

SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE

SPRINGBOARD DATA
SCIENCE CAREER TRACK:
A storytelling
Exercise

Saturday Night Live: 46 years of data

a presentation by Sangeeta Jayakar

Introduction

As a lifelong fan of Saturday Night Live, I always wished I saw more female cast members. Now, I notice that there seem to be more and that they are being featured in prominent sketches, but is it enough compared to male cast? This work will attempt to explore and visualize some of these trends.

Data Wrangling:

LIVE
TODAY NIGHT

Data found on Kaggle

- <https://www.kaggle.com/hhlcks/snldb>
- Contained 11 csv files, many with redundant info

Focused on 'appearances.csv'

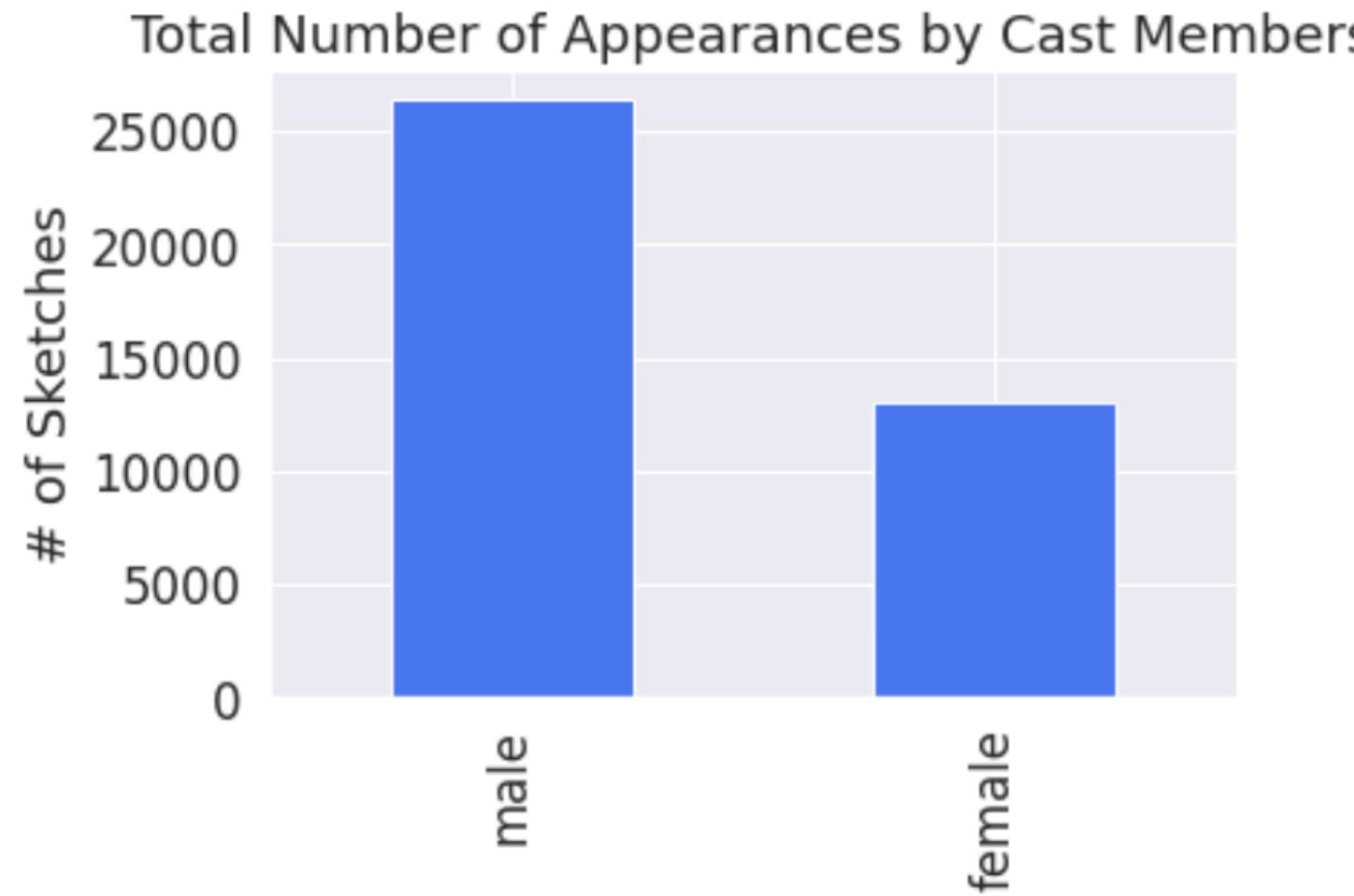
- Entries for each actor (with a unique actor id), 'impid' or unique impression, and a 'tid' which is a unique label for each sketch.
- Over 55,355 entries and was the most comprehensive

Other files called 'actors.csv' and 'impressions.csv' were used to supplement

- Actors.csv listed each actor by unique actor id and their gender.
- Impressions.csv had each unique 'impid', name of actor, and name of character

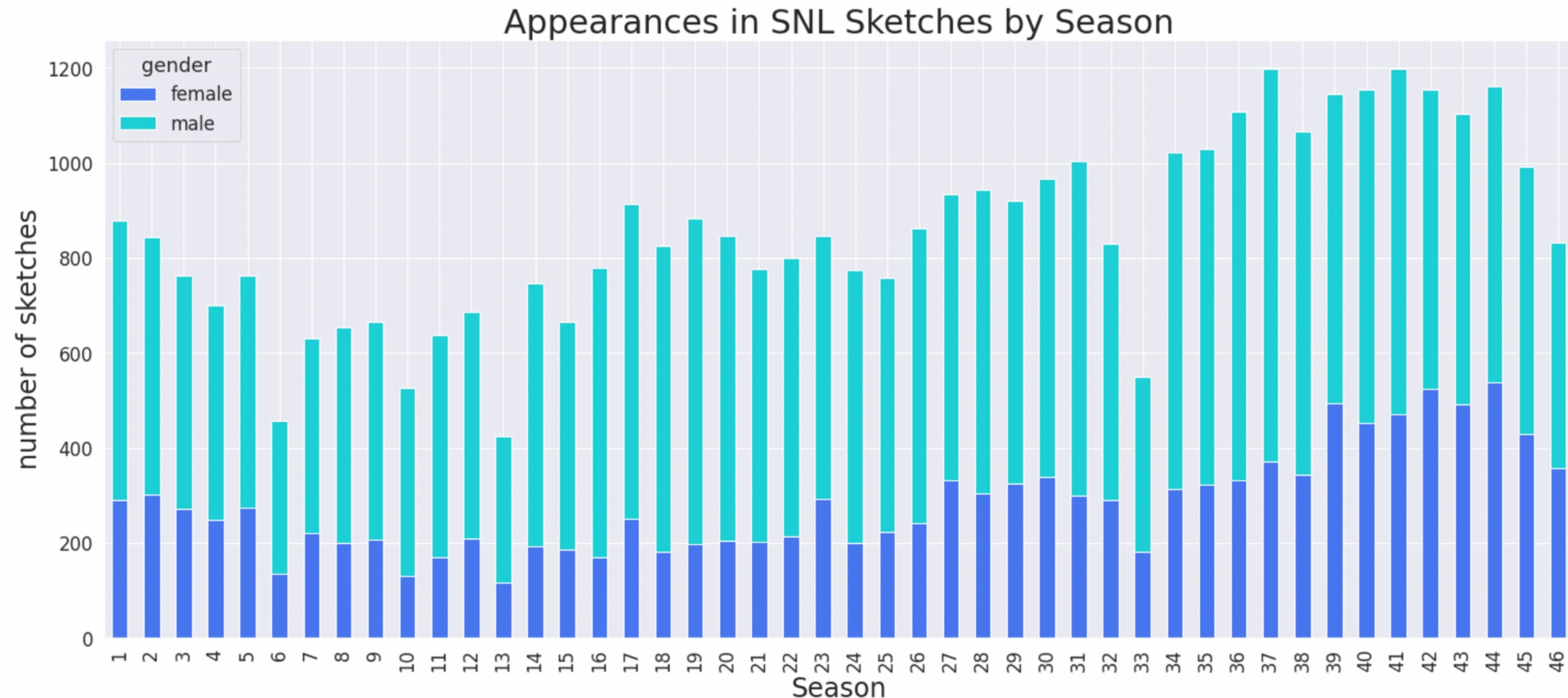
There is a huge discrepancy between the number of appearances by male and female cast members

Appearances by males double the number of appearances by females.

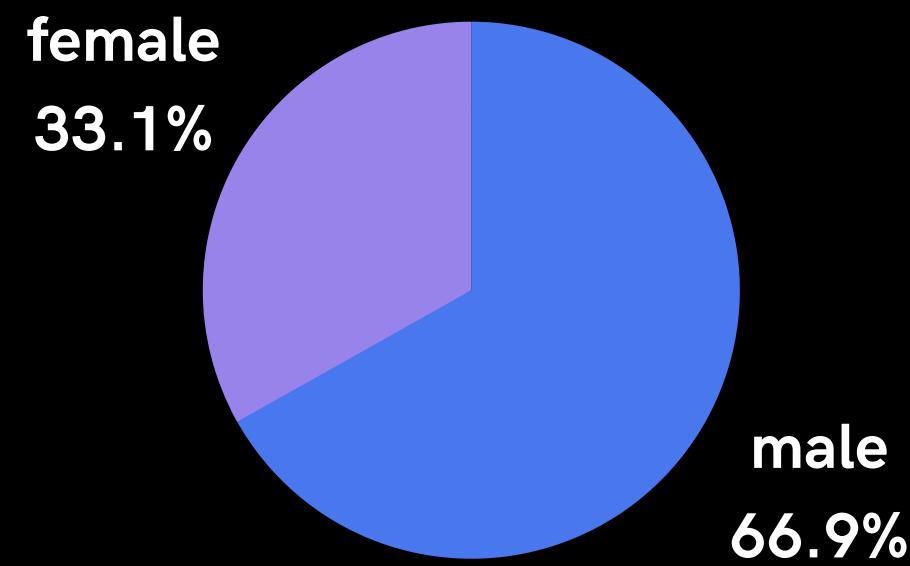


Men outnumber women in appearances each season

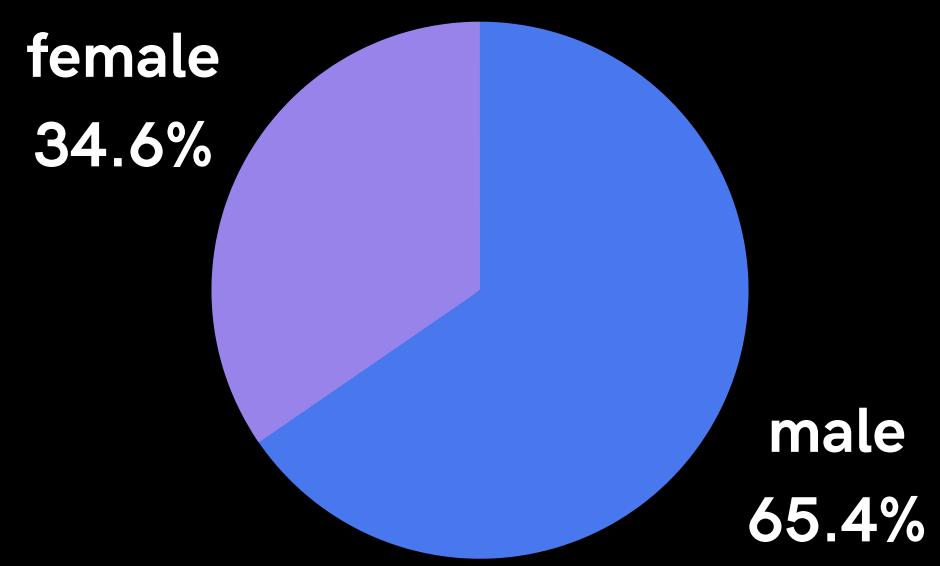
Percentage of women appearing in sketches seems to be increasing each season overall.



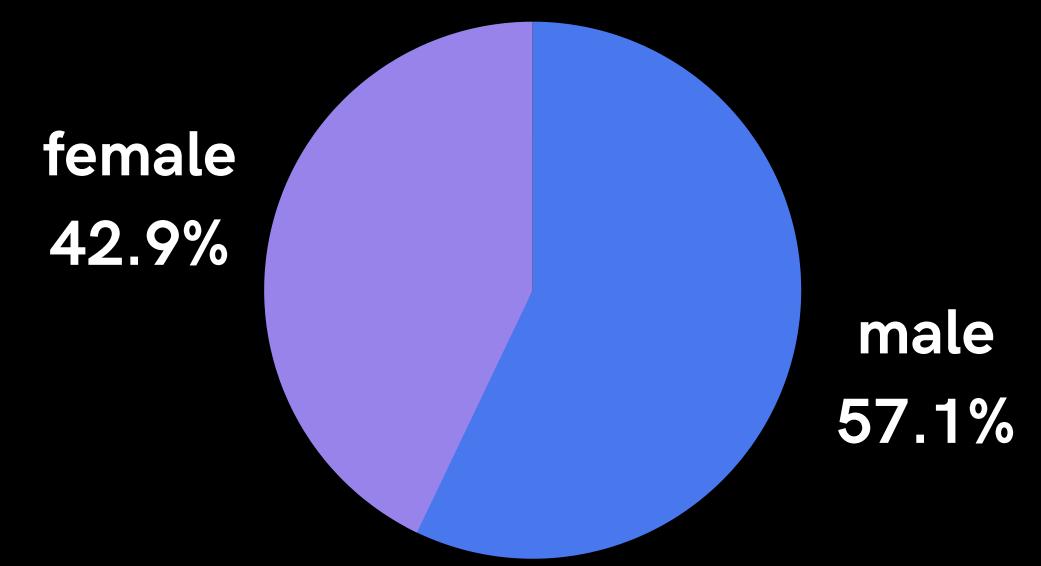
Cast Member Gender Makeup Over the Years



Season 1
1975



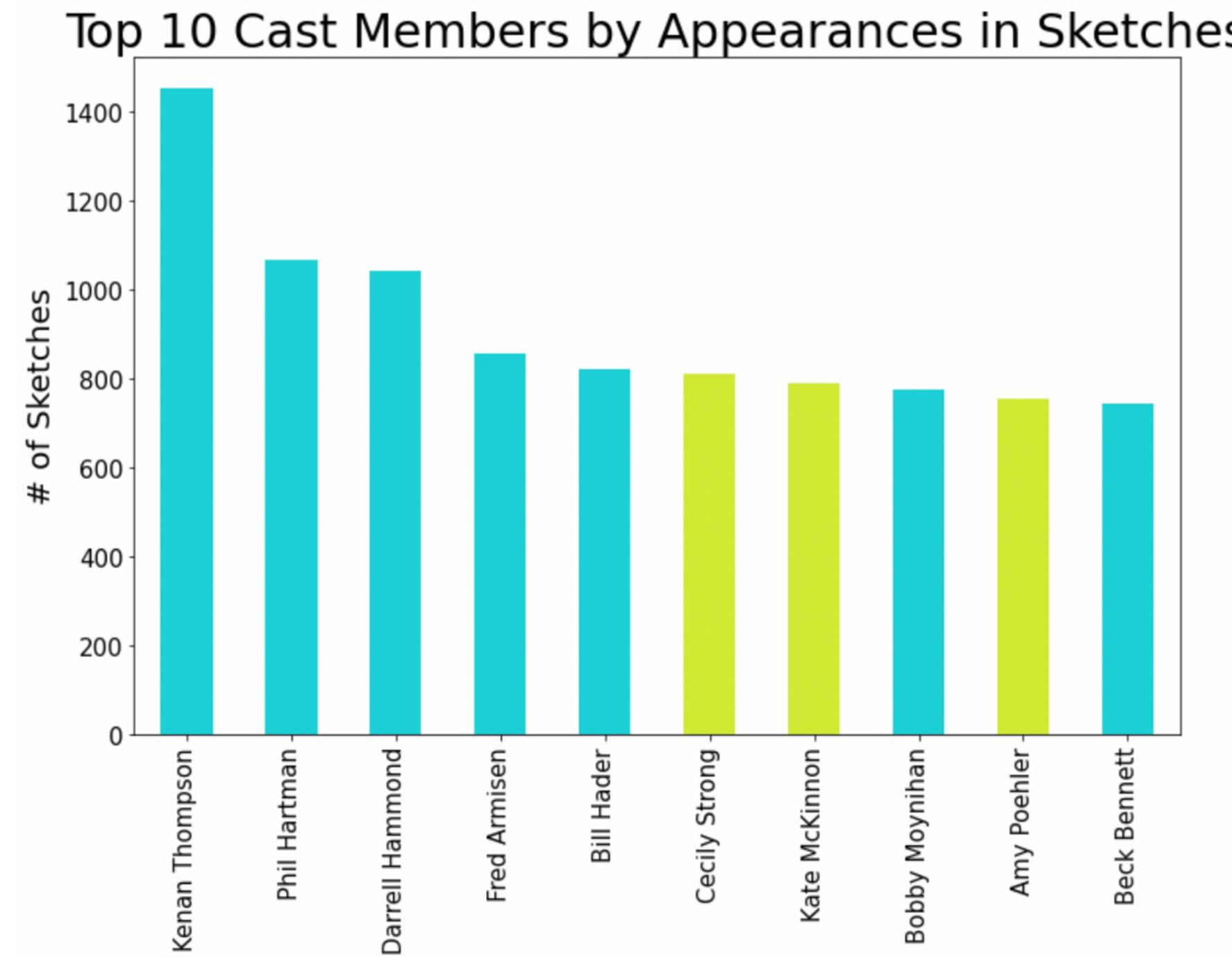
Season 23
1997



Season 46
2020

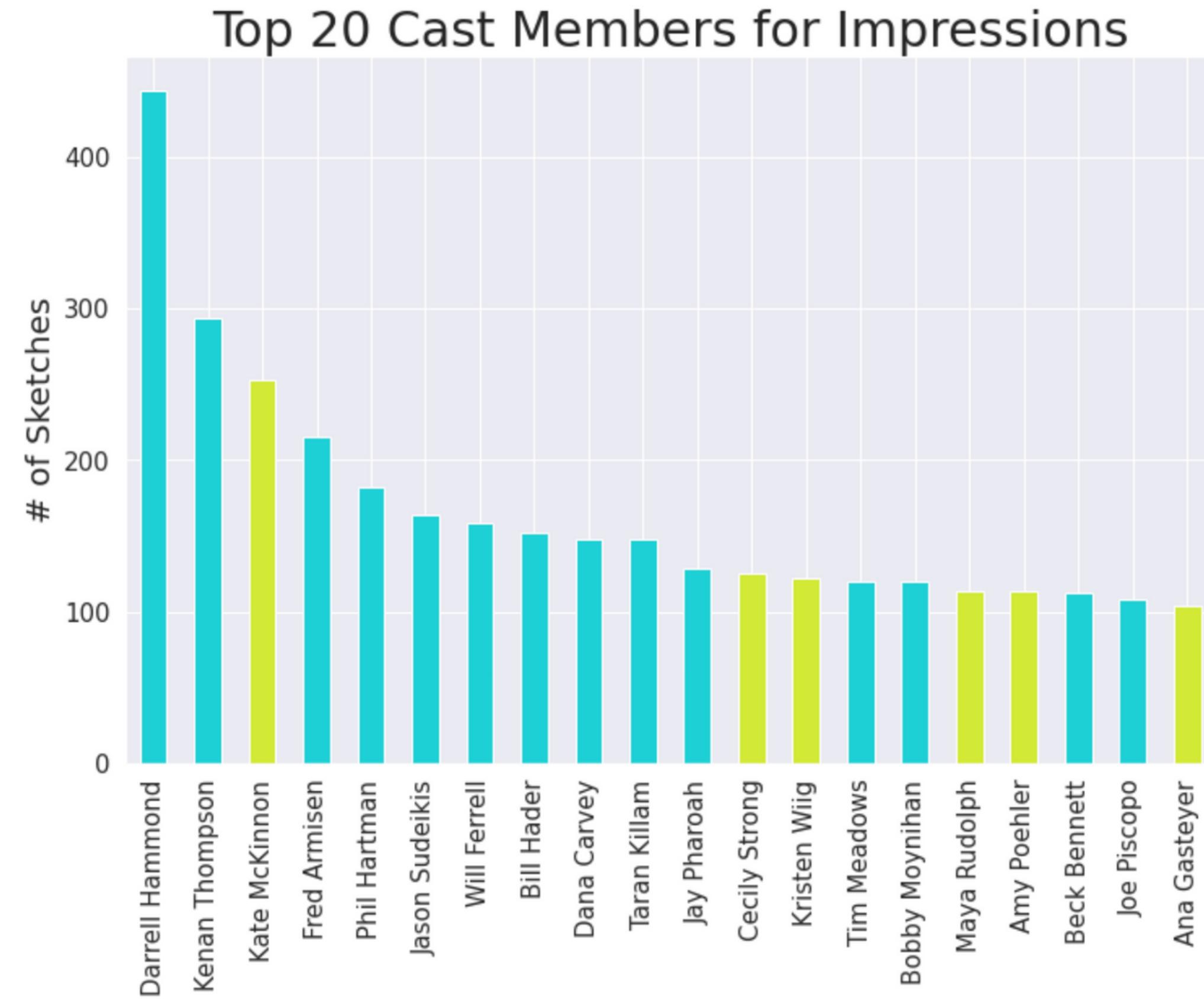
Top 10 cast members of all time based on number of appearances in sketches:

Overall we can see that women (yellow) are far outnumbered by men (teal) in appearing in sketches. The promising trend from plotting across 46 seasons is that the percentage of women does seem to be increasing with time.



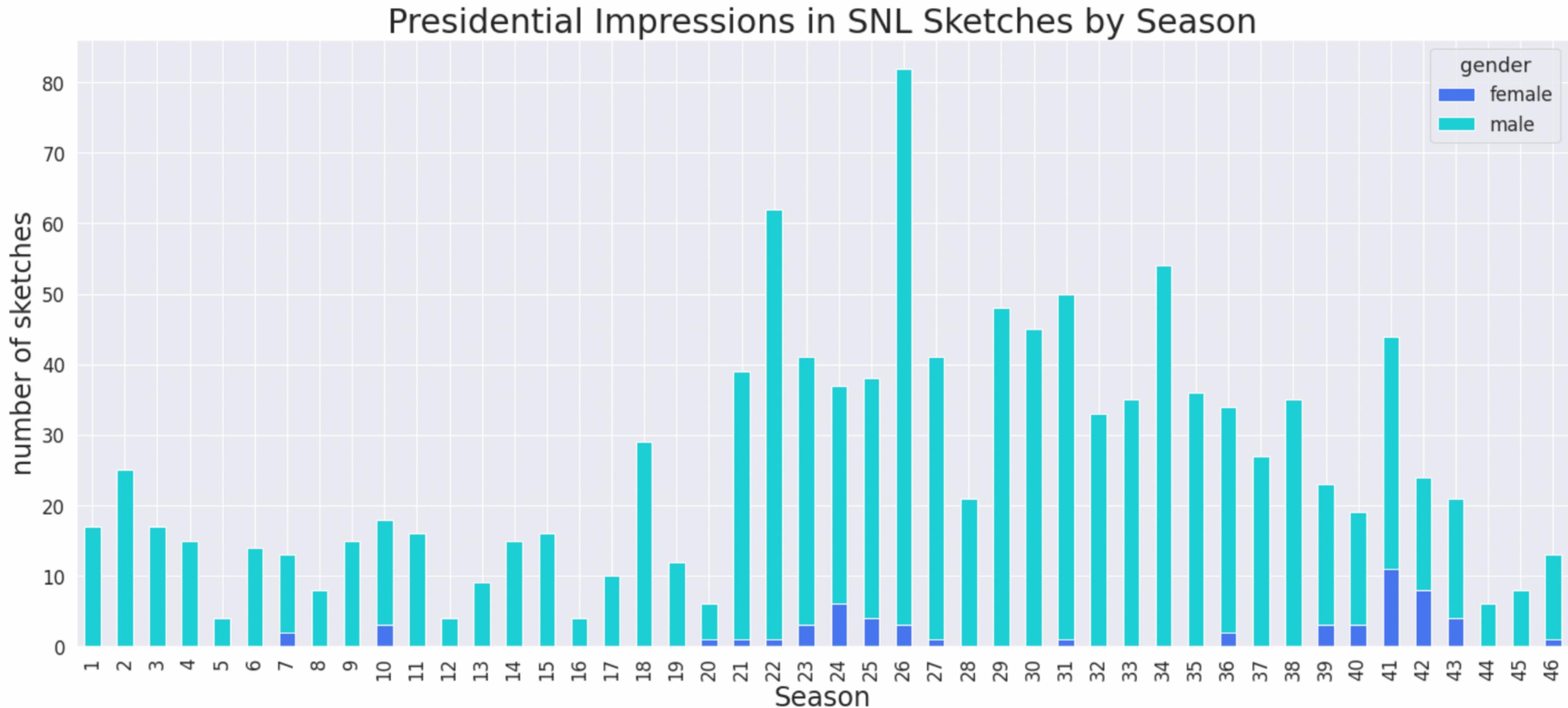
Top 20 cast members based on their impressions shows less women, but interesting trends

A woman holds the #3 spot.



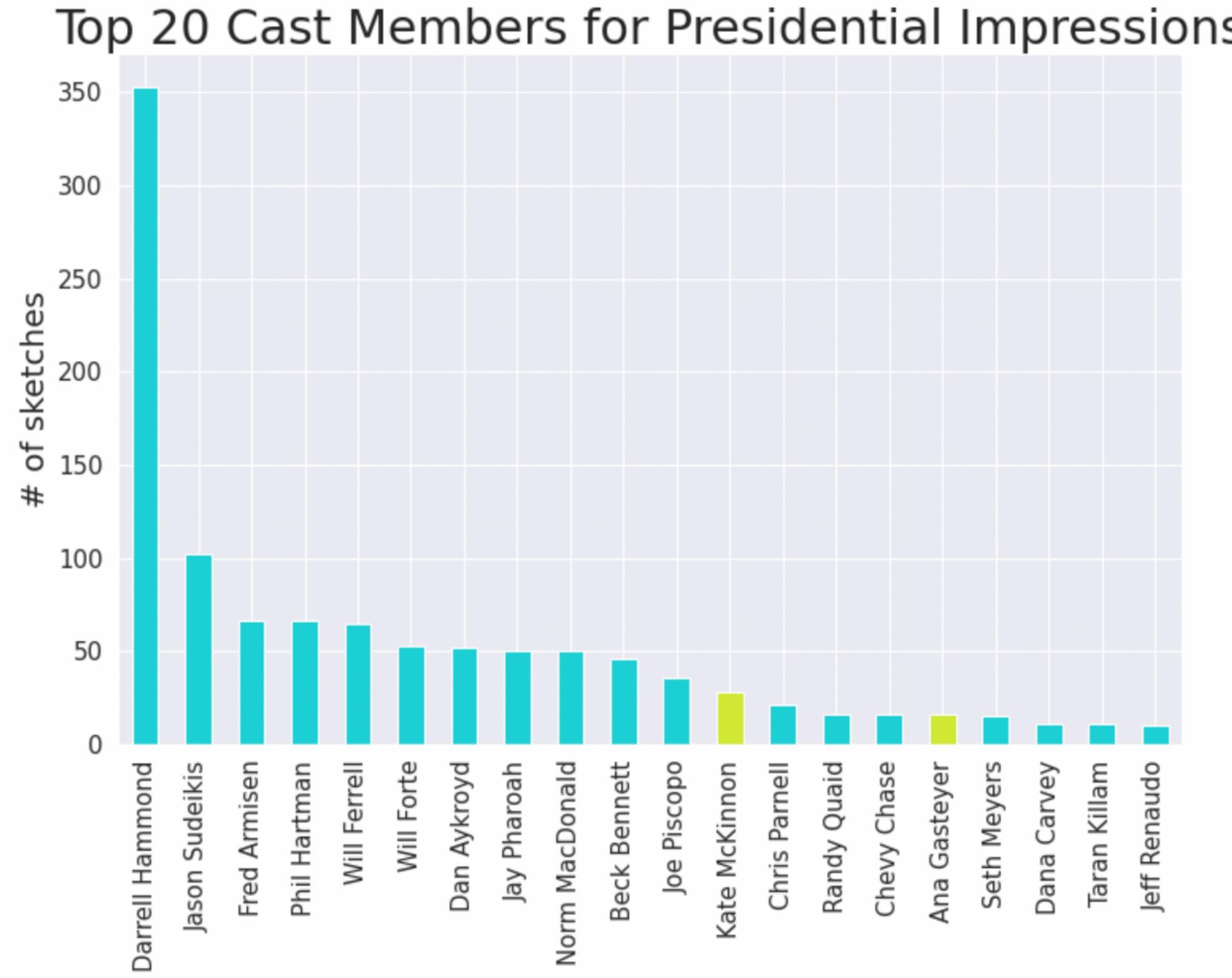
Impressions of presidential figures in SNL over the years shows very few women

SNL is known for its political humor. Filtering the impressions by those of presidential and candidates reveals very few women.



Top 20 cast members for presidential impressions includes only 2 women.

Both have impersonated Hillary Clinton, as well as other political but not necessarily presidential candidates. This graph probably more reflects the lack of females in the political arena compared to males.



Conclusions

It is apparent that there is an unequal representation of women in the SNL cast in terms of appearances in sketches, while it also seems many of the females can do as many impressions as the males. Adding the political component also reflects a possible lack of women in real life prominent political roles. In this study I only took into account presidential and vice presidential candidates of which there are not many women. An interesting expansion to this work would be to evaluate other political figures such as congresswomen and senators, etc. From watching the show regularly, I can estimate that there are more women being featured in these roles than what is reflected in the presidential impressions graph. There are even women cast members who frequently impersonate male political figures. While in previous years, there were often males impersonating female characters. Now, It is interesting to see this trend flipping.