

News decentralisation in the Scottish television model

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Abstract

Scotland is a stateless nation that has its own communication space. This research presents the intensification of decentralised territorial coverage in television news, both on public TV (BBC Scotland and BBC Alba) and on the commercial channel (STV). In the first case, the creation of BBC Alba improved territorial coverage on public television; in the second, STV has split Scotland into four areas of influence to offer local news opt-outs in each of these zones.

Keywords

Television, communication space, Scotland, decentralisation, news.

Resum

Escòcia és una nació sense Estat que disposa d'un espai comunicatiu propi. Aquesta és la premissa de l'estudi que es presenta, per abordar la intensificació de la cobertura territorial descentralitzada en els informatius de televisió, tant de la mà dels prestadors públics (BBC Scotland i BBC Alba) com del prestador comercial (STV). En el primer cas, la millora de la cobertura del territori ha provingut de la creació de la BBC Alba. En el segon, STV ha dividit el territori escocès en quatre àrees d'influència i ofereix desconexions informatives en cadascun dels territoris.

Paraules clau

Televisió, espai comunicatiu, Escòcia, descentralització, informació.

1. Introduction

Scotland is a stateless nation that has set up an active communication space underpinning the region's identity and cultural values. This is the largest regional centre of audiovisual production in the United Kingdom, with its capital in Glasgow. The role played by the public broadcasting service has been vital in its national construction, and television providers are agents of unquestionable importance for the competitive function of the creative and cultural industry. A prominent role has not only been played by the channels financed with public resources stemming from the licence fee (BBC Scotland and BBC Alba) but also by commercial television (STV) which acts as a public service under the strict supervision and control of the independent authority, Ofcom.

The concept of a stateless nation is, according to McCrone (1998), used for "territories in which the identification with the nation is greater than that with the State of which they are currently a part". This term has spread and been used by different authors, especially to refer to Scotland, Catalonia or Quebec. A communication space is understood as the existence of an area with a specific history, a cultural and linguistic community, the present of a specific political power and communication institutions supplying the area (Gifreu 2014).

The Scottish case forms part of the Europe-wide trend towards decentralising audiovisual spaces which was pointed out by Moragas, Garitaonandía and López (1999). In the last few years Scotland has increased its regional coverage, understood to mean the geographical supply of the news covered by a medium, both the public and the commercial service. On one hand the introduction of BBC Alba has led to a substantial improvement in the news coverage in the most rural zones: the highlands and islands; on the other hand the allocation of local channels for the first time in the region, controlled by the STV Group (the company that manages STV), raises the profile of local information for people in the television supplied.

The aim of this article is to provide a diagnosis on "proximity television" in Scotland, in terms of its establishment in the area. It considers proximity providers to be those which broadcast a committed scheduling intended to talk about news from the region itself. It seeks to find out the role that regional channels (the ones that broadcast their own content in the entire Scottish nation) are currently playing in terms of territorial representation and news decentralisation. To this end special attention will be paid to the news programmes of audiovisual providers and the coverage of the region given by them. It was chosen to focus the research on the news and news programmes, as the news has played a vital part in the relationship between civil society and

the State in Scotland (Schlesinger, Miller and Dinan 2001), and in the evolution of this transformation.

This research is based on fieldwork carried out in Scotland in October 2014 as part of a research placement at the Centre for Cultural Policy Research of Glasgow University. Dr. Philip Schlesinger was interviewed as an expert in the subject in the region, also talking to the main agents in the subject analysed (BBC Scotland, BBC Alba and STV): Margaret Mary, head of BBC Scotland's digital services in Gaelic; Norrie MacLennan, BBC Alba news editor; Paul Hughes, editor of STV Glasgow; Dave Rushton, director of the Institute for Local Television; and Alan Stewart, regulatory affairs manager of Ofcom Scotland. The planning of the fieldwork sought to collect information from the media in the geographical area being examined through the managers of the channels themselves, statements made by the regulatory body and also from the academic standpoint. The work done in the field was complemented with a bibliographic review and by consulting documents prepared by Ofcom and other institutions connected with the audiovisual medium, such as the Scottish Broadcasting Commission and the BBC Trust.¹

2. Communication space, identity and proximity

As part of the globalisation of communication, in which the major providers of information distribute audiovisual content on a worldwide scale, a complementary phenomenon is taking place: the regionalisation of communication. The traditional postulates that see social communication as an expression of the cultural geography of the Nation-State have had to be reconsidered in a setting in which a desire for global interconnection has not disregarded the strong bonds found between social communication on the airwaves and national political spaces, which continue to be vital for the collective identity (Schlesinger 2007).

Deutsch (1953) claimed that nations are closely bound by their social structures for communication interaction and that peoples remain united from within through this communicative efficiency. Education and official celebrations play a significant role in consolidating national identities, both in the case of States and stateless nations. Even though institutions are key agents in maintaining identities, these are only consolidated if social agents internalise them (Castells 1997), taking into account that citizens often identify with identities through activities which come from the bottom up. National identity is thus maintained through the use of language and the repeated exposure of common symbols and, in many cases, both of these are found in the media (Billig 1995).

Through the interactions of daily life and the way these are presented in the media, people assimilate and perpetuate symbols and languages that reinforce their identity. Anderson (1983) claims that media communication is vitally important in forming national consciousness. A good deal of nationalist practice is rooted in daily practice and rituals and the pillars of

national identity are reproduced on an everyday basis through the flags constantly seen flying, sports heroes, the weather forecast which reinforces awareness of political geography and news which categorises certain events as "domestic affairs" and distinguishes these from foreign affairs (Billig 1995). These postulates therefore justify analysing the role of the media and, more specifically, the information they offer as they are responsible for part of these daily practices that are important for constructing identity.

When we speak of identity we should take into account the claims of Joseph Straubhaar (2008), who relates this concept with that of proximity. The author states that the population identifies itself on several levels; i.e. that there are several layers of identity depending on the relational framework to which we are referring. The public plays an active role when selecting and interpreting television programmes and channels and this audience is not uniform (Straubhaar 1991). According to the theory of cultural proximity, the audience has a preference for local and national productions based on different factors: the attractiveness of faces with similar ethnic traits, the familiarity of local styles, the appeal of their own subjects and concerns, the identification of the sense of humour, the recognition of local personalities and stars, etc. "The concept of proximity applied to television involves the idea that there is a context of shared experiences between the broadcaster and its receivers, which will ultimately be reflected in the content of the scheduling" (Moragas, Garitaonandía and López 1999: 19). This proximity will be mostly reflected, according to the authors, in the preferential focus of the providers of news content involving the region in question. Applied to the subject analysed in this research, we should take into account the channels that broadcast all over the Scottish territory, with interest focussed on the news closest to the area.

It is relevant to frame this research within the postulates of public service broadcasting (PSB) and how this is seen in the United Kingdom. We should note that, unlike other more decentralised models such as in Spain and Germany, television policies in Britain depend essentially on decisions made by the central government (Fernández Alonso, Capurro Robles, Sanmartín Navarro and Blasco Gil 2008). According to the Communications Act of 2003, which updated the legislation on the audiovisual sector in the United Kingdom, the public broadcasting service must comply with the following requisites: high quality in the production of programmes: originality of the content and predominance of in-house production; representation of and access for the different languages and social groups (multiculturality); appealing productions to reach a broad majority of people (mass audience); innovation in programming; audience stimulation; neutrality in its production; and a wide range of themes in programming. The channels analysed in this research have to meet these requirements, which are complemented by the four values associated with the service: impartiality, quality, diversity and social values (BBC 2003).

Both public and private television stations are subject to their own specific obligations (Petit 2006). Hence, in the United Kingdom (unlike most European television models) the concept of public service is not connected to the public ownership of the operator or to the financing method of the channel but is inherent in audiovisual communication. Commercial television has subsidised access to frequencies while publicly-owned television has free access to them, so that greater demands are made in terms of scheduling and production.

3. Proximity news on the regional channels

Initiatives prior to any Scottish public channel

Although the British public television model has traditionally been centralised in England,² Scotland has wanted to have distinctive news coverage as it has its own information agenda (Schlesinger, Miller and Dinan 2001). BBC Scotland was the first channel to broadcast original content of its own in the region. This is the Scottish version of the BBC One channel, which shows common programmes throughout the United Kingdom and regional opt-out programmes only in Scotland.

Scotland's own news programming is based on a programme called Reporting Scotland, with regional news which is broadcast after the general interest news programme. This formula, started in 1968, has been kept after rejecting the option to produce its own television news programme which would also include mainstream news from a Scottish point of view, a claim which is known as The Scottish Six. From the months of October to December 1998, Scotland had an hour's news as an opt-out but the endeavour was not a success, revealing yet again the limitations of BBC Scotland's independence. The pattern is repeated three times a day, after BBC News at One (1 pm), BBC News at Six (6 pm) and BBC News at 10 (10 pm). The programme at six in the evening, during prime time, is the longest and most popular.

Demand for a news bulletin described as "integrated" became clear after the 1997 referendum which gave rise to the Scotland Act and to setting up the Scottish parliament in 1999, with the ensuing transfer of powers. The claim envisaged an alternative to the present pattern, using the BBC's network of resources to provide a personalised news programme with international, state, national and local news from a Scottish angle. This would show the public that the BBC in Scotland could serve its audience better given the strong position as a national provider gradually being acquired by the Scottish Media Group, managing the commercial channel Scottish Television (STV). "What BBC Scotland wanted was to come forward as more Scottish, and it thought that the news was the ideal place to show this" (Schlesinger, Miller and Dinan 2001: 40).

These goals were curbed since the news at six was considered to have a symbolic role in the United Kingdom and its most centrist critics were afraid that a totally disconnected news programme would indicate a separatist agenda. The BBC

communiqué (1998: 2) about these demands was quite clear: "It will be important to display a clear response to the transfer of powers but also to maintain the strength and unity of a BBC fully integrated in the United Kingdom". Even though the reply from the Broadcasting Council for Scotland stated that the starting point was to emphasise the different national identity of Scotland, it is nonetheless true that the proposal for The Scottish Six was rejected before the Scottish Parliament was set up. The half-hour of Scottish news by BBC Scotland, always preceded by the mainstream news, was thus the most direct antecedent to having a channel with its own news bulletin, which arrived in September 2008 when BBC Alba was started up.

Launching a Scottish channel, in Gaelic

BBC Alba is a channel managed by the Gaelic Media Service (MG Alba) in association with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Its establishment forms part of the framework laid down in the postulates of sections 208-210 of the Communications Act of 2003³, which stipulates that the service's functions must guarantee that a wide and diverse range of high quality programmes is broadcast in Gaelic and made available to Scottish people. Another forerunner can be seen in the Gaelic Language Act of 2005, which gave Gaelic the category of an official language for the first time. The number of Gaelic speakers had been dropping for centuries and new endeavours to preserve and invigorate Gaelic begun in the 1970s became more obvious as from the transfer of powers in the 90s. In spite of Gaelic and Scottish nationalism not necessarily being interconnected, "the "Gaelic renaissance" of recent decades is clearly connected to strengthening perceptions of Gaelic as a national language (...) and to the increasing emphasis on Scottish political and cultural distinctiveness in general" (McLeod 2006: 88). There have been two key elements to boosting the language: teaching Gaelic at some state schools from 1985 and the expansion of Gaelic to the audiovisual media.

The BBC's programming in Gaelic had been concentrated on the radio as the station had broadcast bulletins in this language since the 1980s. Television was also considered to be a necessary part of promoting the contemporary image of the language and learning about the lifestyles of Gaelic speakers. In spite of this, a few hours' programming on BBC Two were the only slot made available to the audience by the public audiovisual provider. 16 years ago the programme *Eòrpa* started to be produced, which has been continued by BBC Alba and is one of the "channel's flagships". Apart from the public channel's programming, Scottish Television (STV) also had a news bulletin that was started up in the 90s but ended prior to the creation of BBC Alba.

BBC Alba broadcasts content entirely in the Gaelic language from five in the afternoon to twelve at night with the aim of "serving Gaelic speakers, those learning the language, those that might wish to learn and those interested in the language and culture, as well as reflecting and supporting the Gaelic culture, identity and heritage" (BBC Trust 2010:1). The channel's target

audience is on the one hand made up of the 90,000 persons who understand and speak Gaelic in Scotland (1.8% of the population), bilingual with English, and on the other hand the Scottish population in general. In a personal interview given on BBC Scotland, Margaret Mary explained that both these objectives combine to help the Gaelic language and culture become standardised and more visible. We can nevertheless distinguish two strategies for reaching both stipulated potential audiences. Firstly, the daily programming is essentially made up of children's programmes, programmes for language learning, documentaries and daily news; secondly, to reach a broader Scottish public not necessarily limited to Gaelic speakers, the channel also includes music and sports content so that the proximity aspect is not necessarily bound to the linguistic side.

According to the appraisal made by the BBC Trust after the channel had been running for less than two years, the linguistic aim was satisfactory since three quarters of Gaelic speakers claimed they watched the channel daily or weekly. The quality of the original programmes was identified as the channel's strong point, especially as regards documentaries, which were subtitled in English. What's more, four out of every five viewers were not Gaelic speakers, so the aim of attracting new speakers or persons interested in the language was considered to have been achieved, this purpose being reinforced with the programming of specific language-learning content. The strategy of including sports and music programmes in the schedule means that viewers have content related to their own culture and identity, with no need to understand Gaelic.

BBC Alba is considered to improve the plurality of the public broadcasting service in Scotland and the channel is thought to be in a good position to deal with unattended niches in Scottish life. The Scottish government claims, in reply to the BBC Alba review⁴, that BBC Alba's area of influence spreads beyond its main audience of Gaelic speakers and students and declares that the channel adds value to other alternatives that are underway (and were already running before the channel was launched) to back and promote the language. They also state that the structures for operating BBC Alba are working efficiently, which means a wide range of producers can regularly launch projects and boost the Scottish audiovisual industry and specifically the companies in the sector which produce content in Gaelic.

The news is the most widely-watched programme through which the channel establishes a relationship with the region it represents, creating bonds with people and reinforcing the Gaelic identity. The daily news programme is not a version in Gaelic of the Reporting Scotland programme but a programme with its own editorial approach, as is argued by Norrie MacLennan (2014) in a personal interview held for this research. Even though the BBC Scotland channel and BBC Alba share their headquarters in Glasgow, the centre from which the information is coordinated and edited in Gaelic is located in Inverness. This city, 272 km from Glasgow, is the administrative centre for the highland region which, along with the islands, make up the main zones where Scottish Gaelic and

Gaelic culture in general still survive.⁵ This is a scattered area with low population density, meaning that there have to be different production centres working in coordination in order to offer a service with no exclusions. The fact of establishing the channel's news bulletin in Inverness is a key factor to be able to provide a decentralised coverage of the territory for the first time. We should bear in mind that the public provider went from having a single team located in Inverness to cover all the Highlands in English for BBC Scotland to having a channel, BBC Alba, with 29 professionals covering the information for the same size of territory and introducing Gaelic as the main language. At present the channel has 6 regional centres with journalists ready to report on matters from each of the following zones: Inverness, Isle of Lewis, Isle of Skye, Oban, Glasgow and Edinburgh. BBC Alba has thus moved far from the centrism hitherto existing in the most highly-populated cities, above all in Glasgow.

The coordination and editing of the news was set up in Inverness because of the desire to improve territorial coverage but it also stems from the notion of "identity proximity". In the case of BBC Alba this refers to the Gaelic community, mostly located in the Highlands and islands (even though there are inhabitants in Edinburgh and Glasgow), rather than the Scottish identity which is also reinforced insofar as the Gaelic identity forms part of it. That's why local news coverage is based on events that involve the Gaelic community. In this respect television establishes a powerful bond with speakers of the language, keeping in touch with associational, civic and educational communities (especially the few schools that use the Gaelic language). This kind of television requires a greater presence on location and, on opening up the medium, the interaction between the BBC and the community has intensified compared with radio. In the whole area the channel covers the information and activities related to the Gaelic community, more concentrated in the northern part but also those living in other zones. In Glasgow, for example, the activities organised by the only education centre in the city whose primary education is given in Gaelic provide news items (MacLennan 2014).

In spite of editorial independence, accentuated by the location of those in charge of news content at two different centres, the news rooms of BBC Scotland and BBC Alba work on an integrated basis and the two channels share information so as not to duplicate work (news items are only covered once). Forming part of the great BBC network provides the regional channel with more international and national news resources, but always from its own standpoint. The latest news at each of the regional centres is broadcast on BBC Alba but BBC Scotland (and, if required, also BBC One) has the graphic material and text at its disposal through a shared server. This means quality information can be provided at all levels (international, state, national and local) from its own standpoint, and the BBC can provide better cover of Scottish territory.

As regards the BBC Alba news programme, some believe this meets the traditional demands of Scottish Six by having a news

bulletin in Gaelic at 8.30 pm instead of the news in English at 6 pm. Although this news bulletin represents a valuable source of quality information for the Scots, potentially credible and clearly complying with the purpose of serving the Gaelic audience, it is nevertheless true that the linguistic aspect may also be a limitation in view of the small percentage of the population who speak Gaelic. While some documentaries are subtitled in English to be able to reach a wider audience, subtitles cannot be provided for daily news because of information routines and the budget. Each of the items is accompanied by three titles in English to give viewers who don't speak Gaelic the main ideas of the news item.

"Proximity news" (local or community news) is a priority on the channel's programme but the local sphere is not the only level of identity that makes television news representative. Four levels of information are differentiated, associated with the population's four levels of identity: local (referring in this case to the Gaelic community), national (referring to Scotland), State (referring to the United Kingdom) and international. The news bulletin combines items on the different layers of identity with a preference for its own content related to the Gaelic community but not exclusively referring to this. In the case of national and State news, an attempt is made to offer its own standpoint, placing the emphasis on the effects for local people. Depending on the local news for the day, international information is also given, particularly sensitive to what's happening in other parts of the world with minority languages or cultures. The structure and order of the bulletin are flexible: this may vary depending on the news agenda for each day, so that the different layers of identity are not assembled in structural blocks and the order may change from day to day.

On all four levels material is shared with other providers or with providers forming part of the same public media network. As regards the first level, the Gaelic community, BBC Alba has an agreement with TG4, the channel in Gaelic which carries out the same function in Ireland. This is an agreement for exchanging one news item a week, in which they change the voiceover to make it more understandable in each of the dialects. At this same level news is exchanged with BBC Scotland and BBC One, generally one-way; i.e. BBC Alba provides the BBC with the more local content referring to Gaelic speakers.

In the national, state and international cases, this one-way direction goes the other way since it is BBC Alba which tends to use content supplied by BBC Scotland (in the case of Scottish news) or from BBC One or News, in the case of State or international news. As regards this fourth level, the international scale, BBC Alba forms part of the World Indigenous Television Broadcasters Network (WITBN). This organisation, established in 2008, is the first worldwide alliance with the aim of unifying television broadcasters all over the world in preserving and nurturing local languages and cultures by creating communication networks and exchanging of content, especially news.

If we concentrate on the first level, the local facet, the channel

comes up against a difficulty caused by the low number of Gaelic speakers. This represents a challenge as regards audience size, which they attempt to get over by subtitling documentaries in English, incorporating programmes without any script (music and sport) and, in the case of news, by incorporating three titles for each news item conveying the main ideas of the piece in English, in view of the impossibility of subtitling the entire news bulletin on grounds of time (the speed of news routines) and budget.

The audience figures for BBC Alba are generally fairly low but the audience is significant if one takes into account the small number of people in the Gaelic community. The news is the most popular and widely-watched item on the channel. In 2014 the channel's watchers soared to a weekly ceiling of 17.6% (news getting 22%), and the weekly audience among the Gaelic community reached an average of 72%.⁶ The difficulties for increasing reception of the channel are not the only challenge which the provider comes up against as regards the minority Gaelic population. The intention is for local news stories to reach the Gaelic community but also to lend a voice to this community in order to establish a firm link with the group. The fact that there are few Gaelic speakers makes it harder to find information or to find people who can make statements in Gaelic (MacLennan, 2014). The strong bond with the territory and the fact that the identity community does not have political institutions to represent it means that proximity news continues quite regularly to be "soft news". Even though they try to ensure that the people involved can express themselves in Gaelic for making statements, they are allowed to make declarations in English when this is not possible.

Territorial coverage is no simple matter since this an area with a low and scattered population, with a complex lie of the land (mountains and many islands). This means that the most efficient way to cover the territory is via electronic news gathering (ENG), in which a single professional can record, announce and edit the news. The channel's regional association is reinforced by the live connections broadcast every day in the news bulletin (from 1 to 3 pm) in order to show the journalist's presence in the local setting. The news bulletin also includes interviews in the studio in a space decorated with local landscapes. In spite of the lack of investigative journalism on the channel, BBC Alba offers thorough territorial coverage and a valuable source of current affairs, which makes it representative of Gaelic culture and language, and binds it to this community (both in terms of territorial coverage and audience).

Regional coverage of the commercial provider

The commercial provider Scottish Television (STV) aims to be the channel that provides proximity information for the Scots in English. It does so in a context in which BBC Scotland provides specific information about Scotland but not general information from a Scottish standpoint. The BBC Alba news bulletin is a relevant source of news, able to provide international, national and proximity news in Gaelic, but has not reached the position

of becoming a mainstream channel for the Scots.

STV is a longstanding television service which has run two channels since the 1960s: STV Central and STV North (which was known as Grampian Television until 2006). These two channels, managed in the past by different companies, make up the services in the Channel 3 network in the region. They therefore share programming and news content with the other channels in the network (particularly with ITV, which manages most of the licences). In the 1990s, when the licences were reviewed, the local production requirements rose contributing to the fact that proximity news is now one of the channel's strong points. The news consists of the same blocks as BBC Scotland but inversely distributed: 30 minutes of proximity news at 6 pm followed by general news from ITV (in the BBC's case, first they broadcast the BBC One general news and then the regional news programme produced by BBC Scotland).

As a result the channel does not have a general news bulletin with news affecting the different layers of identity from a Scottish standpoint. This provider nevertheless gives prominent presence to proximity news which is broadcast as an opt-out thanks to the regional centres. As regards the licence for central Scotland (STV Central), two separate news bulletins are broadcast: one for Glasgow and its area of influence, and one for Edinburgh and its area of influence. In the case of the licence for the north (North Scotland), this broadcasts a joint news bulletin with a 5-minute opt-out for the Aberdeen and Dundee areas. This news architecture ties in with the territorial layout, made up of four production centres with headquarters in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee.

The channel embarked on a strategy to provide more local content in 2007 when it opened regional centres which broadcast original content in each of their respective cities and outlying areas. Apart from having journalists in these regional centres, there is also a small team of reporters in Inverness and independent journalists on the islands who contribute to the channel when needed. STV also manages the two new local channels in Glasgow and Edinburgh, with which it has joint newsrooms and constantly exchanges news items. Since the channels are run as a network, items are only covered once and in some cases versions are given by the different regional news bulletins.

Television news is the most prominent part of the programming and, as the director of the channel, Bobby Hain, asserts "it is relevant to focus on news since this is the most important part of the local PSB in Scotland".⁷ Hain defines the channel as a community and local genre with a firm online strategy which consists of ensuring large amounts of feedback with audiences through social media and providing updated news on the website. The move towards providing more local content was consolidated through the management of local channels, this commercial provider being awarded, in June 2014, the licence to operate the two only channels that had been assigned until then in Scotland, in order to meet the needs resulting from a lack of providers at a local level.

4. Conclusions

The Scottish media are a vital element of the country's civil society (Schlesinger, Miller and Dinan 2001: 10) and the news is the most prominent aspect to ensure the territory and its citizens are represented. Scotland has two mainstream audiovisual providers playing a public service role, one financed through the licence fee (BBC Scotland) and the other based on a commercial model (STV), both of which form part of State television networks (BBC and ITV respectively). In the news model, both channels provide a regional television bulletin which is accompanied by a general interest news programme produced by the main channel of their respective network: their news programmes are based in London but with centres spread over the region to ensure more geographical representativeness. STV divides Scottish territory into four areas of influence and provides news opt-outs in each of the regions. In the BBC's case, the improvement in regional coverage stems from the creation of BBC's Alba channel which, although it is not its main mission (the channel was set up with the basic aim of empowering the Gaelic language and culture) has led to an improvement in representativeness and the coverage of proximity news on BBC Scotland, a channel with which it regularly shares content.

After the referendum for Scotland's independence, the nation's audiovisual scenario needs to be designed. Some are demanding the creation of Scotland's own public channel in English to take on the role of a general provider without forming part of the BBC network. In terms of news, this proposal would fill the gap that has been complained of for years, namely offering a general news bulletin from a Scottish standpoint that incorporates the four information levels: local, national, state and international. For the time being certain initiatives are being got underway to this end. This is the case of the Scottish News project (<http://scottishnews.scot/>) to offer a news bulletin of this type online, mainly financed by donations. Those furthering the web project argue that Scotland needs news from a Scottish angle to be disseminated throughout territory.

Debate is now focussing on how the national channel can be reworked, whether it should continue to form part of the state media system or to opt for its own regional public channel. The Smith commission, which negotiated the transfer of new powers after the referendum in September 2014, leaves the door open regarding this issue. In terms of broadcasting, the document states there will be a formal consultancy process in the review of the BBC Charter (the constitutional basis of the BBC), taking into account that the present one will be in force until 31 December 2016.

The possibilities that could be offered by a new channel are no different from the aims pursued by the new online project: broadcasting a general news bulletin in English from a Scottish standpoint, ranging from international news to "proximity" or local coverage. BBC Scotland and BBC Alba have substantially improved the nation's territorial coverage but have not managed to fill this information gap which can still be found in Scotland.

5. Personal sources

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Notes

- The Scottish Broadcasting Commission was established by the Scottish government in August 2007 with the aim of leading independent research into the production of television content and its broadcasting in Scotland, and to define a future strategy for the industry. The BBC Trust is the governing body of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which works independently with the purpose of making decisions in the interest of its subscribers; that is, the citizens who pay the licence fee.
- The production of content has traditionally been based in London, in spite of the tendency to become a decentralised model seen over the last few years, apparent with the transfer of productions to Manchester and more production of their own in other regions.
- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/21/section/208>, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/21/section/209>, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/21/section/210>
- <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/arts/Archive/Broadcasting/Broadcasting>
- The term used for "Gaelic territory" is Gàidhealtachd. This is often used as a synonym for highlands but these are not interchangeable terms. The former is a linguistic term and the second refers to a geographical area where there are speakers of Gaelic and also of the Scottish dialect of English. Beyond the boundaries of the highlands there are also places that form part of the Gàidhealtachd, such as the Isle of Arran.
- From data in the last Annual Report <<http://www.mgalba.com/downloads/reports/annual-report-13-14.pdf>>
- This statement was made by Bobby Hain, the director of STV broadcasting, in the paper "Perspectives on local services" given as part of the Scottish Digital Network and Local Services Conference, on 16th November 2010 in Glasgow. Video available on: <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/ArtsCultureSport/arts/Archive/Broadcasting/SDNconference>>

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