

Pride of Place

what viewers want from regional television

An ITC Research Publication

Report by Jane Sancho



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July 2002

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is based on findings from two citizens' juries and a citizens' forum on **Regionality**, together with results from a survey of 5,500 viewers, and specific findings on regional programming from the three citizens' juries the Independent Television Commission (ITC) held in 2000 on public service broadcasting. The latest qualitative research conducted in 2001/2002 was jointly commissioned by the ITC and the Broadcasting Standards Commission to build upon previous work and to provide a fuller picture of the value of regional television to viewers and the role they feel it has in the future. The research included a detailed exploration of all the key players – the BBC, Channel Four and S4C but the main focus was on ITV1.

Findings

People in the UK retain a strong sense of their regional/national identities, despite the increasing globalisation of communications, especially via the internet, the increasing impact of the European Union, and the nation's increased mobility through job moves etc. And regional television is seen as being something which helps keep these different identities alive. Viewers are clear that they want it to continue to be provided free-to-air on BBC1 and ITV1.

The key message then from this research is that viewers value regional television in the 21st Century. But do they watch it? Is it simply 'nice to have', rather than 'have to have' television? This unique research highlights some of the key areas for consideration.

Regional Programming

- Regional news was regarded as a vital service and something in which all expressed a high degree of interest; 82% of 5,500 viewers said they were interested in it. While scheduling changes to the national news have resulted in a downward trend in audiences for the early evening regional news on ITV1 at 6.00pm, regional news was highly regarded by everyone and was seen as an essential service for ITV1.

- 89% of the sample thought ITV1 should have to show regional programming. Aside from news, viewers prioritised regional current affairs, regional sport and local history programmes as being the most relevant and important part of the television mix. Other genres, e.g. religion, drama, entertainment and comedy were seen to lend themselves less well to regional programming.

- Quality was regarded as paramount and ultimately of more importance than quantity. As one juror put it *"You don't buy a chocolate bar because it is made in Bourneville but because it is nice. The same goes for programmes. You do not watch them just because they were made in the region, but because they are good."* Overall, most said they would accept fewer regional programmes if these were guaranteed to be better resourced.

- Scheduling was a particular issue. Many felt regional programmes were tucked away in unattractive slots, or put on at times when they could not compete with more popular programming such as soap operas. Participants in the research considered in or around peak (18.00-22.30pm) a better proposition. And there was a demand for regional programmes to be better sign-posted, trailed and promoted.

- There were some individuals who felt that where a programme was made was unimportant; if it was well researched and presented it would be good. But most believed it was very important that programmes were made in the region, because it promoted local talent and brought jobs and money into the local community. And many said they identified with programmes more when they were made in the area: *“if it was about our region we’d feel a bit cheated if the programme was made in London”*.

- Asked what makes a regional programme relevant, participants in the juries carried out in Telford, Southampton and Glasgow said: presenters or actors from the region with an affection for the area; coverage of local issues, news, sport, current affairs etc; being set in a recognisable locality; not patronising or stereotypical. Taken as a whole, this research shows that viewers want well-funded, well-produced, authentic programmes, which are informative and which enhance the image of the region and reinforce regional identities in a positive way.

Key Regional Differences

- Awareness of regional output other than news was not high in some English regions, but regional programming is a genre viewers do not always recognise watching. As one 16-28 year old said, *“I didn’t know that lots of these regional programmes existed”*. Nevertheless, most felt strongly that regional programming played an important role in maintaining regional/national identities.

- In the nations, Wales and Scotland, there was a much stronger sense of identity and a much greater interest in regional/national programming. Many were able to cite the names of programmes they watched regularly and which they regarded as high quality. Welsh jurors thought that regional programmes were important in terms of educating Welsh people about their own country and reaffirming their national identity. For a similar reason, jurors in Glasgow felt that it was more important to have national programming, rather than different output for different parts of Scotland. They felt regional/national television was crucial for bringing income and employment into the Scottish nation.

- In Wales, they wanted to retain the same amount of regional/national programming they had currently, but recognised that more investment was needed if quality was to improve.

- Those living in England were more likely to think that their television regions were not local enough, particularly if they lived on the fringe of an ITV region. In Telford, for example, some jurors felt that many of the issues covered in regional programmes were not particularly relevant to them. Only facilities located within about a 26-mile radius of their homes were considered local and this sense of their region was extended to local media. Local radio stations, for example, were considered to be Telford Radio and Radio Shropshire, rather than the Birmingham-based radio station Heart FM. There was strong support in the Northern jury for more local television services such as those provided by Restricted Service Licences (RSLs).

Demographic Differences

- The 57 participants who took part in the forum were split into four different age groups. Young people (16-28s) tended to have lived in different parts of the country and held the view that the world was becoming more global. As a result, they were less likely to agree that regionalism was relevant, and felt that current regional programming did not cater for their needs or interests. But despite this, they did not want it abolished altogether. Instead, they had suggestions for the kinds of regional programmes that they claimed they would watch.
- Older people were nervous about change and happy with the current provision. They disliked the idea of having fewer regional programmes in case this was the start of a slippery slope.

Representation on the network

- Viewers valued seeing their region reflected in ITV network programmes, but did not accept that such representation was sufficient. Networked programmes were regarded as ‘softer’ versions of regional programmes in the sense that they were widely seen as rather placeless. *“They don’t reflect regional people. They could be anywhere but with an accent.”*
- There was some concern about the way parts of the country were portrayed on the network. People from the North of England felt their region was often shown as being a deprived area. Newcastle, for example, was perceived to be always linked with the closure of the pits and shipyards. Young people could not remember the shipyards being operational, so they considered regional television depicted an out-dated and old fashioned view of their area. Participants from the West Midlands said their accents were often used as the butt of jokes and felt they were rarely portrayed in a positive light. Similarly, the Welsh believed they were not taken seriously and noted that it was rare to see a Welsh character in networked programming in a serious role.

The future

In the light of the changing broadcasting landscape, participants in the research were asked to consider a number of possible options for the future, and to choose between them. The options ranged from creating bigger ITV regions, so that regional programmes cover a wider area, to ITV1 stopping its regional provision and regional programming being placed on a separate digital channel.

- With the exception of news, regional programming is not appointment-to-view programming. Many jurors had experienced stumbling across an interesting programme about their region by accident. For this reason, most did not want regional programming in the future to be placed on a separate digital channel where viewers would have to actively seek it out, rather than just coming across it. They believed this would ghettoise the genre and audiences would decline even more. The group of 16-28s in Birmingham, however, thought this would make it both easy to find, and easy to avoid.
- The majority believed strongly that regional provision should remain free-to-air as part of a mixed schedule.
- There was no support for ITV1 dropping its regional provision and leaving regional programming to the BBC. Most of those consulted felt that without competition, the quality of regional output on the BBC would diminish. They

predicted that this in turn would lead to loss of audience, and worried that the BBC might then take the decision to stop providing it altogether, given that it has no remit to broadcast regional programming.

- In an ideal world, the northern jury wished to retain the current regional provision. But accepting that the status quo was unlikely to be tenable in the long term, jurors opted for a future model for regional programming where it remained on ITV1, but the provision was on a macro level for larger regions, with the news staying more local. They stipulated that they would only accept this option if there was a guaranteed increase in budget for regional programmes. But some had fears that this might be the first step towards ITV1 becoming a purely national broadcaster and that smaller regions would be swallowed up and lost for good. Quite a number in the northern jury felt that the regions were already too large.

- In addition, the northern jury wanted to encourage and support the development of RSLs offering very localised services, although these were seen as an ‘added bonus’ for people in areas where they were available.

- In Wales, the jury proposed its own option, which was that the current range and diversity of programmes of specific interest to viewers in Wales would be maintained on HTV Wales, but that they would be better resourced and more would be screened at or near peak time. The jury put forward suggestions for how additional funding could be achieved e.g. an agreement with the government to reduce HTV Wales’ licence payment in return for greater investment in programmes specifically for viewers in Wales.

- S4C was considered a valuable service, especially for Welsh speaking viewers, and a crucial part of Welsh identity. But it was regarded as an additional service. Jurors did not endorse the future scenario whereby HTV Wales stopped showing specific programmes of interest to viewers in Wales and instead they were placed on a separate channel, with Welsh language programmes continuing to be shown on S4C.

- Participants in the Birmingham forum were less fearful of changes to the system and the different age groups came up with a variety of suggestions. But overall, most favoured elements of the options which advocated improved quality and maintaining the link between ITV1 and regional broadcasting. Those aged 29-40 considered there were financial benefits to ITV1 in having bigger regions which they hoped would mean better programmes for viewers. As long as news remained local, they saw this as a possible model for the future. On the understanding that the current system would have to change, the over 55s agreed with this solution. 41-55s voted for regional programming to move to ITV2 with news remaining local on ITV1. 16-28s suggested that in the future regional programmes should be placed on a separate cable channel with news staying on ITV1. All wanted a guarantee that spend would not be reduced.

General Public Service Broadcast Issues

Part of the research involved a survey of 5,500 viewers, which looked at more general public service broadcasting issues.

- 89% agreed with the statement “*Even though I do not watch certain types of programming, I still think it is important that they are available for others to watch on free-to-air channels*”.

- The vast majority (89%) felt that ITV1 should have to provide regional programming.
- 77% thought it was important that ITV1 showed programmes set in their region or about their region.
- 77% agreed that it was important that programming on mainstream channels such as BBC1 and ITV1 reflected the regional diversity of the country.
- A significant minority (43%) thought their region was not very well represented on mainstream television.

Television retains its magic as a medium and people around the country want to see something of themselves reflected back to them. As one juror said, “*Regional television is a bit like someone’s photograph collection; it is only really interesting if you, or other people and places you are familiar with, are featured in some of the pictures*”. Despite criticism of the quality of some regional programmes, most viewers felt that regional television helps keep regional identities alive and, therefore, it is regarded as a vital service for ITV1.

Since this research was conducted, a new Charter for Nations and Regions has been created (www.itc.org.uk). It may go some way to ensuring the importance of regionality and to meeting the majority of viewers’ requirements for better quality regional programmes on ITV1.

2 BACKGROUND

“One of the ITC’s key responsibilities is to ensure each ITV licensee provides high quality regional news and current affairs, and a diverse range of other programmes designed to reflect life within the nations and regions.” (ITC web site, April 2002)

At the start of 2000, the ITC launched a major public consultation on the role of public service broadcasting now and in the future. This consultation consisted of a wide range of research initiatives which included three citizens’ juries, a postal survey of 6,000 viewers, interviews with opinion leaders, a children’s workshop, a consultation document, and fifteen public meetings held around the UK. The key findings from this programme of research were reported in the publication *Public Service Broadcasting: What Viewers Want* by Jane Sancho, Independent Television Commission, January 2001.

The three citizens’ juries held in Telford, Glasgow and Southampton tackled the issue of public service broadcasting (PSB). They covered topics such as range and diversity, quality, the positive programme requirements imposed by the ITC on the broadcasters it licenses, multicultural content, religious programming, educational programming, children’s programming, and subtitling provision. In addition, each jury spent a whole day discussing regional programming, its importance and what jurors thought about the requirements for varying amounts of different types of regional programming e.g. regional current affairs, regional sport etc. More details of the specific findings on regionality are published for the first time in this report.

Since these juries in 2000, the ITV broadcasters have negotiated with the ITC for a reduction in their original licence obligations with regard to regional output. In a climate where advertising revenue is falling, due not least to the increase in the number of channels available and the associated fragmentation of audiences, the ITC is seeking to strike a balance by regulating in a way which does not tie the hands of the ITV companies, who must compete in a very competitive market place, but also ensures that viewers are not disadvantaged. In May 2002, the ITC and ITV agreed a new Charter for Nations and Regions, designed to secure a sustainable future for national and regional programming on ITV. It modernises their regional commitments, including more prominent scheduling for such programmes and, for the first time, guarantees out of London investment so that regional programming will be of a higher quality and relevant to viewers’ interests in the individual nation or region.

But how strongly do viewers in different parts of the country feel about regional television and what role do they think it has in the future? To build on the previous findings on viewers’ attitudes to regional programming, the ITC, together with the BSC, decided to commission two further juries in Leeds and Cardiff, focussing specifically on regionality (nationality in the case of Wales). In addition, in order to develop the recommendations from these juries, the ITC and BSC jointly commissioned a citizens’ forum involving a larger number of people, which was held in Birmingham in March 2002. All three events were conducted by Opinion Leader Research. The findings of these events are reported in this document.

Alongside this qualitative research, a postal survey of over 5,500 viewers was carried out to test the strength of public feeling about regional television on a much larger sample.

3

METHODOLOGIES

The aim of any public involvement approach is to engage citizens, or lay people, in a deliberative process that enables them to give informed opinions and recommendations. The following techniques were used in this research:

Citizens' Juries

Citizens' juries utilise an innovative research methodology which involve the public in decisions that directly affect them. The Institute of Public Policy Research and Opinion Leader Research introduced juries to the UK in 1996. The technique was developed from similar techniques in America and Germany. The premise behind the method is that, given enough time and information, members of the public can make decisions about complicated policy issues. Juries are a way of obtaining the considered views of members of the public who mostly do not take part in national or local decision-making processes.

A number of people are selected at random either from electoral registers or via face-to-face interviews in the street, to be representative of the area in which the jury is being held. They sit for between two and four days and are presented with evidence to help them reach a decision. People with a particular viewpoint or expertise are asked to speak to them and answer their questions. The jurors then discuss the issues with the aid of independent moderators, and come to a conclusion. They report back to the commissioning body with a set of recommendations.

Northern Jury

For the northern jury held in Leeds, 16 citizens from four different broadcasting regions were recruited using face-to-face recruitment to match specifications based on population statistics for Lancashire, Yorkshire, North East and Border (see Appendix I for details). One individual who was recruited did not attend, so the Jury comprised 15 people.

Welsh Jury

Seventeen citizens were recruited face-to-face from across the whole of Wales for a jury that took place in Cardiff. In addition to ensuring a balance of men and women, a spread of ages, and a mix of social classes etc, the Welsh jury consisted of some native Welsh speakers, non-Welsh speakers, and someone learning Welsh (see Appendix I for details).

Format

For both juries the format was the same. Each jury sat for two-and half days, which included an introductory evening where jury members were introduced to one another and taken through the agenda for the next couple of days. During the course of each day a number of methods were used to help jurors think through the issues and reach conclusions:

- Jurors were presented with briefing notes containing key information and the facts regarding regional broadcasting.
- They were shown a compilation reel, containing examples of different regional programmes. In the case of the Northern jury this included regional output from Granada, Yorkshire, Tyne Tees, and Border. In Wales, they watched clips from

programmes made by HTV Wales, BBC2 Wales and S4C. Both juries were also shown some examples of network programming set in a particular region, e.g. clips from *Peak Practice*, *Crossroads*, *Emmerdale*, *Brookside* etc.

- The jurors received presentations from expert witnesses, selected to represent a range of opinions and interests. They were then able to question their standpoints.
- The juries discussed the issues both in small unmoderated groups and as a whole jury.
- The full jury sessions were moderated to ensure that everyone had a chance to speak.
- Questionnaires were given to the jurors at the beginning and at the end of the process to gauge individual opinions and to evaluate the jury process.
- The juries' recommendations were reported to the commissioning bodies.

Citizens' Forum

Citizens' forums seek to combine many of the key qualities of other deliberative approaches, such as juries, with the confidence of greater numbers. A citizen's forum will typically involve anything from 50 – 200 people who are convened for between one to two days. At the outset, participants are asked to self-complete a questionnaire, which elicits their views and opinions on the topic under debate. They are then presented with evidence, which they can challenge. There are break out groups to enable deliberation and plenary sessions. Participants are asked to vote on a number of key questions.

A citizen's forum on regional television was conducted in Birmingham on 16th March 2002. Fifty-six people were recruited to reflect the demographic mix of Birmingham and the surrounding area (see Appendix I for recruitment details).

The participants were divided into four groups according to age. They worked for part of the day in their small groups, but also met as a large group to feed back thoughts and discussions. Each group's recommendations were presented to representatives from the ITC and BSC. All participants were required to complete a post-forum questionnaire.

Survey

Both of the juries and the forum were conducted by Catherine Meaden, Penny Harwood and Rebecca Morris from Opinion Leader Research.

A postal questionnaire was placed on the Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARB) QUEST panel between 2nd – 29th July 2001. This is an industry panel subscribed to by broadcasters and the ITC. Members of the panel are recruited to be representative of the UK population at large.

4 OBJECTIVES

The overriding objective of the two juries and the forum was to assess the importance to viewers of regionalism in television now and in the future.

Within this overall objective, the following key questions were addressed:

- i) What does 'regionalism' mean to viewers/citizens?
- ii) How important is a broad range of regional programmes (to the individual and to society more widely)?
- iii) How relevant is regional television in the 21st Century?
- iv) How is regional television currently perceived – is it viewed favourably/perceived to be quality programming?
- v) What form should regional television take in the future? What would be acceptable and unacceptable? Within this, what form should any safeguards take?

The key requirements of the juries and the forum were that:

- A holistic view of regional television programming was taken, including a detailed exploration of the roles of ITV1 and all the other key players – the BBC, Channel 4, S4C in Wales, RSLs etc. Radio was explicitly excluded from the debate.

5 FINDINGS: CITIZENS' JURIES & FORUM

The question both juries and the forum addressed was “*How important is regionalism in television today and in the future?*”

DEFINING YOUR REGION

One of the first tasks given to jurors and to participants in the forum was to define their region and decide what made it special. While there are clear definitions of regions based on physical boundaries, broadcast transmitter areas, or cultural differences, people from a particular area may define their region in different ways and have varying degrees of loyalty to it. This research found the following factors impacted on an individual's definition of their region and how attached they felt towards it:

- whether they were born in the region or elsewhere
- their age
- whether they lived in the city or the periphery
- if they have ever lived outside of the region
- their level of engagement with local culture including sport, regional television and the arts

Northern Jury

The northern jury, which took place in Leeds, consisted of people from Lancashire, Yorkshire, the North East and Border. When asked about their regional identity jurors mentioned:

- Heritage
- Stottie cakes
- Tyne Bridge
- Proud to be Geordies
- Pride in hearing about local people doing well
- Hardship/brotherhood
- Dialect
- People in the north get on with each other
- Local news is very important especially for local issues like Foot and Mouth

Most did not see themselves as ‘European’ and all considered themselves to be ‘English’ rather than ‘British’, with the exception of those living in the Border region who felt themselves to be British, although they were quick to point out that they considered Scotland to be very different from England. The North of England was felt to be defined by a number of factors, including football, food and regional accents. People from the Tyne Tees region were especially proud of their area. Someone said “*I've never met a Geordie who doesn't feel his chest swell with pride when he comes over the bridge.*”

It was felt that your region meant less if you were not born there. Also, it was thought to be less important to younger people who travelled more. Some of the younger members of the jury considered the rising popularity of the internet meant the world was becoming much more global and so regional identity was becoming less important.

Welsh Jury

When the Cardiff jury was asked what makes Wales special, jurors came up with the following:

- The language
- Beauty of the countryside/landscape
- Curiosity of the people
- Open
- Friendly
- North/south split
- Song/dance/Eisteddfodau
- St David's day
- Rugby

There was an issue over whether Wales has one coherent identity. Cardiff was seen as being more anglicised than the rest of Wales and was regarded by some as dominating broadcasting to the detriment of other areas. The presence of a North/South split was highlighted, with those living in north Wales being seen as very different and even speaking differently from those living in south Wales.

Some jurors felt that their Welsh identity was being challenged and that there was a danger of Wales being swamped by other influences. But others argued that there were bigger dangers associated with Wales becoming too introspective, and whilst there was a need to ensure it retained its uniqueness, it was imperative to guard against becoming too insular.

It was felt that Wales does have a world-wide culture outside of itself, evidenced by strong communities in New York, India and Patagonia. It was also commented that Welsh people are extremely proud of their heritage and are patriotic. There was a consensus that pride in Wales seemed to increase as people got older and also among those who had moved away. *"The biggest Welshman is the Welshman away from home."*

But a number of negatives were identified. Some jurors felt that part of Wales' identity stemmed from the fact that Welsh people perceived themselves as being *'second to England'* – at a fundamental level they were defined as Welsh by the fact that they *'were not English'*. One juror believed that Wales had changed substantially over recent decades, from its history of chapel and mining etc, and that it was now struggling to find its real identity.

Jurors were asked to think about their region/nation in terms of geographic boundaries, i.e. how local is local, and to consider the impact of Europe and globalisation. Welsh jurors had mixed feelings about Europe. Some felt that it caused them to feel more protective of their 'Welshness' because integration was a potential threat, while others thought that its impact had been minimal as the UK was not fully participating, in the sense that it had not joined the European common currency.

Birmingham Forum

Most participants in the forum defined their region as either Birmingham or the West Midlands. People gave both positive and negative definitions. Some were proud of the West Midlands and defined themselves in relation to the region as a whole. Others defined themselves more narrowly.

“I try not to count Wolverhampton as part of my region” (16-28, Birmingham)

For the most part, there was a great deal of loyalty towards the city of Birmingham and a feeling that it did contribute to participants’ sense of identity. Birmingham generated a sense of pride across all of the age groups and was seen as the hub of the region. This pride was particularly strong amongst younger participants who were born in and still lived in Birmingham. But there was also interest in the city from those that lived both on its outskirts and further afield. However, there was less loyalty and interest in areas outside the city, e.g. the Black Country, other cities in the region, and the Midlands as a whole.

In general, people found it hard to define exactly what was different or unifying about the West Midlands. The key driver appeared to be accent, and particularly how it was perceived by people from other parts of the country. The accent was seen generally to be misrepresented by the media.

“I think most people hate Brummies and think we’re thick because our accent is so broad” (29-40, Birmingham)

When asked what was special about their area, participants at the forum came up with the following:

- Its geographical position in the centre of the country
- The accent
- Multicultural/diversity
- A city which is changing
- Friendly people
- Local heroes - Nigel Mansell, Lenny Henry, Frank Skinner
- Local industry - engineering

“This is a multicultural city and we should be proud of that” (29-40, Birmingham)

“This is a very industrial area with an engineering background” (29-40, Birmingham)

“What drew me back is that people from Birmingham have a heart, they are more friendly” (55+, Birmingham)

Whilst the region, or more importantly Birmingham itself, was seen as a key driver in how participants defined themselves, for many it was no more important than being British or English.

“I’m proud of coming from the Midlands but I’m also proud of being English and British” (41-55, Birmingham)

The perceived importance of their region directly corresponded with people’s age. Older people identified more closely with their region, whilst younger participants felt that their lives were less rooted and more nomadic.

“I’m just a Brummie, I’ve always lived in the Midlands, I want to know what goes on in the region” (41-55, Birmingham)

“It makes a difference having moved around, you have a soft spot for a number of regions” (29-40, Birmingham)

Some participants, particularly those from the older groups, worried that if your identity did not continue to stem from your local area where would it come from? These participants felt that with increasing ties to Europe and rapid globalisation people would need to return to the local to understand their identity.

“The country is changing as a whole and people don’t seem to have a real identity” (29-40, Birmingham)

“I think it’s important that people have an identity and that it starts locally” (41-55, Birmingham)

HOW WELL IS YOUR REGION REPRESENTED ON TELEVISION?

The juries and forum tackled how well viewers felt their part of the country was represented on television.

Northern Jury

In Leeds, the consensus was that their region was not well represented on television. In particular, it was felt that the North was always shown in a stereotypical way as poverty-stricken and as a depressed area. One juror commented that people from Liverpool are always represented on television as *“thieves and scallies”*. And a juror from Newcastle said they were mostly portrayed as *“daft Geordie builders – never anyone intelligent”*. Another juror said that programmes about Newcastle always made reference to the closure of pits and shipyards and had an underlying current of deprivation, *“It’s like a permanent Ken Loach film”*. Younger jurors could no longer remember the shipyards being operational, so for them it was no longer a defining characteristic of the region. Many thought that television had an out-dated view of their area.

The ‘soaps’ were also seen to be guilty of portraying lifestyles that no longer existed. For example, *Coronation Street*, where everyone knows each other and everyone drinks in the local, was seen as a very outdated concept. *“I used to think it (Coronation Street) represented Manchester well but I don’t think that now I’ve moved here.”* But jurors accepted that ‘soaps’ were different from other types of programmes and more likely to contain stereotypes. They felt most people did not see *Coronation Street* as being in Manchester, but just reflecting society and how people relate to each other more generally.

Jurors did think regional television had a strong impact on how people see the different regions of the UK. All the jurors had examples of how they felt regional television exaggerated the characteristics of their region. They criticised Yorkshire Television for concentrating on farming in the Dales, and for portraying Cumbria as a *“sleepy backwater with Foot and Mouth”*, which would not attract (young) people to the area.

City-based programmes in Leeds were viewed as continually showing council estates, shoplifting and drug use. One worried juror said, *“People must think that the whole of Leeds is like that”*. Another said, *“I saw a programme about girls on a night out (Tyne Tees Party Nights), I was devastated. It gives the wrong impression of women in the area”*.

Welsh Jury

In Cardiff, many jurors said they thought Welsh characters tended to be stereotyped rather than seen in serious portrayals. They felt this gave a misleading impression of Welsh people to the outside world.

They were critical of programmes making errors over dialects, for example, a juror cited an unnamed drama set in north Wales which used actors with accents from south Wales. Jurors thought this kind of thing made a programme sound 'fake'.

But the dearth of dramas set in Wales on the network was more of an issue. Some argued that the quality of Welsh dramas was not sufficiently high to be networked, but others felt that there simply were not enough Welsh people involved in the production and commissioning of programmes for Welsh voices to influence what went on the ITV network, or on the BBC.

Birmingham Forum

There was a strong feeling that the West Midlands is not positively represented on television, linked to how participants feel about their area and their sensitivity about the accent. Participants were happy to laugh at stereotypes of their area but considered it dangerous for people outside the region to see this representation. This was similar to the Welsh jury finding where jurors worried about the view people would have of Wales from seeing stereotypical portrayals.

"There's always negative things about us on TV" (16-28, Birmingham)

SPONTANEOUS AWARENESS OF REGIONAL PROGRAMMING

Jurors were asked to name as many regional programmes as they could and these were written up on a flip chart by one of the moderators.

Northern Jury

In Leeds a juror pointed out that you could watch a regional programming without realising that it is regional. This was something which was highlighted in the previous PSB juries conducted by the ITC in 2000. The majority of viewers are likely to be unaware of what constitutes a regional programme.

Few said they actively chose to watch any of the programme names they came up with. The only ones from the list they perceived to be of high quality were *Spender* and the BBC's *The Last of The Summer Wine*. Both are networked programmes, highlighting viewers' confusion about the programme genre.

Jurors tended to think that regional programmes were on at inconvenient times, for example, they clashed with *EastEnders*, and that they were often not relevant or uninteresting. *"The imagination doesn't seem to be there. I'd watch them if they were interesting."*

Regional programmes were seen in the northern jury as being of value to the older generation. They were regarded in the main as addressing a nation that existed 10 years ago, rather than a younger audience who were interested in the bigger picture. *"I don't think my kids want to watch regional programmes."*

Welsh Jury

There was much more awareness in Wales of regional/national programming than in the north of England. Jurors were able to come up with a much longer list of names of national programmes in Cardiff. They were also more positive, singling out news and current affairs programmes as being consistently good. Individual programmes that received praise included, *The Ferret*, *Dragon's Eye*, and *Wales Today*. Jurors, not surprisingly, since they combined different age ranges, gender etc, had mixed views on Welsh soaps like *Belonging and Nuts and Bolts*.

Some quality programmes of specific interest to viewers in Wales were mentioned spontaneously. The '*Shape Of Wales*' made by HTV Wales, featuring a helicopter trip around different parts of Wales, was identified as a particularly outstanding programme. Jurors thought it was important for this kind of programme to be shown within Wales, but also outside of Wales to raise awareness of Wales and promote tourism. Equally, they felt it was important for people living in Wales to learn about other parts of the UK. "*It's important to break down barriers.*"

When asked what sort of programmes should be shown on television about Wales there was a range of suggestions:

- Entertainment e.g. a programme on the Cardiff club scene
- A '*Queer as Folk*' – type drama
- More historical programmes
- Shows from the Cardiff bay concert venue
- Broadcasts from the Eisteddfod
- Programme on the Hay-on-Wye Festival
- Programmes on the Welsh scenery and rambling

All the jurors thought that regional news was extremely important. Some called for it to be more localised, believing it to be too biased towards Cardiff.

After this initial discussion, both juries and the forum were shown a compilation reel of short clips from a range of regional output from their area.

OPINIONS OF REGIONAL PROGRAMMING

Northern Jury

In Leeds this included programmes specifically made for each of the four ITV regions, Granada, Yorkshire, Tyne Tees and Border. In addition, a small number of networked programmes made in a specific region were included (see charts below). Note: the views reported are based upon 15 individuals only and, therefore, are entirely subjective. They lend no weight to the key conclusions of this research, but simply are illustrative of jurors' reactions to the short clips shown at the forum.

Regional Reel

Tyne Tees

Closed for Business (Current Affairs) Thursday 1930. Focused on the early spread of Foot and Mouth in the North East and examined how the farming community and tourism were coping.

Grundy's Wonders (Adult Education) Tuesday 1930. John Grundy's entertaining look at the North East's architectural landscape.

Just Another Day (Religion) Tuesday 2230. How Sunday has been transformed from a reverential day of rest to just another day of relaxation and recreation.

Ordinary Heroes (Documentary) Tuesday 2230. Chronicles the story of a County Durham soldier who is remembered as a national hero in Australia following his heroism with the Anzac forces at Gallipoli.

Yorkshire

Friday Whiteley (Entertainment). Friday 2230. Richard Whiteley interviewing leading personalities from Yorkshire.

Rugby League Raw (Sport) Thursday 2230. Highlights of the Northern Ford Premiership cup competition.

Painting the Past (Arts) Tuesday 2300. Presenter Alan Hydes discovers old masterpieces in some obscure places around Yorkshire.

Granada

Turning Point (Religion) This six part series with Martin Bashir explored individuals' lives at the point they turned, either to a god or away from a god.

Crime File (Social Action) Presented by So Rahman, it is produced in co-operation with the region's police forces.

Lunchtime Live (Factual Entertainment) A daily magazine programme presented by Eamonn O'Neal, featuring cookery, entertainment features and health and adult education strands.

Partyfever (Entertainment) is a late night-entertainment series exploring the different ways in which people in the north west choose to party.

Border

A Farming Family (Current Affairs) Thursday 1930. Part of the *Rural Lives* series, this particular episode explains what happened to a Cumbria farming family when Foot and Mouth struck and examined the consequences.

Law of the Lakes (Documentary) Thursday 1930. This series co-produced with Granada followed the work of the Cumbria police in the south of the county.

Trailblazing (Documentary feature). Tuesday 1930. This series followed the mountain bike trail in Cumbria.

The northern jury discussed their reactions to the regional programmes on the reel. A few individuals felt that they played on stereotypes of the area and that they focussed too much on minority interests. But most of the 15 jurors had not seen many of the programmes. *Friday Whitely* was highlighted for praise from those who had watched it before.

Some jurors did feel that local information about old buildings or people in the area was interesting, but overall most felt that regional programmes were aimed at older people, especially as many were shown during the day, and that young people especially, would not be interested.

In spite of the fact that jurors were fairly critical of the quality and content of regional programmes, they did feel that they would lose out if no regional programmes were shown. They felt that variety was important and that regional television played an important role in educating people about different regions. In particular, they mentioned the fact that it was good to hear people with different accents on the television, reflecting the diversity of Britain.

The jurors were then shown a reel of clips from programmes made/set in a particular region, but shown on the network.

Network Reel

Where the Heart Is (West Yorkshire)

Emmerdale (Yorkshire)

Brookside (Liverpool)

Hollyoaks (Cheshire)

Coronation Street (Manchester)

Rebus (Edinburgh)

Crossroads (Birmingham)

The northern jury members felt that it was difficult to compare the programmes on the two reels, as the second reel comprised mainly soap operas. They were seen as being high quality, but not particularly ‘regional’, in terms of portraying an accurate representation of the area they were filmed in. “*They are placeless...it does not matter where they are set.*” Despite the fact that some of the soaps featured people with strong accents, it was felt that these programmes could actually be filmed anywhere as they made few references to where they were made. The jury thought more could be made of the regional location, pointing out that *Coronation Street*’s ‘Weatherfield’ could in fact be based anywhere; it is not obviously set near Manchester.

‘*Rebus*’ was wrongly thought to be based in Glasgow, rather than Edinburgh where it is filmed. Jurors thought the programme was high quality, but some felt that it reinforced stereotypical views of Scottish cities. Someone said “*if it looks gritty, it has to be set in Glasgow*”.

Whilst few actually watched non-networked regional programmes, the jurors still believed they had a role. *“There is a place for regional programmes, but they need to be relevant and interesting.”*

Welsh Jury

The compilation reel in Cardiff consisted of clips from programming made by HTV Wales, BBC2 Wales and S4C (see chart below). Note: the views reported are based upon 17 individuals only and, therefore, are entirely subjective. They lend no weight to the key conclusions of this research, but simply are illustrative of jurors’ reactions to the short clips shown at the jury.

Regional Reel HTV Wales

HTV News (6pm: weekdays) HTV Wales’ flagship news programme presented by Jonathan Hill and Lucy Cohen.

Waterfront (12.30pm: Sundays) A weekly look at political affairs presented by Jo Kiernan.

Wales This Week (7.30pm: Thursdays) Investigative current affairs series.

Welsh in Australia (7.30pm: Thursdays, December 2001) Factual series presented by Mark Freiden.

Let Robeson Sing! (Friday 20 April 2001, 10.30pm) Documentary about black American singer Paul Robeson’s links with Wales.

Remember (Sundays: 7.20pm) Arfon Haines Davies looks back at some classic footage from HTV’s archive.

Nuts and Bolts (Mondays and Fridays: 5.00pm, autumn 2001). Drama series set in the fictional Valleys town of Ystrad.

House to House (Fridays: 2.10pm) Daytime household make-over series.

Barry Welsh is Coming (Fridays: 10.50pm) Alternative comedy series with John Sparkes.

The factual series *Welsh in Australia* was praised and was seen as being well presented and interesting. As might be expected, views differed with regard to the drama *Nuts and Bolts*. Some of the jurors commented on its ‘wooden’ acting and perceived it as quite a low quality programme. These jurors thought it portrayed stereotypical characters and were concerned that, whilst it might be amusing within Wales, it might evoke a negative portrayal of the Welsh character if it was screened outside Wales. But others praised *Nuts and Bolts* for offering light relief and said they regularly tuned in. *“I think that Nuts and Bolts is quite funny within the Welsh context but I don’t think it would be funny in a national (UK-wide) context at all...if you know different yourself then you can laugh at the joke”*.

The documentary *Let Robeson Sing* was regarded as informative and interesting, but was criticised for what some felt was poor scheduling. These jurors said they would have liked to have watched it, but it was shown late on a Friday evening.

HTV News, *Wales This Week* and *Waterfront* were all recognised by most of the jurors and *Waterfront*, the weekly current affairs programme, was thought to be well presented. *HTV News* was praised for offering a friendly approach to the news and for being consistently up to date, although a minority from north Wales felt that HTV news did not adequately represent all of Wales. They believed there was some unfair representation with a southern bias to news stories.

The majority found the comedy series *Barry Welsh is Coming* amusing, rather than offensive, and compared it favourably with the programme *Goodness Gracious Me* by Meera Syal.

BBC2 W

Dragon's Eye (Thursdays: 8pm, analogue BBC 2 Wales and BBC 2W) Political affairs series presented by David Williams

Satellite City (Fridays: 9.15pm, BBC 2W) Situation comedy series first screened on BBC Wales

Fried (Tuesdays: 9.20pm BBC 2W) Comedy where Simon Adams presents a slice of Welsh life that blurs fantasy with reality

BBC2 was generally seen as an informative channel and was applauded for making good quality programmes that were well presented. Jurors also enjoyed the lack of advertisements. The timing of the *9 O'clock BBC2W* news was highly appreciated. The political affairs series *Dragon's Eye* was praised for being professional, in-depth, and for giving politicians a hard time and 'making them squirm'. It was also seen as informative and relevant, and was regularly watched by several of the jurors. It was compared to *Hardtalk* on BBC World. The comedy series *Satellite City* was described as 'fabulous' by several of the jurors and was a programme that they would make an appointment to view rather than just coming across it by chance. None of the 17 jurors had seen *Fried*.

S4C

Newyddion (Weekdays: 6.00pm, 7.30pm, weekends: variable times,) S4C's evening news programme produced by BBC Wales.

Pobol y Cwm (Weekdays: 7pm, omnibus edition on Sunday afternoons) Popular long running soap series.

Y Sioe Gelf (Sundays: 7.30pm) A weekly look at the arts in Wales.

Nia (8pm: Saturdays) Recently launched Saturday night chat show presented by Nia Roberts.

Welsh speaking jurors were much more aware of S4C programmes, than non-Welsh speakers, but the majority had watched something on the channel. S4C news was acclaimed for having a lively format and for presenting the news with ‘a bit of a kick’. *Nia* was watched by some of the jurors, depending on which guests she had on the show. It was compared to *Trisha* and other chat shows of the same ilk. The Welsh soap *Pobol y Cwm* was popular amongst the Welsh-speaking jurors and was felt to be particularly successful in mid-Wales.

Members of the Welsh jury concluded that the programmes they would actively seek out to view were *Satellite City*, *Dragon’s Eye* and *Barry Welsh is Coming*.

Birmingham Forum

Fifty-seven people took part in the Birmingham forum. Having a larger number of people enabled participants to be separated into breakout groups according to age:

- Group One: 16-28 years old
- Group Two: 29-40 years old
- Group Three: 41-55 years old
- Group Four: over 55 years old

Opinions within each of these groups were not homogeneous, but this section outlines in very broadbrush terms their different concerns, thoughts and levels of engagement with regional programming. Additional opinion drivers included the length of time spent in the region, whether they had children, and their lifestyle.

Audience Profiles

Group One: 16-28 years old

This group tended to have moved around the country due to work, university or social ties and, therefore, had the least engagement with and interest in their region. This was particularly true of those who were not born in the West Midlands but had moved there more recently to study, or for work-related reasons.

- 16-28 year olds were the most likely to differentiate between Birmingham City and the rest of the region. There was interest and pride about Birmingham that was not present when participants talked about the rest of the region.
- Despite this lack of engagement with the region as a whole, the group all regarded regional news as important and the majority of them claimed to be regular viewers. They were interested in events happening in the region and many of the group preferred to watch local news to national news. They liked the informal and friendly tone of the regional news.
- There was limited interest in other regional programmes. The group would potentially watch programmes with a youth or younger focus, for example on nightlife in Birmingham, but they were critical of the existing choice of regional programmes. There was some interest in local current affairs programmes, depending on the subject material tackled.

Group Two: 29-40 years old

This group was less homogeneous than the 16-28 year olds and tended to make decisions or form opinions based on wider factors such as their children's needs or the hours that they worked.

- Participants in this age bracket struggled to see what the role of regional television was as they did not see their area as particularly different or unique. For example, Birmingham was seen as the same as any other large city, rather than as something that it was important to represent. As a result, regionality was not a big part of how this group defined themselves.
- But, 29-40s did think that the region was special, simply in terms of the fact that it is in the centre of the country, and they felt it was a friendly, tolerant and multicultural place to live.
- There was a lot of interest in regional news and what was happening in the local area. Most thought the style of ITV news was in tune with what they wanted and felt that it adopted a more informal and relaxed style than other channels.
- Local current affairs programming with topical issues of the 'softer' variety e.g. crime in the area, hospital scandal etc. was the only other area that this group were enthusiastic about viewing.

Group Three: 41-55 years old

The industrial heritage of the region is the defining feature of the area for 41-55s. The majority described themselves as 'Brummie' and saw this as an important part of who they were. Those who had moved around the country saw the region as less important, in terms of their identity.

- But, regional programming had a value both to those who had moved around the country and to those who were born and bred in the West Midlands. The group welcomed the way it enabled them to keep in touch with what was happening in the region, and in areas where they used to live.
- There was a pragmatic approach from this group towards the quality of programming with, for example, dramas regarded as either good or bad. Where the programme was set or made was not important if the quality of the programme was high.
- There was a strong call for a magazine programme with an appeal to all ages, covering what was on in the area, reviews of local entertainment, restaurants etc. Like the other groups, this age bracket placed a high value on regional news and regional current affairs

Group Four: Over 55 years old

The group of over 55s tended to be active in their local community and they were interested in and proud of the heritage of the region. There was a strong sense of belonging to the area; many were born and bred there

- Regional programmes were a key part of their viewing patterns and they rated them highly. Again, news and current affairs programmes were particularly popular. Programmes about the area and its history were also praised.

- The strongest message from this group was *'if it isn't broke don't fix it'*. They value knowing where and when they can find their favourite television programmes and their television routine is important to them. The over 55s were the most reluctant to *'lose'* anything from the current schedule.

To summarise, overall there was almost universal interest in regional news regardless of age, gender, ethnicity and socio-economic group. And there was a great deal of enthusiasm about looking out for their area on television and knowing what was happening in their area.

"I always look out for my town on TV" (16-28, Birmingham)

"It's really important to know what's going on in your area" (29-40, Birmingham)

General Findings

Local news was one of the principal sources of local information, along with local newspapers (see Table 1 below). The numbers turning to the internet are still very low at present.

Table 1 Where do you get news on what is happening in your area? (Pre-Forum Questionnaire)

Midlands Today (BBC)	72%
Central News (Carlton)	75%
The Birmingham Post	4%
The Birmingham Evening Mail	46%
Other local papers	40%
The Internet generally	4%

(Base = 57)

* Please note low sample size

Almost three-quarters (74%) said they were very interested in regional news, but there were real differences in what people wanted outside regional news.

Younger participants were interested in programmes on the nightlife and people in Birmingham. Older groups tended to praise the more historic and factual programmes, while local current affairs programmes (focussing on topical issues) were of interest to a section of participants across in each age group.

Other regional output (beyond news and current affairs programming) became more of a priority as viewers got older. Younger groups in the forum rated it at the bottom of their priority list, along with religion and arts programmes. Older groups tended to prioritise it more, particularly those who already regularly viewed regional programmes such as *Waterworld*.

Viewers across all the age groups put greater value on quality rather than quantity of programmes. Participants in the forum seemed more willing to accept fewer regional programmes than were the jury participants. This may be due to the fact that people in the West Midlands perceived their area as less distinctive than in the north of England or in Wales, and also had more mixed views about it.

As in the juries, participants in the forum were shown a reel of current regional programmes from Central Television, and examples of networked programmes set in particular regions. Note: these views are based upon 57 individuals only and, therefore, are entirely subjective. They lend no weight to the key conclusions of this research, but simply are illustrative of participants' reactions to the short clips shown at the forum.

Central Television & ITV Network

Central News West (1800 11.3.02) One of three sub-regional daily news bulletins

Waterworld (1930 19.2.02) Documentary series looking at the history and everyday life on the canals and rivers of the region.

It's Your Shout (1400 27.01.02) (Current Affairs) Regular political debate featuring regional MPs.

Rock Legends (2250 4.1.02) (Arts) Profiles of well known Midlands bands.

Spotlight Asia (0500 19.1.02) (Current Affairs) International and local news magazine for Asian viewers.

30 Minutes Special Report (1930 8.1.02) Regular current affairs series.

Crossroads (1340 5.3.02) (Networked drama) Early evening soap.

Peak Practice (Networked drama) Long running peak-time medical drama set in the Peak District.

Central News West was the most well received of all the programmes and watched by all age groups. The quality was praised along with its reporting style. Its presenters were seen as familiar, humorous and friendly. Sports coverage was seen as more in depth than the BBC's.

"I feel at home with Central News, it has a casual approach" (41-55, Birmingham)

Waterworld provoked a polarised response across the age groups, with the oldest participants being more likely to be positive and regular viewers, and younger participants showing little interest.

"(Waterworld) One of the few things I make a point of recording" (55+, Birmingham)

"(Waterworld) The majority of people I think would not find this of any interest...I would not watch it even if I was bored" (16-28, Birmingham)

"There is a big network of canals here and we should be proud of that, it's promoting our area" (29-40, Birmingham)

There was low awareness of *It's Your Shout* across all age groups, particularly amongst younger people, but some viewers commented that its scheduling at 2pm on Sundays contributed. A number said they might watch it if it was on in the evenings and if it was about a topic that they were interested in, although others thought it did not look cutting-edge enough.

"I would watch the headlines for interest stories first...it would be good if it was on in the evenings" (16-28, Birmingham)

Rock Legends was regarded as promoting the region and its heritage, and was popular across participants of all ages. There was particular enthusiasm and loyalty towards the presenter Noddy Holder. A strong factor behind the praise for the programme was the fact that it is presented by someone with a regional accent, who is clearly proud of the area.

"(Rock Legends) Excellent...a good old Brummie to present it and emphasise the great talent we have...and what we've achieved" (41-55, Birmingham)

"(Rock Legends) It is a nostalgic trip down memory lane, I identify with the enthusiastic Noddy Holder and the Birmingham accent" (16-28, Birmingham)

Few participants said they watched *Spotlight Asia*, although ethnic participants liked the clip shown at the forum. They felt it was good quality and well presented. Scheduling was a real issue here as some participants said they were interested in viewing the programme, but not at 5am.

Some participants expressed concern about segregating audiences by ethnicity. This was particularly poignant when people talked about how they feel Birmingham is special and different because of its multi-cultural community. Someone said, *"Why single this out? It segregates people, their issues are our issues" (29-40, Birmingham)*

But, Asian participants felt that this programme would be relevant and interesting to them, if it was on at a more convenient hour.

"I would watch this if it was on at an appropriate time...there's not enough programmes about the sub-continent...I have to subscribe to Asian satellite channels for this news" (16-28, Birmingham)

"(Spotlight Asia) It's a responsibility of regional broadcasting to cater for all aspects of the community" (41-55, Birmingham)

30 Minute Special Report was seen as valuable and thought-provoking, although whether people viewed it or not was largely dependent on the subject matter. After regional news, participants in the forum considered this type of current affairs programme as the most valuable regional programme.

"Programmes like this (30 Minute Special Report) should be shown more often so that people are aware of the troubles in their region" (41-55, Birmingham)

"Anything that is informative about your area is important" (29-40, Birmingham)

Crossroads was unpopular across the board. Most felt that it portrayed a negative view of Birmingham. The majority of the 57 participants thought the acting and story lines were weak compared to other long standing soap operas.

“It’s a poor reflection on the region” (55+, Birmingham)

Peak Practice was seen as a good programme in itself, but was not associated with the region at all. Women and older viewers in particular were keen and rated it on the same level as *Emmerdale* and *Coronation Street*.

“(Peak Practice) I didn’t connect this to my local region but really enjoy watching it. They raise some good and general topics in life” (41-55, Birmingham)

“(Peak Practice) I don’t think it reflects the region, it could be set anywhere apart from the opening titles” (41-55, Birmingham)

THE IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL PROGRAMMING

Each jury was split into three breakout groups and the groups were asked to consider how important it was for them to have free-to-air programmes made within their region and specifically for their region. They were then asked how important they felt it was for others, both those living in their region, and viewers living in other parts of the country, to have free-to-air access to these kinds of programmes.

Northern Jury

Overall, the three groups from the Leeds jury agreed that free-to-air regional programmes were important both for themselves as individuals and for others, even though they were fairly critical of current output. Regional programming was considered particularly vital for news about what was going on in their area. The Leeds jurors accepted that regional productions tapped and developed local talent and enabled them as viewers to identify on a personal level with local, successful individuals. But they also felt that regional programmes needed to appeal to a diverse audience. Most felt the emphasis should be on quality rather than quantity.

Welsh Jury

In Wales, there was a much stronger sense of the importance of regional/national programming. It was felt that programmes made within and for Wales helped to promote the Welsh culture, heritage and Welsh language and helped foster a national identity. Regional programming was thought to be important in encouraging tourism, which was vital for the economy and for employment. Once again, the emphasis was on quality programmes. *“There are different areas of Wales that you can travel to, and although it is a small country, areas are completely different. There needs to be high quality programmes to reflect the high quality of Wales.”* One juror said that it did not matter to her personally to have regional programming. She preferred networked programmes and said a regional programme would have to be exceptional to attract her away, but she felt it was important for other people to have the choice on free-to-air services.

Birmingham Forum

Despite differing levels of engagement with their region, most people prior to taking part in the forum felt it was important to have their area represented on free-to-air television in some form. In a pre-forum questionnaire, 32% said it was very important and 37% said it was quite important (see Table 2).

Table 2 How important is it to you that free-to-air television (BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, C4, C5) shows programmes that are set in or are about your region? (Pre Forum questionnaire)

Very important	32%
Quite important	37%
Neither important nor unimportant	25%
Not very important	5%
Not at all important	-
Don't know	-
No answer	2%

(Base: 56)

THE FUTURE **Juries**

Using briefing notes, which were given out to all the jurors, the moderator talked through some of the recent changes in broadcasting and technology; the growth of cable/satellite/digital channels; the increasing penetration of the internet; RSLs and the concept of Community Television, and how all these things have implications for the future of regional programming.

Following expert witness sessions (see Appendix II), jurors were taken through a number of different proposed scenarios or models for the future for regional programming, particularly in relation to ITV1. The models were slightly different in each case, as they had to be applicable to the rather different situation in Wales, but the key options are outlined below.

Proposed Models

It is not possible to predict what will happen in the future with regional broadcasting, however, there are several options for what could happen:

- Regional programming stays on ITV1 but in a different form – the ITV Regions are made bigger and so provide regional programmes for a wider area, although news stays local.
- ITV1 shows only national networked programmes and regional programmes are shown on a separate digital, cable or satellite channel. In Wales, Welsh language programmes would continue to be shown on S4C.
- ITV1 decides it cannot afford to produce regional programmes so it stops showing them. The BBC continues to produce and show regional programmes.
- There will be fewer regional programmes on ITV1 but they will be better resourced and most will be screened at or near peak times. In Wales, this option was put in the form of a Charter for Nations & Regions.
- The situation stays the same – ITV is regulated in the same way and produces the same range and diversity of programmes as is currently the case.
- ITV1 decides it can't afford to produce regional programmes so it stops showing them. A network of local television services (RSLs) broadcast local programmes across the country (option put to juries only).

THE JURIES DECIDE

Each jury was split into three groups and the groups were asked to consider each of the options for the future of regional programming on ITV1 and report back their thoughts to the whole jury. Their thoughts are summarised here.

Northern Jury

In Leeds there were mixed reactions to the status quo. Many felt ‘better the devil you know’ and argued the advantage of familiarity. But there was recognition that this was unfeasible because of the way the broadcasting landscape was changing, even if it was what they might want ideally. Some argued that there was a danger of stagnation if change was resisted, and a need to move with the times.

One group felt that the option whereby regional television stayed on ITV1, but in the form of macro-regions with local news, was the best one. They thought that the key advantage was that they would still get news local to their area, but benefit from a greater variety of regional programmes from a larger area. They wanted this to be supplemented with a network of local television services. Another group also felt swayed by this option. They thought macro-regions would reach larger audiences and, therefore, have greater resources to make better quality programmes. But some felt the ITV regions were already too big.

Having regional programmes on ITV2 was seen to have the advantage that everyone would know where they were and it might mean there would be greater investment in the programmes made. But jurors were unsure about digital switchover and whether ITV2 would be free-to-air for everyone.

The downside of having all regional programming on the BBC was seen to be that it would reduce competition and quality might fall. The fact that the BBC is not obligated to provide regional programming was a key issue and the loss of local news on ITV1 was viewed negatively.

The local television option was seen as positive in terms of local people having a say, but there were concerns about coverage, poor reception and low budgets. The fact that some areas might not be catered for at all was unacceptable, as was the fact that local news might not be provided because the costs would be prohibitive.

Welsh Jury

In Wales, the options were slightly different. Most members of the jury felt that the two options to remove regional/national programming from HTV Wales and leave provision up to the BBC, or to remove it from HTV Wales and place it on the digital channel ITV2 were not tenable. Without specific programmes of interest to viewers in Wales, jurors felt it would signal the end of HTV Wales. They also believed that lack of competition for the BBC would mean that quality would slip and potentially these programmes would disappear altogether. They felt that having regional programming on both mainstream terrestrial channels offered choice and that this was being taken away if HTV Wales opted not to do it. And many felt that since digital was not yet widespread, placing regional programming on ITV2 was ‘jumping the gun’.

A number of jurors were unsure about the idea of the Charter as presented to them. They said they did not know what *fewer* programmes implied and thought it might be the start of a slippery slope. They wanted to know exactly how the Charter for Nations & Regions would work. They felt that agreements could change over time and wondered how the introduction of OFCOM would affect things.

Birmingham Forum

In order to move the focus of the forum from the current situation to the future, participants were taken through briefing notes and watched a presentation on the existing climate and how this is changing. This allowed for an understanding of how issues such as broadband and the diversification of audiences are affecting the communications industry

Most participants were already aware that the way in which they watched television was changing. There was particular interest in personal video recorders such as TiVo and internet viewing. Some younger viewers saw the future as one in which they would be free to determine their own viewing (and also free from the licence fee). With a few exceptions, older participants were less excited about the implications of a changing technological horizon; some were also concerned at being forced to switch to digital. They tended to worry about the financial implications of the changes and about protecting the television programmes that they currently enjoyed.

Each breakout group discussed the pros and cons of each of the five proposed future models and was invited to draw up its own option if it wished. The following chart summarises the responses to each option:

Option	✓	✗
1 <i>Regional programming stays on ITV1 but in a different form – macro regions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend knowledge of other areas • Programme quality improved • News stays local 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region already too big • Might be job losses • Some localities might get lost
2 <i>ITV1 shows only national networked programmes and regional programmes are shown on a separate digital cable or satellite channel</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to locate programmes • Opportunity to find out about other regions • More time slots available for other genres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would not work in the short term as not enough people have digital • Who will fund it – the viewer? • Might miss the regional programmes on ITV1? • If low viewing figures they might disappear altogether • What happens to regional news?
3 <i>ITV1 stops showing regional programmes; BBC continues regional programming</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBC might invest more money in regional programmes to maintain their reputation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBC is not regulated so might stop showing them • Impact on the licence fee • Potential job losses • BBC would not have any competition so reduced quality • ITV is the traditional regional broadcaster
4 <i>There will be fewer regional programmes on ITV1 but they will be better resourced and most screened at or near peak-times</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better quality programmes on at more accessible times • More viewers will attract higher revenue and more investment • Better quality programmes will improve perceptions of Birmingham 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some people would prefer networked programmes such as a drama in peak time • More money does not necessarily lead to higher quality programmes
5 <i>The requirements stay the same</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No confusion • Do not like change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have to change • Current programmes are stereotypical and old fashioned

OPTION 1

Regional programming stays on ITV1 but in a different form – the ITV Regions are made bigger and so provide regional programmes for a wider area although news stays local

Many participants, particularly older viewers (55+), welcomed the way that this option would extend their knowledge of other areas around the country.

“It’s nice to be able to click into other regions especially if you have family or personal interest in a particular area” (41-55, Birmingham)

“It would be good to see what’s going on in different regions” (55+, Birmingham)

There was some optimism that Option 1 would help to improve programme quality and that there would be fewer low budget local programmes. Participants from all age groups were also relieved that the news would still be local.

“Local news affects everyday life and you should retain it” (55+, Birmingham)

However, there was a strong sense that the region was already too big in terms of the broadcasting area and that if it was extended any more there would be no sense of the region left. Interestingly, this was a particular concern with the 16-28 year-olds whose interest and loyalty lay towards the city of Birmingham, rather than the surrounding and larger region.

“We’ll end up watching Welsh TV” (16-28, Birmingham)

“It would end up too watered down, the West Midlands is our region” (55+, Birmingham)

Concern was expressed that those areas on the periphery might lose out, although it was pointed out that central areas like Birmingham would probably do well out of this option. Some participants worried about how regions would be joined together and whether they would be similar enough to share the same regional programming.

“The areas might be too big and diverse for this” (55+, Birmingham)s

A minority of participants expressed a concern about job losses through the broadcasting areas merging.

OPTION 2

ITV1 shows only national networked programmes and regional programmes are shown on a separate digital, cable or satellite channel

Many participants welcomed the way that this option made it easy to locate programmes for those who wanted to watch them, and easy to avoid for those who were not interested.

Like Option 1, this option offered an opportunity to find out about other regions outside their own, and to inform holiday destinations and day trip choices. Participants who were less interested in regional programmes liked the fact that Option 2 allowed more time slots for other genres, particularly for popular genres like drama and sport, although this was counteracted by concern as to what would replace the regional programmes and how it would be funded.

“This could compromise the quality of existing national programmes if more have to be made to fill the void where regional programmes once were” (16-28, Birmingham)

But, younger participants pointed out that Option 2 would not necessarily work in the short term as not enough people currently had digital. There was a suggestion that this was an elitist option as not everyone has access to it. Some older viewers were quite angry about being forced to go digital by the Government.

“I don’t get gas, I’m not likely to get cable” (55+, Birmingham)

There were also perceived cost implications with this option about who will fund it and a fear that it might end up being expensive for the viewer.

Some felt that they might miss regional programmes on ITV1.

“There could be quality on TV but would you lose the identity of the Midlands?” (29-40, Birmingham)

And there were genuine fears that if viewing figures were low, regional programmes would disappear altogether.

“Viewing figures might reduce and you’d be left with nothing at all” (41-55, Birmingham)

Concern was also voiced as to what would happen to regional news in this option.

“What would happen to regional news – would we lose it all together?” (55+, Birmingham)

OPTION 3

ITV1 stops showing regional programmes; BBC continues regional programming

There was a hope that in this option the BBC might invest more money in regional programmes to maintain their reputation. But many participants were cynical about whether this would actually happen. Most believed that without competition programme quality would diminish.

“The BBC only provides programmes now to compete with ITV” (16-28, Birmingham)

By far the strongest concern with Option 3 was that the BBC was not regulated and so might decide to stop showing regional programmes altogether. It was thought that decisions would be based solely on viewing figures. Participants did not like the loss of choice with this option and criticised the way they would be ‘forced’ to watch the BBC to see regional programmes.

“We’ve got the right of choice” (55+, Birmingham)

A minority were concerned that if regional programming was left to the BBC it would take away regional advertising.

Participants saw ITV as the traditional regional broadcaster and wanted to preserve this role. A few mentioned the resulting loss of jobs and local talent if ITV stopped showing regional programmes.

OPTION 4

There will be fewer regional programmes on ITV1 but they will be better resourced and most screened at or near peak-times

There was a strong feeling that Option 4 would produce programmes which were better quality and that were on at more accessible times. As a result, participants were hopeful that there would be more viewers to attract higher revenue and thus more investment into regional programmes.

There were perceived to be sociological implications. Generally, it was thought that better quality programmes would improve external perceptions of Birmingham and the surrounding areas, although this was dependent on regional programmes being shown nationally, or across macro regions.

Those not interested in regional programming disliked this option on the grounds that they would prefer networked programmes, such as dramas in peak-time. And those who enjoyed regional programmes worried that there would be greater competition if they were shown at peak-times.

“There will be lots of competition at peak-times with things like Coronation Street and EastEnders” (29-40, Birmingham)

There was a sense that with this option there remained an opportunity for more people to ‘stumble’ across regional programmes. This was seen to be an attribute of the current system and something that many considered valuable to hold on to.

Some mourned the reduction of regional programmes associated with this option and a minority said they wanted more rather than less regional programming. This opinion tended to be held by older participants who were happy with the current standard and quality of regional output.

“Fewer programmes would mean fewer opportunities to see local things” (55+, Birmingham)

There was also an argument that more money does not necessarily lead to higher quality programmes.

“It doesn’t mean they’re going to get better just because you throw money at them” (55+, Birmingham)

OPTION 5

The situation stays the same - ITV is regulated in the same way and produces the range and diversity of programmes as is currently the case

Mainly older participants welcomed this option, as they tended to resist change and preferred the lack of confusion in keeping things the same with viewers knowing what was on and when. And those who regularly watched and enjoyed regional programmes would not lose out.

“Change doesn’t appeal to our later age group” (55+, Birmingham)

“If it ain’t broke don’t fix it” (55+, Birmingham)

However, the majority of participants acknowledged that it was impossible to keep things the same in a climate of technological and cultural change.

In terms of the quality of programming, there was a strong feeling that the situation should not stay the same, and that there must be a move away from programmes that were stereotypical and old fashioned.

“Regional programmes now are patronising and old-fashioned and...we should start phasing the new system in” (16-28, Birmingham)

Three of the four groups then created their own option which are outlined over.

Other Options

The youngest age group (16-28) designed the following option, which the majority of them agreed was the best model for the future:

Option 6A

Regional news stays on ITV1 and there is a cable channel for other regional programmes but

- **regional programmes need to appeal to this audience and be relevant, fresh and up-to-date**
- **they need to be well advertised and promoted**
- **they must enhance rather than mimic the region's reputation**
- **scheduling needs to be given careful thought**

"I didn't know that lots of these regional programmes existed" (16-28, Birmingham)

"It seems to me that regional programmes now are just there to fill time like when EastEnders is on" (16-28, Birmingham)

Twenty-nine 40 year-olds also came up with their own suggestions which combine the macro-regions option with very localised channels on cable television, like Channel M in Manchester, and other RSLs.

Option 6B

Regional programming stays on ITV1 but in a different form – the ITV Regions are made bigger and so provide regional programmes for a wider area, although news stays local, AND there are separate cable channels for very localised programmes.

Many of this group felt strongly that regional programmes should cover a larger area and that this would result in better quality programmes. The majority were happy with Option 1 as it stands, although the 'added extra' of RSLs was thought agreeable.

"It would be better to cover a bigger area" (29-40 year old)

"It's really important to have quality programmes" (29-40 year old)

Forty-one to 55 year-olds also created their own option which included both the BBC and a separate cable channel showing regional programmes.

Option 6C

The BBC continues to show regional programmes but at more accessible times and that are better resourced. ITV2 also shows regional programmes and is free to view. ITV1 shows only national programmes. Local news follows the national news as is the case at the moment on ITV1.

This group felt it was important to ensure that there is still competition and that the BBC does not have a monopoly over regional programmes.

Group 4 (55+) did not create their own model. The majority were comfortable with Option 1 and the creation of larger regions.

THE JURIES' RECOMMENDATIONS

The moderator facilitated a debate with each jury to attempt a consensus for the preferred option (or elements of options).

Northern Jury

Retention of the status quo was the overall preference of the Northern jury. In an ideal world, 11 of the 15 jurors chose for the situation to remain the same. But the jury accepted that this was not likely to be possible. Their recommendation for the future if change was required was:

Regional television stays on ITV1 but in a different form i.e. macro regions with local news. A network of RSLs broadcast across the country. This was only acceptable to the jury with the following guarantees:

- Retain the extended, peak-time regional news
- Programme time is allocated fairly among the (mini) regions that now comprise the macro-regions
- A commitment to quality generally
 - consult viewers to ensure that the new system is acceptable
 - commit to spending
 - increase budgets
- The provision of support (financial) to RSLs to facilitate coverage and ensure quality
- Commitment to diversity/make programmes for everyone
- Effective promotion of regional programmes

The jurors also wanted a number of concerns to be noted about the preferred option:

- Exactly how large will the new regions be?
- Is this a slippery slope and will the macro-regions get ever larger?

Welsh Jury

The Welsh jury reached its own recommendation, which was that:

HTV Wales has to screen the current range and diversity of programmes of specific interest to viewers in Wales, but they should be better resourced and more should be screened at or near peak-times. Possibly subsidised by government or European funding.

It was felt that this would create a virtuous circle of investment, leading to the development of better skills which in turn would produce better programmes, which would increase sales. The jurors then discussed how extra funding could be found to achieve these aims. They generated the following ideas:

- European funding and grants
- Look again at the difference in tender payments between HTV and other ITV licensees. Perhaps the government could reduce HTV's payment in return for greater investment in programmes in Wales
- Having larger English regions would increase the spend per regional programme
- Lottery grants and funding
- Selling programmes overseas
- Selling programmes to the network
- More use of business partnerships to exchange skills

THE FORUM'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the participants in the Birmingham forum did not fear changes to the regional programming arrangements. They were creative in their thinking and willing to deconstruct options and devise their own.

- While there was no clear consensus behind any one option, and with several groups choosing their own Option 6, most of the participants favoured elements of Options 1 and 4 which advocated improved quality and maintaining the link between ITV1 and regional broadcasting.
- Option 3 – leave regional programming to the BBC, was universally discounted as being undesirable.
- There was a clear consensus on the importance of having regional news on ITV1, and also considerable interest in regional current affairs on topical issues.
- Most of the participants were relatively happy with using digital channels to supplement this or having a macro-region, with the exception of older people.

EVALUATION OF THE JURY & FORUM PROCESS

Every participant in the research was given a pre and post jury/forum questionnaire. The purpose of this was to gauge individual opinions on the issues covered in the jury/forum and to assess how opinions and perceptions may have changed over the course of the two and a half day jury and one day forum.

All the jury members were positive about the jury experience and they all had something favourable to say about the process. When asked what they thought was the best thing about a citizens' jury they gave comments such as "*Making a contribution and helping to shape the future of TV*" and "*An insight into issues you may not otherwise have heard of*". Almost all said they would recommend taking part in a citizens' jury to someone else. There was a consensus that the public should have a say in decisions about public service broadcasting and that the citizens' jury process was a good way of involving the public in such decisions.

The majority of participants felt they knew ‘very little’ about regional broadcasting before taking part in the research. However, by the end of the jury or forum all felt that they knew either ‘quite a lot’ or ‘a lot’ about the subject. Table 3 below illustrates the base knowledge of participants prior to taking part in the forum, and how much better informed they felt about the subject at the end.

Table 3 How much do you feel you know about regional broadcasting now?

	Pre-Forum	Post-Forum
Nothing	9%	-
Very little	74%	9%
Quite a lot	12%	67%
A lot	4%	25%
No answer	2%	-

Base = 57

Jurors’ views changed over the length of the jury in terms of their perceptions of the importance of regional broadcasting. In all likelihood this reflects the uncertainty participants had at the start, in terms of what regional programmes actually were, and also the fact that most had not given the subject much thought previously. The process demonstrates the value in seeking measured, informed views from the public about issues like this. Surveys tend to obtain top-of-mind thoughts, whereas juries and forums offer a much more deliberative approach enabling participants to look at an issue from a variety of different angles and then give considered opinions.

6 FINDINGS: POSTAL SURVEY

A questionnaire entitled Public Service Broadcasting was placed on the BARB QUEST panel between 2nd and 29th July 2001. Panel members are recruited from every region in the UK, so that the panel is fully representative of the whole population. A short introduction explained to panel members that they were being asked questions about the types of programmes they watched and also about what types of programmes they felt should be provided in the future. Included in this survey were questions about viewers' opinions on regional programming. The questionnaire was answered by over 5,500 people over a four week period. The response rate was 92%.

Forty one per cent of the 5,727 sample had Pay-television, the largest proportion of whom (44%) had been subscribers for over three years. Just 8% were new subscribers who had signed up less than six months ago. 54% of the sample were terrestrial-only viewers and five percent were former subscribers who had cancelled their subscription and now had just the terrestrial channels.

The majority (77%) of those with access to additional Pay-Television channels agreed that they switch between the free-to-air terrestrial channels, that is, BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, Channel 4/S4C and Channels 5 and the other cable/satellite channels to make up a varied evening's viewing. Half (51%) claimed to watch the free-to-air terrestrial channels for most of the time, and to use the additional cable/satellite channels to 'top up' on particular kinds of programmes. Far fewer said it was the other way round (32%), i.e. that they predominantly watched cable or satellite channels and 'topped up' their viewing with the terrestrials. These data demonstrate the continued reliance of Pay-television subscribers on the terrestrial channels, despite increased choice.

Respondents were given a list of programme genres and asked to indicate how interested they were in watching each type on the free-to-air terrestrial channels (see Table 4).

More people said they were very interested in news than any other genre, followed by drama, regional news and then factual programmes. Interest in other regional programming was much lower, but nevertheless placed ahead of other genres such as children's programming, education, arts and religious programmes.

Table 4 Interest in different genres

Genre	Very	Quite	Not very	Not at all
	Interested	Interested	Interested	Interested
	%	%	%	%
News	45	40	13	3
Drama	42	42	14	2
Regional news	41	41	14	3
Factual	40	47	11	2
Entertainment	38	46	14	2
Sport	24	24	24	28
Other regional programming	20	46	29	5
Current Affairs	18	44	27	11
Educational	10	37	39	14
Arts	10	22	43	25
Children's	9	19	41	31
Religious	6	15	35	44

All respondents were asked how important it was for each genre to be available on terrestrial television, even if they personally were not interested in a particular programme type. Tables 4 and 5 show that there are genres which viewers may not be interested in themselves, but which they still regard as being important for free-to-air television. Children's programming is a prime example.

Endorsing this, 89% agreed with the statement "*Even though I do not watch certain types of programming, I still think it is important that they are available for others to watch on free-to-air channels*", indicating that people approach free-to-air television both as viewers and as citizens.

Table 5 Importance of different genres

Genre	Very	Quite	Not very	Not at all
	Important	Important	Important	Important
	%	%	%	%
News	82	15	2	1
Factual	63	31	5	1
Children's	63	29	6	3
Entertainment	60	33	6	1
Drama	58	34	7	1
Current Affairs	52	38	8	3
Regional programming	50	38	9	3
Educational	49	40	9	2
Sport	45	31	15	9
Arts	30	37	27	6
Religious	26	33	28	12

For the same list of programme genres, respondents were asked if they thought ITV1 should a) have to show each type of programme and b) not bother showing it on the basis that if people wanted to watch a particular type of programme they could buy a specialist channel. Most felt that ITV1 should have to provide all of the genres, but there was less support for arts and religious programming. As many as 89% thought ITV1 should have to show regional programming, rising to 94% in the Grampian region and 93% in Yorkshire.

Overall, 77% said it was important that ITV1 showed programmes set in their region or about their region. Opinion varied across the country with London viewers least likely (68%) to say having programmes set in their region was important and viewers in the north of England much more likely to think it important e.g. Yorkshire (84%), Tyne Tees (82%).

Claimed viewing of regional programming tended to focus on news with the vast majority (94%) saying they watched news from their area. This does not match with BARB viewing figures, which demonstrate a marked decline in audiences watching many of ITV1's regional news services over the last couple of years. But the question was a very general one, covering all regional news services including the BBC's, and did not specify times of broadcasts, nor the frequency of viewing. The next most popular regional genre was factual regional programmes (50% claimed to watch), with fewer saying they watched regional drama (38%), current affairs (35%) or sport (34%) (note: not all of these regional genres are available in all regions).

Over half (57%) felt that their part of the country/region was well represented on mainstream television, that is, BBC1 and ITV1, although only 8% said they thought their area was very well represented with the rest saying it was quite well represented. A significant minority (43%) thought their region was not very well represented. 77% agreed that *"It is important that programming on mainstream channels such as BBC1 and ITV1 reflects the regional diversity of the country"*. Agreement with this statement was lowest amongst younger viewers (66% of 16-24s) and those living in London (72%), and highest amongst 65+s (86%), people from Yorkshire (83%), Granada (83%) and Central Scotland (80%).

7 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING WORKSHOP 25TH APRIL 2002

Around 26 people from the broadcast industry and from academic circles were invited to a workshop chaired by writer and broadcaster Gillian Reynolds to discuss PSB. The ITC and BSC's citizen jury and forum research on regionality was presented as a stimulus for debate and discussion. What follows is a summary of the comments and issues raised by those who took part.

Television in context of other media

The first question posed for debate by an academic was: *“Could television retreat from providing regional programming because of the number of other sources for local information e.g. the local press, internet and radio available for people to turn to? To what extent do viewers feel television does a job that other media do not?”*

Representatives from the ITC and BSC argued that television is a completely different medium. People want to see their part of the world reflected on television because of its status. A BSC spokesperson said it will be a challenge to see where regional television fits in the wider context. But the feeling in the Birmingham forum was that people are still proud to see positive images of their area on both regional and network television. The research shows that localness is very important. There was strong support in the northern jury for the idea of a network of RSLs for local television.

The ITC accepted that the artifice of regions created by broadcast transmitters worked better in some areas of the UK than others.

In terms of television doing a job that other media did not do, a broadcaster highlighted the success of local television news and said it was the prime source of local information for many people. He argued that local television news with all its technology would always beat newspapers to a big local story.

Community Television

The discussion touched on regional community channels and whether these were perceived as being the way forward. The citizens' jury in Leeds showed that viewers are positive about RSLs but tend to see them as a bonus for those areas where they are available. At the moment, as was pointed out, frequency allocation is a problem and a question for the new Communications Bill is whether digital spectrum will be set aside for these services.

Independent Production

A participant from Channel 5 raised the issue of whether viewers really know or care, outside of news and local current affairs programming, where programmes are being made. *“Why is it the broadcasters' role to boost the local economy, rather than just commissioning the best programmes?”* A participant from S4C said that it would be hard to find good programmes from north Wales if there was nothing to sustain an industry there. He believed that the regional requirements placed on ITV helped to sustain local broadcasting talent, which was important for the industry as a whole.

The ITC said it was concerned with both regional output and the production ecology. There was a need to ensure that a single ITV was not just a London-based operation. When Channel 4's targets were set in 1998 (30 per cent production outside London by 2002) there was a strategy to keep a strong production sector outside London. Channel 5 has no legal requirement to produce outside London but has set itself a 10% voluntary target. The television industry benefits from a variety of choices.

The chair felt strongly that viewers do know the difference between a programme made in their area and one made outside it. If a programme does not display a depth of knowledge of the area, it devalues it.

A representative from the BSC said that the further you get from the seat of power, the more regional programming making becomes important. As an example, she said that until Channel 4 did a news programme in Carlisle about Foot and Mouth, the issue was not seen as anything very important. She argued that after this programme was aired, the Prime Minister visited the area and the army was called in to assist. Information about the issue on the internet would not have attracted the same attention.

Investment

An academic said that the obligation of commercial channels to show news in peak underpinned the strength of the news service. But he argued that there has been a decline in investment and as a result quality has fallen. He raised the question: *"To what extent should there be an investment requirement for regional news, and indeed for programming?"*

One broadcaster felt that investment targets were another form of box ticking. He disagreed that investment necessarily produced quality. The move away from detailed requirements was welcomed and to have a requirement for investment was moving back towards controlled regulation. An academic argued that without investment requirements, funding for regional programming would go down, as evidenced by some of the erosion of regional budgets already. He argued that it was more likely that better programmes would be made with more money.

An ITC spokesperson explained that when the Channel 3 licences were competed for, everyone overbid on delivery of hours of regional output, so in many regions there were more hours of regional programming than were originally envisaged. Competition from other channels had increased rapidly and budgets were being spread thinner. But, research highlights the fact that people want quality, and make no allowances for it being regional. There is a need to move forward. The ITC is turning its attention to examining what type of investment targets will be proportionate, rather than restrictive. ITV has committed to 50% of production being outside London – the ITC is asking why that requirement cannot be moved to spend, rather than hours. The ITC gathers statistics to look at year-on-year changes. OFCOM should not be in a position to prescribe regional budgets, but it should have the ability to question why there are particular movements that cannot be explained by production efficiencies. Someone said OFCOM would need to have teeth to go beyond asking questions. The ITC spokesperson said it remained to be seen what teeth OFCOM would be given.

There was considerable debate about how spend would be calculated and the difficulties of measuring investment. Broadcasters tended to think it would overcomplicate things and that budgets could easily be manipulated. A BSC spokesperson said that some of the objectives for OFCOM would be about competition in the industry and for the good of the consumer, and some would be about variety of output. If broadcasters do not stick to what they have promised they will deliver, then OFCOM will have sanctions to take against them. But there is no intention to micro-regulate.

Quality

A BSkyB participant asked “*Does it matter if regional programming does not have a network level of quality? There could be wastage if there is a higher budget than necessary e.g. does a restaurant review need to be network quality?*”. An ITC spokesperson said that audiences do not accept different levels of quality for regional programmes. Viewers want to watch good programmes. A broadcaster said that cheap programmes could be good. He argued that some programmes are very cheap to make, such as a restaurant review, and do not need high investment. He felt that making a judgement about investment would involve a great amount of detail and argued that this would be a hindrance to trade.

S4C

The chair asked about the situation in Wales. A spokesperson for S4C said that S4C has a different challenge to HTV Wales. It produces all types of programming to reach a range of audiences, whereas HTV Wales has to do things that would not otherwise be on the Network. It is a different creative challenge.

BBC

The chair asked if the BBC has an advisory panel charged with overseeing regional production. One participant said that he used to be in charge of a BBC region with an advisory panel and was not convinced that the panel was truly representative of the region. But he felt that having a consultative council with a cross-section of society was valuable. A BSC spokesperson considered that these bodies could be window dressing if they did not have teeth. She commented that the BBC governors run and regulate the BBC, and self-regulation might not have integrity. The spokesperson from S4C responded that regional boards at least guard against the centralising tendencies of a single ITV company, or a single BBC. They may occasionally fail, but that is better than micro-regulation.

The ITC spokesperson raised the question “*How can we take into account the views of the regions in a consolidating ITV within the self-regulatory approach?*”

Self-regulation

A broadcaster said that if the press are going to be negative, it made self-assessment by broadcasters difficult because they would be reluctant to admit to their mistakes. The chair pointed out that Classic FM is piloting a new model where they are using an appointed programme jury. She asked if this would be possible in television. The ITC spokesperson said that hopefully it would, but it remained to be seen how much weight such panels’ reports would carry. She stated that with self-regulation comes accountability and the challenge is to find ways of keeping broadcasters accountable that involves a genuine dialogue with the audience.

Regional Production Base

Another broadcaster commented that whilst defining quality and success was hard, it was not unreasonable to expect ITV to spend money in the regions. He felt that much of the comment in the press was negative, and there was a feeling that ITV was trying to spend less money on regional production. A Channel 4 participant said that the distinctive thing that ITV brings is regionality. Removing funding from the regions is bound to have an effect. Successful programmes have come out of the regions, but will those production companies exist in the future? He said that Channel 4's obligation to produce 30% of its output outside the M25 had made everyone think more carefully about commissioning from across the whole of the UK. Besides programming, he suggested that ITV could have a production quota in the regions.

An ITC spokesperson said, the ITC was discussing with ITV the concept of a global target that embraces network as well as regional production for both viewers and the UK production industry. It was important to have structures that encourage creative hubs all over the country to ensure that ITV does not become too centralised. The health of the ITV network schedule is what funds these regional programmes.

There is an ecology in all the channels where broadcasters are making strategic decisions to fund the less cost effective parts of the schedule. In the early days, the ITC was concerned mostly with what was broadcast, but it has now become more aware of production. It is looking at PSB in the round, including the BBC.

A broadcaster agreed that it was important to preserve the regional production base, but said that the way that it was defined was being transformed by the changing nature of ITV, and by new technology. He said there were now a lot of empty buildings in the regions from the days when broadcasters promised to have a regional wildlife or drama department. He argued that there could be a centre of excellence without a huge investment in real estate. The regional production base is people. There has to be a way for the regional production base to continue. This is in everybody's interest, and it makes a much better balanced British culture. It should be one of the obligations of the public service broadcasters that they do not make Britain so metropolitan that the programmes do not make a connection with the regional audiences.

The chair asked "*Would a bland, metropolitan channel be bad for business?*" A broadcaster said it would depend on how the channel was branded. Without regional obligations, ITV could be run like Sky One and have just entertainment without any programmes that stretched people's horizons and knowledge. Another broadcaster said that this would not be good for business. He said that 10 years ago *LA Law* was on at 9 o'clock. Now, apart from movies, his channel had no American imports at this time because of the demand for domestic material.

Someone asked "*If regional programming is key to PSB, why do only two out of five networks show it?*" An ITV broadcaster responded that the reason there is no obligation on Channels 4 and 5 is that they could not afford to do it because there is no advertising revenue to sustain it. He stated that ITV makes a huge investment in the regional news service. An ITC spokesperson added that the reason why more broadcasters do not have a regional remit is because the channels are meant to be different and complementary to each other. But, it was important to note from the research that no-one was demanding more regional

programmes on any channel. It was interesting also that people did not like the idea of just the BBC providing regional broadcasting. There is a belief that competition in the provision of regional programmes is just as valid as with network programmes. And also viewers were indicating that there is a potential future for more localised services.

An academic asked “*Why do current regions need to remain the same if there is one ITV?*” An ITC spokesperson said they did not. Potentially it would be possible to change them. A broadcaster wondered if it would be worth it in terms of re-branding and other costs. A member of the workshop from Sky argued that Channel 4 has an infrastructure with regionalism of advertising. In public policy terms, there was nothing to stop Channel 4 having six different regional opt-outs for programmes. He asked if these ideas were being explored.

Need for regulation?

An academic posed the question “*Is regional programming a legitimate PSB obligation?*” One ITV broadcaster said that personally he would provide regional news and other regional programmes without regulation, but accepted that there were counter-voices in every organisation, so on balance he felt that a requirement was necessary. But he questioned whether that meant a fully hands-on regulator. An ITN broadcaster believed that regionality would not die without regulation because it helped make a connection with viewers and this was vital. A representative from ITV said that regional advertising had stood up better than anything else in the recession. He added that this might not come from regional programmes themselves, but rather from having a regional presence. He put forward the argument that there is a commercial motive for having regional programming.

The ITC spokesperson added that regionalism is one of the most important PSB obligations for ITV, but although the channel might offer regional news if it was unregulated, it was questionable whether it would remain at the same level, or given the same priority. And it was questionable what other regional genres would continue to be provided.

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RESULTS FROM PREVIOUS CITIZENS' JURIES ON PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

During 2000, three citizens' juries on Public Service Broadcasting were conducted in Telford, Glasgow and Southampton. These juries focussed on various aspects of public service broadcasting, including regionality. A summary of the overall findings were published in *Public Service Broadcasting: What Viewers Want* (January 2001), but here, for the first time, more detailed results of the juries' consideration of regionality are reported.

TELFORD JURY

Each of the three citizens' juries on PSB included a day discussing regional programming. The first PSB jury was held in Telford in March 2000.

How would you define your region?

Jurors were asked for their definition of their region and what made their region special. Individual jurors defined their region differently as:

- The Wrekin
- Shropshire
- West Midlands
- The Wrekin and Border communities
- Telford in the West Midlands

The moderator conducted a vote on the number of jurors who would describe their region using one the above definitions. Half believed that 'Shropshire' best described their region, with the rest split in half again between 'Telford in the West Midlands' and the 'Wrekin and Border Communities'.

Jurors felt that some of the things that impacted on their definitions of their region included:

- Place of birth
- Stomping ground
- Where one lives
- Areas of commonality, due to similar accent, history or geography

How would you describe your region?

When asked to describe their region, jurors came up with the following list:

- Industrial
- Historic
- Rural, green, farming
- Working class
- Cheap and central

The jurors agreed that Wolverhampton and Birmingham were the furthest places that they would travel to for a night out. Despite the presence of many entertainment facilities in the West Midlands, jurors did not feel any sense of ownership of them. Only facilities located within about a 26-mile radius of their homes were considered local.

This sense of regionality was extended to local media. The jury agreed that their local radio stations were Telford Radio and Radio Shropshire, as these were the stations they tuned in to for local news. The majority preferred local radio to national radio. Heart FM, a Birmingham radio station, was not considered to be a local radio station. The jury thought the Telford Journal and Shropshire Star were good, local newspapers due to the quality of journalism, the relevance of advertising and the extensive and relevant local news coverage.

Awareness of Regional Programmes

To gauge awareness of regional television programmes the moderator asked the jurors to name programmes that they thought would be classified under the heading 'regional programming'.

One juror said that programmes such as *Heart of the Country* had good and relevant content, covering local attractions such as Ironbridge. However another juror disagreed, stating that regional programmes did not reflect Telford, but rather the West Midlands, which encompassed Walsall, Birmingham and Wolverhampton – places s/he saw as having separate identities. Most jurors felt that Telford was on the fringes of the West Midlands, and thus many of the issues covered in regional programmes were not felt to impact on them. Another juror commented that s/he did not expect regional programmes to reflect their area specifically, but only broadly.

Programmes such as *Heart of the Country* and *Central Weekend Television* were valued because they reflected local issues and events. *Trauma*, a hospital documentary based in Birmingham, which purported to be of regional interest, was seen as having no more relevance to the jurors than *Jimmy's*, as Birmingham was not considered any more local than Leeds. Programmes like *Take me home*, which was filmed in Telford town centre and included Telford residents as extras, were felt to reflect the region more accurately. *Jobfinder* was seen to account for the specific needs of the region, but as it was directed at the unemployed and broadcast in the early hours, it was not regarded as particularly relevant to the majority of jurors. Neither were regional religious programmes, for example, *Soul Music*, as religion was not viewed as a regional concern. Regional arts programmes were criticised on the grounds that they rarely interviewed local people.

Regional sports programmes were commended though, because the majority of the jurors felt some connection with the local football clubs shown. However, programmes were criticised for neglecting smaller local clubs, such as Telford United and Kidderminster, in favour of less local and bigger clubs like Aston Villa and West Bromwich Albion. One juror expressed dismay at this situation because "*without media interest, such clubs are never going to muster any local interest.*" This particular juror felt strongly that responsibility should lie with local media to generate exposure and coverage through broadcasting, in order to inspire greater local interest.

Many of the jurors noted that they had watched the National Tennis Championships on television because they were played at the Telford International Centre, and despite being of national interest, many of the jurors considered the tennis "*as local as you are going to get*". One commented that regional television was "*a bit like someone's photograph collection; it is only*

really interesting if you, or other people and places you are familiar with, are featured in some of the pictures.” Jurors were shown a reel of regional clips from their local ITV television company. These included: *Extra Time with Ron Atkinson* (Sport), *Waterworld* (Documentary series) *Spotlight Asia* (International & local news magazine for Asian viewers), *30 Minutes* (Current Affairs) and *Pulling Power* (Factual) from Central, and *Granada Tonight* (evening regional news magazine programme, now replaced by *Granada Reports*), *A Taste For Travel* (travel series), and *FM Unplugged* (a one-off documentary about a radio station) from Granada.

The moderator then prompted a discussion based on these regional programmes, focusing on how well they were perceived to serve regional needs, interests and concerns, and the extent to which they were felt to be ‘regional’. Note: the views expressed must be considered as entirely subjective and are based only on a small sample of viewers.

One juror commented that Central’s regional programmes were typical of the image often portrayed of the area. The programmes showed “*shire horses, canals and rural scenes with music from the Hovis advert, immediately conjuring up an image of ‘when I were a lad’ villagers.*” This was compared to what many saw as the more lively, animated and cosmopolitan Granada programmes, which the jurors felt made that region appear a lot more exciting and interesting.

Not everyone felt this way, however. One juror commented that such criticism was unfair, as the Central programmes reflected accurately “*the peaceful, scenic and rural scenes that I consider reflect my image and perceptions of the area; which we should not be ashamed of.*” A younger member of the jury commented that they were not necessarily ashamed of this image, but felt Telford could be better promoted by focusing on other local interests and attractions.

A number of jurors did not perceive *Spotlight Asia* to be a regional programme. Whilst most understood the necessity to recognise the needs of ethnic minorities, some did not believe programmes like *Spotlight Asia* were relevant to the Shropshire region. However one juror disagreed, making the point that these programmes are relevant to the region due to the nature of today’s multicultural society; “*if you come from a different culture then you are inevitably interested in your roots.*” The jurors were asked whether they believed that some types of regional programmes were more relevant than were others. Regional news and regional sport were considered to be the most relevant, and, therefore, most important. Drama and religion were both mentioned as types of programmes that “*lent themselves less well to regional programming.*”

One juror concluded that it might not be so important to have such rigid positive requirements for regional programming, “*because possibly there is not enough quality and relevant content to fill the schedule, and if nothing of interest is going on then they will just show rubbish.*” A number of the jurors disagreed, stating that regional programming requirements were important as they recognised the distinct interests, needs and concerns of the region. One juror commented that “*we might lose our identity if we do not reflect the area in programmes.*” Another juror disagreed feeling that other locally based media, such as the local press, served the needs of the locale equally well.

However, a few jurors stated that the importance of regional programmes lay in the fact *“that they are made in the area, so bring investment and employment to the region, and can be sold nationally, which can bring positive coverage of the area.”* The majority of the jury agreed that it was important to promote the immediate locale better, and that it was nice to hear a regional accent on national television. One said *“I like ‘The Grimleys’ because of their accent; I am from the Midlands and I recognise the show as coming from my area. Coupled with seeing people and places you know on television, hearing an accent you hear everyday gives the biggest buzz.”*

The jurors were asked to comment on the requirement for 80% of regional programmes to be made in the region. One said that such a requirement was important because it secured employment for the region. But another felt that this depended on where you drew the boundaries of the region, *“If programmes about Telford are made by people living in Birmingham it is of no greater benefit to the people of Telford than if they were being made in London.”* Someone else drew the analogy that *“You don’t buy a chocolate bar because it is made in Bourneville but because it is nice, the same goes for programmes. You do not watch them just because they were made in the region but because they are good.”*

A number of jurors agreed with this assertion, stating that the major priority for regional programmes should lie in quality production, not local production. One juror added that television production was probably not even a major employer in the region anyway, so such a requirement was not so important. If the programme was made in the region it should be considered a ‘bonus’, not the precondition for commissioning the programme. This view was affirmed by someone else who doubted *“whether our region has the resources to produce the same high quality television as national programmes”*. However, another juror commented that there was no reason to presume that the region could not develop the skills and resources needed to produce high quality programmes.

The moderator then asked the jurors to comment on their expectations of the quality of the different types of regionally produced programmes. The jurors were agreed that local news, factual and sport programmes were of a consistent high quality. They felt unable to comment on the quality of regionally produced entertainment or social action programmes, but were agreed that local religious programmes had little relevance to regional issues.

The moderator then asked the jury to comment on whether the diversity or quality of regional programmes was most important. Some felt they were of equal importance. Another commented that one gets diversity from the network, and so diversity was less important for regional programmes.

The moderator then asked what they wanted from regional television. One juror commented that it is most important to have positive local coverage, which serves to enhance the image of the region. Another said that local news, sport, current affairs and local history were the types of regional programming that were especially important.

By removing the positive requirements for regional programming the Telford jury thought that:

- There would be a drop in the level of regional programming - the jury was split as to whether this would be large or small
- News, factual and sport programmes were thought certain to stay
- Education, drama and entertainment programmes were thought likely to decrease
- Arts and religion programmes were expected certainly to decrease

All but one of the jurors believed that there should be a requirement of some kind on ITV companies to provide regional programmes. And all but one of the jurors believed that the requirement should not specify the number of hours and minutes that the regional broadcaster must show of each genre.

The majority thought that the positive requirement for 80% of regional programmes to be made in the region should be kept.

GLASGOW JURY The second PSB jury was held in Glasgow in June 2000.

Defining the region

The jurors worked in pairs to answer the questions: *How would you define your region?*, and *What makes your region special?*. They reported back to the whole group. People saw their region in different ways, as evidenced from Table 6 below.

Table 6 How would you define your region?

West of Scotland	4
Central Scotland	2
Govan	1
Greater Glasgow	1
Scotland	2
Glasgow	1

The jurors gave the following reasons for why they associated themselves with the different areas listed above:

- Different accent/language – “*We (West of Scotland) say salt and vinegar and they (East of Scotland) say salt and sauce*”
- Differences in the people – more bigotry in Glasgow, particularly about religion
- The way the weather forecast is divided
- Different water companies

Those who had lived in different parts of Scotland tended to associate with central Scotland. Most agreed that some of the divisions in Scotland were artificial, such as Strathclyde.

The responses below list the reasons they gave for why their region was special.

- The Scottish Parliament
- The people – friendly, straight-talking lively, good neighbours, ‘Tartan Army’
- The accent/language
- Sharp sense of humour
- Cosmopolitan and multicultural city (Glasgow)
- Diverse mix of religion
- Architecture and the arts e.g. Charles Rennie Mackintosh
- Economy of central belt is different from the rest of Scotland. Move away from traditional industries to electronics and call centres. Higher unemployment – people migrating to the South East

Regional Programming

To gauge awareness of regional programmes, jurors were asked to name television programmes that they thought would be classified under the heading of regional programming. They were then asked what it was about these programmes that made them regional. They drew up the following list:

- Scottish presenters and actors
- Set in recognisably Scottish places
- Dealing with issues relevant to Scotland, e.g. politics, Scottish Assembly, current affairs in Scotland, drugs, fishing industry, homelessness
- News and sport about Glasgow and Scotland and UK
- Current affairs about Glasgow and other parts of Scotland
- Not patronising or stereotypical
- Reflecting Scottish humour

The jurors were shown a reel of regional programmes from their local ITV company Scottish Television which included ‘*Scottish Passport*’ (holiday/travel review programme classified as documentary), ‘*Beachd*’ (Gaelic language discussion show), ‘*High Road*’ (drama series), ‘*Artery*’ (arts and culture), ‘*Room at the Top*’ (magazine show, - other factual), ‘*Touchdown Scotland*’ (Scottish American football - sport), and ‘*Chartburn*’ (music/film charts and reviews - entertainment). They had varying reactions and comments to the programme clips. These are individual, subjective views and cannot be taken as indicative of widespread opinion.

‘*Room at the Top*’ was felt to be a good regional programme because it is set in Glasgow and has Scottish presenters. ‘*High Road*’ was thought by some to be contrived and a little patronising, “*To be honest it makes me cringe a bit*”. Others felt the New Year’s Eve programmes tended to resort to stereotypes, “*It always seems to be about shortbread, highland flings and first footing*”. One juror expressed an interest in Gaelic programmes, “*I really like Gaelic programmes, they really grasp the issues.*”

Following the discussion about regional programmes, the jurors worked in small groups to answer the following questions:

1 Is it important to have programmes made in the region – Scotland, Central Scotland, West of Scotland?

2 Is it important to have programmes about the region - Scotland, Central Scotland, West of Scotland?

The jurors in the first group felt that it was not really important where dramas were based, although they did prefer to see locations that they recognised. They recognised the value for tourism, providing the programmes were not 'contrived'. News and weather, politics and Parliament, sport and the Edinburgh festival were seen as being particularly important. The group concluded by saying "We'd like to see Scotland in a positive light, promote ourselves".

The second group wanted to see a balance of programmes from all around Scotland which were well funded and produced, and authentic. This was seen as crucial for bringing income and employment into the area. The third group of jurors felt it was important to have programmes made 'in and about' the region. They perceived that there was a bias toward Glasgow and expressed an interest in programmes from elsewhere in the region, and other parts of Scotland. Good programmes were thought to attract tourism. One juror felt that the flourishing film industry in Scotland should be reflected in regional television.

Keeping the Regional Requirement

The focus in the PSB juries conducted in 2000 was on the requirements for key PSB genres, such as regional programming. The jury was asked to consider whether an overall requirement for regional programming (other than news) was necessary.

The jurors concluded that it was necessary to have some form of requirement for regional programming, although not necessarily with a specified minimum number of hours and minutes for every regional genre. The majority voted to have a more flexible requirement for education, religion, entertainment, arts, Gaelic and children's programming.

They also felt that the positive requirement for the amount of programming made within the region should remain. Most expressed the wish to see programmes from other places in Scotland, not just from the STV region.

SOUTHAMPTON JURY

The third jury was held in Southampton in July 2000.

Defining your region

As with the others, jurors were asked to define their area. Different people had different views about what constituted their region. They included:

- The sunny south
- The New Forest
- Southampton
- The Meridian area
- Central Hampshire
- Portsmouth/Winchester/Southampton
- Southampton/Hampshire and the Isle of Wight – not Portsmouth or Farnborough or Bournemouth
- A 15 mile radius around Southampton
- The whole area from Brighton across the south
- West to Dorchester, Northwest to Salisbury, east to Havant, the Isle of Wight; the Hampshire area
- Salisbury to Brighton and the Isle of Wight

All the jurors agreed that they would count the Isle of Wight as being ‘in their area’. Many were proud of their area, believing that it had a great deal to offer both residents and visitors, particularly in terms of history, attractions such as the zoo and New Forest, good transport links and other facilities. When it came to what made their region special, they gave the following reasons:

- Historic buildings
- The New Forest
- Ocean Village
- The zoo
- Accessible – the transport links are good
- The parks
- The University
- The Abbey at Romsey
- Tight knit community
- Multicultural
- Premier League football team
- French church – the only one in the country

One juror commented that she/he found it hard to define ‘their area’, unlike somewhere like Northern Ireland which was obviously distinctive. Another said their area did not really seem to have a soul and therefore did not inspire the kind of attachment Geordies, Scousers or Brums had to their regions. There was a suggestion that this was due to the transient population. However, other jurors felt that there was a strong regional ‘feel’, and the area had a lot to be proud of that attracted people into the region. One commented “*we’ve got everything here*”.

Awareness of Regional Programmes

The jury was shown a reel of clips of Meridian regional output. These included: *Grass roots* (Factual), *Bon Voyage* (Factual), *Save a Life* (Social Action), *The Green Team* (Social Action), *7 Days* (Current Affairs), *Starting Up* (Factual), *Dunkirk Remembered* (News Special), *Farnborough – Above and Beyond* (Documentary), *The Frame* (Arts), *Wild Watch* (Factual). Most jurors had seen some of the programmes shown to them. The jury felt that there was a good range and variety.

There was a discussion around whether a documentary about Farnborough should be a regional or a national programme. Some felt that the war and Farnborough’s role in it was a national issue, not just relevant to the South. Others felt that since Farnborough was in the South and it was their history, it should be a regional programme.

It was commented that *Save a Life* might have been made in the area but did not seem specific to Southampton, as it was dealing with first aid issues in a way that was equally relevant to all areas.

A discussion followed about presenters in the South, with particular reference to Fred Dineage presenting many programmes, and a question over whether the region lacked other talented presenters. A juror commented that it was important to have people “*that sound Hampshire – if someone sounds like you, psychologically you like it.*”

What makes a regional programme relevant?

The jurors were asked what makes a regional programme relevant to them. They compiled the following list:

- Covers events in immediate area – Southampton/New Forest
- Covers activities by small groups in the community – as that makes it feel more personal
- Covers issues that are specific to the region, to Southampton e.g. unemployment, factory closures in the area
- Presenters that have an affection and enthusiasm for the area; that are not just applying for a job with a television company

Many felt that the attitude of the presenter to the area was more important than the accent.

Someone said that they would like to have more notice about events in the area. S/he said that the Junior Olympics, for example, had received no publicity. Other events, such as the Boat Show and the Festival were also mentioned.

Programmes made in the region

The jurors discussed whether it was important that programmes were made in their area. Some felt that where the programme was made was unimportant, and that if it was well researched and presented it would be good. Others believed that it was very important that programmes were made in the region, because it brought jobs and money into the local community.

Some also felt that people identified with programmes more when they were made in the area and that *“if it was about our region we’d feel a bit cheated if the programme was made in London”*. They also wondered whether it was possible to make a good programme about the area if it was not made there.

The regional genres

The jurors were then asked about the importance of the regional genres other than news, current affairs and history.

One juror said that *“the arts touch an area of our experience that is very important”* and felt that it was important to have regional arts programmes because they could ‘kick-start’ the careers of local artists or musicians.

Several jurors felt that entertainment did not need to be regional. There was a sense that the qualities that made entertainment good cut across regions. They also felt that regional comedy would not work because *“our humour isn’t different to anyone else’s.”*

The jury believed it was important for regional programming to include news, sport (minority as well as majority sports), factual programmes, arts, religion and social action because there were regional interests and topics which they would like to see covered by these kinds of programmes. They also considered it important for programmes to be made in the area, as well as set in and reflecting the area, to provide opportunity and employment to local people and encourage local talent.

9 APPENDICES

APPENDIX I Recruitment Details for Northern Jury

The Leeds Jury specification was based on population statistics for Lancashire, Yorkshire, North East and Border

Gender	
Men	8
Women	8

Age	
16-24	2/3
25-34	3
35-44	3
45-54	3/4
55-64	2
65+	2

Family status	
No children	5
Parents (children 8-16)	5
Parents (children other ages)	6

Work status	
Full-time workers	6
Students	1/2
Retired people	4
Part-time workers	2
Other not working	2/3

Social class	
AB	3
C1	5
C2	3
DE	5

Ethnicity	
White	15
Black	1
Asian	2

Broadcast region	
Granada	5
Yorkshire	5
Tyne Tees	4
Border	2

Subscription	
Subscribers to digital television – through any platform	6
Other non-subscribers	10

APPENDIX II Recruitment Details for Welsh Jury

The specification for the Cardiff Jury was based on population statistics for Wales as a whole

Gender	
Men	9
Women	8

Age	
16-24	3
25-34	3
35-44	3
45-54	4
55-64	2
65+	2

Location	
North Wales	5
Mid-Wales	3
South East	5
South West	4

Welsh-speaking	
Welsh speakers	4
Learning Welsh	1
Non Welsh speakers	12

Social class	
AB	3
C1	6
C2	5
DE	3

Ethnicity	
White	14
Black	1
Asian	2

Work status	
Full-time workers	6
Part-time workers	2
Students	3
Retired people	4
Other not working	2

Subscription	
Subscribers to digital television – through any platform (include 2 Welsh speakers)	7
Other non-subscribers (include 2 Welsh speakers)	10

Recruitment Details for Birmingham Forum

Participants were recruited to match the specification below. They were recruited from Birmingham city centre.

Gender

Men	32
Women	33

Social class

AB	10
C1	14
C2	18
DE	23

Age

16-25	10
25-34	16
35-54	19
55+	20

Ethnicity

White	47
Black	7
Asian	11

Broadcast region

Granada	5
Yorkshire	5
Tyne Tees	4
Border	2

Family status

No children	5
Parents (children 8-16)	5
Parents (children other ages)	6

Work status

Full-time workers	25
Part-time workers	7
Retired	16
Unemployed/other not working	17

Time living in region

10 years or more	At least 33
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Access to multichannel TV

Yes	26
No	39

Example of one of the Jury Agendas

Northern Jury (Leeds)

Day One: 28th September 2001, West Yorkshire Playhouse

9.30-9.45	Explain day's agenda
9.45-10.15	Group discussion
10.15 -11.15	Witness session 1 Neil Robinson; Controller of Programmes, Border Television Ali Rashid; Managing Director, Real Life Productions Professor Charles Critcher; Principle Lecturer in Cultural Studies, Sheffield University
11.15-11.30	Morning break, refreshments
11.30-12.00	Group Discussion
12.00-1.00	Showreel of regional and national programmes Group discussion
1.00-1.45	Lunch
1.45-2.15	Explanation of the requirements placed on broadcasters to produce regional television Q & A
2.15-3.15	Witness session 2 Graeme Thompson; Controller of Programmes, Tyne Tees Television Claire Morrow; Controller of Programmes, Yorkshire Television Mark Alderton; Editor of News and Current Affairs, Granada Television
3.15-3.30	Afternoon break, refreshments
3.30-4.15	Small group discussions
4.15-4.30	Closing session Wrap up and feedback

Day Two: September 29th, West Yorkshire Playhouse

9.30-9.45	Welcome back Explain day's agenda
9.45-10.15	Small group exercise Create an ideal day's schedule
10.15-10.45	Explanation of schedules to full group
10.45-11.00	Morning break, refreshments
11.00-11.45	Explanation of how regional broadcasting is changing and the options for the future
11.45-12.45	Witness session 3 Nicky Edmonds; Deputy Director, Community Media Association Philip Reeve; Managing Director, Channel M Louise Sethi; North West Regional Manager, ITC
12.45-1.30	Lunch
1.30-2.15	Small group discussions
2.15-3.30	Feed back to main group Jury finalise their preferred option for the future
3.30-3.45	Afternoon break, refreshments
3.45-4.30	Presentation of the Jury Findings to Sarah Thane from the ITC and Geoff Elliott from the BSC
4.30-5.00	Thanks and close Post-Jury questionnaire and payment

The Welsh Jury Agenda followed the same format as the Northern Jury.

Expert Witness Sessions

Day One: 8th February 2002 – Chapter Arts Centre

11.15 – 12.15

Witness Session 1: focus on role of regional/national broadcasting in Wales (overview).

Each given 5 minutes to speak. Q & A.

Mr Peter Stead; Freelance Journalist

Professor Kevin Williams; University of Swansea

Day Two: February 9th, Chapter Arts Centre

11.45 – 12.45

Witness session 3: focus on the future options/models.

Each given 5 minutes to speak. Q & A.

Mr Geraint Talfan Davies; Former Controller of BBC Wales

Ms Elin Rhys; TAC

Dr Hugh Mackay; Open University in Wales

Birmingham Forum Agenda

9.00

Registration /Tea and Coffee

Participants register and go to their breakout rooms
Moderators welcome participants and distribute packs
Participants complete pre-forum questionnaires

9.30

Breakout groups

What do you class as your region? What makes your region special/not special?

PROBE: accent, sport, culture, local heroes, heritage, beauty, geographics, diversity...

Does your region play a part in how you define yourself?

PROBE: Importance of national voice, impact of Europe, globalisation...

What regional programmes can you think of? Which of these do you watch?

10.15

Plenary session

Introduction from Sarah Thane, Director of Programmes and Advertising and Paul Bolt, Chief Executive of the BSC

Showreels

11.00

Break

11.15

Breakout groups

Feedback on current regional programmes and discussion of showreel

Which ones have/do you watch, which do you make an appointment to view? Which would you record if you weren't there?

What do you think about these programmes? How important are they?

How do you rate the quality of them?

PROBE: loyalty to programmes, scheduling

Moderators explain current system using short briefing notes and answer questions

Moderators divide group into 4 sub-groups with men and women split up. Each sub-group goes through each of the genres in turn and discusses if they are a priority for them and why.

Feedback from smaller groups. Each group explains why each genre has been/has not been prioritised

Does the group want more regional programming than just regional news? Why/why not?

Why have they prioritised/not prioritised regional programmes?

12.45

Lunch

13.45

Plenary session

'Future Gazing' presentation by Jane Sancho, Research Manager ITC outlining how new technology, increased number of channels etc is changing face of broadcasting and the way we watch television. Q & A

Presentation of 5 options by Opinion Leader Research

1. Regional programming stays on ITV1 but in a different form – the ITV Regions are made bigger and so provide regional programmes for a wider area although news stays local
2. ITV1 shows only national networked programmes and regional programmes are shown on a separate digital, cable or satellite channel
3. ITV1 stops showing regional programmes; BBC continues regional programming
4. There will be fewer regional programmes on ITV1 but they will be better resourced and most screened at or near peak times
5. The requirements stays the same – ITV is regulated in the same way and produces the range and diversity of programmes as is currently the case

14.30

Breakout groups

Moderator runs through 5 options in participant's packs and answers questions to clarify understanding of options

Moderator divides group into 5 sub-groups. Each sub-group is given one option to start with and evaluates its pros and cons. They then move on to the other 4 options

15.15

Break

15.30

Breakout groups

Feedback from smaller groups on the options to whole breakout group

Whole breakout group debates pros and cons of each option. What would it mean for the future? What would you gain/lose from each option?

Group decide preferred option – they can combine options or make up their own

Volunteer feeds the findings back to plenary group
Participants fill in post-forum questionnaires. Moderator collects all documents and distributes incentives
Moderator and volunteer jot down a summary of which option the majority of the group have gone for and why for the volunteer to read out

16.30

Plenary session

Each volunteer presents their preferred option and why
Sarah Thane, Director of Programmes and Advertising ITC, and Paul Bolt, Director of the BSC receive findings

17.00

Thanks and close

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