4. Women Behind the Scenes

A Data-Driven Approach to Analyse Female Labour
in Italian Television[1]

Valentina Re and Marica Spalletta

ABSTRACT

The aim of this work is analysing women's employment in key behind-the-scenes jobs in Italian TV crime dramas distributed from Fall 2015 to Summer 2022. This research has a two-fold objective: first, understanding female employment in the Italian television sector through the lens of crime dramas (*micro-level*); second, and more generally, setting an analysis model that can be replicated with respect to other genres, periods, countries or typology of datasets (*macro-level*). Since the sample analysis we conducted revealed data and trends consistent with analyses of larger datasets, we can argue that the original findings obtained may extend beyond the boundaries of the crime genre. Despite some positive trends, data about female employment in Italian television production show a more unbalanced scenario with stronger gender inequalities compared to both European averages for TV fiction and the Italian film sector.

KEYWORDS

Gender equality; female labour; TV series; Italian screen industry; data-driven approach.

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[1]   This study originates at the intersection of three research projects: the H2020 project DETECt – Detecting Transcultural Identity in European Popular Crime Narratives (2018-2021); the national project (PRIN 2020) The Atlas of Italian "Giallo". Media History and Popular Culture (2022-2025); the CERV-2022-GE project GEMINI – Gender Equality through Media Investigation and New training Insights (2023-2025). This work is the fruit of genuine and intensive collaboration on all parts and aspects of the essay. Each of us was principally responsible for writing exactly half of the essay.

Introduction:
Gender Equality, Data, Policies

As a fundamental EU value and a core EU objective, gender equality is surrounded by a strong policy background in all sectors of European societies – see for instance the *EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025* and the *Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023*. Given the influential role of media on how social and cultural norms relating to gender are perceived, specific measures have been progressively established to increase gender equality and diversity in the European audiovisual sector – e.g., the *Creative Europe MEDIA Programme (2021-2027)* and the *Eurimage – Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2023*.

The reference to "diversity" underlines the need to complement the gender equality perspective with an intersectional approach aimed at addressing discrimination on a systemic level, thus combining gender with other personal characteristics (e.g., race, religion, age, disability) which can pose a potential source of inequality, and promoting diversity as a value and a driver of growth and innovation in all areas of life. In this respect, several reports over the past five years have combined behind-the-scenes and on-screen perspectives to map gender issues in the audiovisual sector from the broader perspective of diversity and elaborate policy recommendations.[2] All these reports stress how the "availability of such knowledge is crucial for both creating awareness about existing gender issues as well as developing appropriate policies and good practices" while pointing out the "lack of systematic data" (EENCA 2020: 8). As clearly stated in the conclusions of

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[2] See at least EAO 2021, EENCA 2020, Voices of Culture 2020, ERGA SG 4 2019, and EAO 2018. Concerning the impact on policy strategies and funding, see the BFI diversity standards as a paradigmatic case: https://www.bfi.org.uk/inclusion-film-industry/bfi-diversity-standards (last accessed 14-01-23).

the 2020 report *Achieving Gender Equality and Promoting Diversity in the European Audiovisual Sector, Good Practice Handbook*: "The high value of the regular production of statistics and qualitative analyses of the levels of representation of women and other under-represented groups on screens and in the audiovisual workforce has been demonstrated" (Tepper 2020: 69).

The first report released by the Italian Observatory on Gender Equality, set up by the Ministry of Culture in November 2021, goes precisely in the same direction. At the beginning of the last chapter, entitled "Uno sguardo ai dati" ("A look at data"), we can read:

> The availability of data to monitor gender equality in the cultural sectors is still scarce and above all heterogeneous across sectors. Nevertheless, the available data, to which we will refer in the following pages [...], confirm strong gender inequalities and the need to promote a systematic collection of information that can shed light on the inequalities that have emerged, which appear difficult to unravel and which require targeted policies for the promotion of equality in all sectors of culture (MiC – Osservatorio sulla parità di genere 2022: 47; our translation).

The data to which the Italian Observatory refers concern exclusively female employment in the film sector, and more specifically come from: *Women Directors and Film Production. Addressing the Gender Gap and the Role of Festivals* (WIFTMI 2019), *Tutti i numeri del Cinema e dell'Audiovisivo* (MiC 2020), *Gender Balance in Italian Film Crews. Data and Research Policies* (MiC and Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore 2022). Despite the huge popularity of television narratives and the "content arms race" in the age of the so-called "peak TV", the only data currently available on gender equality in Italian television production are those released by the European Audiovisual Observatory (EAO) (Fontaine 2022), APA (Associazione Produttori Audiovisivi) and Fondazione Symbola (2022), and the public broadcaster Rai – the latter however limited to the on-screen perspective (Rai 2022).

We can similarly see a need for more data available in academic research. Although film and television studies are becoming increasingly concerned with data-driven approaches (Bielby 2014, Krijnen and Van Bauwel 2015, Liddy 2020), it is still difficult to find research based on a mixed methods approach (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011), where qualitative and quantitative approaches blend to offer qualitative analysis of quantitative data and vice versa. At the same time, these studies often tend to employ methodological triangulation models "within-method" or "between/across-method",

where instead only the full integration of convergent and divergent perspectives would ensure the accuracy of researchers' assessments (Amaturo and Punziano 2016). Finally, it cannot be ignored that quantitative analyses provided by both academic research and public reports are often based on different datasets and frequently recur to different types of measuring, with the result that in most cases the research findings are not directly comparable because they are uneven both on the side of data collection and data analysis.

Aims & Methodology

It is precisely to fill these gaps that this study – which is part of a broader research aimed at analysing gender equality and diversity in Italian television production[3] – combines data analysis and production studies both to analyse the gender equality issue and female labour in contemporary Italian TV crime drama (*micro-level*) and to set an analysis model that can be replicated, for example, with respect to other genres, periods or countries (*macro-level*).

While considering the extensive Italian and international literature on gender and media in both social sciences and television studies, this article is mainly concerned with methodologies and data evidenced by reports from stakeholders such as public broadcasters, streaming services, public service organisations and non-profit research organisations.

For this purpose, this study focuses on Italian TV crime dramas distributed from Fall 2015 to Summer 2022 (seven television seasons) as a paradigmatic case study.

The focus on the crime genre depends on well-established findings emerging from the academic literature of recent years. On the one hand, crime narratives provide the opportunity to analyse mainstream productions and popular narratives; as argued in *Transnational European Television Drama*, "crime drama […] is clearly the most popular genre across Europe" (Bondebjerg et al. 2017: 223) and it "serves as a lens through which to observe the local, national and even transnational issues that are prevalent in

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[3]   For a more comprehensive account of this ongoing research, which combines behind-the-scenes and on-screen perspectives, see our article "Unsuitable Jobs for Women: Women's Behind-the-Scenes Employment and Female On-Screen Representation in Italian TV Crime Drama" (*Comunicazioni sociali*, 1, 2023, pp. 82-97) and the related report available at: https://atlantedelgiallo.unilink.it/index.php/2022/11/18/professioni -inadatte-a-una-donna-report/ (last accessed 14-01-23).

a society" (Hansen et al. 2018: 1). On the other, the crime genre has been investigated by a rich tradition of feminist cultural and media studies that have explored the role of women as creators, characters, and consumers of crime narratives. In this respect, the crime genre has represented a privileged perspective to observe changes in gender roles, both in society and fictional worlds, and particularly the relationships between the representation of female investigators and changes in female condition in the broader socio-cultural context, especially in the workplace and domestic spaces.[4]

The time frame 2015-2022 is motivated both internationally and nationally. On the one hand, it allows comparing the evidence of this research with data provided by EAO about the presence of women among six audiovisual professional categories in TV fiction with a first broadcast or release in the EU27 plus UK between 2015 and 2020 (Fontaine 2022).[5] On the other hand, at the national level, 2015 stands out as a turning point in the innovation processes implemented by Rai, the Italian PSB and leading provider of TV series, to respond to original productions by linear and non-linear pay TV players (Sky, Netflix, Amazon) and to the increasing circulation of production and narrative models from other European countries, and especially Nordic ones. More particularly, the TV series *Non uccidere* (*Thou Shalt Not Kill*, 2015-2018), aired on Rai 3 in September 2015, pushed Italian production into an international context thanks to its innovative visual style and its female protagonist, Valeria Ferro, a woman in her thirties and inspector of the homicide squad.

From a methodological point of view, the background analysis of existing reports has shown that they often tend to be based on vast amounts of data resulting from large datasets.[6] Consistently with the macro objective of our research (namely, to set an analysis model that can then be replicated), we chose to adopt a sample methodology, which allows us to make infer-

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[4]   See in particular: Dresner 2007, Gates 2011, Hoffman 2016, Klein 1995, Reddy 2003, and Turnbull 2014. For a literature review focused on the Italian context, see D'Amelio and Re 2021a.

[5]   See also Jiménez Pumares 2021. Pioneering research on gender equality in the Italian audiovisual sector, with particular reference to the film industry, has been conducted by the research project DEA from 2016 to 2019, see DEA 2016 and 2018. For more recent approaches focused on Italian cinema, see Fanchi and Tarantino 2021 and the research project CineAF: Women's Films in Italy (1965-2015) (http://cineaf.eu/, last accessed 14-01-23).

[6]   For instance, the sample of the 2022 EAO report is composed of 37,138 TV films and episodes for directors (90% of all TV films and episodes produced) and 34,706 for writers (84% of the entire production).

ences about a selected sample corpus, expecting to make them generalisable (Corbetta 2015). In particular, the sampling procedure took into consideration the different methodological choices adopted by other reports working on a sample basis, merging them into an original model within which:

1. In accordance with the report *Boxed In 2019-2020* (Lauzen 2020), we analysed only one episode for each TV series distributed in the selected time span;

2. Following the report *Women Over 50* (Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media 2021), we did not consider one randomly selected episode, but always the second episode of season 1 (01x02). This choice allows focusing on the first season of each series (which stands for the 'original crew') while considering how season premieres or pilot episodes, as well as season finales, may differ from regular season norms.

Behind-the-scenes jobs we tracked correspond to four main categories:

- *Above-the-line roles*: director(s), writer(s), delegate producer(s);[7]
- *Below-the-line roles:* cinematography, music, sound, editing, costume design, production design, special/visual effects, casting, make-up;
- Main producer(s);
- Producer(s) for the commissioner.

Data were collected in two steps. First, we selected all the Italian TV series (distributed in the predetermined time frame) labelled as 'crime' and 'thriller' (or in Italian *giallo* and *poliziesco*) in the IMDb database or, even otherwise labelled (e.g., 'action' or 'drama'), referable to 'crime fiction' as a pragmatic set of features and expectations shared by producers and viewers and displayed in promotional strategies. At the end of this step, the selected

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[7]   The high heterogeneity in crediting the various producer figures, which describe equally diverse production practices, made it necessary to make some methodological choices. As we wanted to focus on figures with decision-making and supervising roles, we distinguished between the main producer(s) (that is, the main financial supporter[s]), his/her main delegate(s) (in Italian *produttore delegato* or *produttore esecutivo*) and the producers representing the commissioner (e.g., the channel/platform of the first release, which is also the major funder). At this research stage, the tracking of behind-the-scenes jobs through the credits did not include the main cast because the actors' role was addressed separately from the on-screen perspective and the analysis of characters. For more details see the report *Unsuitable Jobs for Women*, https://atlantedelgiallo.unilink.it/index.php/2022/11/18/professioni-inadatte-a-una-donna-report/ (last accessed 14-01-2023).

Italian TV crime dramas amounted to 62. The second step consisted of collecting data concerning the selected key roles. To this purpose, we considered the opening credits of each episode, integrating them, when needed (e.g., visual and special effects supervisor, producer), with final credits or the information provided by the IMDb. Considering all the names in the credits, the analysed corpus amounts respectively to 1,158 mentions referring to the sex each name conveys (that is, counting each name every time the credits quoted it) and to 759 professionals with respect to the individual they refer to (that is, counting each name only one time).

The collected data were then processed and subjected to a double type of analysis, monovariate – based on the study of each variable individually, through descriptive statistical analysis tools – and bivariate – more properly exploratory in nature, aimed at verifying the existence of any association between the variables, and to reach a proper interpretation of the same (Marradi 2007).

Patterning Italian Crime Dramas

The analysis of women's employment in key behind-the-scenes roles in Italian crime dramas requires to preliminarily patterning the object of analysis (Tab. 1). To this purpose, we have considered five main elements:

1. *First release*: when (before/since Fall 2015) and on which channel/platform (Rai, the commercial broadcaster Mediaset, the Pay TV Sky, Netflix, Amazon Prime Video);
2. *Production and format*: if it is an international co-production, an original production, a literary adaptation (from a female or male novelist), or a remake; episode duration (less/more than 65');[8]
3. *Setting*: the period (present or past – before the 2000s) and the main location where the story unfolds;
4. *Narrative form*: episodic or serial narrative;[9]
5. *Protagonist(s)*: male-based, female-based, duo-based or team-based (ensemble).

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[8] For this distinction see Fontaine 2022.
[9] The binary distinction between long-term arc storytelling and stand-alone episodes refers to the form prevailing in every TV series and does not strictly categorise it. In fact, in current practice, the two forms are increasingly combined, and especially the "mystery of the week" traditional model is now commonly associated with a more or less complex and relevant horizontal storyline.

TV SERIES	YEARS	SEASONS	EPISODES	CHANNEL/PLATFORM
Baby	2018-2020	3	18	Netflix
Bang bang baby	2022-	1	10	Amazon Prime Video
Bella da morire	2020	1	8	Rai 1
Blanca	2021-	1	6	Rai 1
Blocco 181	2022-	1	8	Sky Atlantic
Catturandi – Nel nome del padre	2016-	1	12	Rai 1
Diavoli	2020	2	18	Sky Atlantic
Don Matteo	2000-	13	265	Rai 1
Fosca Innocenti	2022-	1	4	Canale 5
Fuoco amico TF45 – Eroe per amore	2016	1	8	Canale 5
Giustizia per tutti	2022	1	6	Canale 5
Gli orologi del diavolo	2020	1	8	Rai 1
Gomorra: La serie	2014-2021	5	58	Sky Atlantic/Sky Cinema
I bastardi di Pizzofalcone	2017-	3	18	Rai 1
I delitti del BarLume	2013-	9	18	Sky Cinema
I misteri di Laura	2015	1	8	Canale 5
Il bosco	2015	1	4	Canale 5
Il cacciatore	2018-2021	3	28	Rai 2
Il capitano Maria	2018	1	4	Rai 1
Il commissario Montalbano	1999-2021	15	37	Rai 2/Rai 1
Il commissario Ricciardi	2021-	1	6	Rai 1
Il giovane Montalbano	2012-2015	2	12	Rai 1
Il miracolo	2018	1	8	Sky Atlantic
Il processo	2019	1	8	Canale 5
Il re	2022-	1	8	Sky Atlantic
Il silenzio dell'acqua	2019-2020	2	8	Canale 5
Il sistema	2016	1	6	Rai 1
Imma Tataranni - Sostituto procuratore	2017-	2	14	Rai 1
Io ti cercherò	2020	1	8	Rai 1
L'allieva	2016-2020	3	35	Rai 1
L'ispettore Coliandro	2006-	8	34	Rai 2
L'alligatore	2020	1	8	Rai 2
L'onore e il rispetto	2006-2017	5	32	Canale 5
La fuggitiva	2021	1	8	Rai 1
La narcotici	2011-2015	2	12	Rai 1
La porta rossa	2017-	2	24	Rai 2
La strada di casa	2017-2019	2	24	Rai 1
Le indagini di Lolita Lobosco	2021-	1	4	Rai 1
Màkari	2021-	2	7	Rai 1
Maltese – Il romanzo del commissario	2017	1	4	Rai 1
Masantonio - Sezione scomparsi	2021-	1	10	Canale 5
Monterossi - La serie	2022	1	6	Amazon Prime Video
Nero a metà	2018-	3	36	Rai 1
Non mentire	2019	1	3	Canale 5
Non mi lasciare	2022	1	8	Rai 1
Non uccidere	2015-2018	2	36	Rai 3/Rai 2/Rai Premium
Petra	2020-	1	4	Sky Atlantic/Sky Cinema
Pezzi Unici	2019	1	12	Rai 1
Provaci ancora prof!	2005-2017	7	46	Rai 1
Rocco Schiavone	2016-	4	16	Rai 2
Romanzo Siciliano	2016	1	8	Canale 5
Rosy Abate – La serie	2017-2019	2	10	Canale 5
Solo	2016-2018	2	8	Canale 5
Solo per amore	2015	2	18	Canale 5
Sorelle	2017	1	6	Rai 1
Sotto copertura	2015-2017	2	10	Rai 1
Squadra antimafia – Palermo oggi	2009-2016	8	74	Canale 5
Squadra mobile	2015-2017	2	32	Canale 5
Suburra - La serie	2017-2019	3	24	Netflix
Un passo dal cielo	2011-	6	80	Rai 1
Vite in fuga	2020	1	12	Rai 1
Vostro onore	2022	1	8	Rai 1

TABLE 1

The analysed corpus.

TIME

BEFORE

23% **fall 2015**

14 SERIES

SINCE

77%

6 — 8 — 6 — 4 — 4 —10 —10

48 SERIES

CHANNEL/PLATFORM

RAI **57%**
MEDIASET **26%**
SKY **11%**
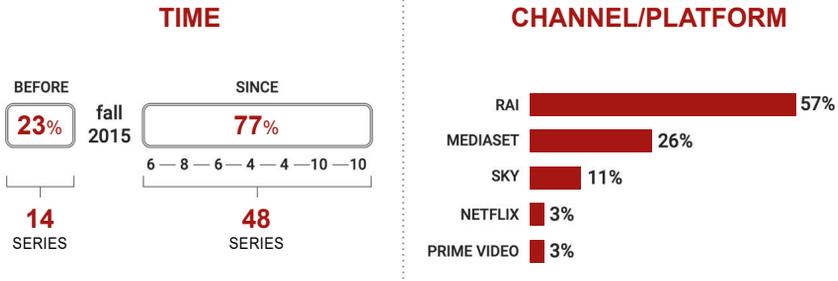NETFLIX **3%**
PRIME VIDEO **3%**

FIGURE 1
First release.

Crime dramas distributed since Fall 2015 consist of 48 TV series (77%), while 14 cases (23%) started before Fall 2015 and were renewed in the 2015-2016 season or the following ones. Figure 1 shows that over the last two seasons the number of new productions has significantly increased, thus proving the popularity of the crime genre. Concerning channels and platforms, about half of the corpus (57%) consists of crime dramas co-produced by Rai, while 1 in 4 (26%) comes from the commercial broadcaster Mediaset. The remaining ones are co-produced by Sky (11%), Netflix (3%), and Amazon Prime Video (3%). Comparing the performance of the broadcasters in the shift before/since Fall 2015, an inverse trend emerges: the number of Rai TV series grows (from 50% to 59%) while Mediaset productions decline (from 36% to 23%) (Fig. 1).

Moving to the second feature (*production and format*), only two crime dramas are international co-productions, *Diavoli* (Italy/France/UK, 2020-) and *Gli orologi del diavolo* (Italy/Spain, 2020). 3 TV series in 5 (60%) represent original productions, while 35% consist of adaptations (male novelists prevail over female ones – 71% vs 29%); 3 cases (*I misteri di Laura*, 2015, *Non mentire*, 2019, and *Vostro onore*, 2022) are remakes of original crime dramas produced in Spain (*Los misterios de Laura*, 2009-2014), UK/USA (*Liar*, 2017-2020) and Israel (*Kvodo, Your Honor*, 2017). A significant transformation concerns the episode duration: overall, crime dramas with episodes longer than 65' are more than half (52% vs 48%). However, splitting the data shows an inverse trend: series released before Fall 2015 present longer episodes (71% vs 29%), while more recent series prefer shorter (54% vs 46%). Given the widespread popularity of this format abroad, we can interpret the increasing use of the less than 65' format in terms of a growing internationalisation process of Italian TV series (Fig. 2). Again, *Non ucci-*
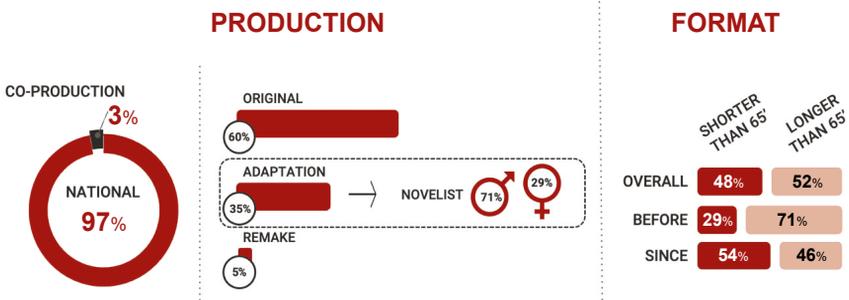
PRODUCTION

FORMAT

CO-PRODUCTION **3%**

NATIONAL **97%**

ORIGINAL **60%**

ADAPTATION **35%** → NOVELIST **71%** ♂ **29%** ♀

REMAKE **5%**

	SHORTER THAN 65'	LONGER THAN 65'
OVERALL	48%	52%
BEFORE	29%	71%
SINCE	54%	46%

FIGURE 2
Production and format.

dere can be interpreted as a paradigmatic case. When renewed for a second season, episodes are doubled (from 12 to 24), but their length is reduced to 50 minutes at the request of foreign buyers.[10] In fact, despite not achieving good ratings in Italy, the show circulated quite well abroad – in France (*Squadra criminale*) and Germany (*Die Toten von Turin*) on Arte and on the British Channel 4' Walter Presents streaming service (also available in the US from 2017) for UK and US audiences.

Concerning the third feature (*setting*), almost all the analysed crime dramas (90%) are set in the present, while 10% look at the past both for narrative choices (i.e., *Il commissario Ricciardi*, 2021-, and *Bang Bang Baby*, 2022-) and when the plot refers to actual events dated in specific periods of Italian history (e.g., the "Italian Mafia" which recurs in *Il cacciatore*, 2018-2021, and *Maltese – Il romanzo del commissario*, 2017). Regarding locations, Rome peaks as the "Capital" of Italian crime dramas (13 productions), followed by Sicily (where Montalbano's fictional Vigata is located); the only TV series set abroad is *Diavoli*, with a plot unfolding primarily in London. Crime dramas released since 2015, however, show the development of more diversified location strategies, with new productions set in Basilicata, Calabria, Liguria, Lombardia, Piemonte, Puglia, Valle d'Aosta, and Veneto (Fig. 3).

Concerning the *narrative form*, the serial model prevails over the episodic one (60% vs 40%). However, data show an interesting shift in the time frame: before 2015, in fact, 57% of crime dramas belonged to the episodic model, while starting from 2015, the serial form prevailed (65% vs 35%)

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10 See the interview with creator Sergio Corbucci available on Rai streaming portal RaiPlay, https://www.raiplay.it/ (last accessed 14-01-23).

TIME

PRESENT

90% | 10% PAST

NARRATIVE CHOICE | REAL EVENTS

LOCATION

OVERALL

EPISODIC 40% | SERIAL 60%

BEFORE | SINCE 2015
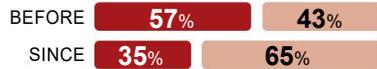
BEFORE 57% 43%
SINCE 35% 65%

FIGURES 3, 4
Setting and Narrative form.

(Fig. 4). Moreover, as already pointed out, the episodic case is increasingly associated with a more or less complex and relevant horizontal storyline.

Finally, an interesting transformation also emerges regarding the *protagonist's role*. Overall, male protagonists peak with 40%, followed by female protagonists (31%), team-based (ensemble) narratives (21%), and duo-based narratives (8%).[11] However, comparing TV series released before and since 2015, ensemble narratives show a descending curve (36% vs 17%) to the advantage of female protagonists, which grew from 21% to 33%. The "decline" of the team-based model, which has mainly char-

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[11]   In all the analysed series, every duo consists of a man and a woman. The only case in which the duo involves two characters of the same sex/gender (male/man) refers to the Fortebracci brothers in *L'onore e il rispetto* (2006-2017).

OVERALL

BEFORE | SINCE 2015

MALE **40**%
FEMALE **31**%
ENSEMBLE **21**%
DUO **8**%

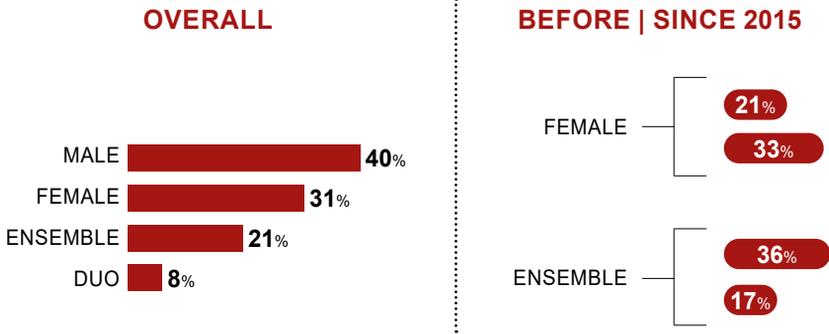FEMALE **21**% **33**%

ENSEMBLE **36**% **17**%

FIGURE 5
Protagonist(s).

acterised Mediaset productions in the past, can be partially explained by the decreasing number of Mediaset productions but also by the decreasing relevance as strategic drivers of internationally successful Sky productions such as *Romanzo criminale – La serie* (2008-2010) and *Gomorra – La serie* (2014-2021). On the other hand, the growth of female protagonists and the focus on female narratives can be linked to Rai's innovative production strategies mentioned above. Focusing on the two broadcasters, there is no difference between Rai and Mediaset concerning the share of crime dramas with female protagonists (32% vs 31%), and the same applies to ensemble narratives (14% vs 13%). However, while in Rai TV series stories with male protagonists prevail (51% vs 31%), the share of Mediaset series featuring a duo stands out to be much higher (25% vs 3%). Indeed, whereas the duos are usually composed of males and females, there would seem to be more room for women in Mediaset series than in Rai (Fig. 5).[12]

Female Employment
in Behind-the-Scenes Roles

Before introducing the research's main findings, a methodological premise is due. In fact, referring to the credits does not allow to distinguish between sex and gender identity. Therefore, the distinction between female/women

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[12]   For an overview of Italian TV policewomen and the role of female characters in the team-based model see Buonanno 2012 (especially chapter 6, "Le ragazze con la pistola"). For an overview of recent productions see D'Amelio and Re 2021b.

professionals and male/man professionals was made based on the credited personal name and the sex with which this name is commonly associated in Italian culture.[13] Of course, this choice in no way entails a binary approach to gender issues. Only further qualitative research, based on surveys and interviews with professionals, could make it possible to investigate, also from the behind-the-scenes perspective, the relations between sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation and how these aspects impact the working conditions in the audiovisual sector.

Measuring Female Employment by Mentions

To understand women's employment in key behind-the-scenes roles, we refer first to the mentions' parameter. Therefore, we analysed the overall 1,158 credits, measuring the female presence with respect to both the total tracked credited roles (*how many women are overall involved in the crews in comparison with men?*) and all the analysed crime dramas (*how many TV series include women in their crews?*).

General data show predominantly male crews: in fact, the overall female presence represents 31% of the 1,158 analysed credited roles, while the male presence amounts to 69%; therefore, for each woman involved, there are at least two men. On the contrary, only one series (*Catturandi – Nel nome del padre*, 2016) does not include any woman in its crew (Fig. 6).

Male employment prevails in the above-the-line roles, with no relevant differences between series released before or since 2015. In the analysed time frame, in fact, female directors represent 6%, and only three women (Cinzia Th Torrini, Maria Sole Tognazzi and Rossella Izzo) are directors of 4 series; finally, three series in 4 also present a female protagonist when there is a female director. Compared to direction, female employment in scriptwriting rises to 25%, but male writers still prevail (75%). This trend is confirmed by looking at the series: although in 32 of 62 crime dramas there is a female writer, only two series (*La narcotici*, 2011-2015, and *Vostro*

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[13]   While in the international scenario "Andrea" is both a male and female name, in Italy it is mainly used to identify male persons; therefore, all crew members with that name have been coded as male. On the other hand, for personal names not belonging to the Italian tradition (e.g., Emita), pseudonyms (e.g., Salmo) and bands (e.g., Calibro 35), further research was carried out to identify their sex. Finally, based on the biographical names given in the credits, it was impossible to identify the share of intersex, which would only be identifiable through surveys with direct answers.
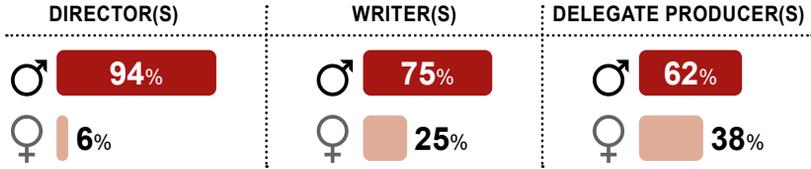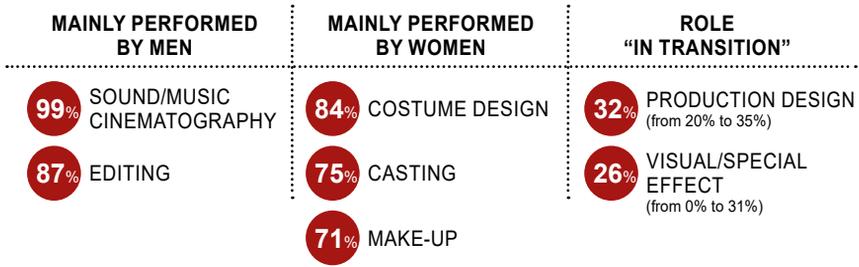
FIGURE 6
Overall female employment.

FIGURE 7
Female employment in above-the-line roles.

onore) are entirely written by women and, more in general, a male majority characterises writing teams. The female presence in the above-the-line roles peaks in the role of delegate producer: although men still prevail, women account for 38%. This larger female employment is confirmed by looking at the second parameter: women work as delegate producers in 20 of 43 series in which this role is conferred (Fig. 7).
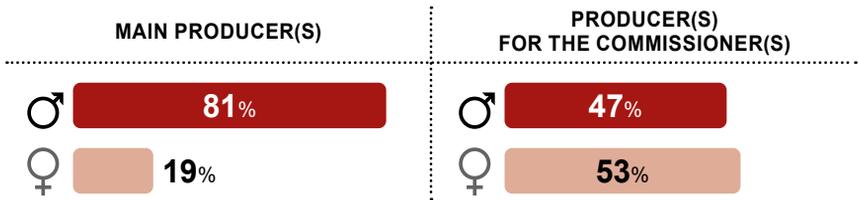
Concerning below-the-line roles, data analysis shows three different trends:

1. *Roles mainly performed by men*: cinematography (99%), music (99%), sound (99%) and editing (87%). Only one series credits women in cinematography (*Il miracolo*, 2018), sound (*Gomorra*) and music (*Il processo*, 2019), while editing boasts a more significant female presence: 9 of 62 series credit at least one woman in their editing crews;
2. *Roles mainly performed by women*: costume design (84%), casting (75%) and make-up (71%). Respectively, 53 of 62 and 44 of 59 series involve at least one woman in costume design and make-up, while 50 of 62 series credit a female presence in casting roles;
3. *Roles 'in transition'*: production design (32%) and visual/special effects (26%). These roles show an increase in female employment from crime dramas released before or since Fall 2015: female production designers shifted from 20% to 35%, while female visual/special effects supervisors grew from 0% to 31%. Women serve as production

MAINLY PERFORMED BY MEN	MAINLY PERFORMED BY WOMEN	ROLE "IN TRANSITION"
99% SOUND/MUSIC CINEMATOGRAPHY	**84%** COSTUME DESIGN	**32%** PRODUCTION DESIGN (from 20% to 35%)
87% EDITING	**75%** CASTING	**26%** VISUAL/SPECIAL EFFECT (from 0% to 31%)
	71% MAKE-UP	

FIGURES 8
Female employment in below-the-line roles.

MAIN PRODUCER(S)	PRODUCER(S) FOR THE COMMISSIONER(S)
♂ **81%**	♂ **47%**
♀ **19%**	♀ **53%**

FIGURES 9
Female employment in production roles.

designers in 21 of 62 series, while supervising visual/special effects is a matter for women in 15 of 52 crime dramas (Fig. 8).

Regarding production roles, women have more opportunities as producers for the commissioner than as main producers (53% *vs* 19%). However, looking at time distribution, both roles show a negative trend: since 2015, the share of female main producers has dropped from 32% to 15%, and commissioners have reduced the number of their female producers from 71% to 48%. Nevertheless, 21 of 58 series present at least one woman in their production team, while series in which women are employed as producers for the commissioner amount to 34 of 44 (Fig. 9).

Measuring Female Employment by Individuals

In the second step of the research, we referred to a corpus consisting of 759 professionals, obtained by considering each mention by the individual it refers to.

Overall, data analysis confirms that, for each woman, there are at least two men involved in the crews: in fact, the female presence stands at 32%

of the 759 professionals, in line with the 31% of the 1,158 credited roles. At the same time, the individuals' perspective shows two main trends: on the one hand, female professionals involved in more than one production team are less than men, with the only exception of those roles we have defined as "mainly performed by women", where the repetitiveness in the role is also "a matter of women"; on the other hand, the employment in more than one crew negatively affects the percentage of women even in those few roles apparently "less unsuitable for women".

Referring to above-the-line roles, the number of professionals tends to decrease because they are often involved in 2 or more series as directors, writers or delegate producers; on the contrary, the share of women employed in the crews tends to be confirmed. Referring to directors and delegate producers, the overall number decreases respectively from 63 to 47 and from 85 to 66 (because 12 professionals and 14 delegate producers are involved in two or more series), but the man/woman percentage does not change (94% *vs* 6% and 62% vs 38%). Concerning writers, they amount to 122 units instead of 158 (23 professionals are involved in two or more writing teams and, among them, there are five women), but women slightly increase from 25% to 27%.

Looking at below-the-line roles, men prevail in photography, music and sound, which are characterised by a significant recurrence of the same professionals: directors of photography working in two or more productions are 13 out of 49, composers are 15 out of 43 (and among them Andrea Farri, Ralf Hildenbeutel and Savio Riccardi recur in more than five series), and sound directors are 16 out of 46. As for editing, the role appears always mainly performed by men, albeit to a lesser extent than in the previous three roles. In fact, the total number of editors decreases from 78 to 46 because 15 professionals work in more than one series, and of these two professionals (Alessandro Heffler and Pietro Morana) are engaged in 6 and 7 series respectively; however, only two women appear to be engaged in more than one production team, compared to 13 men, which explains why, in percentage terms, the female presence increases from 13% to 17%.

Looking at the roles mainly performed by women, the number of make-up artists drops from 67 to 49 (due to 13 professionals engaged in more productions), while the share of female employment is confirmed (71%). Percentages significantly decrease with reference to the roles of costume designer and casting director (from 84% to 80% and from 75% to 66%, respectively). However, this reduction is directly proportional to the greater "presence" of women in more productions: 13 out of 49 costume designers,

in fact, work in more than one series, and in 11 cases they are women (with Marina Roberti appearing in four productions); the same goes for casting, where 18 out of 44 directors are engaged in more than one series, and of these 15 are women. The high number of female professionals involved in casting in multiple series (as in the cases of Elisabetta Curcio and Adriana Sabbatini, engaged respectively in five and six productions) means that, percentage-wise, female employment drops from 75% to 66%. Finally, "roles in transition" show two different trends. In fact, the number of production designers drops from 69 to 48 due to 15 professionals working in more than one series (in particular, Valerio Girasole engaged in 4 different productions); however, the fact that men working in multiple series are more than women (11 vs 4 women) causes female employment to increase from 32% to 38%. On the contrary, the share of women engaged as special/visual effects supervisors drops from 26% to 20%, and this is because women engaged in more production are as many as men (among them, Monica Galantucci is the record woman of attendance with seven series to her credit).

Finally, with reference to production roles, the number of main producers decreases significantly from 129 to 65, and this is due to 26 professionals engaged in the production of more than one series (the record man is Carlo Degli Esposti, with seven productions to his credit); among these, however, only five are women, and this determines an increase in the percentage of female employment (from 19% to 25%). An inverse trend characterises the role of the producer for the commissioner: in fact, the number of professionals stands at 40 (compared to 83 in the previous measurement), 21 of whom are engaged in multiple productions; about half of these professionals (precisely 12) are women, resulting in a minimal change in the level of female employment, which stands at 58%.

Conclusions

This research has a two-fold objective: first, understanding female employment in the Italian television sector through the lens of crime dramas (*micro-level*); second, and more generally, setting an analysis model that can be replicated with respect to other genres, periods, countries or typology of datasets (*macro-level*).

Starting from the first goal, the data emerging from this study about the discrete amount of women in the role of scriptwriters (25%), as well as the extremely poor presence of women in the roles of director (6%), cinematog-

rapher (1%) and composer (1%), are in line with those on Italian TV fiction provided in the EAO 2022 report – female directors between 10 and 15%, writers between 30 and 35%; cinematographers and composers less than 5%.[14] These data show a more unbalanced scenario with stronger gender inequalities compared to European averages (17% directors, 36% writers, 7% cinematographers, 5% composers) and data for the US context provided in the report *Boxed In 2019/20* (referring to both scripted and non-scripted shows): 30% directors, 36% writers, 8% cinematographers.

Since the sample analysis we conducted revealed data and trends consistent with analyses of larger datasets, we can argue that the original findings obtained may extend beyond the boundaries of the crime genre and may be compared with data about the Italian film sector.

In this respect, the increase of female production designers (from 20% in TV series started before Fall 2015 to 35% in series distributed since Fall 2015) and VFX/special effects supervisors (from 0% to 31%) shows a positive trend. However, data on the different production roles reveal a bleaker scenario, with strong gender inequalities in top positions. Women represent only 19% of main producers and tend to occupy more functional, albeit relevant, roles such as producer for the commissioner (53%) and *produttore delegato* (38%) – this latter figure is in line with the general figure for Italian female producers provided by EAO, between 30% and 35% (European average 44%).

Comparison with the Italian film sector reveals a similar picture, with the same preponderance of female professionals in roles traditionally associated with women (such as make-up) and significant disparities in other key roles, although far less pronounced than in the television sector – especially for composers, cinematographers and editors. Over the five years from 2017 to 2021, the share of female film directors rose from 14% to 19%, the share of female screenwriters from 22% to 23%, the share of female composers from 12% to 16%, the share of female cinematographers from 8% to 10%, while the share of female editors remained stable (27%). The figure for women film producers rose from 25 to 26%, but without reference to the more specific role played in the production team (MiC and Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore 2022; MiC – Osservatorio sulla parità di genere 2022: 49).

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[14]   Note that in all these cases the share of female professionals is weighted by the number of professionals in that role of each episode.

Compared to the first step, the second step of the research (measuring female employment by individuals) confirms the general average of women's employment. At the same time, a significant "qualitative" gender difference stands out: if men tend to be engaged more frequently in two or more productions (especially in below-the-line roles), "repetitiveness" does not seem to be "a matter for women", except for those roles "mainly performed by women". However, paradoxically, where this "repetitiveness" occurs, the share of female employment tends to fall compared to the male one.

In conclusion, we can argue that further analyses of gender equality in the Italian television sector, focusing on other genres and formats and with a longer time span, are strongly recommended, both to get a more comprehensive picture of Italian television production and to allow a more in-depth and systematic comparison with the film sector and other European and US production cultures. More particularly, the use of larger datasets could also allow an analysis of how gender issues and discriminations relate to creative clusters and professional collaboration networks in Italian television production – following the models of application of social network analysis to Italian cinema offered by Holdaway (2017) and Fanchi and Tarantino (2021).

At the same time, it is necessary to conduct a thorough methodological investigation that considers at least two main aspects. Firstly, it is essential to assess which data collection and analysis protocols are most widely used, implement them and standardise them so as to obtain data that is as homogeneous as possible and allows for consistent comparisons. Second, new research methodologies must be developed to overcome a too rigidly binary approach and study diversity in audiovisual professions. More precisely, further qualitative research is needed to enlighten the relations between sex/gender identity/sexual orientation and how these aspects impact the working conditions in the audiovisual sector.

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WOMEN BEHIND THE SCENES: A DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH TO ANALYSE FEMALE LABOUR IN ITALIAN TELEVISION