Race and Ethnicity in the UK Film Industry:
an analysis of the BFI Diversity Standards

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Executive Summary

The UK film industry is a sector beset by a number of deep seated and multi-modal inequalities both in on-screen representations and its production and institutional workforce, and Britain's black and ethnic minority population remain excluded by a continued culture of structural racism. *Race, Ethnicity, and the UK Film Industry: An analysis of the BFI's Diversity Standards*, is a data-led study of race and ethnicity within the film industry, conducted at the London School of Economics and Political Science, funded by the LSE's Knowledge Engagement and Impact Fund and supported by the British Film Institute, *The Guardian*, and the Cabinet Office's Race Disparity Unit. The BFI's Diversity Standards was launched in 2016 as a policy requiring film productions to include underrepresented groups in a range of film roles and positions, with these groups based on the protected characteristics identified in the 2010 Equalities Act. This study analysed data from the 235 feature films made between 2016 and 2019 that have received production funding from the BFI, BBC Film and Film4 and nomination for the British film categories in both the BAFTA film awards and the British Independent Film Awards (BIFA) as a result of their meeting of the Diversity Standards criteria. The study assess both the overall proportion of racial difference across these films and how efficient the Diversity Standards is as a model for both increasing racial representation and measuring the various ways in which this takes place in the sector. Alongside an analysis of the general presence of race and ethnicity across a range of criterions that suggest that the Diversity Standards is not yet a robust enough model for responding to the intersectional and multi-dimensional nature of inequality in the industry, the study considers how racial equality and inclusion is impacted by the film's location and setting, genre and production budget. The key findings from this first phase of the study are:

Black and ethnic minority groups face tremendous levels of exclusion from the film industry, with the data revealing that film productions were over twice as likely to represent gender difference than Race/Ethnicity and other underrepresented groups across a vast number of key on-screen roles and off-screen positions.

Films with larger productions budgets do not produce more racially diverse representations, with the representation of Race/Ethnicity being generally consistent across all five budget bands between £10 million+ and under £0.5 million, both on and off-screen.

There remains an extremely poor representation of racial difference in films made outside of London, with some UK regions such as the East and West Midlands registering no representation of racial and ethnic difference in their off-screen workforce.

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INTRODUCTION

Race, Ethnicity and Inequality in the UK Film Industry

Despite nearly 20 year of policy initiatives in the UK's film industry, inequalities in both its off-screen workforce and on-screen representation of marginalised identities, particularly BAME individuals remains a severe issue (Nwonka, 2020; Cobb, 2020; Newsinger and Eikhof, D, 2020). Recent academic research on the diversity agenda in the UK film sector suggests that ethnic minorities in particular are vulnerable to the exclusionary practices of the industry, with the proportion of ethnic minority represented in the UK film industry's workforce at less than 5 per cent across the sector (CAMEo, 2018). The informality of recruitment practices, the stronghold of "white gatekeepers", and the combined effect of racism and class discrimination have produced an industry landscape that has structurally denied efforts to increase the presence of BAME workforces during this period. Such structural inequalities have continued despite the rhetorical nature of the diversity agenda across the screen industries (Nwonka, 2015; Nwonka and Malik, 2018). As a result, in recent years we have seen a new enthusiasm for diversity schemes and policies in the screen industries, most notably the Diversity Standards, devised by the BFI as a long-term intervention to redress the exclusion of BAME identities in the sector.

About this Report

This report, led by Dr Clive James Nwonka from The London School of Economics and Political Science, builds upon the BFI's own interim report, BFI Diversity Standards Key Findings in January 2020 by offering a more detailed, independent analysis of the Diversity Standards by looking specifically at how racial equality and inclusion has been produced across film productions. By conducting the first holistic analysis of the BFI Diversity Standards data mapping the empirical nature of race and ethnicity across UK feature film productions in relation to a number of research questions, this allows for an exploration of the various factors that have determined how racial diversity has been pursued across films assessed against the Diversity Standards.

This research, carried out between September 2019 and May 2020 and capturing a sample of the Diversity Standards data on Race/Ethnicity across a number of production contexts, identifies the UK film industry as a site of multi-dimensional inequalities. This means that film diversity cannot be understood as a universal principle of inclusion and representation, but an approach determined by a range of social, cultural and industrial variables. In the analysis of such variables, this research report aims to inform future developments to both the BFI Diversity Standards and the UK film industry's broader approach to racial exclusion and diversity by developing new knowledge about the function of film genre, production settings, locations, regions, and production budgets as key factors determining the responsiveness to race and ethnicity across the Diversity Standards.

About the BFI Diversity Standards

In 2016 the BFI launched the Diversity Standards to address the continuing issue of underrepresentation in the film industry. As a requirement for BFI Film Fund investment in film projects, the Standards encouraged film productions to demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion by meeting the Standards criteria in at least two of four production areas; On-Screen Representation, Themes and Narratives (A) Project Leadership and Creative Practitioners (B) Industry Access and Opportunities (C) and Opportunities for Diversity in Audience Development (D) (BFI 2016). In each of these Standards, a number of diversity areas will need to be met by the production as a prerequisite for potential funding through the BFI Film Fund by referring to at least one of the protected characteristics identified in the Equalities Act 2010, in addition to regional participation, lower socioeconomic backgrounds and those with caring responsibilities.

For the purpose of this research, the analysis is focused on the representation of Race/Ethnicity within Standard A and B as these were the areas where the representation of racial difference both on screen and off screen was most evident within the scope of the data research.

Three of these six areas need to be addressed to meet Standard A:

- **A1:** Meaningful representations of diversity in main protagonists and/or antagonists

- **A2:** Meaningful representations of diversity in primary or overall themes and narratives

- **A3:** Meaningful or unfamiliar representations of diversity in secondary themes and narratives

- **A4:** Meaningful representation of place (e.g. nations, regions or communities that are under-represented on screen)

- **A5:** Meaningful representations of diversity in background and sundry characters who are pertinent to the narrative and themes

- **A6:** Non-specific representation (e.g. casting not intrinsically based on or related to specific under-represented groups).

Two of these four areas need to be addressed to meet Standard B:

- **B1:** At least three of director, scriptwriter, principal producer, composer, DoP, editor, costume designer and production designer

- **B2:** At least six other key roles (which could be mid-level crew and technical positions, or other roles where there is existing under-representation)

- **B3:** At least half of all crew or project staff are a mix of under-represented groups, in a variety of departments and varying levels of seniority

- **B4:** Productions located in the UK outside Greater London that demonstrate an intention to offer substantial local employment.

Research Methodology

The full dataset contains a total of 235 film productions which entered principle photography between June 2016 and 31 March 2019. These films are drawn from the following sources: BFI Productions, which refers to the 65 feature films that were awarded production funding by the BFI Film Fund since the BFI Diversity Standards were introduced in 2016, and Non-BFI Productions, which are the 170 feature films made without BFI Film Fund resources but were assessed against the BFI Diversity Standards. These include films eligible for BAFTA's Outstanding British Film and Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer awards in 2017/18 and 2018/19, films eligible for BIFA's Best British Independent Film in 2018/19 and feature films financed by BBC Films and Film4 since they adopted the BFI Diversity Standards in March 2018 and June 2016 respectively.

Beyond an analysis of the overall representation of Race/Ethnicity across Standard A and B, a number of datasets were created and coded to respond to a number of research questions designed to address four key production variables to identify trends, commonalities and patterns in how film productions have responded to the Race/Ethnicity URG within the Diversity Standards:

Film Setting and Location
In considering how film production locations and settings may impact the representation of race and ethnic difference, the dataset produced a breakdown of the overall proportion of Race/Ethnicity representation in Standard A and B for film productions in each UK region, a breakdown of Race/Ethnicity in Standard A and B for each film by regionality and criterion A5 and B4, and the most frequent URG chosen for each region across Standard A and B. These nine regions were coded using the Office for National Statistics (ONS) classification, upon which film applications to the Diversity Standards are categorised: East Midlands, East of England, London, North East, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands, Yorkshire and Humber, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In addition, the regionality of the productions were coded using two Diversity Standards data variables: the region where the film is set (based on evidence for criterion A5) and the region where substantial local employment during production was gained (criterion B4).

Film Regionality
In relation to the analysis of film settings and locations, the report also details the representation of Race/Ethnicity within film productions across six broader UK regions: North of England (North East, North West, Yorkshire) Midlands (East Midlands, West Midlands) and South of England (East of England, South East, South West) alongside Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Given the concentration of Britain's BAME population to within London and the centrality of London for film production and

employment in the UK film industry (61.1 per cent) this research area seeks to understand to what degree is the representation of Race/Ethnicity within regional film productions determined by both the number of films and the proportion of BAME groups in comparison to the capital. Has the Diversity Standards encouraged a greater inclusion of racial and ethnic difference in areas of the UK with both a low ethnic minority population and a limited number of film productions?

Film Genres
Film genres are a key but under-researched area in relation to racial diversity and this research question seeks to analyse trends and conventions in the representation of racial and ethnic difference within film production, and if the Diversity Standards have stimulated the selecting of Race/Ethnicity in film genres that have not traditionally represented racial difference, particularly in lead/key roles on-screen. This genre analysis is based on the BFI's classification of production genres from which film production fund applications are titled. To provide a holistic understanding of how film genres may influence the presence or exclusion of Race/Ethnicity, the Diversity Standards data was analysed from three approaches; the overall proportion of Race/Ethnicity references in Standard A and B across each film genre, the number of film productions that met at least one criterion with Race/Ethnicity, and the most frequent protected characteristic chosen for each genre in Standard A and B.

Production Budgets
Finally, the research explored the overall budget scale for each film production award vs the percentage of Race/Ethnicity representation. Here, a dataset was created to capture to what degree have films within each budget category identified by the BFI referenced Race/Ethnicity in their productions. The research sought to understand if film budgets impacted the presence of race/ethnic difference within both its on-screen representation and off-screen workforce within the Diversity Standards data. Do larger production budgets permit the greater inclusion of Race/Ethnicity or do lower budgeted films, generally associated with BAME characters and storylines within the UK film industry, remain the key area in which racial and ethnic difference is represented?

Notes on the Research Data, Descriptions, and Sources

- The Under Represented Group (URG) category of Race/Ethnicity includes the onscreen representation of BAME characters, storylines and communities. However, this category has also captured a small number of films that represent identities from white minority backgrounds (e.g. Jewish; Polish and Eastern European etc).

- The research was conducted to correspond with data collected from the first iteration of the Diversity Standards in 2016. The report acknowledges that some amendments were made to the Diversity Standards criteria in July 2019, notably in Standard A with the inclusion of factual and entertainment programmes and the diverse representation of presenters and voice artists. Forthcoming Diversity Standards data research will be coded and analysed against these updated criteria.

- International locations were omitted from the data results for regions, location and settings. These refer to international co-productions and films that may use an overseas location.

- Documentary films, which comprised of 23 per cent of all films in the database (both BFI and Non BFI films) were also omitted from the analysis due to its general incompatibility with the criterions in Standard A, particularly A1 (Lead Characters) and A2 (Other Characters). However, the report acknowledges that the changes made to Standard A in 2019 permits the inclusion of Documentary films within an analysis of Race/Ethnicity representation through its reference to presenters, voice artists and factual programmes.

- It is not possible to address the gender/socio-economic/disability composition within Race/Ethnicity in Standard A and B given the way the dataset is organised and coded. However, this will be addressed in forthcoming research.

- Given the Diversity Standards objective of encouraging regional film production (Standard A5 and B4) the dataset has been coded to omit film productions set in London.

- Some film titles appeared in the lists of two or more of the data sources, including features funded by the BFI Film Fund that were also co-financed by BBC Films or Film4 and/or were eligible for BAFTA or BIFA awards. These duplicate records were omitted from the dataset to avoid double-counting.

- Some figures within the data analysis do not total 100 per cent as a film production could meet each Diversity Standards criterion with reference to more than one URG.

The Overall Landscape of Race/Ethnicity in the UK Film Sector

This enquiry was addressed in two ways: (a) by looking at the proportion of film productions that referenced Race/Ethnicity in evidence for at least one criterion in Standard A and/or Standard B, and (b) by looking at the frequency with which Race/Ethnicity was cited in evidence for Standards A and/or Standard B out of all instances where URGs were referenced. Both approaches show that Race/Ethnicity was the second most common URG referenced in evidence for Standards A and B, after Gender.

Standard A Insights (Figure 1)

The data reveals 117 film productions referenced Race/Ethnicity in evidence for at least one Standard A criterion, which is 50 per cent of all 235 productions in the dataset. There is little difference between BFI and non-BFI productions in this regard, and almost half of BFI productions (48 per cent) referenced Race/Ethnicity in evidence for Standard A, while the same was true of 51 per cent of Non-BFI productions.

Standard B Insights (Figure 2)

93 productions referenced Race/Ethnicity in evidence for at least one Standard B criterion (40 per cent of all productions in the dataset). Similar to Standard A, there is little difference between BFI and Non-BFI productions, and 37 per cent of BFI titles referenced Race/Ethnicity in evidence for at least one Standard B criterion, which is comparable with 41 per cent of non-BFI films.

Standard A and B Insights (Figure 3)

In looking at the frequency of the citing of Race/Ethnicity, there were 259 references to this characteristic in evidence for Standard A out of 1,151 URG references altogether (23 per cent). Here, Race/Ethnicity was almost as commonly referenced as Gender (25 per cent). However, Race/Ethnicity was referenced 137 times in evidence for Standard B out of a total 576 URG references (24 per cent), which represented almost half the number of mentions of Gender (49 per cent).

Figure 1 Under represented groups across Standard A

A	All productions (N=235)	
URG	No. films	%
Gender	149	63%
Race/ ethnicity	117	50%
Socioec. status	97	41%
Disability	89	38%
Age	64	27%
Sex. orientation	57	24%
Regional part	20	9%
Religion	14	6%
Other	7	3%
Not stated	4	2%
Gender identity	3	1%

Note: Figures do not sum 100% because a film could meet each criterion with more than one URG

Race / Ethnicity: 50% (117 films)

**Figure 2** Under represented groups across Standard B

B	All productions (N=235)	
URG	No. films	%
Gender	168	71%
Race/ ethnicity	93	40%
Sex. orientation	58	25%
Regional part	17	7%
Age	16	7%
Disability	9	4%
Socioec. status	7	3%
Religion	7	3%
Not stated	5	2%
Gender identity	2	1%
Other	0	0%

Note: Figures do not sum 100% because a film could meet each criterion with more than one URG
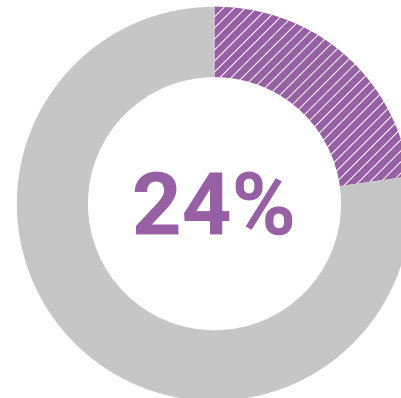

Race / Ethnicity: 40% (259 films)

Figure 3 Under-represented group references across Standard A and B

23%
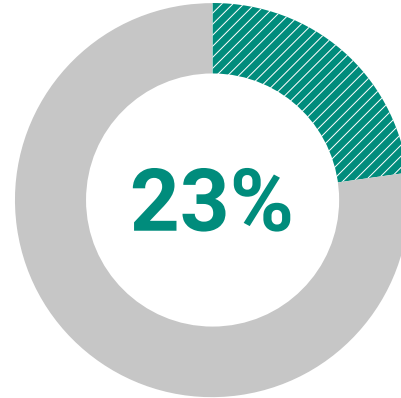
URG A Race / Ethnicity
On-screen representation, themes and narratives

24%

URG B Race / Ethnicity
Creative leadership and project team

> Criterion A2 and A6 were the only diversity options across both Standard A and B in which Race/Ethnicity was the highest cited protected characteristic.

Race and Ethnicity Representation Across Film Production Budgets

In this area of analysis, data was analysed on the relationship between film production budgets and the representation of Race/Ethnicity. The results below present data analysed from all films (there is no division between BFI films and non-BFI films). The 235 films in the database were categorised into five budget bands: £10 million+, £5-10 million, £2 million - £5 million, £500,000 - £2 million, and under £500,000. In such an analysis the objective was to determine if increased film production budgets created the opportunity for the increased representation of racial/ethnic difference, or if small budgeted "low-risk" productions produce a greater representation of Race/Ethnicity both on and off screen.

Insights

The data results from both Standard A and B in relation to film production budgets reveal that there is little correlation between the budget size and the representation of Race/Ethnicity, either within on-screen representation or the off-screen workforce.

In Standard A, there is a general consistency with the representation of racial difference, with 62 per cent of films the highest budget band (£10 million+) 56 per cent of film productions in the lowest budget band (Under £500,000) meeting at least one Standard A criterion referencing Race/Ethnicity, although the latter budget band achieved this figure with over twice as many films (37).

In Standard B, we observed a similar trend, with 43 per cent of films in the highest budget band and 36 per cent in the lowest meeting at least one Standard B criterion in reference to Race/Ethnicity, with the data revealing similar percentages across the other budget bands.
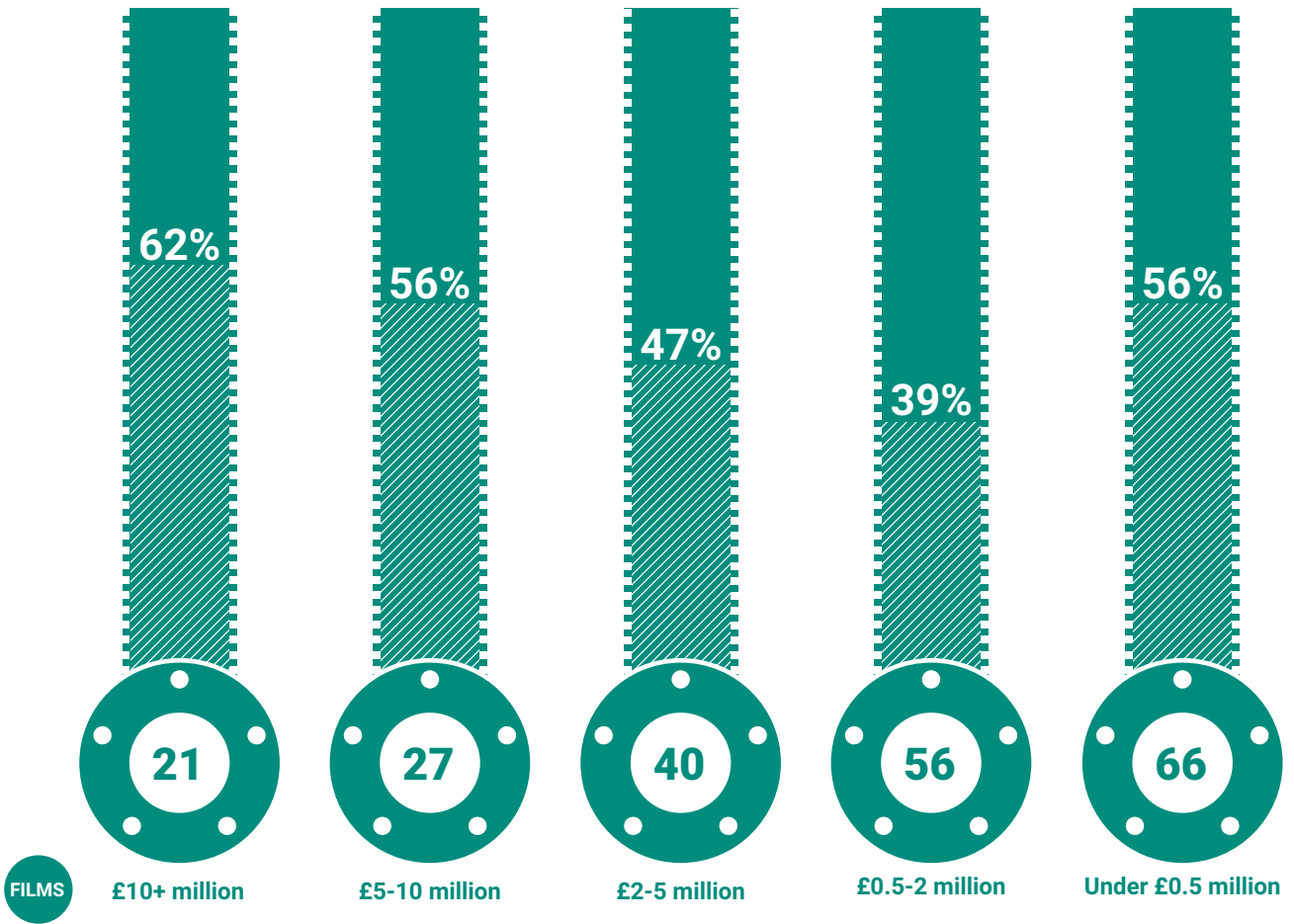
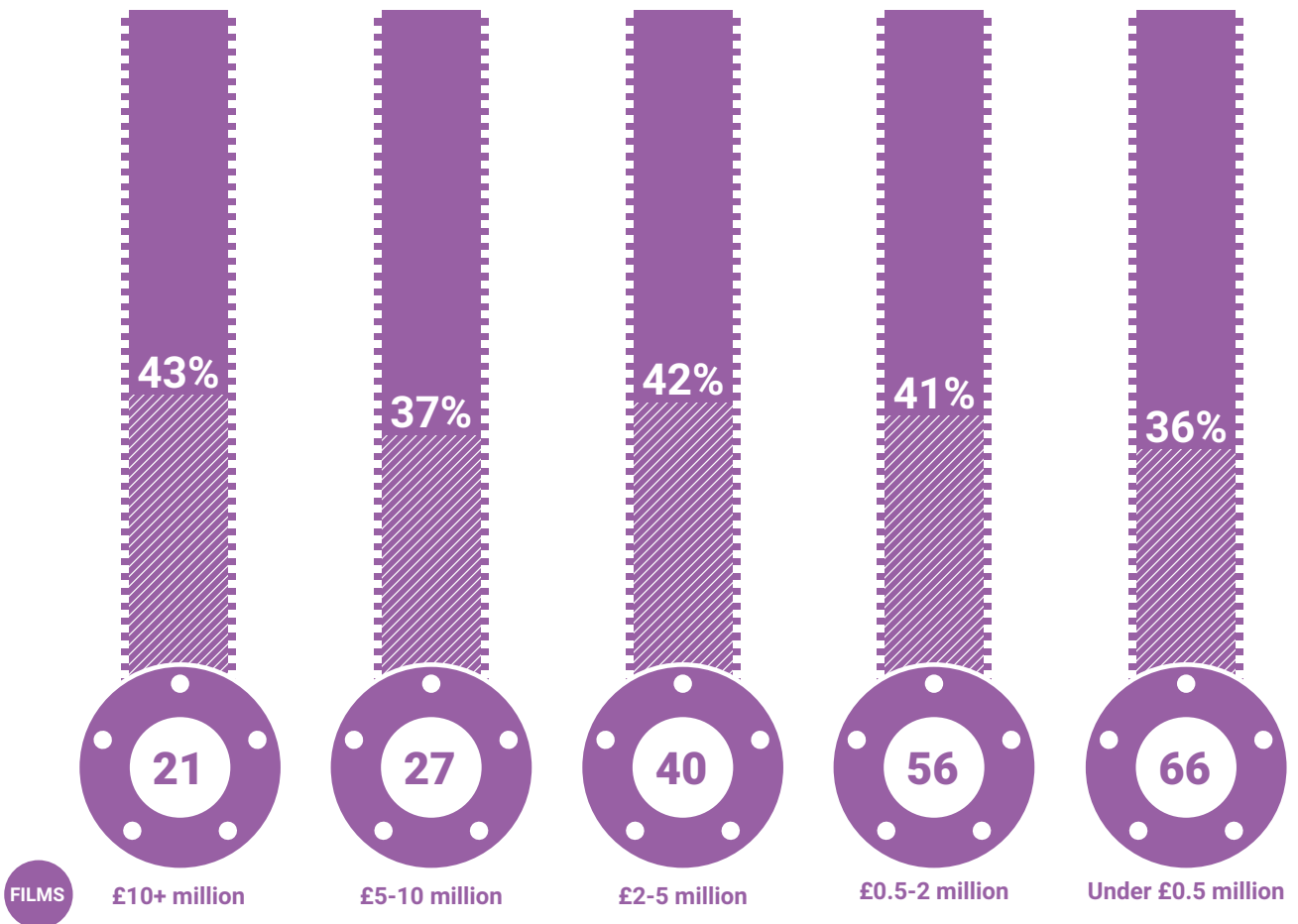**Figure 4** Race/Ethnicity representation across Standard A by budget band

Figure 5 Race/Ethnicity representation across Standard B by budget band

# The National Picture: Race/Ethnicity by Production Setting/Location

Research was conducted to reveal how film productions adhering to the Diversity Standards represented Race/Ethnicity by non-London regions. This was approached in two ways. Firstly, the regional composition of film productions in the UK based on the nine production regions classified by the BFI, which are also informed by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) classification. An analysis of the volume of film productions outside of London helps to contextualise the second area of analysis, which is the representation of Race/Ethnicity within each region. This was determined by the percentage of film productions in each region that cited Race/Ethnicity as a URG. In addition, a division is made between where the film is set, and where the film production is located.

Generally, the production location and filmic setting were the same, but for the purpose of ensuring the integrity of the data results, the dataset was coded to produce data on A5 (where the film is set) and B4 (the regional production location that will offer local employment).

Regions of the UK

- South East England
- South West England
- West Midlands
- East Midlands
- Yorkshire
- North West England
- North East England
- East England
- Outside London
- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- ● Percentage/ number of films

Figure 6 Regional representation across Standard A (A5) by film setting
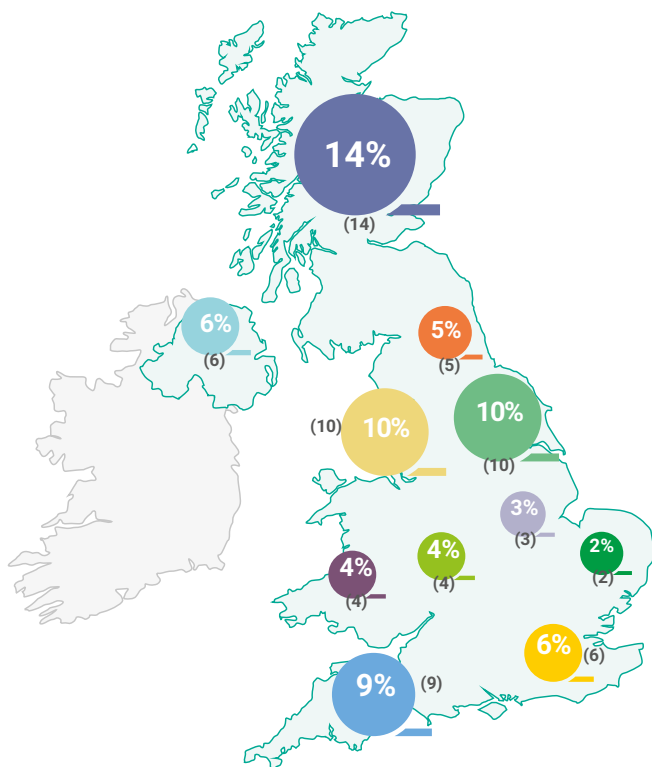
Note: Figures do not sum 100% because a film could meet criterion A5 with more than one location

Figure 7 Race/Ethnicity representation across Standard A (A5) by regional setting
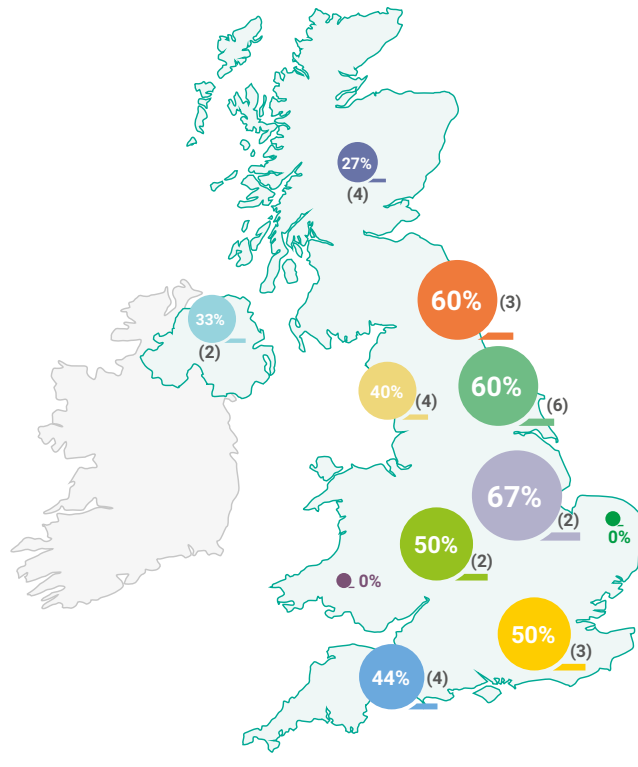
● Percentage/number of films that met at least one Standard A criterion with Race/Ethnicity

Note: Figures do not sum 100% because a film could meet criterion A5 with more than one location

10

Insights

The data results reveal that the representation of Race/Ethnicity within the UK regions is determined in part by the low number of film productions outside of London. 97 film productions cited one or more regional locations for meeting criterion A5, which represented less than 50 per cent of all films in the Diversity Standards database and 84 film productions satisfied criterion B4. From this, the Midlands, Yorkshire and the North East all recorded high references to Race/Ethnicity, with over half of all citations for this URG for regional film settings (A5).

However, these results are tempered by the extremely low number of film productions, with each region achieving these high percentages for Race/Ethnicity with just six or less films. The same degree of caution is needed for a reading of Race/Ethnicity representation in regard to the production location and regional employment (B4). Again, there is a generally high percentage of Race/Ethnicity references, notably in the South East and North West (both 50 per cent) but these figures represent just nine film productions.

> Outside of London, just one regional setting (North of England) had Race/Ethnicity as the most commonly referenced identity for Standard B. Race/Ethnicity failed to feature as the highest referenced identity for regional employment (Standard B) in any UK region outside of London.

Figure 8 Regional representation across Standard B by production location
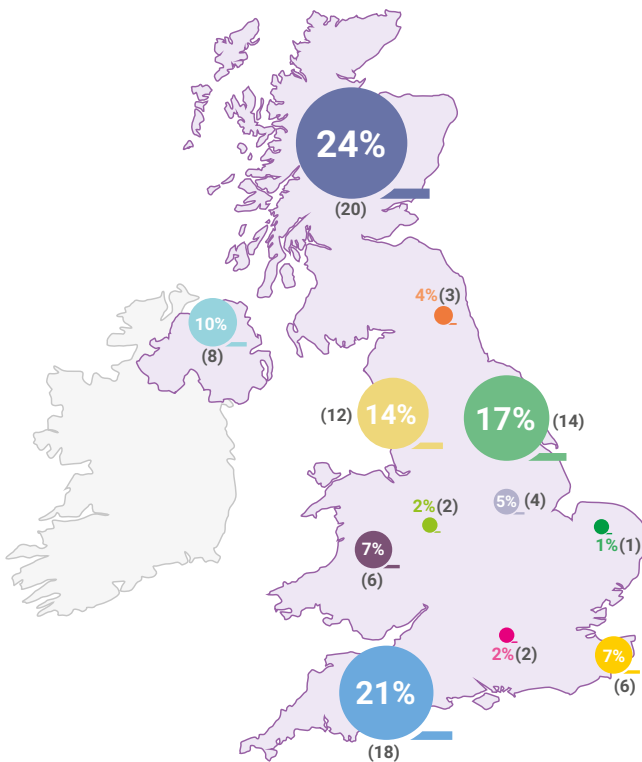
Note: Figures do not sum 100% because a film could meet criterion A5 with more than one location

* Outside London includes any regional employment outside London and the South East that was not attributed to a particular location by the applicant

Figure 9 Race/Ethnicity representation across Standard B (B4) by production location
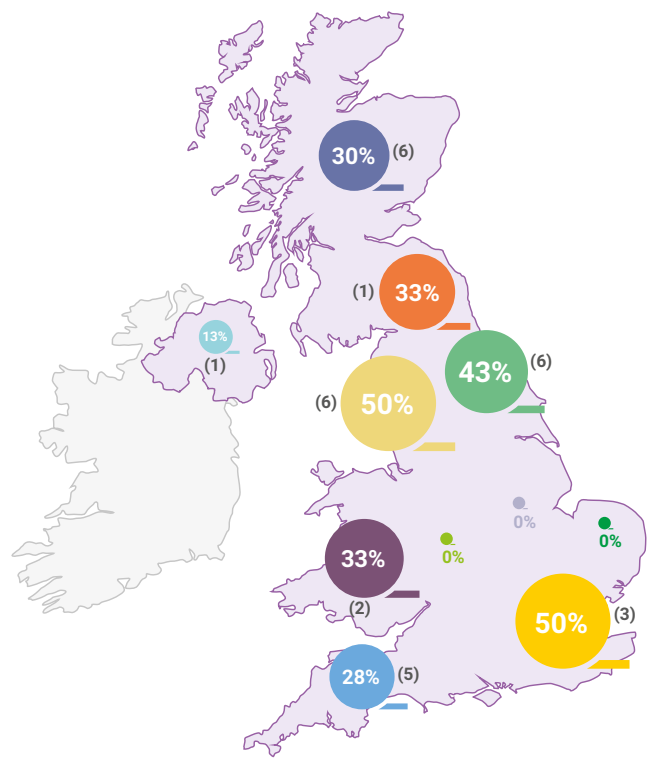
● Percentage/number of films that met at least one Standard B criterion with Race/Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity Representation by Production Region

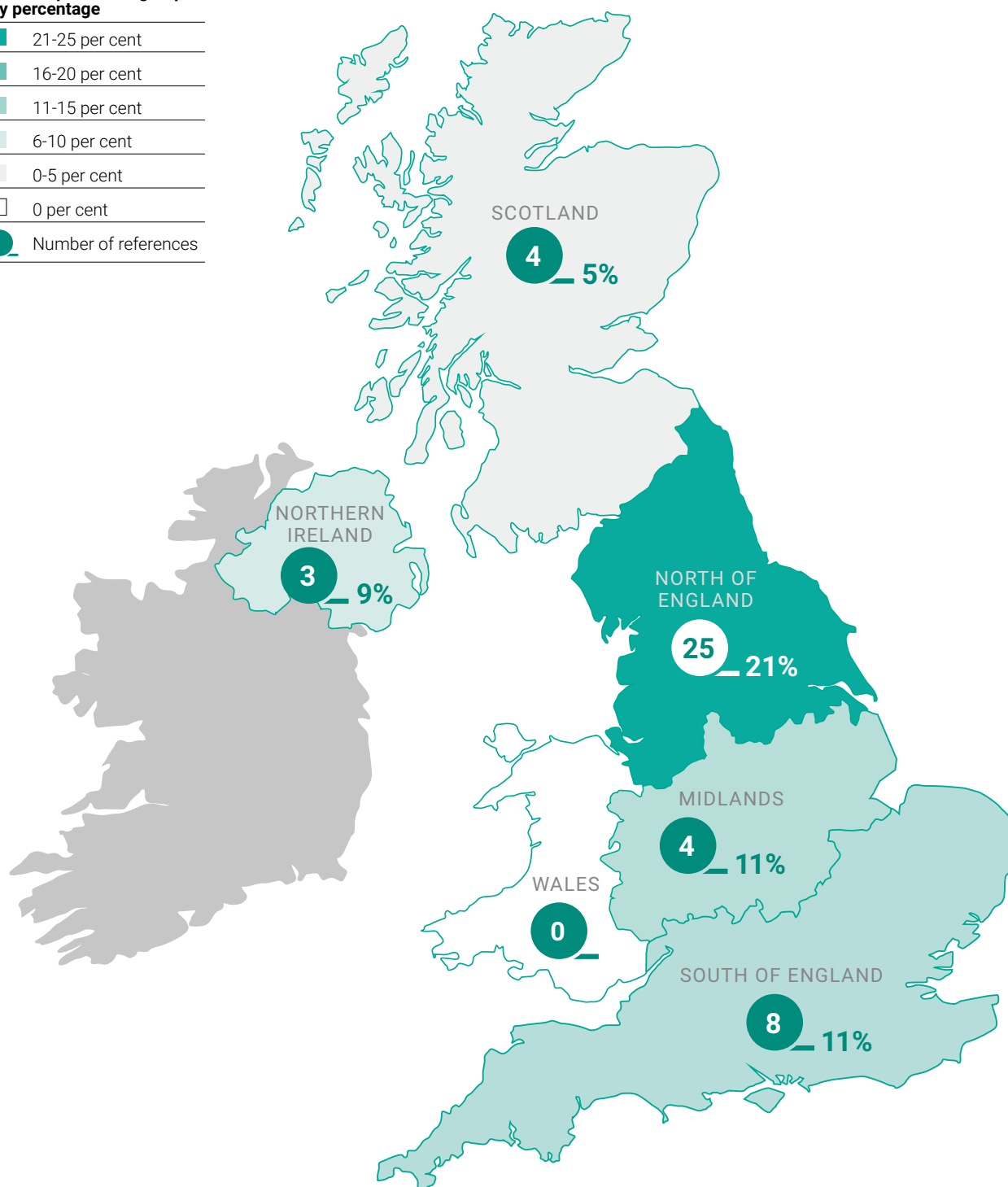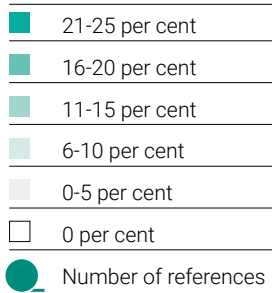To compliment the results from the analysis of production settings/locations, the data in this section details the broader regional composition of film productions across the UK, coded across 6 grouped UK regions; North of England, The Midlands, South of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This is again detailed across Standard A and B, and demonstrates the percentage of Race/Ethnicity references within each production region against other URGs.

Figure 10 Under Represented Group References Across Standard A by Production Setting

Under represented group by percentage

- 21-25 per cent
- 16-20 per cent
- 11-15 per cent
- 6-10 per cent
- 0-5 per cent
- 0 per cent
- Number of references

SCOTLAND
4 — 5%

NORTHERN IRELAND
3 — 9%

NORTH OF ENGLAND
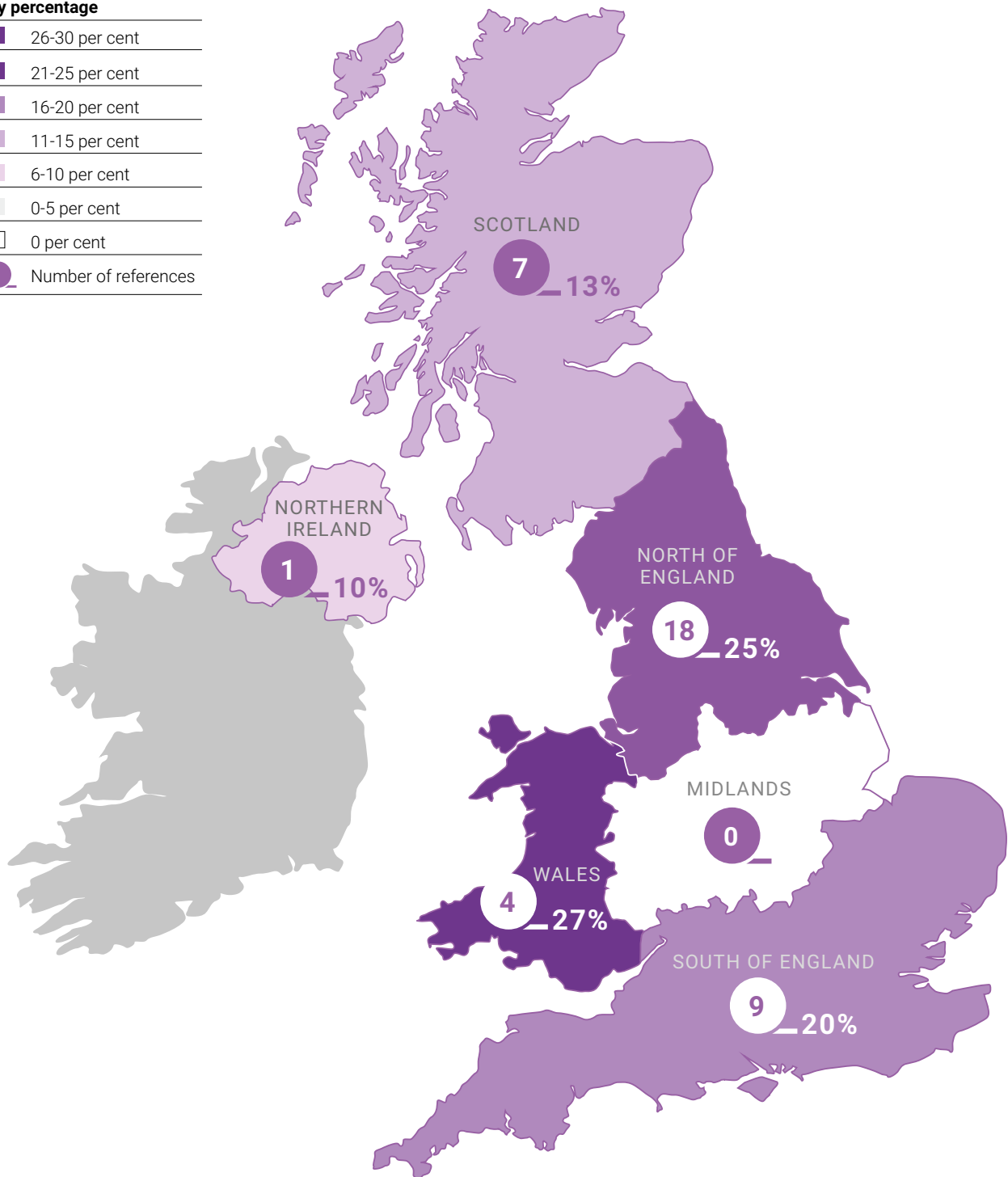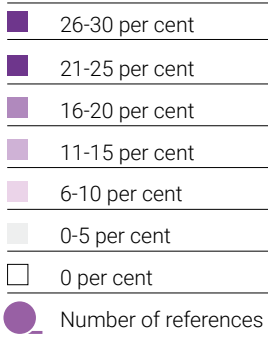25 — 21%

MIDLANDS
4 — 11%

WALES
0

SOUTH OF ENGLAND
8 — 11%

Insights

Even at this broader regional analysis, we again notice an unreliable relationship between the proportion of Race/Ethnicity references and the number of film productions. In the North of England, Race/Ethnicity comprised of 21 per cent of all URG references for on-screen representation and 25 per cent of all references in Standard B. However, this percentage was achieved from a low number of film productions (24 and 26 respectively). A similar trend is observed in the South East, Scotland and Wales, which reported 27 per cent of references for Race/Ethnicity, returned from just six film productions.

Figure 11 Under Represented Group References Across Standard B by Production Setting

Under represented group by percentage

- 26-30 per cent
- 21-25 per cent
- 16-20 per cent
- 11-15 per cent
- 6-10 per cent
- 0-5 per cent
- 0 per cent
- Number of references

SCOTLAND
7 — 13%

NORTHERN IRELAND
1 — 10%

NORTH OF ENGLAND
18 — 25%

MIDLANDS
0 —

WALES
4 — 27%

SOUTH OF ENGLAND
9 — 20%

Film Genre and Race and Ethnicity Representation

The analysis of the presence of Race/Ethnicity within film genres across Standard A and B was approached in two ways; firstly, a dataset was coded to reveal the number of films that met at least one criterion with reference to Race/Ethnicity, and secondly, the percentage of Race/Ethnicity citations within each film genre category in both Standard A and B. Similar to the data results from the regional/settings and location analysis, the low volume of film productions within some of the genre categories mean that the results should be considered with care.

Insights

A correspondence between the number of films in each genre category and their reference to Race/Ethnicity was observed from the data results, with Drama recording 26 films that referenced this URG, representing nearly half of all films in this category in Standard A, followed by the Comedy genre, where 17 films met at least one Standard A criterion by citing Race/Ethnicity. A similar trend is noticed in Standard B, where 23 Drama films cited Race/Ethnicity, the highest in this category, again followed by Comedy (13) and Thriller (11). Both Sci Fi and Fantasy films produced no reference to this URG across both Standards, and the Crime genre, often associated with representations of race/ethnic difference also registered a low number of references to this URG.

In considering the percentage of Race/Ethnicity across genres, Drama was the most frequent genre in the data set from this period, and this is reflected in the high percentage of Race/Ethnicity references within both Standard A (21 per cent) and Standard B (24 per cent), a figure drawn from 54 films under this category. Further, Comedy, Thriller, and Romance genres recoded relatively high responses, with over a quarter of all URG references for Race/Ethnicity within both Standard A and B.

> " Drama was the most cited Genre within the dataset. However none of its most commonly met options – A1, A3 and B3 – were criterions where Race/Ethnicity was the most referenced URG. "

Figure 12 and 13 Race/Ethnicity representation across Standard A and B by film genre

A Genre	No. films that met at least one Standard A criterion with Race/Ethnicity	%
Musical	4	100%
Mystery	2	100%
Action	5	83%
Adventure	2	67%
Crime	6	67%
Horror	6	67%
Comedy	17	57%
Animation	1	50%
Family	1	50%
Fantasy	1	50%
Thriller	12	50%
Drama	26	48%
Romance	5	45%
Biopic	6	35%
War	1	33%
Sci Fi	0	0%

B Genre	No. films that met at least one Standard B criterion with Race/Ethnicity	%
Sci Fi	1	100%
Adventure	2	67%
Action	3	50%
Animation	1	50%
Musical	2	50%
Mystery	1	50%
Thriller	11	46%
Romance	5	45%
Crime	4	44%
Comedy	13	43%
Drama	23	43%
War	1	33%
Biopic	4	24%
Horror	2	22%
Family	0	0%
Fantasy	0	0%

Figure 14-28 Race/Ethnicity references across Standard A and B by film genre
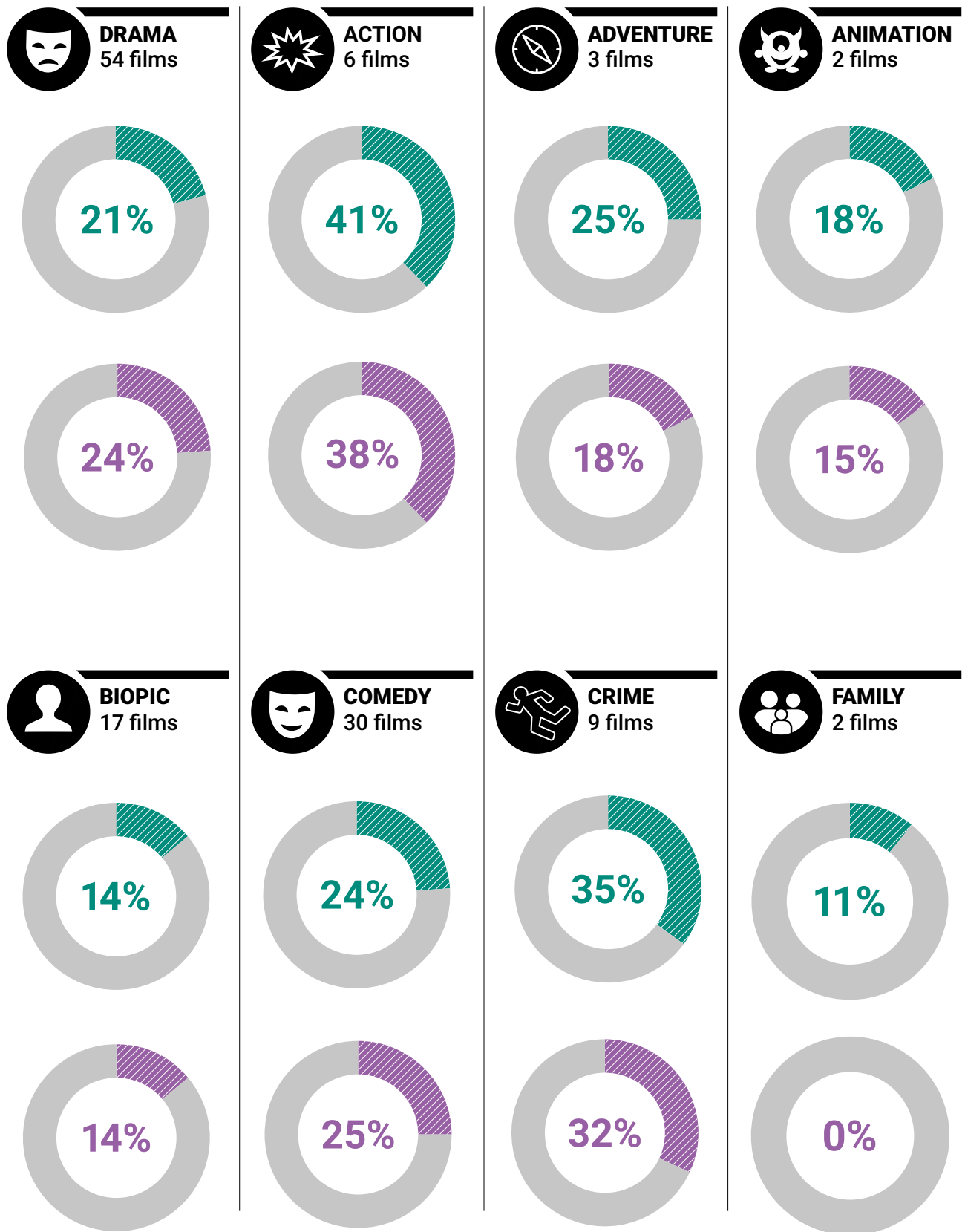
DRAMA
54 films

21%

24%

ACTION
6 films

41%

38%

ADVENTURE
3 films

25%

18%

ANIMATION
2 films

18%

15%

BIOPIC
17 films

14%

14%

COMEDY
30 films

24%

25%

CRIME
9 films

35%

32%

FAMILY
2 films

11%

0%

Figure 14-28 Race/Ethnicity references across Standard A and B by film genre

FANTASY
2 films

17%

0%

HORROR
9 films

20%

17%

MUSICALS
4 films

18%

31%

MYSTERY
2 films

36%

40%

ROMANCE
11 films

27%

29%

THRILLER
24 films

31%

24%

WAR
3 films

9%

33%

Additional Research Data Results

- There were only 23 references for Race/Ethnicity in Standard A citing criterion A1 (Lead Characters) from 97 regional productions out of 1,151 total URG references.

- In Standard B, Race/Ethnicity featured just 19 times as a reference for criterion B1 (At least three of director, scriptwriter, principal producer, composer, DoP, editor, costume designer and production designer) from 84 film productions.

- Race/Ethnicity was the most commonly referenced URG for A2 (Other Characters) with 59 per cent of film productions satisfying the Diversity Standards with this URG citation.

- Race/Ethnicity was also the most commonly cited URG for A6 (Casting Decisions) with 52 per cent.

- Race/Ethnicity was the second most referenced URG in B1 (Department Heads) with 37 per cent, however this was less than half of the citations for the most frequently referenced URG, Gender, which recorded 88 per cent. This was a similar trend for B2 (Other Key Roles) with Gender at 89 per cent and Race/Ethnicity at 45 per cent, and B3 (Other Project Staff) with Race/Ethnicity at 44 per cent and Gender at 72 per cent.

- Romance (18), Action (9) and Crime (13) was the only genres where Race/Ethnicity was the highest referenced URG for Standard A. However, this was achieved from a combined total of just 19 films.

- Mystery was the only genre in which Race/Ethnicity was the highest referenced genre for Standard B. However, its two references were achieved from just two films made within this genre.

- Race/Ethnicity was the fourth most referenced URG for A3 (Main Storyline) behind Disability (26 per cent) Socioeconomic (27 per cent) and Gender (41 per cent).

Key Findings

The research data results suggests an improvement in some aspects of Race/Ethnicity representation across the film sector, with notably high references for this URG in Standard A and B criterion. However, the data analysis reveals that racial underrepresentation remains a structural condition within the film industry, and such results should be read with a degree of caution. Firstly, the presence of Race/Ethnicity is generally located in what can be described as secondary roles, and there remains a low number of references to Race/Ethnicity in Lead Characters (A1) and Department Heads (B1). Secondly, data on how film productions have met the Diversity Standards in regard to Race/Ethnicity must also be considered in the context of the performance of other URGs.

Given the prolonged and continued discrimination, exclusion and misogyny experienced by women in the screen sector, the results reveal a welcomed increase in representations of Gender, which was the most commonly URG listed for criteria across the Diversity Standards, with female cast, crew and characters being the most frequently cited URG for A1 (Lead characters), A3 (Main story), B1 (Department Heads), B2 (Other key roles) and B3 (Other project staff). However, this should not necessarily be understood as an achievement that has worked to the detriment of the representation of other protected characteristics. Rather, the Diversity Standards data is relational rather than intersectional; the data does not yet permit an evaluation of the composition of Race/Ethnicity, socio-economic background, disability and other URG's within Gender. Such a policy development, where the Diversity Standards is able to capture how productions respond to such intersections will provide particular insights into the racial and class difference within the Gender category and how this may reveal how the film sector produces forms of social reproduction; the ways in which the Diversity Standards responses may allow for the continuation of structural inequality in the sector.

Setting, Location and Regionality

The disproportionately low number of film productions outside of London revealed in the data analysis means we cannot yet gain an affirmative understanding of how film locations, settings and regions impact the ability of films to satisfy the Diversity Standards in regard to Race/Ethnicity. The data does suggest that films being made outside of London are much less likely to represent Race/Ethnicity both on and off-screen, however this is also an outcome of the centrality of London for both film settings, production locations and employment and the generally smaller proportion of ethnic minorities within UK regions. This is not to abdicate the responsibility of regional films to represent racial and ethnic difference, and much more needs to be done within the BFI Diversity Standards to ensure that regional productions respond to the racial heterogeneity of the UK regions.

Genre

The primacy of Drama within the Diversity Standards, where this was the most common genre in terms of film production funding, provides a useful, if somewhat limited picture of how Race/Ethnicity intersects with genre. The low number of productions for other genres means that their citing of Race/Ethnicity as a URG should be considered in this context. This said, Comedy and Thriller, the other most common genre categories in the data set, reveal a high proportion of Race/Ethnicity references satisfying the Diversity Standards, and suggests some correlation between the number of productions in each genre category and the volume of Race/Ethnicity citations.

Budgets

According to the data analysed between 2016-2019, there is no obvious or reliable relationship between production budgets and the representation of Race/Ethnicity in either Standard A or Standard B. Drama was the most frequent genre through the period of study, and 58 per cent of UK films adhering to the Diversity Standards were produced on budgets of under £2 million. The volume of references for Race/Ethnicity within this genre in both Standard A and B does suggest that low budgeted Dramas may be more inclined to represent Race/Ethnicity.

> ❝ the film industry has yet to recognise the full scale of structural racism as an everyday reality for BAME individuals, and as a result, the more sophisticated forms of racial inequality that take place within the cultural spaces of films sets and institutions remains unchallenged and continues to impact the retention of BAME talent and workforces. ❞

Summary

This report acknowledges that the BFI Diversity Standards is an evolving concept and to this end, has performed as a crucial intervention in policy approaches to diversity in the film sector from 2016. The Diversity Standards represents the most ambitious and wide-ranging attempt to respond to the issues of diversity within the sector. However, this research reveals a number of issues and area for improvement with both its methodology and uptake. Therefore, a continuous, longitudinal and rigorous analysis of the Diversity Standards across a number of years is required to fully measure the success of the Diversity Standards in its objective to establish a culture of inclusivity and broad representations of the UK's racial and ethnic identities.

Future amendments to the Diversity Standards must respond to some of the key variables identified in this report. There is a relationship between region, production setting, location, genre and the representation of Race/Ethnicity in the UK film industry. What is not yet conclusive is the degree to which these variables inform decision making processes both in front and behind the screen, and how these decisions reflected in the data results are the outcome of deep-seated perceptions of regional identities, genre conventions and audience expectations and recruitment practices that simply reproduce dominant identities. Whilst this may point to the existence of cultural and industrial biases, these can no longer be understood as benign impulses but harmful approaches that produce a naturalisation of inequality within the film production workforce and preserves a normative worldview on-screen. At present, the Diversity Standards do not yet respond to the complexity and nuances of diversity within the film sector, and a more targeted strategic range of criteria is required to produce the kind of sophisticated workforce data that will allow forthcoming research to accurately assess the on-screen and off-screen inclusion of racial difference.

This report acknowledges and welcomes plans by the BFI to consider making Standard B compulsory for film projects applying to the Standards, request more detailed workforce data on cast and crew that provides a greater understanding of how Race/Ethnicity is achieved, and the launching of a new online system to assist in capturing data on how the Diversity Standards are being satisfied by each production. However, such concerns should go beyond questions of diversity and inclusion, and refer to the actual lived experience of racial difference within film productions and industry cultures. Whilst qualitative data approaches as reflected in the Diversity Standards produce valuable insights into how diversity is performed, the film industry has yet to recognise the full scale of racism as an everyday reality for BAME individuals, and as a result, the more sophisticated forms of racial inequality that take place within the cultural spaces of films sets and institutions remains unchallenged and continues to impact the retention of BAME talent and workforces.

The next stage of this research to be led by Dr Nwonka will capture anecdotal evidence and testimony provided by BAME staff who are and have previously been employed on the film productions referenced in the data. The combination of both qualitative and quantitative data on Race/Ethnicity will be crucial for both informing future Diversity Standards approaches that are both purpose-driven and accurately reflects the experiences of BAME identities.

Recommendations

1 Given the deep racial inequalities within the film industry's off-screen workforce as revealed in the Standard B data analysis, the report recommends that film projects applying to the Diversity Standards must cite Race/Ethnicity in at least two of the available criterions in meeting Standard B. In addition, these citations should be drawn from options B1 and B2.

2 The report recommends that film productions with higher budgets should adhere to a stronger set of Diversity Standard requirements. At least three citations for Race/Ethnicity should be made mandatory for productions with a budget of £10 million and above, and at least two citations for Race/Ethnicity for productions £5 million and above, to be drawn from standard A, B and C.

3 Given the concentration of UK film production and the industry workforce within London, the report recommends that a minimum Diversity Standards Race/Ethnicity target of 30% should be set for film productions set and/or located in London, a target to be achieved through standard A, B and C.

4 A Diversity Standard's Workforce Database should be created and maintained by the BFI, in which film projects adhering to the Diversity Standards can access information on qualified/skilled BAME off-screen talent (particularly in key roles) to assist productions trying to diversify their production workforce.

5 A Diversity Standards liaison role should be created by the BFI to support film productions on the specific issue of racial equality within their productions. This will ensure the standards are being met and act as a crucial point of contact for both the on and off-screen BAME workforce employed on Diversity Standards assessed films in order to understand the on-set working practices, cultures and experiences for BAME individuals within film productions.

6 The BFI's evaluation practices of Standard A's fulfilment of Race/Ethnicity must be defined beyond "meaningful and/or unfamiliar" representations. A formal review of the Diversity Standards evaluation practices should be conducted to explicate the BFI's understanding and application of racial diversity within on-screen representations.

7 The BFI should explore the viability of "Proportional Diversity", where specific Diversity Standards criterions are to be met for film productions outside of London to respond to some of the low proportion of Race/Ethnicity representation identified in this report.

8 An increased focus in regional film production may provide opportunities for films made outside of London with large ethnic minority communities (i.e. Birmingham, Leeds, Nottingham, Manchester, Bristol) to offer a less London-centric filmic representation of racial difference.

9 The inordinate public focus on the BFI on the issue of diversity disallows for a greater interrogation of the measures the other main public funders of the UK film production, BBC Films and Film4, are taking to achieve racial equality in the sector. In addition to working with BAFTA and BIFA, the BFI should create stronger alliances with BBC Films and Film4 on the specific issue of how Race/Ethnicity is being represented both within and outside the Diversity Standards framework.

10 More transparency and justification should be provided by production companies in relation to their casting and hiring decisions, particularly in relation to key roles and positions where there is a clear absence of racial and ethnic difference.

11 A combination of both quantitative and qualitative data should be produced within the Diversity Standards to create a deeper understanding of how Race/Ethnicity is represented and included. Existing developments in the Diversity Standards in the collection of work force data should also provide ways for BAME individuals to provide direct feedback on their experiences of working on Diversity Standards approved film productions.

12 Whilst the BFI Diversity Standards description of URGs operate within the protected characteristics listed in the 2010 Equalities Act, such a framework does not translate harmoniously into Standard A. The specific case of Eastern-European and "white minority" identity representation within the Race/Ethnicity URG exemplifies this issue. The ability of certain acting talent to perform as white British characters (and therefore satisfy Standard A criterions) creates a further ambiguity, both for the on-screen representation of racial and ethnic difference and for the reliability of Race/Ethnicity data. The Diversity Standards should consider the creation of a distinction within the Standard A criterion for Race/Ethnicity between BAME and Eastern European/White Minority identities as a URG (this is the subject of forthcoming research by Dr Nwonka).

13 The Diversity Standards data-capturing methods should be developed for the creation of cross-category data, (e.g. BAME women/BAME LGBTQ+ identities) within the Standards to provide insights into the intersectional dynamics of underrepresented groups.

14 Whilst the overwhelming fulfilment of Standard A and B by way of the Gender URG may suggest that this protected characteristic is being selected at the expense of Race/Ethnicity and other URGs, the report does not support proposals to remove Gender as a URG category within the Diversity Standards as this may not necessarily improve the advancement of Race/Ethnicity, especially in light of the absence of intersectional data.

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