

## Reconstructing De Gaulle

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Over two thousand books and articles make a very good point: Charles de Gaulle based his domestic and foreign policies on a fundamental, unchanging vision of France's geopolitical position in the world. Andrew Moravcsik summarily dismisses this literature for its "tendency to engage in imaginative biographical reconstruction" and argues instead that "the overwhelming preponderance of direct evidence in the published public record about the motivations of de Gaulle and his closest associates with respect to the European Economic Community (EEC) confirms the primacy of commercial concerns."<sup>1</sup> Moravcsik provides a large amount of countervailing evidence to support his conclusions, which he declares to be "unambiguous" (Part 2, p. 54). Unfortunately, Moravcsik's flawed methodology and misrepresentation of the evidence undermine his case. In analyzing Moravcsik's article, my comments will first address the general questions of his methods and his depiction of de Gaulle. I will then take a closer look at each of Moravcsik's cases and point to the evidence for alternative explanations of de Gaulle's decisions and actions.

### Methodology

Three methodological problems and some sporadic faulty logic mar Moravcsik's article. First, Moravcsik asks the reader to consider evidence about the EEC in isolation from de Gaulle's general policy goals. Why should we deliberately ignore reams of relevant evidence? This is tantamount to attempting to understand a person's decision to commute to work each day by

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1. Andrew Moravcsik, "De Gaulle Between Grain And *Grandeur*: The Political Economy of French EC Policy, 1958–1970 (Part 1)," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Spring 2000), p. 7 and Part 2 in Vol. 2, No. 3 (Fall 2000), p. 67. All subsequent references to Moravcsik's article will be followed by part and page numbers in parentheses.

studying only the conditions of the commute. Using this metaphor, we can see de Gaulle's starting point as his vision for France as a world leader. His goal was to leave France with a constitution and practices that would ensure a strong and viable French political system even after his retirement. The "commute" between his vision and its realization encompassed all the details of implementation, including his policy toward the EEC. Published documents provide more than enough contextual evidence for the primacy of geopolitics in de Gaulle's EEC policy, as does the archival record. Specific examples will be noted below.

Second, although a study based only on published documents can be insightful, Moravcsik has not made responsible use of these documents. A good historian must at least acknowledge evidence that supports conflicting interpretations. Moravcsik often fails to do this, and at times he falsely (although probably unintentionally) claims the absence of such evidence. He is thus guilty of his own charge of "selective citation and interpretation" (Part 2, p. 67). Below I will draw on Moravcsik's own sources to provide specific examples of evidence that contradict his arguments. In only a few cases will I supply archival evidence as further proof of my claim that Moravcsik's argument does not square with the facts.

Finally, although Moravcsik criticizes "ex post facto" accounts as unreliable, he frequently and uncritically draws on them when convenient. For example, Moravcsik relies on de Gaulle's 1970 memoirs for an account of a specific meeting in September 1958 (Part 1, p. 27, fn. 69). In another case he accepts the account found in Edmond Jouve's 1967 book to explain de Gaulle's position in 1958 (Part 1, p. 22).

Problems of logic arise as well. In Part 1, pages 20 and 21, Moravcsik offers a list of outcomes that the geopolitical and economic theories are supposed to predict. But he does not provide sufficient analysis to explain why the outcomes must follow as they do. For example, if de Gaulle ascribed some geopolitical significance to the EEC (as Moravcsik acknowledges in Part 1, p. 27), why would French support for the EEC have to weaken with de Gaulle's return to power in 1958? To make such a claim, Moravcsik needs to provide a thorough analysis of the level of support for the EEC under each of the four Fourth Republic governments after the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957.

## **Explaining de Gaulle**

Moravcsik's analysis unfortunately attempts to apply overly simplistic explanations to a complicated figure. It is inaccurate to argue that de Gaulle was influenced *either* by geopolitics *or* by economic concerns. De Gaulle's ap-

proach to French economic interests constituted a subset of his geopolitical goals, not a competing claim. To separate the two is to do a disservice to de Gaulle. To insist that commercial interests automatically generate a foreign trade policy, regardless of the government in power (Part 1, p. 15), makes Moravcsik's "liberal intergovernmentalism" sound like liberal determinism, which, in turn, seems more Marxian than liberal.

The real Charles de Gaulle was much more sophisticated and much more self-assured than Moravcsik describes. De Gaulle understood international trade in the mid-twentieth century in a neomercantilist sense not inconsistent with the prevailing Bretton Woods system. In the case of agriculture, for example, Moravcsik correctly observes that the democratic de Gaulle could not easily suppress the interests of France's large farming population. At a time when services had not yet emerged as a major sector of Western economies, French industry would be left to pay the agricultural bill through wealth transfers. De Gaulle argued that "our industry can face the competition, but if our agriculture had to remain outside the Common Market [the core of the EEC], the resulting burden for our industrialists would not be bearable."<sup>2</sup> De Gaulle understood French industry both as the key to French geopolitical strength and as the weakest link in the chain sustaining that objective. (See below on his motivations in 1958 for accepting the Treaty of Rome.) Although France remained the most influential member of the EEC in the early 1960s, West Germany was the EEC's strongest industrial state. De Gaulle feared that if French industry had to sustain French agriculture, it simply could not keep pace with West German industry. This, in turn, would undermine France's geopolitical position as the dominant EEC country. On the other hand, de Gaulle saw that agriculture was not inherently a burden to France. It was a potential asset, since farm exports could be exchanged for industrial imports from West Germany.

De Gaulle's statement in the previous paragraph comes immediately after his reference to agriculture as the most serious problem after Algeria, cited by Moravcsik (Part 1, p. 24). Moravcsik places this quotation "at a critical Cabinet meeting in August 1962." That makes three errors in one phrase. The quotation is from 6 June 1962. It is from a standard, one-on-one, post-Cabinet meeting with Information Minister Alain Peyrefitte (whose notes of conversations with de Gaulle now constitute a large part of the published record of de Gaulle's presidency). And there was nothing "critical" about the preceding Cabinet meeting, nor about almost any other during de Gaulle's Fifth

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2. Alain Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1 (Paris: Fayard, 1994), p. 302; and Alain Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Fayard, 1997), p. 367 (25 March 1964).

Republic. De Gaulle made his own decisions. Unfortunately, such mistakes are all too common in Moravcsik's article, making his account of de Gaulle's EEC policies unreliable.

### **Case I: Accepting the Treaty of Rome**

Moravcsik argues that de Gaulle's acceptance of the Treaty of Rome in 1958 demonstrates the French leader's view of the EEC as a vehicle to support the commercial interests of French agriculture. In reality, when de Gaulle accepted the EEC in May and June 1958, he did so with no evident consideration of agriculture.<sup>3</sup> The evidence that Moravcsik produces is based on a publication from 1967, when the issues on de Gaulle's mind differed from those of nine years before. In 1958 and 1959, de Gaulle offered at least three reasons for having accepted the EEC, but agriculture was not among them. In a meeting with West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in November 1958, de Gaulle confirmed what Maurice Couve de Murville remembers de Gaulle had decided the previous May: that the Common Market would "awaken French industry" by "obliging [it] to modernize."<sup>4</sup> This in turn would strengthen France's geopolitical position. Chronologically speaking, this seems to be the main reason that de Gaulle accepted the EEC in late May 1958. Certainly, he was encouraged in that direction by the insistence of his domestic coalition partners and his foreign counterparts. De Gaulle did not require "months" to make a "turnaround" in committing himself to the EEC (Part 1, p. 22). His turnaround was complete by the time he became prime minister of the last coalition government of the Fourth Republic on 1 June 1958.

Moreover, de Gaulle immediately realized the implications for using the EEC as a precedent to leverage French power through leadership of Europe. In a meeting of his chief foreign policy advisers on 10 June 1958, de Gaulle announced that among the three European Communities (including Euratom and the Coal and Steel Community), "the essential point is the Common Market which, in itself, is not a bad thing, and especially the political and cultural organization of Europe."<sup>5</sup> It is no coincidence that the Fouchet Plan's subsequent proposed membership would overlap precisely with that of the Common Market.

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3. As the incoming prime minister of the Fourth Republic, not yet as president of the Fifth Republic.

4. Maurice Couve de Murville, interview by author, Paris, 14 May 1997; and comments in a note by Jean-Marc Boegner, 29 November 1958, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter referred to as MAEF), Cab. Couve 316.

5. MAEF, Cab. Couve 316.

In late 1959 de Gaulle told British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan that “I finally accepted the Common Market because it ties the Germans to us.” This statement is found in recently published French diplomatic documents.<sup>6</sup> Stated only 18 months after the fact and in the context of a meeting with Macmillan, this assertion seems implausible. Nonetheless, de Gaulle put this spin on the issue long before he began to insist that agriculture was the *sine qua non* of the EEC. The same published collection of documents provides no evidence that de Gaulle even mentioned agriculture to Adenauer in September 1958, despite the later claim that he did (in de Gaulle’s memoirs, cited by Moravcsik, Part 1, p. 27).

The statement to Macmillan, accurate or not, represents a significant challenge to Moravcsik’s commercial argument, and Moravcsik must at least consider it before rejecting it. Either he consciously decided to omit it or he was unaware of it, despite its availability in a key source published several years ago. Moravcsik instead relies on *ex post facto* evidence from memoirs to support a position that no known documentation from 1958 will sustain and that is directly contradicted by the available documentation.<sup>7</sup> He thereby falsely conflates de Gaulle’s 1958 acceptance of the EEC and the General’s later agricultural positions within that organization.

## Case 2: EEC Agriculture

De Gaulle first raised the question of agriculture in the EEC in the spring of 1961. He believed that France needed to use income from agricultural exports to finance industrial development, which he understood to be the core of France’s geopolitical strength. Why, then, did de Gaulle threaten the EEC over agriculture if he appreciated its beneficial effects on French industry? Why did he raise the question if he knew that agriculture offered a valuable precedent for his desire to organize a Europe of the Six? The answer can be found by looking at French industrial development. By 1961 it was clear that French industry had risen to the challenge, and de Gaulle recognized in November 1963 that France could retain the status quo in the Common Market’s

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6. *Documents Diplomatiques Français*, 1959, Vol. 2 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1995), p. 781 (hereinafter referred to as *DDF*, with appropriate volume number).

7. Here I should note that the archival documentation I cite above is part of my Ph.D. dissertation, “Europeanism and the European Economic Community, 1954–1966” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, Cambridge, 1999), for which Andrew Moravcsik was a supervisor. Moravcsik may have been reluctant to mention it, per my request not to cite my dissertation before it is published. I am grateful that he honored my request.

industrial trade arrangements and continue to negotiate “in the same path.”<sup>8</sup> With the successive failures of the Fouchet Plan in April 1962 and the Franco-West German Elysée Treaty in April 1963 (when Adenauer accepted a separate West German preamble), de Gaulle no longer had to treat the EEC in a gingerly manner. The Fouchet Plan he had hoped to extract from his EEC partners was now moribund. To be sure, the EEC could still fulfill de Gaulle’s geopolitical vision. But de Gaulle believed that France would be at the center of any European organization, and he was convinced that if he undermined the EEC another organization would rise in its place.<sup>9</sup> In any case, the geopolitical-economic problem of agricultural transfers was now more important than the specific geopolitical benefits of the EEC, and de Gaulle was willing to threaten the latter in order to obtain the former.

### Case 3: The Fouchet Plan

The seeds of the Fouchet Plan for European political union were planted in de Gaulle’s mind very early, perhaps even before he came to power in 1958. Moravcsik’s account of the Fouchet plan is regrettably based upon extrapolation from one ill-chosen document, and it surprisingly fails to consider the opposing evidence. His analysis of the Fouchet Plan is thus the weakest part of his article.

Moravcsik presents the Fouchet Plan as a devious “deception” by de Gaulle to portray integrationist *bona fides* while in reality pursuing French commercial aims in the EEC. The single document Moravcsik uses to support this claim was written by Alain Peyrefitte in 1960, more than a year before he entered de Gaulle’s Cabinet. The document represents Peyrefitte’s personal reflections on, not his input into, the evolving initiatives that later become the Fouchet Plan.

A number of errors are found in this section of the article (Part 1, pp. 34–35):

1. De Gaulle did not “suddenly revise” the plan in January 1962. Instead, he eliminated recent compromises introduced by his diplomats and reaffirmed the position he had consistently maintained since 1958 – that the organization should be intergovernmental, with no explicit acknowledgment of the jurisdiction of either the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the EEC, both of which were partial targets of de Gaulle’s plan.

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8. Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 246.

9. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 168.

2. Moravcsik claims that de Gaulle did “not . . . fully [expect] the Fouchet Plan to succeed.” After de Gaulle initiated two rare multilateral European summits in 1961, he lost so much face when the project failed in 1962 that he shied away from taking the same initiative when Erhard encouraged him to do so in 1963–1966.<sup>10</sup> Also, de Gaulle’s style may have been obdurate, but he did not engage in outright deception and back-handed diplomacy. He had very high hopes for the Fouchet Plan, and he was sorely disappointed when it collapsed.
3. Moravcsik charges de Gaulle with failing to make “significant efforts” to ensure the success of political union because he would not compromise with his five partners. Moravcsik does not recognize that the entire purpose of de Gaulle’s plan was to unite Western Europe under French leadership, particularly in the military sphere. To compromise on that position would have nullified the whole effort. (For example, the Dutch alone were essentially responsible for the plan’s failure, but de Gaulle refused to give in to their main demand that the British be invited to participate.)
4. Moravcsik claims that the Fouchet Plan’s “failure [did not] have any impact whatsoever on his policy toward the EEC.” By 1961–1962 the EEC was gaining momentum as the principal institution for unifying Europe, a position it has maintained ever since. De Gaulle intended his project to challenge that position, which it certainly would have, and eventually to supplant it, which it might have. After the failure of the Fouchet Plan, de Gaulle came to terms with the EEC as the principal locus for organizing Europe, at least in the medium term.
5. De Gaulle’s effort is supposed to have ended in 1962 or 1963, but he actively endorsed similar proposals in 1964 while allowing West German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard to take the evidently ill-fated initiative to convene a multilateral a European summit.

After relying on the irrelevant Peyrefitte memorandum, Moravcsik curtly summarizes the opposing evidence in a footnote: “The quotations are too numerous to recite, yet . . . rarely linked in any concrete way to the EEC” (Part 1, p. 42, fn.115). The first problem is that Moravcsik has included this case in his article because it is supposed to have distracted France’s partners from de Gaulle’s agricultural agenda. Moravcsik depends on the link to the EEC. The second problem is that de Gaulle’s own words provide extensive evidence

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10. Jeffrey Vanke, “The European Collaborations of France and Germany,” in Wilfried Loth, ed., *Du traité de l’Elysée au sommet de La Haye: Le projet européen de 1963 à 1969* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, forthcoming).

for the geopolitical nature of the Fouchet Plan, and in fact for a very different kind of linkage with the Common Market. Immediately after the Fouchet Plan's demise, de Gaulle lamented it and expressed hope that it would be resurrected:

The Common Market exists. It will continue. We will prepare ourselves for it. But one can ask oneself whether it will not be condemned in the long run by the impossibility of achieving a *politique commune*. If the Political Union is not instituted, what will become of the Common Market, of which it [the Political Union] should be the coronation?<sup>11</sup>

That same day, de Gaulle regretted that the Belgians and the Dutch preferred NATO to the Fouchet Plan. By insisting that there was “no question of mentioning NATO in a European treaty,” he referred to what he had insisted on for two years: that one of the core purposes of the Fouchet Plan was to coordinate European defense. De Gaulle even admitted to Adenauer that the Dutch accusation of his attempt to establish “Franco-German domination” was “not entirely false.”<sup>12</sup> Finally, the long quotation above indicates one of de Gaulle's geopolitical ambitions for the Common Market. He believed it could serve as a stepping stone toward organizing Europe and, in turn, leveraging French power in the world.<sup>13</sup> Again, Moravcsik relies on an incomplete presentation of the evidence when superimposing his general theory onto a specific case.

#### **Case 4: The British Application**

Moravcsik's selective documentation continues in his analysis of de Gaulle's veto of British membership in the EEC in January 1963. Moravcsik asserts the following about de Gaulle's speech announcing the veto:

During the entire press conference of 14 January 1962 [sic—1963], de Gaulle never explicitly mentioned security issues, geopolitical disagreements with the Anglo-Saxons, the Fouchet Plan, Franco-West German relations, European political cooperation, the MLF or nuclear weapons, American geo-strategy, or any other non-economic concerns. (Part 2, p. 11)

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11. 18 April 1962, Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, p. 107.

12. Letter dated 20 May 1961, MAEF, EU61–65 dr. 1961. Defense was mentioned as a central purpose in a memorandum to Adenauer, 30 July 1960, Charles de Gaulle, *Lettres, notes et carnets*, Vol. 8 (Paris: Plon, 1985), pp. 382–83.

13. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 158–159; cited in Moravcsik, Part 1, p. 11.

At the end of his article, Moravcsik repeats the claim, adding that de Gaulle made “not a single mention of . . . the ‘special relationship’” in his response to the question of Britain and the EEC (Part 2, p. 66). The speech does elaborate on agriculture at length. But here is what else de Gaulle says, all within the single answer devoted to Great Britain and the Common Market:

The Treaty of Rome was conceived by six continental States. . . .

They are in solidarity, first, because of the consciousness that they collectively represent an important part of the origins of our civilization and also, with regard to their security, because they are continentals and because they are faced with the same threat from one end to the other of their combined territory.

Finally, they are in solidarity because none of them is tied to the outside by any *particular* political or military accord.

It was therefore possible, psychologically and materially, to organize an economic Community of the Six.<sup>14</sup>

Within this single quotation, de Gaulle makes an explicit reference to security, an explicit reference to geography, an obvious implicit reference to Britain’s special defense relationship with the United States, and two explicit references to culture and identity. What is more, the next two questions in the press conference addressed the “Bahamas accord” (on special nuclear relations between the United States and Britain, December 1962) and “Franco-German cooperation.” De Gaulle’s memorized answers run to several more pages of text. Moravcsik’s failure to acknowledge this evidence is surprising.

The conversations in the weeks preceding the veto, documented by Peyrefitte, reveal further contradictory evidence. Moravcsik alludes to this in Part 2, footnote 22—de Gaulle acknowledged an “implicit” link between the special Anglo-American nuclear arrangement at Nassau in December 1962 and the economic problems of the British candidacy for the EEC. But Moravcsik neglects to mention that de Gaulle continued this thought only two sentences later: “If the English do not have the same scruples [that the French have against depending on U.S. nuclear weapons], that is a sign they are not yet suited to enter Europe.” As in a previous example, Moravcsik misdates this meeting and misreads the notes (Part 2, pp. 6, 13). Moreover, at the Cabinet meeting of 19 December 1962 (which Moravcsik erroneously dates as 17 December 1962) de Gaulle did not announce the veto, as Moravcsik

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14. 14 January 1963, in Charles de Gaulle, *Discours et messages* (Paris: Plon, 1970–71), p. 107, emphasis added.

claims. De Gaulle at that point merely enumerated problems of Britain's candidacy. Foreign Minister Couve de Murville was present on 19 December, but he did not know about the veto until 9 January 1963.<sup>15</sup>

The same volume of Peyrefitte's memoirs provides more evidence of de Gaulle's geopolitical reasons for rejecting Britain: "Europe of the Six is disturbed by the English candidacy and by the Americans, who are preparing to enter by extension (*en ligne*)." If Britain entered, "that would be free trade of the Western world; that would no longer be the European Common Market." De Gaulle emphasized the point:

The United States understands that our conception of Europe, which rests on a Franco-German entente, can have the effect of undermining American hegemony in the Western world. . . . [The United States] is pressing Great Britain to join the founding countries of the Common Market; they could thereby strengthen their means of pressuring the Six. . . . [With the British Commonwealth then gone as well], nothing would be opposed any longer to American hegemony.

[The Americans] now want to construct a "Multilateral Force" to camouflage this hegemony on the nuclear level, just as they created NATO in 1949 to camouflage their hegemony on the conventional level. The English will be their Trojan horse in Europe. For that, it suffices that the European Community open itself to the Anglo-Saxon world, by means of which they will make the law there.<sup>16</sup>

This quotation is uninterrupted and the notes from the conversation reveal no mention of economic affairs when the question of British membership in the EEC came up. De Gaulle clearly viewed the EEC as a geopolitical bastion of French and European power against infiltration by the United States via Great Britain. The fact that it could also serve as an export market for French agriculture does not detract from this central geopolitical rationale.

De Gaulle's veto of the second British application in 1967 further belies the explanation that French commercial, or even mercantilist, interests exclusively determined de Gaulle's position. When British Prime Minister Harold Wilson presented his case to de Gaulle in late June 1967, the French president posed two questions: First, was Britain prepared to shift its agricultural imports from the Commonwealth to the EEC? Second, "will you bring to Europe something of independence from [the United States], or an element of the At-

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15. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle*, Vol. 1, pp. 336, 349.

16. 18 April and 24 May 1962, 24 January 1963, *Ibid.*, pp. 107, 109–110, 150, 282.

lantic community?” If Wilson could not answer affirmatively, de Gaulle added, “there will be no Europe, at least not a European Europe; there will of course be Europeans, but lumped into a whole where they would [sic] have lost their character and their personality.” Wilson replied: “We will fulfill our obligations as loyal members of the Community, and we will follow its decisions, including those that have been taken up to now.” As both leaders knew, all of the main agricultural decisions had already been made. But Wilson qualified his position on relations with the United States, and for the remainder of the meeting, de Gaulle kept coming back to this core disagreement and dropped the subject of agriculture. He concluded, “I do not believe that you and we have evolved in opposing directions, but it is not yet the same direction.”<sup>17</sup> Moravcsik interprets de Gaulle’s reasoning for the first veto in 1963 in the following manner: “Only once EEC policies were definitely established, de Gaulle averred, could Britain and Scandinavian countries enter” (Part 2, p. 21). Instead, as this new archival evidence demonstrates, even when Britain accepted the CAP in 1967, de Gaulle still vetoed British membership.

### **Case 5: The “Empty Chair” Crisis**

The last case, the “empty chair” crisis of 1965–1966, does leave room for debate over whether economic or institutional elements had primacy in de Gaulle’s geopolitical vision. Some historians have argued that de Gaulle provoked the crisis to secure (as he eventually did) billions of marks’ worth of EEC (mostly West German) subsidies for French agricultural exports through common financing of the CAP. Others argue that the crisis was chiefly institutional and that de Gaulle used disagreements over agriculture primarily to force a de facto amendment of the Treaty of Rome and thereby retain national veto rights.

In this case, I agree with part of Moravcsik’s reading of the Peyrefitte interviews. De Gaulle clearly had in mind intra-EEC CAP trading preferences, as well as CAP financing, when he pursued the retention of national veto rights in EEC legislation. Significantly, de Gaulle ended the “empty chair” crisis once the institutional question was resolved in the Luxembourg Compromise of early 1966, before the Six even returned to the issue of CAP finance, which they did not settle until a few months later. But I still insist that de Gaulle’s pursuit of French economic interest was motivated by mercantilist, and therefore geopolitical-economic, concerns. The West Germans, about whom de Gaulle retained long-term ambivalence, “export a lot more indus-

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17. 19 June 1967, Centre d’Histoire de l’Europe du vingtième siècle (Paris), CM 9–02.

trial products than we do, and they import a lot more agricultural products at good prices than we do. We face a difficult situation in comparison to them. We not only have to absorb the production of our farmers; we have to sell their surpluses, whatever the cost.”<sup>18</sup> Keeping pace with the West Germans, in every sense, required the opening of West German agricultural markets to French products.

In this case, if de Gaulle had been following the dictates of pressure groups, he would have settled for trading preferences alone and not threatened the operations of the EEC in the “empty chair” crisis. Moravcsik himself points out that this policy caused de Gaulle to lose the farmers’ votes in December 1965 (Part 2, p. 51). Moravcsik could argue that de Gaulle was doing what was best for the farmers’ commercial interests even if they did not understand it. But this would mean that de Gaulle was acting on an independent assessment of what would be beneficial for agriculture, and that he was, in fact, free to make decisions without succumbing to the pressure of commercial interests.

In other places Moravcsik’s argumentation leads him into tautological reasoning: “Achieving a ‘political Europe’ was never de Gaulle’s first priority, because it was never the first priority of French interest groups and voters” (Part 2, p. 55). Although de Gaulle still hoped that some future moment would bring a French-led political Europe, he unilaterally amended the Treaty of Rome to discard qualified majority voting (QMV) in favor of national vetoes. Besides this geopolitical interest, de Gaulle preserved France’s EEC veto in order to preserve the agricultural agreements that would help France remain geopolitically competitive with West Germany. Once de Gaulle secured that objective, he allowed the “empty chair” crisis to end.

## Conclusion

What if French farmers had been politically disorganized and unable to come to an agreement on what they wanted from the French government? What if de Gaulle’s policies on these five EEC cases had been developed in the absence of pressure from commercial interests and their political representatives? The evidence suggests that de Gaulle would have pursued the same policies. His decision in 1958 to accept the Common Market had nothing to do with French agriculture; it stemmed primarily from his determination to force French industry to modernize. Although some elements within French industry supported the Common Market, the loudest voices were opposed.

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18. 25 March 1964, Peyrefitte, *C’était de Gaulle*, Vol. 2, p. 367.

De Gaulle, however, chose to override those voices. In the CAP negotiations of 1961–1964, Moravcsik has his strongest case for the influence of commercial interests on the outcome. But this group naturally would have been consulted on EEC policy when its interests were at stake. As demonstrated above, de Gaulle treated agriculture as France's comparative advantage in the world economy and a sector that would influence how the more important French industries would develop. The Fouchet Plan case is clearly unrelated to the EEC, and de Gaulle explicitly enunciated the geopolitical nature of Britain's application for EEC membership.

Furthermore, although it is difficult to imagine that de Gaulle would have given up the gains he achieved through the CAP before 1965 (Part 2, p. 50), it is even more difficult to imagine that he would have operated by the Treaty of Rome and accepted QMV. He wanted to establish an alternative practice of unanimity that would not jeopardize the CAP, and he guessed correctly that the EEC with French membership was too important to his partners for them to abandon it for the sake of QMV. In the end, de Gaulle got his CAP, entrenched the principle of unanimity, and never had to choose between them.

Moravcsik makes clear in his conclusion that his article is a coda to his recent book on European integration theory.<sup>19</sup> By tackling the most independent-minded national leader in the history of European integration, Moravcsik aims to underscore his contention that all national leaders involved in that process acted more or less at the beck and call of organized commercial interest groups. He implies that this is the case in any democracy. His theory has some validity, especially in its ability to explain some later episodes in European integration history. But by dramatically overreaching in the case of de Gaulle, Moravcsik greatly weakens his general theory.

The theory of liberal intergovernmentalism assumes completely different characteristics when it is applied so universally and deterministically. Moravcsik's rigid model leaves the producing classes with no objective other than their own direct commercial profits (as opposed to securing generally favorable economic conditions), which they pursue by manipulating the strings of national leaders, their marionettes. The picture that emerges is more in line with Marxian interpretations of domestic and international economy and allows little space for individual liberty to choose between different courses of action. Moravcsik sustains this simplistic model through a selective presentation of the evidence that best validates it, while ignoring the most damaging countervailing evidence.

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19. Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

An analysis of de Gaulle's approach to European integration does yield two better, if more obvious, observations about the balance between domestic policy and foreign policy in determining the destiny of nation-states. First, virtually all national leaders hold some beliefs that they are unwilling to compromise for either domestic or international reasons and for which they are willing to sacrifice even the success of their projects or their own hold on power. De Gaulle let the Fouchet Plan fail rather than dilute his ambitions for it. He nearly resigned his presidency in December 1965 because he would not rule France without a democratic endorsement of his leadership and policies. Second, organized commercial interests do not necessarily determine a state's foreign trade policy, and leaders do sometimes place a higher priority on the state's macroeconomic or other interests. In the interest of France, de Gaulle forced French industry to modernize through foreign competition at a faster rate than many industrialists wanted. In the interest of France, de Gaulle negotiated a Common Agricultural Policy that happened to correspond to most of the expressed interests of French agriculture.

It is no revelation that de Gaulle pursued French commercial interests in the EEC when these did not conflict with his general interest in strengthening the country. Moravcsik has not offered new arguments about French commercial interests in the EEC during de Gaulle's years in power. Evidence for his arguments has always been accessible: in the first contemporary journalistic accounts, in the first contemporary histories, and in virtually any sizable narrative history of EEC developments.<sup>20</sup> Moravcsik's notion that commercial interests were of primary importance for understanding de Gaulle's policies is contravened by an overwhelming amount of evidence. The geopolitical interpretation of de Gaulle's policies and actions toward the EEC remains basically intact.

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20. For example, F. Roy Willis, *France, Germany, and the New Europe, 1945-1967*, 2nd ed. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968).