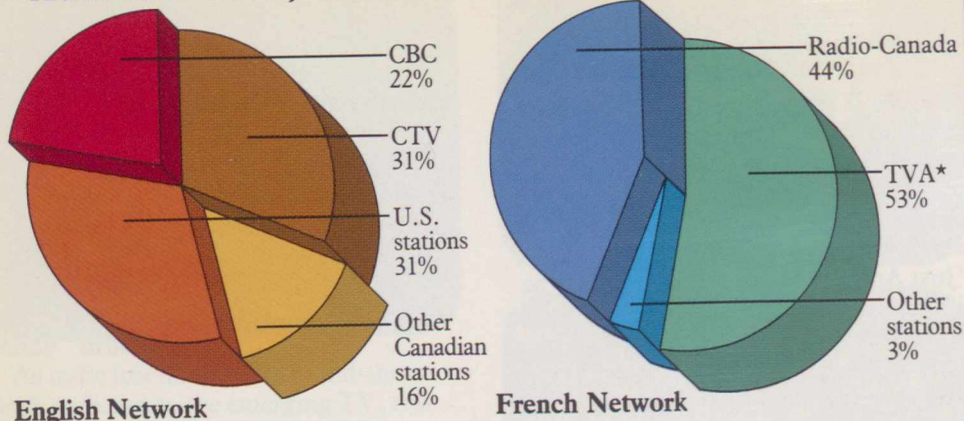


## Audience Share, 1982-1983



Source: CBC

\* Privately owned network with ten French stations.

## Canadian Content

Canadian broadcasting, as noted, has always suffered from a border-line disease – the overwhelming availability of popular and expensively produced programs from the United States.

In 1960 the Board of Broadcast Governors, the regulators of the Canadian airwaves, ruled that within two years 55 per cent of all broadcast time must be “Canadian in content and character.”

The Board’s definition of Canadian content was broad – it included not only programs actually produced in Canada but all news and commentary programs, events in which Canadians were participating, and special programs such as the World Series and the funerals of Winston Churchill and John Kennedy that were “of interest to Canadians.”

In 1962, when the rule went into effect, it was extended to include CTV, Canada’s first privately owned TV network, and tightened a bit. Prime-time programs would include those shown between 6:00 p.m. and midnight and they, as well as the overall averages, would have to score the 55 per cent. This was soon relaxed; CTV’s prime-time quota for fall, winter and spring was lowered to 40 per cent and no prime-time quota was applied in the summer.

In 1968 the Canadian Radio-Television Commission (now the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission) replaced the Board, and in 1970 it narrowed the sweep of what was considered “Canadian” and hiked the quotas for both CBC and the private stations to 60 per cent for both average and prime time. Prime time was shortened to 6:30 to 11:30 p.m., which added to the Canadian content concentration.

In 1971 the CRTC refined its terms once more. Prime time was extended again, from 6:00 p.m. to midnight, and the “content” limitations were loosened. In 1972 the Commission ruled that the private broadcasters would have to meet a prime-time quota of only 50 per cent, though CBC stations would continue to meet 60. In 1983 it announced new criteria which became effective last April. Canadian content certification is now based on a point system which considers how many key members of the cast and production team are Canadian citizens. The emphasis has shifted even more emphatically to CBC, which will lift its level of prime-time Canadian content to 80 per cent on both English and French networks within five years. This will be a 40 per cent increase on the English network and 20 per cent on the French.

“The requirement that the broadcasting service should be basically Canadian in content and character is not an attempt to exploit nationalism for the benefit of Canadian artists, writers, performers and producers. Its purpose is to recognize that Canadians have ideas to express.”

*Fowler Commission, 1957*

## New Challenges

CBC – which has survived the high-level competition from below the border and from privately owned Canadian rivals, the very popular CTV and the less pervasive Global TV – is now facing a wide range of new challenges.

**Pay-TV:** In 1982 the CRTC authorized several regional and specialized pay-TV services, and production began in February 1983.

One cultural channel went bankrupt a year ago and a service in the Atlantic provinces is now in receivership.

The two main survivors, First Choice/Premier Choix and Superchannel, have ambitious plans though both have been losing money.

They would like to share the national market, with First Choice having a monopoly from Ontario to the Atlantic Ocean and Superchannel one from Manitoba to the Pacific. The idea has been approved by the CRTC, which believes that the Canadian market is too small to support competing pay channels.

**Cable TV:** Canada is the most cabled country in the world, with some 4.9 million subscribers, 60.9 per cent of its homes, connected, and the services are expanding. Most Canadians have access to more channels than do viewers in New York – in addition to the CBC French and English networks, and the private

