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Author(s): Jon Cowans

Source: *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Jan., 1996), pp. 145-170

Published by: Sage Publications, Ltd.

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/261099>

Accessed: 03-06-2016 08:01 UTC

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Jon Cowans

Political Culture and Cultural Politics: The Reconstruction of French Radio after the Second World War

Complaining in May 1946 that the French airwaves were polluted with ‘this vile froth from the café-concert, these endless songs sung by floozies and hoodlums’, the writer Jean Schlumberger asked, ‘Why must our entertainment broadcasts be of such a humiliating vulgarity?’¹ To radio critic Jean Thévenot, however, French radio in 1946 suffered from ‘numerous “artistic” broadcasts based on a *snobisme* of the obscure, the exclusive, the pretentious’, and he called the national network ‘a “heavy” network crushing all of France with boredom’.² Although arguments such as these have appeared in debates over culture and the mass media throughout the twentieth century in France, the debate over radio in 1945 and 1946 featured a particular urgency and intensity. With most of the country’s radio system having been destroyed by the departing German army, and with the new Resistance-led government seeking to distance itself from the pre-war and Vichy approaches to broadcasting, many French leaders saw a rare opportunity to redesign the structure of the country’s mass media, creating a centralized state radio system that would unify, enlighten, and entertain the entire nation.

As with many other aspects of reconstruction in France, however, the reconstruction of radio had to proceed with severely limited financial and material resources. Even after requisitioning all remaining privately-owned broadcasting equipment in November 1944, the French government had only enough equipment and money for one national network and one smaller Parisian network, both of which it placed under the control of the *Radiodiffusion française* (RDF), a largely autonomous branch of the Ministry of Information.³ Gathering all of the

Journal of Contemporary History (SAGE, London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi), Vol. 31 (1996), 145–170.

country's radio matériel and personnel in one state corporation made sense in a time of dire shortages, but the decision to centralize and nationalize French radio also reflected the *dirigiste* ideology of the new leaders and their desire to unify a nation still suffering from bitter internal divisions.

Aside from nationalizing radio and periodically appropriating funding for the RDF, political leaders devoted little time or attention to the subject of broadcasting policy between the Liberation of Paris in August 1944 and the end of the war in May 1945. When political leaders did debate broadcasting policy, they tended to examine the highly sensitive topic of news and political programming, which Charles de Gaulle's Provisional Government entrusted directly to the Minister of Information. On the subject of cultural and entertainment broadcasts there were no significant partisan divisions, and the government granted the radio administrators the freedom to choose programming. In the absence of specific instructions, the RDF began airing a highly eclectic daily schedule, reminiscent of pre-war radio, including classical music and theatre, game shows, popular songs, avant-garde literature, sports, opera, comedy skits, and jazz.⁴

In time, however, various French politicians and journalists began to find fault with aspects of the RDF's programming, and by 1946 the French were debating the underlying issue of the basic mission that French radio should fulfil. Some wished radio to serve primarily as a means of teaching people to appreciate the fine arts; Schlumberger, for example, asked, 'Should the state radio pander to the average taste of its audience by offering it what people, in their eternal laziness, desire . . . or has it the task of improving tastes and helping to enlighten people's thinking?'⁵ The mass-circulation newspaper *France-Soir*, on the other hand, lamented that French radio seemed committed to 'doing the opposite of whatever the listeners wanted', and the editors applauded RDF director Wladimir Porché's March 1946 promises to make programmes more entertaining and 'to satisfy the greatest number'.⁶ As these comments suggest, a crucial issue in the debates over radio concerned a conflict between 'high' and 'low' culture, a set of categories whose validity many scholars have challenged in recent years. Yet regardless of several undeniable problems with concepts and categories such as high and low, or élite and mass culture, because those categories dominated the thinking of the

participants in this debate, such terms are simply unavoidable if one is to describe and understand their views.

It should be noted that despite the apparent distance between the views that cultural specialists such as Schlumberger expressed and those that *France-Soir* defended, the participants in this debate generally embraced certain basic principles underlying their opponents' arguments. Those insisting on the right of the people, organized as a nation of equal individuals, to decide their own affairs also subscribed in large part to the image of a French culture whose distinctive character lay in the achievement of the highest possible artistic and intellectual standards. Conversely, the same artists and intellectuals who sought to defend a culture of distinction and refinement also believed deeply in France's republican ideals of democracy, equality, and liberty – concepts for which they and their colleagues in the Resistance had fought since 1940. This consensus on basic values crumbled, however, over the idea of applying the political concepts of universal suffrage and legitimation by numbers to the realm of cultural expression, with Schlumberger and others seeking to prevent the ideas and practices of democracy from infiltrating into the reserved domain of artists, critics, and intellectuals.

Of course, attempts to police the border between a political realm marked by reverence for egalitarian principles and a cultural realm more openly built upon the authority of knowledge and expertise has been a recurring feature of the cultural history of twentieth-century France, but the increasing use of quantitative representations of audience preferences in 1945 and 1946 makes that period merit careful examination. As this article will argue, understanding why those new techniques of representation began to appear in cultural debates in 1945–6 requires an awareness of certain political events of that period, particularly Charles de Gaulle's decision to call a referendum on France's new postwar constitution. Hoping that a popular vote in favour of his constitutional ideas would prevent the party leaders from re-establishing a pure parliamentary system for the new French Republic, de Gaulle used his powers to overcome the parties' opposition to a procedure they viewed as a tool of demagogues and dictators, and in October 1945 France held its first referendum since 1870. When the referendum seemed to prove popular with most French voters, the idea of direct

popular consultation began to acquire a certain momentum, and several participants in the debate over radio soon proposed consulting audiences on their listening preferences.⁷ In short, a new mode of political legitimation had become a mode of cultural legitimation as well.

The basic outlines of the French debate over reconstructing radio after the second world war have appeared in discussions of the arts and the mass media throughout much of the world in the twentieth century, for although the central ideas in this debate – the political egalitarianism and the desire to ‘enlighten people’s thinking’ – have deep roots in French history, similar debates have arisen wherever these two estranged offspring of the Enlightenment have settled. But if the phenomenon of democratic political culture reshaping the terms of cultural discourse appears nearly universal in the twentieth century, it would nonetheless be wrong to overlook the particular historical circumstances within which such changes occurred in any given country. Not only has the timing of such historical shifts differed from one country to another, but the reasons why they have occurred and the specific paths of causality involved have varied significantly by country as well. This is not to deny the value of a global perspective on the rise of cultural polling, audience measurement, and the consequent growth of art forms that those practices seem to favour, but simply to argue that before those historical transformations can be understood universally, the experiences of individual countries must first be considered. Moreover, this study of a single moment in France’s past will try to show that understanding current systems of cultural legitimation requires an awareness of how those systems came into being, which the largely sociological work of cultural theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu generally does not provide. This paper, then, undertakes a case study in the historical relationship between political culture and cultural politics, examining some early uses in France of a now-familiar means of cultural legitimation.

The political culture that helped alter the terms of the radio debate was itself changing significantly in the immediate post-war period.⁸ When the Resistance took power in Paris in August 1944, its leader, Charles de Gaulle, considered the reform of

France's political institutions crucial to national reconstruction.⁹ In de Gaulle's view, France's ordeals of the past two decades had arisen in large part from a constitution that produced weak, unstable coalition governments and left the sovereign people powerless and resentful. He believed that solving the problem of governmental instability and regaining the support of the citizenry would require a new constitution with a stronger executive and an electorate playing a more active and constant role. De Gaulle's colleagues in the Resistance, particularly the leaders of the major political parties, shared his desire for a more stable and legitimate regime, but, fearing the loss of their own power to the immensely popular de Gaulle, they rejected the idea of shifting power from parliament to the executive.

Hoping to limit the powers of an assembly he knew the parties would control, de Gaulle proposed to let the voters decide in a referendum whether the first postwar parliament should meet to write a new constitution or should simply begin governing under the 1875 text. If a majority approved de Gaulle's plea for a new constitution, then they would also vote on a proposal to limit the Constituent Assembly's powers and require it to submit its final draft for the voters' approval in a second referendum. The parties vehemently objected to these proposals, insisting that Parliament retain its legal monopoly on popular representation, but they lacked the legal authority to block it. In October 1945, the voters approved both of de Gaulle's proposals, with 96 per cent voting to authorize the writing of a new constitution.¹⁰

De Gaulle considered the vote clear evidence of popular rejection of the pre-war political system, but his rivals disputed his interpretation of the reasons for the landslide vote. Because de Gaulle refused to present his own candidates for the Constituent Assembly – an action he deemed inconsistent with his role as the guardian of French unity – he left the control of the Assembly to his political rivals, who proceeded to write a constitution giving Parliament virtually unlimited control of all governmental powers. A frustrated de Gaulle finally resigned from office in January 1946, but although his resignation left the party leaders free of any serious rival, one relic of his tenure remained: the law requiring a referendum on the Constituent Assembly's final draft. In May 1946, the voters shocked nearly all political observers by rejecting the text written by representatives whom they had elected just seven months earlier.¹¹

The May 1946 referendum caused a profound change in French political culture, one whose repercussions affected the debate over French radio. Many deputies had called the referendum unnecessary, arguing that the voters had already expressed their will by electing candidates for the Assembly, and many also insisted that the Assembly was the only true expression of the popular will. Before May 1946 few had challenged the deputies' assertions of parliamentary infallibility, but the voters' rejection of a text written by deputies they had just elected led opponents of the parliamentary majority to begin charging that Parliament could – indeed did – misrepresent the popular will. The political debates of the months after the referendum show a recurring rhetorical pattern, as assertions that the people supported a given policy provoked flat denials and demands to verify the popular will on that policy through a new referendum. To many participants in this debate, the will of the people – the theoretical source of all authority in republican France – thus became something to verify rather than something to assert. Embarrassed by these challenges but unwilling to call referenda, the leading parties eventually drafted a new text with minor modifications, and in October 1946 that text won narrow approval by an electorate that could see no point in a third assembly comprising the same political parties. The parties thus obtained their parliamentary system, but that system's legitimacy stood in serious doubt. Moreover, the political struggles over the constitution had produced significant changes in French political culture, including a redefinition of the concept of public opinion and the establishment of a precedent for consulting the people to resolve policy disputes among contenders for power.

Many scholars have called attention to important continuities between the Vichy regime and the republics that came before and after it, and the subject of radio policy corroborates this view.¹² Private, commercial radio stations had operated alongside public stations in France since the mid-1920s, but the approach of the second world war brought increasing government control of radio in France as in many other countries. Although Resistance leaders often denounced the Vichy regime's domination of the airwaves, the transition to a state monopoly of broadcasting had

begun not under Marshal Pétain, but under the last governments of the Third Republic, which took increasing control over private stations under the pretext of national emergency in 1938 and 1939. The postwar nationalization was thus the culmination of a process spanning three regimes.

The decision to nationalize radio also reflected the pervasive view in 1944 that radio had played a crucial role in the efforts of both the French Resistance and of dictators such as Hitler, Mussolini, and Pétain. 'For almost five years', explained Jean Thévenot, 'military battles and radio battles developed in counterpoint, the action in the airwaves supporting the action of bombs and vice-versa. Mobilized, the microphone became a weapon.'¹³ Those viewing radio as a military asset would no more turn it over to foreign or private control than they would release a fighter squadron or a tank battalion to private entrepreneurs.

Even in peacetime, radio planners rejected the idea of privately-owned radio. Exemplifying the Resistance's mistrust of capitalist corporations, a 1943 communiqué on postwar radio warned of 'the businessmen who will arrive in the trucks of the liberating armies seeking to lay their hands on our radio', and using it to spread 'doctrines that we have condemned'.¹⁴ Fears of radio's powers of persuasion primarily concerned news broadcasts, but the newspaper *Le Figaro* expressed a common view in describing France's pre-war private stations in these terms: 'Subsidized by commercial firms seeking the largest possible audience, they stubbornly "aimed low" Decent people made it a rule never to listen to these depravities and sadly sought refuge in state radio.'¹⁵ If any deputies in the Consultative and Constituent Assemblies did dislike the idea of government control of radio, they made no attempt to stop it, and the Assemblies never debated the issue. Even outside those Assemblies, few voices were raised against the idea of government control.¹⁶ At issue, then, was not government control, but simply the extent to which the radio bureaucracy should heed opinions on programming expressed by parliamentary deputies, journalists, and listeners.

The participants in the debates over French radio tended to favour one of three basic approaches to the selection of programming, one based on an almost unlimited bureaucratic control, another urging radio administrators to consider the

volunteered opinions of critics and listeners, and a third using new forms of mass consultation to guide, perhaps even determine, the choice of programming. The first approach prevailed virtually by default in the first months after the Liberation, in part because nearly all the leaders of the Resistance believed in the ideas of *dirigisme* and technocracy, and in part because there were more urgent tasks facing France in late 1944 than the consultation of radio listeners. To complement this bureaucratic control, the Resistance's Liberation Committee for Radio Broadcasting proposed another idea typical of the times: a corporatist-style advisory council representing what the Committee called 'the nation's general interests, technicians, and labour'.¹⁷ It is important to note that some proponents of unlimited bureaucratic control proved more royalist than the king, for the directors of the RDF, while certainly favouring bureaucratic control, seemed genuinely interested in satisfying French listeners, and they refused to take the kind of dictatorial approach to the selection of programming that some urged them to take. Therefore, although the directors of the RDF tended to share the cultural tastes of critics such as Schlumberger, comments such as Porché's promise to satisfy the greatest number suggest that they believed too firmly in the principles of democracy to ignore audience preferences altogether.

To the proponents of bureaucratic control, the radio administrators' legitimacy rested on three basic sources: their special expertise, their wartime record, and their appointment by a legitimate government. The expertise in question could be technical or artistic, as one radio administrator illustrated by arguing that 'scholars, engineers, writers, and artists' should run the RDF in conjunction with career civil servants.¹⁸ Yet expertise alone did not qualify one for work in radio, and the new government, defining as collaborators all who worked in radio during the Occupation, carried out sweeping purges of personnel in all branches of French radio in 1944 and 1945. Unfortunately, many of those hired as replacements lacked either special expertise or a stellar wartime record, if not both, but because the government that had appointed them enjoyed considerable support in late 1944, the RDF's personnel enjoyed a certain legitimacy in the first months after the Liberation.

Those favouring bureaucratic control – including people both inside and outside government – generally agreed that radio

should fulfil a largely educational mission. The rapporteur of a parliamentary committee on radio policy accepted the commonly-stated idea that radio should inform, entertain, and educate, but he favoured the latter, declaring that radio should 'elevate the intellectual and moral level of the people'.¹⁹ Seconding this view, another deputy proposed 'creating a plan for the education and the cultivation of the masses, who need a higher culture', and he recommended programmes of 'history, literature, and philosophy'.²⁰ Warning of 'the colonization of France by the music-hall and the cabaret', Jean Schlumberger proposed limiting the number of entertainment broadcasts and excluding all but works 'of the most exquisite taste'. Schlumberger also took issue with those who believed radio should serve as a mirror of a country's existing ways. 'Can you imagine', he asked, 'the tax collector being content with observing that people did not wish to pay their taxes, or schoolteachers putting themselves at their students' feet and resigning themselves to speaking in *patois* with them?'²¹

Although the people articulating such views soon met charges of élitism, it should be noted that they rejected a traditional pattern of separate art forms for different social classes. According to RDF director Porché, French radio should not 'create a division between the two classes of listeners, the cultured few and the great mass of the public'.²² Some speakers in this debate largely ignored a potential contradiction between basing programming on their own tastes and seeking to satisfy the greatest number, insisting that people would embrace works of genuine value if only they were given the chance. 'It should not be impossible', affirmed one politician in March 1945, 'to reconcile the desires of the public with broadcasts of quality.'²³ In France, added another, 'musical taste is spread throughout all the classes'.²⁴ These speakers thus hoped for French radio to bring culture to the masses, ignoring the meagre results of similar efforts in France's recent past.²⁵

When criticism of the RDF began to emerge in 1945, much of it concerned not the idea of unfettered bureaucratic control but rather the end-product of the bureaucracy's efforts. In a November 1945 series on radio, for instance, *France-Soir* complained about scheduling errors, bungled transitions, poor sound quality, and other technical failures, concluding that 'there is no comic opera, no Marx Brothers film, no musical

revue that can match French radio in the realm of the burlesque'.²⁶ A parliamentary deputy said of one recent broadcast, 'I thought I was listening to the screeching of a buzz saw, but in listening more closely, I found that it was "The Tales of Hoffmann" being sung by a vinegary voice.'²⁷ To one sarcastic radio critic, postwar radio had 'the merit of transporting the average listener back to the early days of the wireless: stammering announcers, bad sound quality, inexperienced personnel, etc.'²⁸ The radio directors acknowledged the problems, but they begged for patience and pointed out the financial constraints facing them.

Before long, however, dissatisfaction with the broadcasts led some to question the methods used to produce them, as perceptions of incompetence began to undermine the image of expertise that justified a technocratic approach to radio. Scrutinizing the administrators' methods, critics began to dispute the wisdom of trying to improve French radio by purging collaborators. One radio critic observed that purges had cancelled 'programs by incontestable stars from Maurice Chevalier to Edith Piaf', and others added that the firing of technicians had also hurt French radio.²⁹ 'Unfortunately', wrote *France-Soir*, 'having been a victim of war or a deputy's comrade in the *maquis* does not necessarily mean one has talent.'³⁰ Critics also began to portray current programming as a heavy and stifling product of an élitist bureaucracy. *Le Figaro*, for example, decried 'the abusive authority given to artistic theories that could not excite more than two hundred people in the shadow of Saint-Germain-des-Prés'.³¹ Sensing widespread discontent with the existing system, various journalists and politicians began formulating a new approach to running radio, one that would urge the RDF to consider the listeners' wishes.

The essence of this second approach involved applying the political concept of popular sovereignty to radio and treating the audience as the source of all authority. Just as the inventors of democracy had once pleaded for the people's right to govern themselves, those embracing this vision argued for the listeners' right to determine what they would hear over the air. Among the first to adopt this attitude was the newspaper *L'Aurore*, which asked its readers in June 1945 to send in their suggestions for improving radio. The paper soon noted the 'flood of responses that grows each day' and observed that 'this consultation

responds to the listeners' unanimous desire to give their views' on radio. 'Don't they have the right', asked the editors, 'to ask to be served according to their desires?'"³² One deputy went even further, demanding that 'the whole nation, the whole audience be allowed not only to make its desires known, but also to participate in the management of radio'.³³ With this end in mind, the deputies decided to include listeners' representatives in the council of experts that advised the directors of French radio, but *Le Figaro* remained dissatisfied, calling this council 'a decorative, totally powerless, organization'.³⁴

Populist rhetoric notwithstanding, the opinions on radio's mission and content that these journalists and politicians expressed showed striking similarities to those of the artists, intellectuals, and civil servants whose control of radio had provoked their protests. Indeed, many faulted radio not for excessive élitism, but for pandering to poor taste. 'Public opinion', declared one deputy, 'is unanimous in seeing the insipidness and, often, the vulgarity of many programmes.'³⁵ *Le Figaro* contended that people's 'most common complaints concern the intolerable vulgarity of certain broadcasts, the unacceptable tendency of radio to drift into indecency and even licentiousness'.³⁶ The letters that *L'Aurore* published in its 1945 campaign followed in this vein, denouncing vulgarity, bad grammar, jazz music, and variety shows. 'Regarding entertainment broadcasts', wrote one reader, 'our radio is particularly lamentable and gives the impression of being a machine to cretinize the people.' 'No more jazz', wrote another, 'and no more Tom-Tom nightclub music.' Calling for radio to be 'educational, moral, and entertaining', a woman from the wealthy Parisian suburb of Neuilly suggested that radio offer 'a little of everything, but under the control of men of education and culture, scholars and artists'. Angry over grammatical errors and general vulgarity on the air, another reader wrote, 'If France has no more thinkers, no more poets, no more writers, if we no longer even know how to speak our mother tongue, then let us have the decency to be quiet. . . . Let us spare France the shame of a radio for crooks and cab drivers.'³⁷

Considering the reverence surrounding the idea of the people in postwar France, the rise of rhetorical claims setting the popular will against that of a privileged élite of radio functionaries might have been expected. Indeed, claims about

the listeners' desires seem surprisingly rare in the first months after the Liberation, for even in the more arcane and technical policy debates of the time orators occasionally invoked the will of the people to legitimate their proposals. Yet as students of public opinion in other eras have noted, the mythic figure of the public does not invite itself into palaces and parliaments, but rather appears only when one of the rival factions inside those enclosures decides to summon it.³⁸ The first speakers to bring terms such as the public, public opinion, and the people into discussions of radio after the war were indeed political leaders, newspaper editors, and others capable of addressing large audiences. Even the 'average readers' who answered *L'Aurore's* call for letters on radio were probably wealthier and better educated than much of the rest of the French population, if only because writing a letter to a newspaper in France in the 1940s required greater levels of linguistic skill and confidence than many people in France possessed at that time.³⁹ But whereas assertions and counter-assertions about the will of the people had been a common part of the political culture of the Third Republic, similar assertions in the postwar debate on radio encountered a new kind of response: demands to verify the popular will through referenda and other methods. These proposals to settle the radio debates by creating statistical portraits of popular opinion thus constituted a third approach to running French radio.

One example of this approach appeared in Jean Thévenot's 1946 book, *L'âge de la télévision et l'avenir de la radio*. Discussing the RDF's practice of using panels of radio journalists to predict the public's reaction to new programmes, Thévenot noted that these methods might help predict the press's reaction, but despite their pretensions, 'radio journalists . . . are not the public'.⁴⁰ As for letter campaigns organized by newspapers such as *L'Aurore*, Thévenot argued that those responding to such campaigns 'are only a fraction of these newspapers' clientèle', and he added that *L'Aurore's* overall readership 'differs from the rest of the nation by the mere fact that they read *L'Aurore*'.⁴¹ Even the letters sent directly to the RDF aroused Thévenot's scepticism. The 'tiny minority' who write in, he explained, 'would be precious witnesses if they represented exactly the diverse categories of individuals and families whose ensemble forms this mysterious monster: the public'. But, he contended,

the fan mail that performers cited to prove their popularity often came from 'forty-nine neurotics with a passion for writing love letters'.⁴² Thévenot proved no kinder to the pre-war practice of listeners electing representatives to help run local stations. In his view, these elections privileged the opinions of the owners of radios while obscuring the views 'of those who hear the radio by chance: in a café, in a restaurant, while passing by on the street'.⁴³ Arguing that non-listeners might be avoiding radio out of displeasure with the broadcasts they had heard, he insisted that the opinions of listeners and non-listeners deserved equal consideration.⁴⁴ Thévenot concluded his study by pleading for 'scientific polling, by the Gallup method', one of the earlier public demands for polling in France.⁴⁵

In 1946, *France-Soir* provided further evidence of this historical transition to a more quantitative concept of public opinion, and of the link between political culture and cultural politics. In late February, with the referendum on the new constitution approaching, *France-Soir* announced that it would hold a referendum of its own on the subject of radio. Unlike *L'Aurore*, which had called its project a 'survey', and had asked readers to answer questions in their own words, *France-Soir* called its undertaking a 'referendum' and printed a ballot strongly resembling the one used in the constitutional referendum. Explaining the rationale behind the referendum, the editors wrote that the RDF 'will need to know the thoughts and wishes of those with the primary interest in radio: the listeners'.⁴⁶

This new concept of public opinion differed from the older version in several ways. For one, Thévenot and *France-Soir* treated public opinion as an empirical problem, and they showed considerable interest in portraying it in quantitative terms. Beneath this disagreement over whether and how to gauge public opinion lay a more fundamental dispute over what to gauge. The politicians, journalists, and other notables whose business it had been to articulate 'public opinion' before the advent of opinion polling, very likely believed in all sincerity that they were expressing what most, if not everyone, believed on a given question. But as the founders of opinion polling have argued in defending their work, people tend to associate with others who share their views and to extrapolate from conversations with those friends and associates, drawing con-

clusions about what 'the public' or 'the people' think on a given issue.⁴⁷ To Thévenot and the editors of *France-Soir*, however, the opinions of the notables and the members of the radio audience might differ significantly, and they proposed to let people speak for themselves. These conflicting concepts of public opinion also differed in two respects that Pierre Bourdieu has discussed. Bourdieu defines an opinion as 'a formulated discourse which aims at coherence and intends to be heard', and by that definition the views of respondents to opinion polls or *France-Soir*'s multiple-choice referendum would not even count as opinions, much less public opinion, for the respondents had neither volunteered these so-called opinions nor formulated them in their own words.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, whether polls and referenda represented opinions or simply what Bourdieu calls 'positions', the messages they presented tended to contradict those that the notables had expressed. *Le Figaro*, for example, had used a common rhetorical device in writing that 'a unanimous complaint is rising up against French radio', but opinion polls on radio found no such unanimity; in response to the May 1946 poll question, 'Does the radio today satisfy you or not?', 35 per cent replied yes and 38 per cent no.⁴⁹ The polling institute also published comments by several respondents, including one man who said, 'I'm a lot less unhappy than the newspapers say I am', and a woman who declared, 'I adore the radio, and I will leave it to others to criticize it.'⁵⁰ *France-Soir* reported that 10 per cent of the participants in its referendum wanted to hear jazz and 16 per cent did not, contradicting sweeping claims such as *L'Aurore*'s statement that its survey showed 'an almost unanimous condemnation of jazz and swing broadcasts'.⁵¹ Whereas parliamentary deputies condemned the amount of airtime devoted to variety shows, the respondents in *France-Soir*'s referendum placed variety shows and broadcasts of popular music among their favourite programmes.⁵² As for the announcers whose bad grammar and vulgar speech had produced such outrage in *L'Aurore*'s survey – the paper reported that 100 per cent of its respondents wanted the announcers off the air – nearly half of *France-Soir*'s respondents expressed satisfaction with the current announcers.⁵³ A majority of *France-Soir*'s respondents even favoured such scandalous ideas as privately-owned stations (77 per cent in favour) and commercials on radio (52 per cent in favour).⁵⁴

Politicians and journalists rarely strove to refute these unwanted representations of the popular will, and their silence makes it difficult to say how much credence they lent polls and straw polls. *Le Figaro* did mention *France-Soir's* decision to hold a referendum, and its weary comment that the exercise would show that many listeners felt French radio was 'still not low enough, vulgar enough, facile enough' suggests that *Le Figaro* essentially expected the referendum to portray popular opinion accurately.⁵⁵ The RDF's Porché also seemed to accept the polls' accuracy, and he promised in March 1946 that he would consider polls when designing new programmes.⁵⁶ But for the most part, cultural specialists treated polls and straw polls on radio in the same way that French politicians treated political opinion polls until the 1960s: they read the results but said nothing about them in public, hoping they would simply go away.

The appearance of polls and straw polls in debates over radio placed enormous weight on the question of radio's mission, for the radio administrators' right to ignore popular opinion depended on the specific functions radio carried out. If, for example, radio sought to educate, then programmers had little reason to poll listeners, just as professors would have little reason to ask students which books they would like to read. The partisans of high culture thus defined all of radio's tasks, even that of entertainment, in essentially pedagogical terms, as Schlumberger's reference to the foolishness of schoolteachers speaking *patois* illustrates. By making knowledge – whose symbiotic relationship with hierarchy Michel Foucault and others have shown – the basic commodity that radio disseminated, intellectuals such as Schlumberger helped remove any basis for popular consultation. Polls and straw polls on radio did occasionally include questions on educational shows, with which most respondents tended to express satisfaction.⁵⁷ Whether those who claimed to like such shows actually listened to them remains unclear, but the fact that they claimed to like them suggests that no challenge to the administrators' right to select programming was likely to arise over educational programming.

As for radio's mission to inform, nearly everyone who spoke on the issue called for an objective approach to radio news, one offering knowledge of the day's events without any partisan interpretations. But a chorus of complaints from politicians,

journalists, and listeners about the partiality of radio news suggested that many felt that the RDF's news broadcasts sought to persuade rather than inform, to convey opinions rather than knowledge. On the subject of opinions, Pierre Bourdieu has argued that those at the lower levels of the social hierarchy, 'what others call "the masses" or "the people"', tend to defer to their social superiors on political subjects, taking refuge in silence or abstention even when others solicit their views.⁵⁸ But when questioned about radio news in 1945 and 1946, most people did respond, often expressing anger at a given party's attempts to impose its views on the public. Thus one could hardly have opposed polling listeners about radio news on the grounds that they lacked opinions. In short, the conditions for the kind of acquiescence to bureaucratic control that educational programming enjoyed simply did not exist for news and political programming. Yet because the same rifts that divided the political class extended well into the radio audience, popular consultation could hardly have resolved disputes over the partiality of French news broadcasts. Consequently, there was little to gain by consulting listeners on news and political broadcasts or by citing their views in public debates, and those who researched and cited audience opinion devoted far more attention to entertainment programming than to political topics.

As long as radio sought to educate and inform, then, its administrators found themselves largely free from rhetorical claims about popular opinion. That freedom disappeared, however, when radio turned to the task of entertainment, and to dispensing pleasure rather than knowledge. As Bourdieu has argued, the concept of artistic taste tends to bolster and legitimate social hierarchy, and throughout much of French history the *cognoscenti* have indeed preferred to enjoy their favourite art forms in the company of others of the same social class, leaving the rabble to amuse themselves elsewhere. In 1945, however, dreams of an entire nation sharing the same culture led many artists and intellectuals to invite the barbarians into the city. But like the Popular Front officials who had opened the Louvre in 1936 so that workers could view its treasures, these postwar élites retained certain assumptions inimical to the project of cultural unification, primarily that the uneducated would become 'cultured' through mere exposure to the fine arts, and that they would come to prefer those art forms once they gained

access to them. These cultural specialists, that is, were inviting the barbarians into the city but expecting them to leave their culture at the gates.

Unaccustomed to having to explain the superiority of the fine arts, many highly-educated people proved strangely inarticulate on the question of what made one form of art or entertainment 'higher' than another. Numerous opponents of popular music, for example, exhorted the RDF to air 'good' music and works by artists 'of quality' without defining those terms.⁵⁹ Such terms may have needed no definition among people raised in a certain social milieu, but the project of creating a common culture required including millions of French people whose musical and artistic tastes might shock the relatively prosperous, educated, and disproportionately Parisian population that urged the RDF to air 'good' music. The problem of cultural distance among various groups of radio listeners in France had become particularly acute in 1945 and 1946, for as P.J. Kingston has noted, the wartime food shortages that had created relative prosperity for food producers had in turn produced a boom in radio ownership among French peasants.⁶⁰ Perhaps sensing their failure to convince, a number of writers turned to nationalism to justify keeping certain programmes off the air, contrasting a French culture meeting the highest artistic standards with a philistine mass culture invading France from across the Atlantic. Yet the most popular programmes during these years were not broadcasts of jazz or American popular music but rather songs by artists such as Edith Piaf, Maurice Chevalier, and Tino Rossi, as well as variety shows, with their roots in vaudeville, burlesque, and French popular theatre.⁶¹

The advocates of high culture had largely lost their battle as soon as they conceded the point that radio should entertain as well as educate and inform. For the basic point of entertainment – the production of pleasure – threatens the ability of critics and cultural specialists to determine the legitimacy of a given style or work of art. A critic, that is, may argue that beauty lies in one work of art and not in another, but to say whether a given work produces pleasure in its beholder simply lies outside a critic's realm of competence. In previous centuries, of course, quantitative measures of artistic worth such as theatre attendance and book sales had often posed challenges to critics' control of the process of cultural legitimation. By 1945, however, several

important inventions and other developments had altered the French cultural terrain, weakening the position of critics and other professional analysts of the arts. The invention of radio, for example, and a subsequent boom in the ownership of sets in France, had suddenly and dramatically expanded the size of audiences for musical and theatrical performances.⁶² Before participants in cultural debates could make any use of this new mass audience, there had to be some means of documenting the audience's listening habits and opinions, and such methods became increasingly available in the 1940s, as the French gradually moved from the crude audience-research techniques of the interwar years (such as noting surges in electrical usage during the airing of certain radio programmes) to the more complex methods that the nascent French polling industry was developing and refining after the war.⁶³

The mere invention of new technology and research methods, however, provides an incomplete explanation for the historical transition to new modes of cultural legitimation in twentieth-century France. In the political realm, for example, opinion polls languished in obscurity throughout the Fourth Republic, appearing in public debate only when the new institutions and political culture of the Gaullist Fifth Republic created a demand for polling in French politics.⁶⁴ Supply, in short, did not automatically create its own demand. In the case of the postwar debates over radio programming, it was the decision of various journalists and others to embrace the now-triumphant principles of democracy and to argue for people's right to hear the kind of programmes they liked that created a demand for quantitative representations of audience opinion. *Le Figaro*, for example, defended the listeners' rights to diversion, relaxation, and escapism, protesting the idea of entrusting those in 'the avant-garde of the country's artistic evolution' with 'the task of speaking at night to the peasant buckling with fatigue, to the exhausted worker, to the shopkeeper devoured by worries, to the immense audience of men who turn to their radio for relaxation and entertainment'.⁶⁵ In 1945 and 1946, then, the development of new methods of audience research and the rise of a rhetoric of cultural populism helped undermine the project of elevating popular tastes.

Retreating in search of a more defensible position, some partisans of high culture proposed that French radio broadcast a

mixture of programmes of high and low culture. To observers such as Schlumberger, however, such a compromise entailed surrender, for 'everything printed or broadcast helps to establish in the public mind a certain tone, a certain language, certain mores' and 'creates, by habituation and contagion, the most harmful climate for a nation, that of an acceptance of mediocrity'.⁶⁶ Consistent with the assumption that exposure suffices to form tastes, Thévenot wrote, 'When fed mediocrity, the public acquires increasingly mediocre tastes, which in turn call for even lower mediocrities.'⁶⁷ In effect, these writers were arguing that cultural tastes obeyed a sort of Gresham's Law, with the mere presence of low culture sufficing to drive the fine arts out of circulation. As Porché noted, the RDF had found that when people had a choice between 'a very popular programme . . . [and] a production of a higher nature, well, the majority of the audience, the very great majority, will tune into the former'. To thwart such behaviour, he explained, the RDF often followed 'a variety show, for example, with an undeniably superior musical programme . . . [thus] gradually raising the tone and the intrinsic value of the programmes, but only imperceptibly so as not to lose the mass public'.⁶⁸ Because many listeners tended to tune in at certain hours of the day rather than to seek out specific programmes, Porché's sugared-pill strategy undoubtedly managed to expose some French listeners to higher culture.⁶⁹ Yet if Bourdieu is correct that people absorb the cultural tastes of their social, educational, and economic milieu over a course of many years, then the RDF's strategy for elevating popular tastes probably yielded rather limited results.⁷⁰

Those tempted to force-feed audiences a more nutritional cultural diet faced several other constraints. For one, despite the French government's monopoly on broadcasting, many French listeners could tune in to foreign stations. Failing that, of course, listeners could always switch off their radios and seek entertainment elsewhere. But most importantly, in a country weary of censorship, dictatorship, and hardship, the directors of the RDF were reluctant to treat listeners dictatorially and to deny them the 'light' entertainment that so many seemed to want. Attesting to the pervasiveness of democratic ideology in postwar France, even the most spirited defenders of high culture could not resist invoking the people or public opinion to legitimate their cultural projects. 'The French people', declared

Schlumberger, 'refuse to acknowledge the boorish traits that others attribute to them.'⁷¹ The Socialist deputy Jean Biondi told the Constituent Assembly that 'public opinion demands' better radio programmes and that 'everyone agrees' that France lacked a radio network 'worthy of its cultural and artistic value'.⁷² And, of course, Porché's pledge to satisfy the greatest number demonstrated the kind of thinking among French leaders that opened the door to the rhetoric of cultural populism.

Unfortunately for those hoping to satisfy French radio audiences, seeking guidance from such a multifarious sovereign tended to create as many problems as it solved. 'If only you knew how hard it is' to satisfy everyone, Porché pleaded at a March 1946 press conference. 'The other day I had lunch with a family of five, none of whom agreed on a single programme.'⁷³ Opinion polls echoed Porché's tale of conflicting popular tastes, with no single programme gathering the support of anywhere near a majority of respondents.⁷⁴ To satisfy these diverse tastes, some proposed that French radio offer listeners a wide range of specialized stations; Thévenot, for example, proposed a national radio system comprising seven channels, each devoted to a different style of music and programming.⁷⁵ In recent years, the French mass media have indeed offered a range of specialized channels, but in 1945 the desire for a common culture and the economic constraints of the time prohibited a proliferation of radio stations.

A more attainable form of pluralism, and one more consistent with the attempt to produce a common culture, consisted of offering a wide range of programmes on France's two national networks. The RDF used this approach throughout the Liberation period, but in trying to please everyone, the RDF may have ended up irritating everyone instead. Having to listen to opposing political opinions, for example, led many listeners to propose taking political discussions off the air altogether. Musical genres proved equally controversial. As one of *L'Aurore's* readers wrote, 'I don't want to hear any more idiotic songs by women imitating men's voices. And above all, for the love of God, no more jazz!' Some had long lists of dislikes: 'Too much jazz, too many café-concerts, too many political speeches, stupid jokes and idiotic puns.' Sunday morning religious programming angered one listener, who wished 'not to hear mass on Sunday, which is imposed on everyone', adding, 'There

are churches for the religious.⁷⁶ As long as everyone in France had to share the same two radio stations, the best hope of achieving national consensus probably lay in maintaining radio silence.

The outcome of the debate over reconstructing French radio after the second world war, like so many other policy debates of that period, left those with ambitious hopes and plans for the new era deeply disappointed. The government that took power in 1944 had nationalized radio in part out of horror over the depravities of France's pre-war commercial radio, but the RDF administrators' fears of appearing dictatorial soon led them to put aside their own cultural preferences and broadcast hours of 'crowd-pleasing' programming. A major reason why these administrators retreated from their original aims for postwar radio concerned the appearance of new forms of popular representation such as the referendum and the opinion poll, forms which were invented, developed, and legitimated in the political arena but which soon leaked into the realm of cultural politics. And yet despite the outrage that many expressed about vulgarity on the airwaves, historians of French radio generally portray the broadcasts of the Liberation years as unusually heavy on the fine arts; Hélène Eck, for example, calls the period 'a privileged moment, one which led men of letters, scholars, and intellectuals to come to the microphone'.⁷⁷ Whether the programming of these years came closer to reflecting a public opinion consisting of the published views of artists, critics, and other cultural specialists or one based on tallying the solicited opinions of equally weighted individuals, the fact that the RDF strove to satisfy such different voices suggests that in cultural politics, as in constitutional politics, the new language of 'direct democracy' was undermining established ways of claiming the authority of public opinion.

As the idea of art legitimated by an observance of stringent aesthetic standards increasingly gave way to the idea of art legitimated by the size of its audience, the partisans of high culture blamed *France-Soir* and others for introducing demagoguery into the debate over postwar radio. Yet it seems unlikely that anyone would have proposed holding a 'referendum' on radio if Charles de Gaulle had not reintroduced the referendum

to French politics. Moreover, despite many writers' and intellectuals' anger at the proponents of cultural consultation, it was their own belief in the ideas of equality, liberty, and democracy that made them vulnerable to their opponents' rhetorical strategies. Unable to show why the idea of legitimation by numbers and the practice of popular consultation should not apply to cultural matters, they began to retreat from their pursuit of a common culture, from their *mission civilisatrice*, turning reluctantly by 1946 to lesser goals such as reserving one network for high culture. But if the French artists, intellectuals and politicians of the Liberation years failed to defend the border between high and low culture, their successors proved equally unable to keep the French airwaves free of cultural forms designed to satisfy the greatest number, from the 'yé-yé' music of the Beatles in the 1960s to American television shows such as 'The Wheel of Fortune' in the 1980s. The historical patterns of the Liberation years have thus recurred throughout the postwar era in France – as in much of the rest of the world – as the partisans of high culture have struggled with the contradictions between two of their most fundamental beliefs.

Notes

1. Jean Schlumberger, *Le Figaro*, 4 May 1946, 1.
2. Jean Thévenot, *L'âge de la télévision et l'avenir de la radio* (Paris 1946), 78, 146.
3. A third network, Paris-Inter, did not go on the air until 1947. For a summary of French legislation on radio in this period, see René Duval, *Histoire de la radio en France* (Paris 1979), 358–61. The text of the decree nationalizing French radio appears in *Journal Officiel, Ordonnances et Décrets*, March 1945, decree 45–472. For an assessment of wartime damage to French radio, see *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Consultative Provisoire*, 27 March 1945, second session, 791.
4. For a description of the programming on the two French networks, see Duval, *op. cit.*, 362–3. The original plan for the two networks was for the Parisian network to offer more 'light' programming, but the schedules for the two networks show the same general approach to programming, and the RDF eventually decided to do away with any distinction between the two; see Hélène Eck, 'Radio, Culture and Democracy in France in the Immediate Postwar Period 1944–50' in Brian Rigby and Nicholas Hewitt (eds), *France and the Mass Media* (London 1991), 137.
5. Schlumberger, *Le Figaro*, 4 May 1946, 1.

6. *France-Soir*, 23 March 1946. For Porché's comments, see *Le Figaro*, 22 March 1946.

7. An opinion poll by the Institut français d'opinion publique (IFOP) found 66 per cent approving of the idea of holding a referendum on the new constitution and 20 per cent opposed; see IFOP's *Bulletin d'information*, 16 August 1945, 160. Another polling organization, the Service de sondages et statistiques (SSS), found 50 per cent in favour and 30 per cent opposed to the use of the referendum in May 1946; see *Sondages de l'opinion publique française*, 15 May 1946, 369.

8. For a survey of political reconstruction in postwar France, see Jean-Pierre Rioux, trans. Godfrey Rogers, *The Fourth Republic, 1944–1958* (Cambridge 1987), chaps 4, 7; Gordon Wright, *The Reshaping of French Democracy* (Boston 1948).

9. On de Gaulle's earliest arguments for a strong national leader, see Wright, op. cit., 41–6. During the war, de Gaulle had left the task of designing postwar political institutions to his advisers, primarily Michel Debré. Only after resigning from public office did de Gaulle offer a constitutional blueprint, at Bayeux in June 1946. The Bayeux speech is in Eric Cahm (ed.), *Politics and Society in Contemporary France (1789–1971): A Documentary History* (London 1972), 327–31.

10. On the origins of the referendum proposal, see Wright, op. cit., 79–80. On the referendum and its outcome, see Rioux, op. cit., 58–9.

11. On the May 1946 referendum, see Wright, op. cit., 176–83.

12. See, in particular, Stanley Hoffmann, 'Paradoxes of the French Political Community' in Stanley Hoffmann et al., *In Search of France* (New York 1965), 34–60. For a discussion of this issue, see Andrew Shennan, *Rethinking France: Plans for Renewal, 1940–1946* (Oxford 1989), 30–3.

13. Thévenot, op. cit., 71.

14. Quoted in Duval, op. cit., 358. Opponents of private radio also noted that collaborators such as Pierre Laval and Henri Trémoulet had owned and operated private radio stations before the war; see Thévenot, op. cit., 127; see also Pascal Copeau's comments in *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Consultative Provisoire*, 27 March 1945, 797.

15. Pierre Scize, *Le Figaro*, 16 March 1946. For a similar denunciation of private radio, see Thévenot, op. cit., 87–8.

16. Hélène Eck argues that Resistance leaders 'unanimously agreed in 1944' that radio should be a government monopoly; see Eck, op. cit., 130. For a description of groups opposing a state monopoly on radio, see Thévenot, op. cit., 114–33.

17. *Le Monde*, 8 December 1945.

18. Jean Tardieu, 'Nous autres, gens du moyen âge', *La Nef*, 73/74 (February–March 1951), 42.

19. Paul Verneyras, *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Consultative Provisoire*, 27 March 1945, 788.

20. Robert-Pimienta, *Ibid.*, 793.

21. *Le Figaro*, 4 May 1946, 1. For similar comments, see René Sudre, *Le huitième art: mission de la radio* (Paris 1945), 104.

22. Quoted in Eck, op. cit., 138.

23. Paul Verneyras, op. cit., 790.

24. Albert Le Bail, *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Consultative Provisoire*, 27 March 1945, 793.

25. On attempts to 'bring culture to the masses' in postwar France, see Eck, *op. cit.*, 129–46; Brian Rigby, 'The Reconstruction of Culture: Peuple et Culture and the Popular Education Movement' in Nicholas Hewitt (ed.), *The Culture of Reconstruction: European Literature, Thought and Film, 1945–50* (New York 1989), 140–52. On the cultural policies of the Popular Front of 1936–37, see Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy, 1934–38* (Cambridge 1988), 113–45. On an earlier example of this cultural project, see David James Fisher, 'The Origins of the French Popular Theatre', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 12, 3 (July 1977), 461–97.

26. Paul Bringuier, *France-Soir*, 11 November 1945, 1.

27. Robert-Pimienta, *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Consultative Provisoire*, 27 March 1945, 791.

28. Persicaire, 'Radio – le moribund qui s'ignore', *Esprit*, 1 January 1945, 306.

29. Pierre Laroche, *Radio 45*, 31 December 1944–6 January 1945, 6. See also Pierre Scize, *Le Figaro*, 12 March 1946, 1.

30. Paul Bringuier, *France-Soir*, 11 November 1945, 1.

31. Pierre Scize, *Le Figaro*, 12 March 1946, 1.

32. *L'Aurore*, 26 June 1945, 1; 6 July 1945, 1.

33. Henri-Louis Grimaud, *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Nationale Constituante, Débats*, 31 December 1945, second session, 662.

34. Pierre Scize, *Le Figaro*, 14 March 1946, 1.

35. Joanny Berlioz, *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Consultative Provisoire*, 27 March 1945, 795.

36. Pierre Scize, *Le Figaro*, 12 March 1946, 1.

37. *L'Aurore*, 28 June 1945, 1; 3 July 1945, 1; 26 June 1945, 1.

38. Thomas Crow, for example, has shown how rival factions within the political and artistic élite of pre-revolutionary Paris began to use the rhetorical device of 'public opinion' to gain advantage in their struggles; see Thomas Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven, CT 1985). See also Keith Michael Baker, 'Public Opinion as Political Invention' in *Inventing the French Revolution* (Cambridge 1990), 167–99.

39. Here it is crucial to point out how dramatically access to secondary and higher education has increased in France since the 1940s. In addition, American readers should keep in mind the differences between French and American attitudes to social class, particularly regarding people's sense of entitlement to engage in public debate.

40. Thévenot, *op. cit.*, 166.

41. *Ibid.*, 161.

42. *Ibid.*, 157.

43. *Ibid.*, 157.

44. *Ibid.*, 163.

45. *Ibid.*, 163. Some historians place the beginning of cultural polling in France around 1950, but two private French polling institutes took polls on radio in 1945 and 1946. See Cécile Méadel, 'The Arrival of Opinion Polls in French Radio and Television, 1945–1960' in Rigby and Hewitt, *op. cit.*, 147–76; and John Dorsey, 'Public Opinion Research in France', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 16 (Summer 1952), 225–35. For the earlier polls, see the Service de Sondages et Statistiques publication, *Sondages de l'opinion publique française*, 15 May 1946,

379; see also, *Bulletin d'Information de l'Institut Français d'Opinion Publique*, 10 (16 February 1945), 54.

46. *France-Soir*, 19 February 1946, 1.

47. See Jean Stoetzel's comments in the IFOP publication, *Sondages* (1977), 56; Jean Stoetzel, *La psychologie sociale* (Paris 1963), 267; Roland Cayrol, *La nouvelle communication politique* (Paris 1986), 94.

48. Pierre Bourdieu, 'Public Opinion Does Not Exist', Mary C. Axtmann, trans., in Armand Mattel and Seth Siegelaub (eds), *Communication and Class Struggle*, vol. 1 (New York 1979), 128.

49. Pierre Scize, *Le Figaro*, 12 March 1946, 1. *Sondages de l'opinion publique française*, 25 (15 May 1946), 379.

50. *Sondages de l'opinion publique française*, 25 (15 May 1946), 380.

51. *France-Soir*, 1 May 1946, 1. *L'Aurore*, 6 July 1945, 1.

52. For a complaint about time spent on variety shows, see Joanny Berlioz's comments in *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Consultative Provisoire*, 27 March 1945, 795. For the popularity of variety shows and popular music, see *France-Soir*, 1 May 1946, 1.

53. *L'Aurore*, 5 August 1945, 1. *France-Soir*, 2 May 1946, 1.

54. *France-Soir*, 2 May 1946, 1.

55. Pierre Scize, *Le Figaro*, 12 March 1946, 1. To placate more sceptical observers, *France-Soir* organized a committee of cultural notables (including Marcel Pagnol) to oversee its referendum and to present its findings to the public; see *France-Soir*, 25 May 1946, 1.

56. *France-Soir*, 23 March 1946, 1.

57. *France-Soir* reported that 68 per cent of its respondents expressed satisfaction with educational programmes; see *France-Soir*, 1 May 1946, 1. For further discussion of people claiming to like educational programming, see the 1951 listener survey in *La Nef*, 73/74 (February–March 1951), 136–66.

58. The quote is in Pierre Bourdieu, trans. Richard Nice, *Distinction* (Cambridge, Mass. 1984), 398. His discussion of deference on political subjects appears on pages 397–414.

59. See, for example, various readers' letters in *L'Aurore*, 30 June 1945 and 3 July 1945. See also Thévenot, op. cit., 81. Porché called certain (unnamed) kinds of music 'undeniably superior', but he provided no explanation; see *La Nef*, 73/74 (February–March 1951), 169.

60. P.J. Kingston, 'A Survey of the French Radio Industry, 1940–1944, as seen by the BBC', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television*, 3,2 (1983), 155–6.

61. On the popularity of variety shows in these years, see Robert Beauvais, 'Les variétés', in Pierre Descaves and A.V.J. Martin, *Un siècle de radio et de télévision* (Paris 1965), 365–74. On page 368, Beauvais notes the French roots of these variety shows.

62. P.J. Kingston cites a BBC report showing 5,322,810 licensed radio sets in France in March 1943, but he notes that there was a thriving black market in radio sets during the war; see Kingston, op. cit., 149–60. A 1951 survey estimated there were about 8 million sets in France, and that 70 per cent of French homes had radios; see *La nef*, 73/74 (February–March 1951), 164, 155.

63. *La Nef* mentions a peak period of electrical usage occurring when a prize boxing match was broadcast at 2.30 am; see *La Nef*, 73/74 (February–March

1951), 143.

64. On the gradual acceptance of polling in France, see Jon Cowans, 'Wielding the People: Opinion Polls and the Problem of Legitimacy in France since 1944', PhD diss., Stanford University, 1994.

65. Pierre Scize, *Le Figaro*, 15 March 1946, 1.

66. *Le Figaro*, 4 May 1946, 1.

67. Thévenot, op. cit., 131.

68. *La Nef*, 73/74 (February–March 1951), 169.

69. On listening habits in France, see Thévenot, op. cit., 24–5, 70; *La Nef*, 73/74 (February–March 1951), 136–64.

70. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 1–3.

71. *Le Figaro*, 4 May 1946, 1.

72. Jean Biondi, *Journal Officiel, Assemblée Nationale Constituante, Débats*, 31 December 1945, second session, 661.

73. *Le Figaro*, 22 March 1946, 1.

74. See, for example, *France-Soir*, 1 May 1946, 1. Opinion polls on people's favourite films showed a similar fragmentation of tastes; when the IFOP institute asked people to name their favourite film of 1946, the most commonly-named film received 8 per cent of the answers; see *Sondages*, 18 (16 October 1946), 245.

75. Thévenot, op. cit., 144.

76. *L'Aurore*, 28 June 1945, 30 June 1945, 17 July 1945.

77. Eck, op. cit., 135. See also Pierre Miquel, *Histoire de la radio et de la télévision* (Paris 1972), 151; and Pierre Albert and André-Jean Tudesq, *Histoire de la radio-télévision* (Paris 1981), 54.

Jon Cowans

is Assistant Professor of History at Rutgers University, Newark. He is currently working on a manuscript examining French political culture and the problem of legitimacy from 1944 to the present.