise Ireland on their entrepreneurship start-up scheme to include dedicating space at existing incubation centres for female creative talent and encouraging female creative talent to engage with Enterprise Ireland's existing schemes.
6. **Partnership.** We will also be working with other funders in media including the BAI Sound and Vision Fund and the public service broadcasters RTÉ and TG4 so that gender equality is embedded within the decision making process in screen content and that cultural diversity generally is promoted in production which is publically funded. We will also be working with Women in Film and Television Ireland and other bodies nationally and internationally to progress gender equality.

13. UK feature films directed by women

Below are just some of the top UK-grossing films made by female directors during our study period (i.e. UK feature films shot between January 2005 and December 2014).



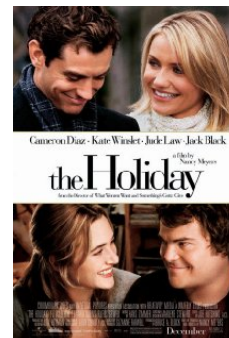
"Mamma Mia!"
Phyllida Lloyd



"Arthur Christmas"
Sarah Smith and Barry Cook



"Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang"
Susanna White



"The Holiday"
Nancy Meyers



"StreetDance 3D"
Dania Pasquini and Max Giwa



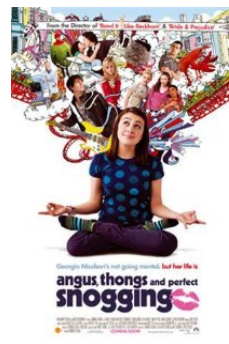
"The Iron Lady"
Phyllida Lloyd



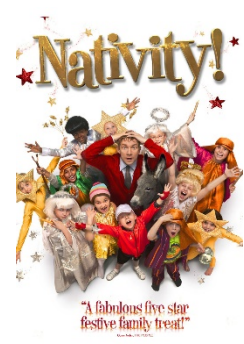
"Nativity 2: Danger in the Manger"
Debbie Isitt



"One Day"
Lone Scherfig



"Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging"
Gurinder Chadha



"Nativity!"
Debbie Isitt



"StreetDance 2"
Dania Pasquini and Max Giwa



"An Education"
Lone Scherfig



"We Need To Talk About Kevin"
Lynne Ramsay



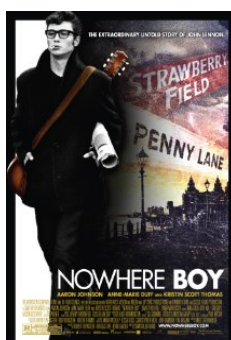
"Belle"
Amma Asante



"Cloud Atlas"
Lana Wachowski, Andy Wachowski and Tom Tykwer



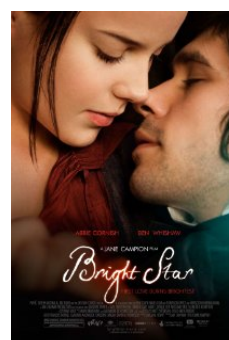
"The Riot Club"
Lone Scherfig



"Nowhere Boy"
Sam Taylor-Johnson



"Walking on Sunshine"
Dania Pasquini and Max Giwa



"Bright Star"
Jane Campion



"It's A Wonderful Afterlife"
Gurinder Chadha



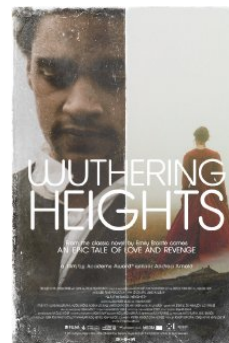
"Brick Lane"
Sarah Gavron



"Northern Soul"
Elaine Constantine



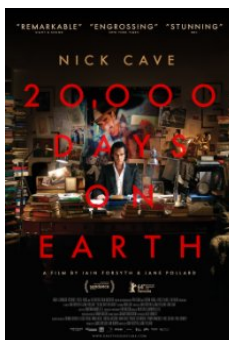
"Africa United"
Debs Paterson



"Wuthering Heights"
Andrea Arnold



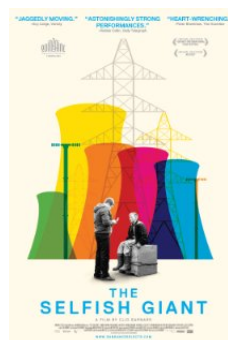
"Fish Tank"
Andrea Arnold



"Nick Cave: 20,000 Days On Earth"
Jane Pollard and Iain Forsyth



"Fifty Dead Men Walking"
Kari Skogland



"The Selfish Giant"
Clio Barnard



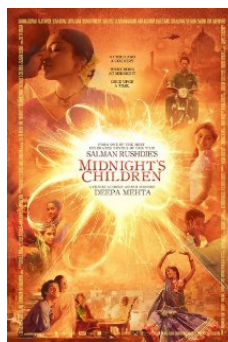
"Good Vibrations"
Lisa Barros D'Sa and Glenn Leyburn



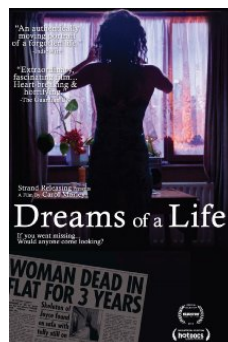
"Archipelago"
Joanna Hogg



"Lore"
Cate Shortland



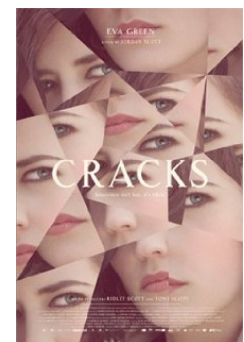
"Midnight's Children"
Deepa Mehta



"Dreams of a Life"
Carol Morley



"Mischief Night"
Penny Woolcock



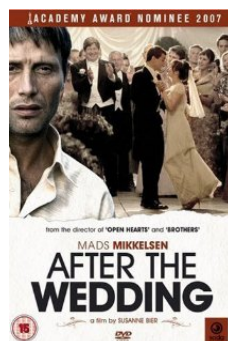
"Cracks"
Jordan Scott



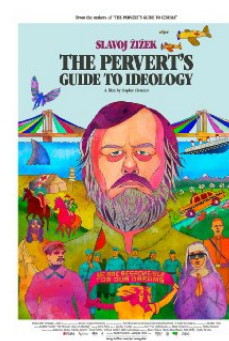
"McCullin"
Jacqui Morris and David Morris



"Jig"
Sue Bourne



"After the Wedding"
Susanne Bier



"The Pervert's Guide to Ideology"
Sophie Fiennes



"The Arbor"
Clio Barnard