Title

A Broadcast System in Whose Interest?
Tracing the origins of broadcast localism in Canadian and Australian television policy, 1950-1963

Abstract

The broadcast systems of Canada and Australia are often assumed to be similar if not synonymous. Both are dominated by American imports; rely on a networking of stations; and trace their media systems to a combination of American and British influence. Moreover, in the past decade, both have implemented tremendous changes to their broadcast policies, particularly with regards to local television. Yet despite these similarities, scholars have never critically reflected on the evolution of these countries’ local television policies. As such, this paper concentrates on the ways in which Canada and Australia have historically framed, defined, and implemented the concept of localism in broadcast policy. Through an analysis of documents from 1950-1963, the argument is made that when compared with Australia, localism was not an immediate priority, but rather a taken-for-granted assumption by Canadian policy-makers. Thus, the nationalism debate in Canadian television was fought at the expense of the local