

Revolving door effect in the media: New cohort method reveals a dual job market for actors and actresses

CONTEXT

Gender inequalities are a growing concern in the film and television industry. The double standard of age and gender (Sontag) was already known and research showed that actresses nominees are structurally younger than their male counterparts. Moreover, the creative decisions about the characters have a direct impact on the job opportunities (knowing that in the major programs the leading roles are paid about 400'000\$ per episode).

Susan Sontag conceptualized the “double standard of ageing” for men and women. From Bazzini to Arbogast or Jermyn, research confirms that the screen industry prefers women to be young, whereas ageing is not a professional handicap for the men.

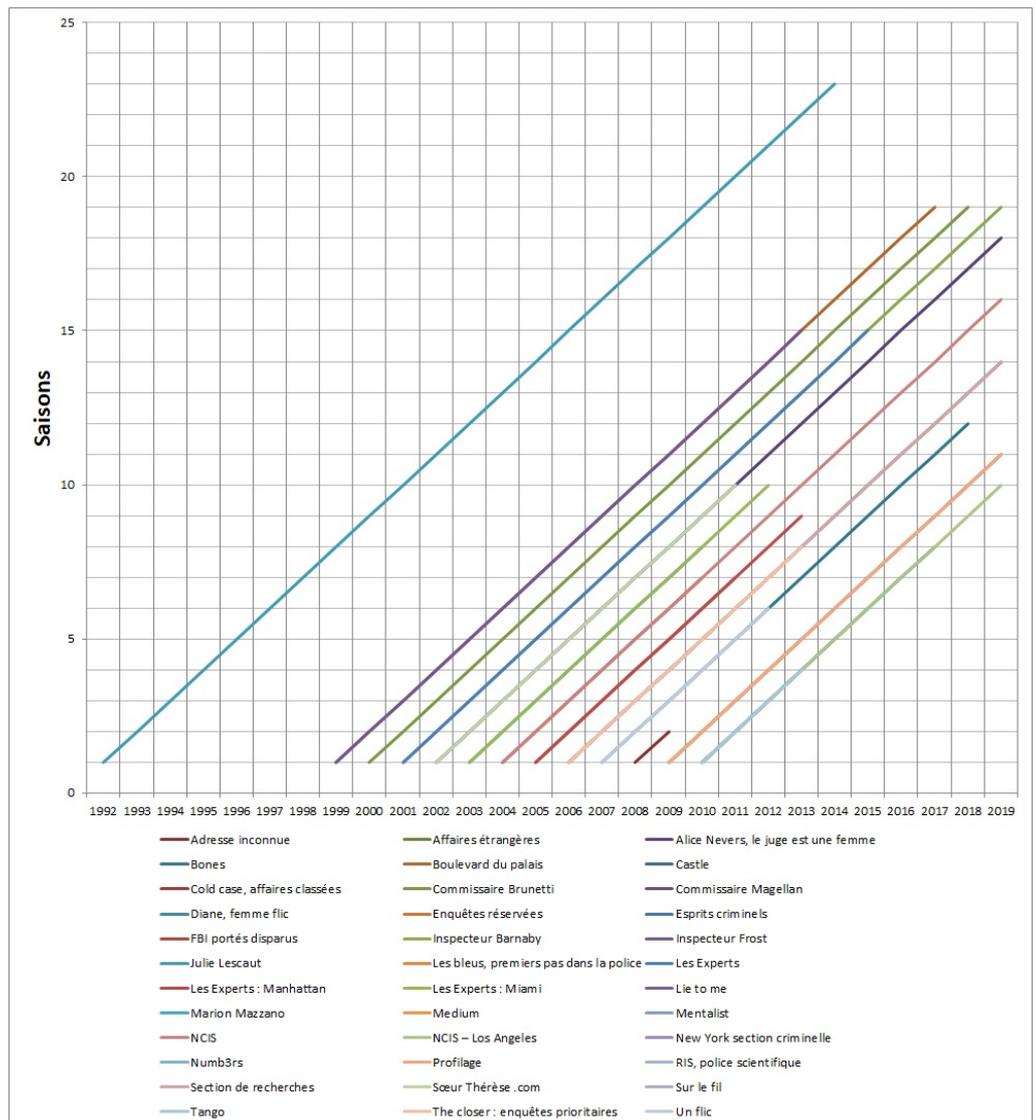
THEORETICAL APPROACH

We test the hypothesis that according to the gendered organizations theory (Acker) there is a dual job market for actors and actresses. Specifically, there is a revolving door effect (Jacobs) in TV series: women stay less longer in the casting. Indeed, focusing on TV series (which is currently the most widely spread cultural practice worldwide) allows for a cohort analysis of the changes in the casting from one season to the next. The preference of the industry for young women and the revolving door phenomenon could be understood as interrelated.

DATA

Following a large literature on the gender analysis of the media (Signorielli), we analyzed the cast of TV series. Like Brugeilles et al we chose to study 1 complete year of Prime Time programming, i.e. 36 TV series. Being broadcast on the main networks in 2010 is the event which defines this corpus as a cohort. We collected data on the main and recurring cast of all existing seasons, from the season 1 of each series. 35 series have more than 1 season, from 2 to 22 seasons (for the preliminary results).

For the purpose of this research, only police shows were analyzed, i.e. 24% of the Prime Time programming (non-fiction included).



METHOD

The data include the total number of seasons of the program, the number of the season of first appearance and the last season in the cast. Secondary data is thus generated: number of seasons in the cast, then ratio of cast presence (total seasons in the cast/total number of seasons of the series).

More variables were created: age of the actors and actresses, original cast or late entrance, presence at the final season or early exit, duration of the series, type of character.

RESULTS

Disclaimer: The preliminary results use partial truncated data (right-censored in 2014). This communication will present actualized results updated until 2020 included (right-censored: several programs are still in production).

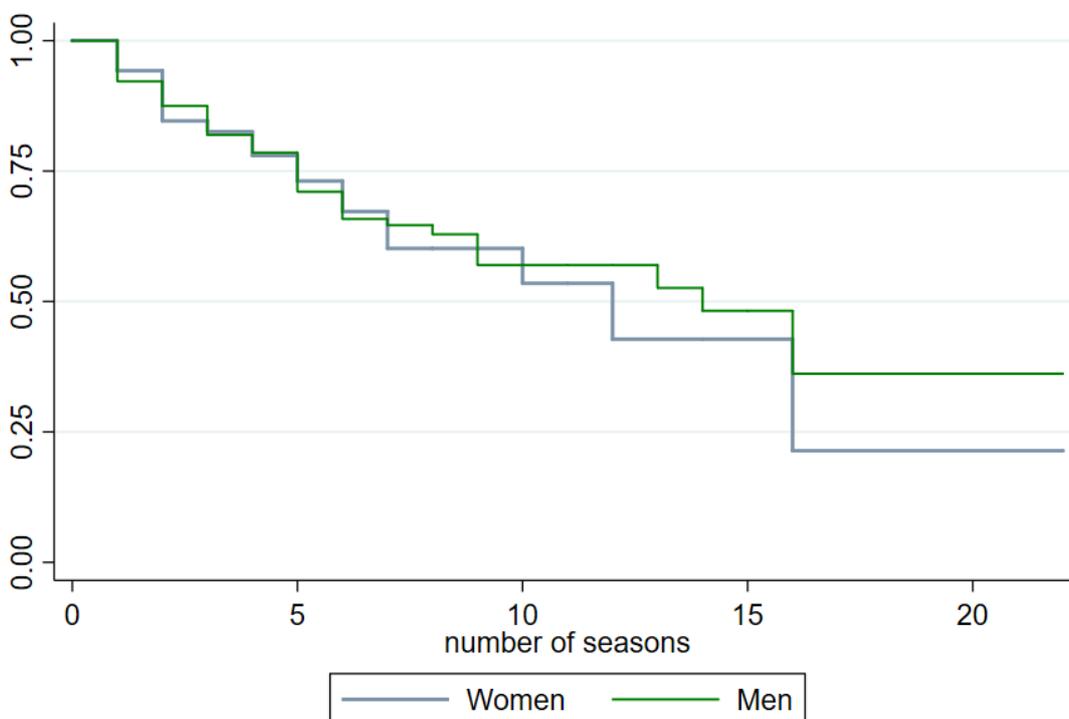
Age structure: The age pyramid is strongly asymmetrical. In season 1, only 6.6% of the women are 50 or more, against 24.5% of the men. In the episodes broadcast in 2010, the proportion is 14.8% and 37.9% respectively. The gender age gap deepens.

Mean ratio of presence in the cast: 0.59 for women and 0.66 for men

The ratio allows for comparisons between series with different lengths (7 seasons and 15 seasons, for instance). The mean real presence in the cast is 4.6 seasons for the women and 5.6 seasons for the men. Men appear in the cast in 1 season more than women.

Survival analysis of the original cast

The survival analysis shows a gender difference in the long term, but not in the early seasons. The original male cast has a higher survival rate after 7 and even more after 10 seasons.



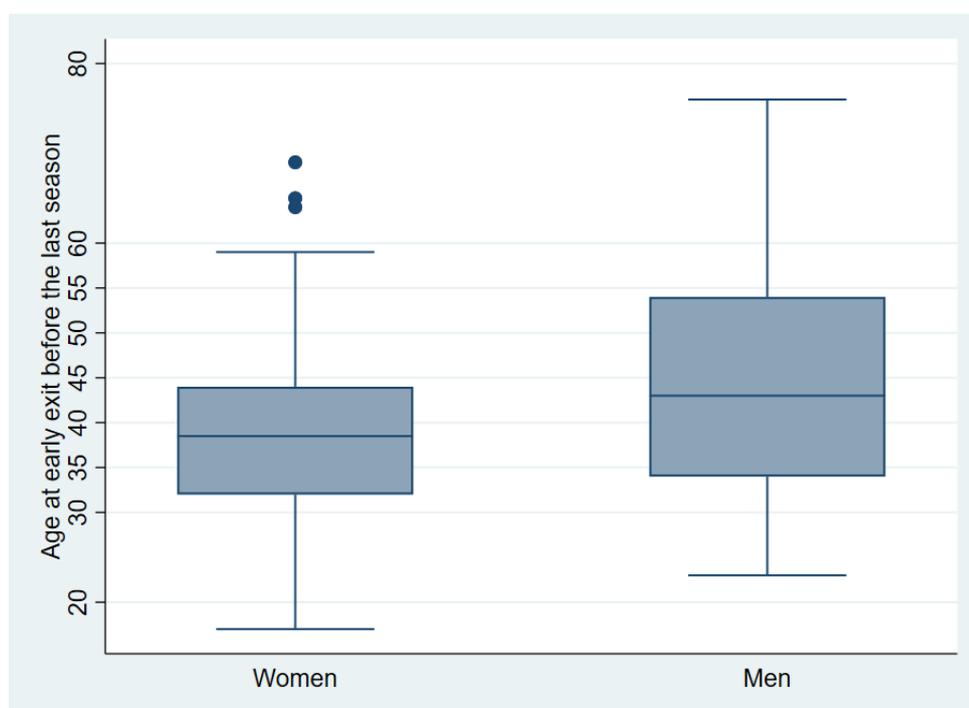
Changes in the cast and migratory balance

	Present in the last season			Early exit			Total		
	W	M	total	W	M	total	W	M	total
Present at season 1	55	97	152	33	58	91	88	155	243
Late entrance (after s.1)	44	41	85	41	39	80	85	80	165
Total	99	138	237	74	97	171	173	235	408

Only 37.5% of the original cast is still present in the last season. The overall balance is -6, but with a strong gender difference: +11 women between the first and the last season, but -17 men. More women than men enter the cast later than the first season (49% against 44%). But women also leave the cast early (before the last season) a little more often than men (42.8% against 41.3%).

Age at early exit of the cast (i.e. before the last season)

Women who leave the cast before the last season are younger (and younger than 50) than men who leave early too. The boxplot shows only 25% of the women early exiters leave at 43 or more, whereas 50% of the men leave at 44 or more.



Logistic regression (main results)

Women have 2.3 higher risk of late entrance compared to men (significant <0.1%). There is no significant risk associated to age group (no age group of women has a significant OR of late entrance). The risk rises with the number of seasons: the risk is 2.2 times higher for series with 6-to-9 seasons than for series with 5 seasons or less (ref.), the risk is 4.7 times higher in series with 10 seasons or more (significant <0.1%).

The risk of early exit shows no significant OR for the sex. But the risk of early exit for women is 22 times higher when the series last 10 seasons or more than series with 5 seasons or less (ref), whereas for men the risk is only 5.8 times higher. When series last 10 seasons or more, the impact on the female cast changes is much stronger than on the male cast.

Full tables will be displayed in the communication.

DISCUSSION

Series allow a cohort analysis of the job changes (cast changes), which was not possible in previous research on the film industry except for a specific subpopulation (the Stars nominated for the Academy Awards, Treme & Craig).

The original difference in the age structure between men of all ages and women mostly under 40 is the key starting point. Then the combination of several mechanisms strengthens the gendered differences in the cast. There is a clear evidence of a gendered revolving doors effect which contributes to maintain most of the female cast under the age of 50. Our data show that TV series are a dual job market with strong gender inequalities in the number and in the structure of opportunities. Actors face much less competition than actresses and can continue to work more easily after 50.

The method can be reused on larger or different serial programs, e.g. for monitoring purposes.

SELECTED REFERENCES

- ACKER Joan, « Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations », *Gender and Society*, vol. 4, n°2, 1990, p. 139-158.
- ARBOGAST Mathieu, « De si jeunes femmes... Analyse longitudinale des écarts d'âges et des inégalités de genre dans les séries policières », *Genre en séries* [Online], n°1, 2015, p. 73-99.
- BAZZINI Doris G., MCINTOSH William D., SMITH Stephen M., COOK Sabrina, & HARRIS Caleigh, « The Aging Woman in Popular Film: Underrepresented, Unattractive, Unfriendly, and Unintelligent », *Sex roles*, vol.36, n°7-8, 1997, p. 531-543.
- BRUGEILLES Carole, CROMER Isabelle et CROMER Sylvie, « Les représentations du masculin et du féminin dans les albums illustrés, ou comment la littérature enfantine contribue à élaborer le genre », *Population*, vol. 57, n°2, 2002, p. 261-292.
- GERBNER George, GROSS Larry, SIGNORIELLI Nancy, and MORGAN Michael, « Aging with Television: Images on Television Drama and Conceptions of Social Reality », *Journal of Communication*, vol. 30, n°1, 1980, p. 37-47.
- JACOBS Jerry A., *Revolving doors: sex segregation in women's careers*, Stanford (Ca), Stanford University Press, 1989.
- JERMYN Deborah, « Past Their Prime Time?: Women, Ageing and Absence on British Factual Television », *Critical Studies in Television*, vol. 8, n°1, 2013, p. 73-90.
- LINCOLN Anne E. and ALLEN Michael Patrick, « Double Jeopardy in Hollywood: Age and Gender in the Careers of Film Actors, 1926-1999 », *Sociological Forum*, vol. 19, n° 4, Dec. 2004, p. 611-631.
- SIGNORIELLI Nancy, « Aging on Television: Messages Relating to Gender, Race, and Occupation in Prime Time », *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, vol.48, n°2, 2004, p. 279-301.
- SONTAG Susan, « The double standard of ageing », *The Saturday review*, September 23, 1972, p. 29-38.
- TREME Julianne and CRAIG Lee A., « Celebrity star power: Do age and gender effects influence box office performance? », *Applied Economics Letters*, vol. 20, n°5, 2013, p. 440-445.