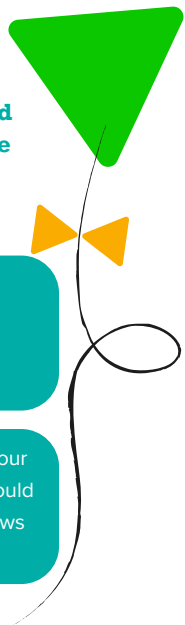


Discrimination Research

The last two years have seen a number of movements dedicated to raising awareness and combatting discrimination and racism gain more traction with the public. We respond to what's going on in the world and how that impacts the views of people living in the UK, and we particularly wanted to hear from those who are most affected by discrimination.



Do people in the UK agree with BBFC classification decisions for content depicting issues of racism and discrimination?

How should the BBFC communicate and inform people of racism and other forms of discrimination in ratings info?

Research Objectives

What factors affect classification decisions on this subject, especially at U, PG, 12A / 12?

As perceptions and standards of behaviour and language change over time, how should the BBFC assess older films and TV shows from a modern viewpoint?

Methodology

Online Community

Understanding participant responses to discrimination in content
Over a two week period, 70 participants responded to 59 clips, two trailers and four feature films that depicted different forms of racism and discrimination in a variety of contexts. Content included *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, *Call the Midwife*, *Selma* and *Crocodile Dundee*.

70 respondents took part in the research

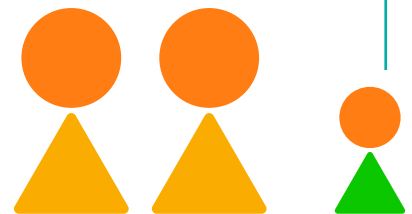
When defining the sample we intentionally over represented a number of minority groups (e.g. Black) in order to understand the perception / impact of discriminatory content on those most directly affected.

Over 70% of the final sample were among protected characteristic groups

When analysing the data special care was taken to ensure all participants' views were understood in the context of their own lived experiences.

In-Depth Interviews

Digging deeper / gaining clarity on key questions
In order to uncover the nuances of this complex topic, 20 x Zoom interviews were also conducted with selected members from the online community.



WHAT?

WHO?

The majority of participants agreed with BBFC classification decisions on the features and clips they watched.

The breakdown of clips was:

35 rated the same 7 rated lower 6 rated higher 11 split across multiple

Understanding the respondents

Further analysis revealed two sub-groups - Preparers and Protectors

PROTECTORS

- Want to shield children for as long as possible from the harmful nature of the real world.
- Don't want them to see discrimination in films and TV shows.

PREPARERS

- Believe there is value in showing children examples of racism and discrimination to 'prepare' them for the behaviour and attitudes they may experience.
- Believe there is value in showing children examples of discrimination to educate them.

Findings

People are largely empathetic towards others, recognising that even if they may not personally be offended by a certain term or behaviour, they acknowledge others may be.

Parents are concerned about children imitating potentially discriminatory behaviour or language, so look to BBFC ratings info to help them make informed viewing choices for their family.

Some parents want to talk to their children about racism and discrimination and look to BBFC ratings info to help them to do that.

Factors to consider when rating content that portrays discrimination

Things that could result in a lower age rating

- Documentary
- Historical Context
- Older Films / Series
- Educational Values
- Condemnation

Documentary was identified as the most significant reason for a lower rating, due to educational potential.

People understand older films and TV shows as 'products of their time', but want the BBFC to flag discriminatory material in ratings info to help them make informed viewing decisions.

Things that could result in a higher age rating

- Limited
- Violence / Threat
- Language

General consensus that children could have access to most things (via the internet etc.) and so if it is inappropriate for them it should be rated higher.

Assumed racial identities

These are problematic in modern content and would likely require higher classifications than in some older films or TV shows where it is seen as a 'product of its time'.

If the depiction in older content is not intended to be mocking or is done respectfully it does not necessarily need a higher age rating, but if it is derogatory / portrays inferiority it could be classified higher. Regardless, people want content warnings.

'Discriminatory stereotypes' is the most appropriate term to describe this content in short ratings info.

N-word

People want to be aware of what racist or discriminatory content or language occurs in films and TV shows so they can choose well.

It is highly unlikely that the 'n-word' will be permitted in any content rated lower than 12A/12.

We will use the term 'racial language' to describe reclaimed, peer-to-peer or certain historical uses of racial terms. Racist use of the 'n-word' will be described as 'racist language', or be covered under the term 'racism' in short ratings info.

Discriminatory terms

Parents are concerned about the likelihood of their children imitating discriminatory or racist language or behaviour in the playground without fully understanding what it means, and the potential harm these words could cause if they are normalised.

Ratings info

'Discrimination' can be used where there is no space to be specific in the short ratings info, but the type of discrimination should be specified in the long ratings info.

Racism should continue to be listed separately in short ratings info.

Stereotypes and assumed racial identities can both be described as 'discriminatory stereotypes' in short ratings info.

'Racial language' can be used to describe some uses of the 'n-word', such as reclaimed / peer-to-peer uses. However, if the word is used in a racist manner it needs to be described as 'racist language'.

The phrase 'an actor in make-up portraying a different ethnicity' was preferred to 'blackface', or similar terms relating to other ethnic or racial identities.

BBFC Response

The research shows the BBFC's current policies are in line with what the UK population feels is appropriate in classifying content depicting discrimination. We will now:

Be particularly mindful of intent when classifying older films and TV shows

Adopt an even stricter position on the classification of the 'n-word' at the junior categories

Continue to consider directed, aggressive or violent depictions of discrimination, or likelihood of imitation, as key factors that may result in a higher rating

Place significant emphasis on the educational potential of documentaries

Continue to use ratings info to signal when content contains discriminatory language or behaviour