Charles de Gaulle and Europe

The New Revisionism

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Most scholars of President Charles de Gaulle's policy toward European integration now agree that it was motivated primarily by political-economic interests, not by de Gaulle's geopolitical "grand vision" or by other political-military concerns. This "revisionist" view emphasizes the role of major producer groups, notably farmers, in demanding European trade policies and subsidies that would enhance their well-being. Existing documentary and contextual evidence overwhelmingly backs the revisionist interpretation. On this basic point, those who study major French decisions regarding the European Economic Community (EEC)—to remain in the organization in 1958, to demand the establishment of a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), to press for the Fouchet Plan, to veto British membership in 1963 and 1967, and to provoke and then settle the "empty chair" crisis—have reached a remarkable level of consensus.

Yet most scholars engaged in the study of de Gaulle's foreign policy have not gotten the message. These "traditionalists" continue to interpret his EEC policy as motivated by the same mix of geopolitical and ideological factors that may well have influenced French military, nuclear, and alliance policies. This geopolitical orthodoxy, despite being superficially attractive because of its parsimony, is sustainable only through dubious historiographical means: selective reading of primary sources, use of indirect rather than direct evidence, and citation of secondary works dealing primarily with French political-military policies. Younger revisionists have created further confusion in the field by framing new economic interpretations primarily as criticisms of earlier, nearly identical, economic accounts. Such internecine divisions within the revisionist camp seem to rest on interdisciplinary misunderstandings that are more rhetorical than real.

The editors of *Globalizing de Gaulle* deserve credit for producing a vol-

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ume that mirrors these important tendencies and tensions in recent scholarship. The overriding lesson for future research is that scholars (and readers) would benefit from greater intellectual tolerance and exchange, both within and across disciplines. Above all, this would highlight the considerable progress made over the past two decades in developing a shared interpretation of de Gaulle's policy toward Europe.

Traditional and Revisionist Interpretations of de Gaulle's European Policy

The central cleavage in historiographical debates over de Gaulle's EEC policy involves the interpretation of the core "national interests" that underlay it. This debate divides "traditionalists" from "revisionists." The dichotomy is drawn in the literature and replicated in *Globalizing de Gaulle*, where N. Piers Ludlow employs the terms "revisionist" and "traditional." Most histories of French European policy in the 1960s still take the traditional view. From this perspective, French EEC policy was inspired by the same motivations that underlay France's distinctive policies vis-à-vis the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and nuclear weapons at the time. At the heart was de Gaulle's distinctive geopolitical "grand design," which aimed to promote French sovereignty and *grandeur,* amass French military power, and enhance French diplomatic prestige. This interpretation is expounded by Garret Martin in the concluding chapter of *Globalizing de Gaulle* and is briefly endorsed by Carine Germond and James Ellison in their chapters.[1]

Martin argues that de Gaulle was on a quest "to recapture what he perceived as his country's natural great power status," to which end he promulgated a "grand design." Although economics and domestic politics mattered, "the fundamental principle for success remained preserving France's independence."[2] The most fundamental of de Gaulle's goals, Martin conjectures, was to "deal with the superpowers, especially the U.S." De Gaulle's obsession with sovereignty and geopolitical advantage, understood in a very traditional realist *("Primat der Aussenpolitik")* sense, stemmed from an amalgam of personal history, political ideology, and geopolitical calculation. De Gaulle had

1. Garret Martin, "Conclusion: A Gaullist Grand Strategy?," in Christian Nuenlist, Anna Locher, and Garret Martin, eds., *Globalizing de Gaulle: International Perspectives on French Foreign Policies, 1958–1969* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), pp. 291–308; Carine Germond, "A 'Cordial Potentiality'? De Gaulle and the Franco-German Partnership, 1963–1969," in Nuenlist, Locher, and Martin, eds., *Globalizing de Gaulle,* p. 52; and James Ellison, "Britain, de Gaulle's NATO Policies, and Anglo-French Rivalry, 1963–1967," in Nuenlist, Locher, and Martin, eds., *Globalizing de Gaulle,* pp. 136, 148.

2. Martin, "Conclusion," pp. 294–295.

"regarded America with mistrust and animosity ever since his difficult relationship with Franklin Roosevelt during World War Two." De Gaulle's transatlantic and European policies also rested on his "philosophy of history," which reflected "a Frenchman's instinctive fear of Germany" and his view that France should be an "eternal seeker of détente" with the USSR. In addition, de Gaulle faced the classic geopolitical dilemma of alliance membership. He worried that "the U.S. presence in Europe might not last forever," yet "on the other hand, he feared that America, because of its might, could be tempted to try to dominate its European allies." Other motivations for de Gaulle, according to Martin, were to bolster France's "Great Power credentials," to "promote France's status," to "overcome the blocs," to "avoid any form of subordination," and to consolidate "France's leadership" in Europe. Above all, de Gaulle sought to avoid anything that would "undermine French sovereignty" or France's ability to "preserve its freedom."[3]

Traditionalists believe that French tactics and policies toward the EEC followed directly from such geopolitical aims. Maurice Vaïsse, perhaps the leading historian of de Gaulle's foreign policy, states the traditionalist view clearly:

> Was European union an end in itself and a primary concern or one factor among others in a foreign policy that assured France a primary role in the international system? . . . For General de Gaulle the economic success of the Europe of the Six was not an end in itself. His grand design was to give Europe a political dimension.[4]

This is also the view Martin takes. The cornerstone of the policy, he believes, was de Gaulle's "very specific vision of the Europe he wanted to build"—namely, the Fouchet Plan for an intergovernmental organization centered on France and Germany but including the Six.[5] Such an arrangement was designed to displace, entirely or in part, the EEC. According to Martin, who quotes Georges-Henri Soutou's *L'alliance incertaine,* France blocked British membership in the EEC in order to show that France "did not accept the indefinite postponement of political Europe in line with its views [understood as politico-military cooperation within the Fouchet Plan], and the supremacy of the US in Western Europe."[6] The veto also blocked a "threat to France's leadership within the Community" posed by Britain, "with its nuclear deter-

3. Ibid., pp. 294–301.

4. Maurice Vaïse, *La grandeur: Politique étrangère du général de Gaulle, 1958–1969* (Paris: Arthème Fayard, 1998), pp. 162, 175.

5. Ibid., p. 296.

6. Ibid., p. 297. For the original, see Georges-Henri Soutou, *L'alliance incertaine: Les rapports politico-stratégiques franco-allemands 1954–1996* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), p. 278.

rent and ties to the other member states."[7] Finally, France wanted to oppose supranational institutions, and a federal model of integration was necessary to maintain French sovereignty. This aim, Martin writes, was absolute: If France "had to choose between a bad Europe and no Europe at all, it would always choose the latter."[8] In sum, de Gaulle's EEC policy was a function of his distinctive policies regarding NATO, nuclear weapons, the Cold War, and nationalism, which in turn followed from his geopolitical vision.

Roughly fifteen years ago, there arose an alternative, "revisionist" interpretation of de Gaulle's European policy, rooted in international political economy. This view is less parsimonious and more nuanced than the traditionalist account insofar as the revisionists believe that France's policies toward the EEC and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) during this period rested on motivations different from those underlying French policies toward NATO and nuclear weapons. According to this view, the primary motivation behind de Gaulle's major European decisions—though not all of his foreign policy—was the promotion, within France's aggregate economic and fiscal means, of the welfare of powerful French industrial and agricultural constituencies.

The revisionist account is not an "economic" interpretation per se but one based on political economy. Its basic premise is that governments seek economic goals, but in doing so they do not treat all groups equally. Instead, subject to overall fiscal, policy, and competitiveness constraints, policymakers strive to assuage pressures from powerful domestic groups and constituencies that are concerned about their own social welfare.[9] De Gaulle, as I noted in

7. Martin, "Conclusion," p. 296.

8. Ibid.

9. Revisionists do not argue that French policymakers sought simply to maximize aggregate national welfare as a classical economist might calculate it—a view with little basis in political science. Political-economic interests stem also from domestic distributional conflict, which implies, for example, that pressure for subsidies increases in declining sectors like agriculture, at least until those sectors shrink to an insignificant size. Ann-Christina Knudsen incorrectly seeks to distinguish her "welfarist" explanation of the CAP from mine by attributing to me a purely "diplomatic" or "economic" view. She misreads me in the process, pointing to my claim that the EEC was not "primarily an effort to preserve a system of social welfare provision unique to post-war Western Europe." See Ann-Christina Knudsen, *Farmers on Welfare: The Making of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), p. 13. Yet in making that statement, I do not deny that European states sought to maintain social welfare for the agricultural community. I only insist that we should not view EEC countries as "unique" or a postwar "exception"—except as France's commercial position required. See Andrew Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), p. 13. The political economy approach also does not imply that governments simply fulfill domestic interest groups' demands. A government that did so would quickly go bankrupt. Any viable model of political economy must impose a constraint, usually understood as representing the government budget or mass popular support for adequate provision of other public goods. See Gene Grossman and Elhanen Helpman, *Interest Groups and Trade Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002). The welfarist focus is one distinction between Alan Milward and myself, on the one hand, and Stanley Hoffmann's accurate but more limited thesis about strengthen-

this journal more than a decade ago, "sought to generate electoral support, promote industrial modernization, prevent disruptive strikes and protests through guarantees of economic welfare for farmers, and avoid massive government deficits."[10] In this view, politics is largely about distribution, and politicians are primarily concerned to stay in office by skillfully managing domestic distributional issues. Far from being unique, de Gaulle's basic goals in this respect were not unlike those of his predecessors and successors in France or of politicians across postwar Europe at the time—though French market circumstances and de Gaulle's ability to craft a domestic political consensus around his policies obviously differed.[11]

From the revisionist perspective, the EEC was an essential instrument. Of course, first and foremost, it permitted France to benefit from expanding industrial trade in Europe. Yet this could have been achieved in other ways; for example, through a free trade area or GATT. What was more distinctive about the EEC, from a French perspective, as compared to these alternatives, was that it promised a protected European zone in which to export subsidized French agricultural commodities. The only way France could export wheat and other commodities on a significant scale was to displace imports from the United States and other global market producers to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), a massive commodity importer, within a "small European" customs union among the Six involving a common tariff, a centrally regulated set of European agricultural subsidies, and net budgetary transfers between countries. France also benefitted from foreign subsidies to its farmers, as well as aid to its former colonies. Although neither de Gaulle himself nor classical economists regarded the promotion of agriculture as an optimal strategy of economic modernization—indeed, de Gaulle's overall strategy was to adjust out of agriculture—the CAP promoted the goal of modernization in the indirect, second-best sense of appeasing the welfare demands of powerful social constituencies, maintaining social stability, reducing the tax burden on industry, and balancing external accounts.[12] In the revisionist view—as developed

ing the nation-state, on the other. See Stanley Hoffmann, "Reflections on the Nation-State in Western Europe Today," *Journal of Common Market Studies,* Vol. 21, No. 1–2 (1982), p. 35.

10. 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. 5.

11. Ibid., p. 28; and Andrew Moravcsik, "De Gaulle between Grain and *Grandeur:* The Political Economy of French EC Policy, 1958–1970 (Part 2)," *Journal of Cold War Studies,* Vol. 2, No. 3 (Fall 2000), pp. 54–55.

12. Some critics go further, arguing that there was no contradiction between guns and butter because any promotion of economic welfare for constituencies was simply a means to promote French *grandeur* and power. See John Keeler, "Comments on Moravcsik," *Journal of Cold War Studies,* Vol. 2, No. 3 (Fall 2000), p. 76. This argument seems superficially attractive, at least to those scholars who favor an overly parsimonious account of human behavior in this case. Yet it is both theoretically and empirically unsatisfactory. Theoretically, it renders any discussion of de Gaulle's idiosyncratic "grand vi-

by Alan Milward, Frances Lynch, and myself, among others, and now followed by N. Piers Ludlow, Ann-Christina Knudsen, Laurent Warlouzet, and other historians—these were the core interests that led France to support the EEC and the CAP as it did.[13]

Pursuit of these economic interests created two tactical imperatives: establishing EEC control over external trade (GATT) policy and blocking British entry into Europe.[14] France feared that West German free market advocates led by the new chancellor Ludwig Erhard, U.S. agricultural export promoters, and defenders of Britain's Commonwealth and global market commodity trading bloc would undermine the CAP by opposing the EEC position on agriculture in the Dillon and Kennedy Rounds of GATT. This meant that France would have to block the United Kingdom's bid for membership. The problem was not that Britain would be unable to reach a negotiated accession agreement with the EEC; the problem was what might happen afterward. Once the British were inside the EEC, they would likely try to block further EEC progress toward the CAP or even to dismantle what had already been achieved, perhaps working through the EEC GATT process. In 1963, Britain could not credibly commit to a future CAP—or even to maintain the existing one. Even without the British, the CAP and customs union were far from certain things: the negotiations took almost a decade and nearly collapsed several times. With the British in, surely the talks would have failed. The records of discussions in London and Washington at the time suggest that Anglo-American leaders were hoping to undermine the CAP. It was no coincidence that de Gaulle's successor, President Georges Pompidou,

sion" irrelevant, implying that any French leader would have pursued the same economic goals. See Andrew Moravcsik, "Beyond Grain and *Grandeur:* An Answer to Critics and an Agenda for Future Research," *Journal of Cold War Studies,* Vol. 2, No 3 (Fall 2000), pp. 131–133. Empirically, it is not viable because de Gaulle in fact faced conflicts between the geopolitical, ideological, and economic imperatives—a point on which Ludlow and I now agree. For a particularly well-documented view, see Laurent Warlouzet, "The Deadlock: The Choice of the CAP by de Gaulle and Its Impact on French EEC Policy (1958–69)," in Kiran Patel, ed., *Fertile Ground for Europe? The History of European Integration and the Common Agricultural Policy since 1945* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2009), pp. 99–118; and Laurent Warlouzet, "Quelle Europe économique pour la France? La France et le Marché commun industriel, 1956–1969," Ph.D. Diss., University of Paris IV, Sorbonne, 2007.

13. Alan S. Milward, *The European Rescue of the Nation-State* (London: Routledge, 1993); Alan S. Milward and Vibeke Sfrensen, "Interdependence or Integration? A National Choice," in Alan S. Milward et al., eds., *The Frontier of National Sovereignty: History and Theory 1945–1992* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 10, 12, 20; Frances Lynch, *France and the International Economy: From Vichy to the Treaty of Rome* (London: Routledge, 1997); Knudsen, *Farmers on Welfare;* and Warlouzet, "Quelle Europe économique pour la France?" Ludlow started his career with a traditional interpretation of de Gaulle, but he has since adopted an increasingly revisionist stance. For an example of his traditional phase, see N. Piers Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain: The Six and the First UK Application to the EEC* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997). For an example of his more recent revisionist phase, see N. Piers Ludlow, "From Words to Actions," in Nuenlist, Locher, and Martin, eds., *Globalizing de Gaulle,* pp. 63–84.

14. Moravcsik, "De Gaulle, Part 1," pp. 18–19.

finally agreed to British entry at the Hague Conference of 1969 on one non-negotiable condition: CAP reforms locking in future financing.

Serious analysts, including revisionists, do not doubt that de Gaulle possessed such a political-military grand design and aspired to realize its goals, all other things being equal. In politics, however, all other things rarely are equal: Successful politicians—and de Gaulle was a very successful politician—must trade off some goals against others. So the empirical task facing historians of French foreign policy is to assess how the general's distinctively Gaullist ideals actually guided his policy and how they did not. If Gaullist aspirations did not guide policy, what counteracted them and why? Revisionists insist that de Gaulle acted "under such exceedingly narrow economic constraints that his individual geopolitical vision was reduced to a secondary, largely insignificant, role."[15] To be sure, revisionists do believe that Gaullist ideology was critically important in ways *other* than defining vital French national interests. The ideology helped to cement a strong center-right coalition in France, which permitted, as I argued in this journal in 2000, "successful domestic economic and political reform, which removed the obstacles to trade liberalization that had stymied [de Gaulle's] Fourth Republic predecessors and thereby facilitated a more forthcoming policy toward the EEC."[16] Another is that Gaullist ideology—reflected especially in apparently pro-European plans like the Fouchet Plan—was tactically useful. It served as a "smokescreen" and a "deliberate deception," masking the Gaullist pursuit of narrow national interests from both domestic and international opponents and creating a bargaining edge for French diplomacy.[17]

The Weakness of Documentary Evidence for the Traditional Geopolitical Interpretation

Globalizing de Gaulle reveals a striking historiographical disjuncture characteristic of scholarship on this subject. Traditional interpretations stressing the decisive importance of de Gaulle's geopolitical ideas still dominate general studies of French foreign policy in the 1960s, yet specialized studies of French EEC policy reveal little direct evidence to support these interpretations. As a

15. He was constrained to be "a modern democratic politician first and a geopolitical visionary second." See ibid., p. 6.

16. Ibid., p. 6; and Moravcsik, "Beyond Grain and *Grandeur*," pp. 129–131.

17. Moravcsik, "Beyond Grain and *Grandeur*," p. 119. I have since slightly moderated my views about the extent to which the motivations were tactical—the evidence suggests that de Gaulle also had sincere geopolitical and ideological motivations—but the documents do confirm the basic claim that these tactical advantages were recognized from the start.

result, documentation of the traditional view tends to rest on dubious historiographical techniques: an unquestioning presumption that French policy toward the EEC must have responded to the same imperatives as French policy toward NATO; uncritical citation of secondary works dealing with military, alliance, and nuclear policies rather than Europe; and selective (mis)reading of primary sources.

French commentators in de Gaulle's day already recognized the weakness of the documentary evidence that might support a traditional geopolitical interpretation of EEC policy. The French government's explanations of the veto of British membership, of French behavior in the "empty chair" crisis, and of other major European policy decisions rested on economic considerations. Therefore, any geopolitical interpretation of them has to assume that de Gaulle and his government deliberately misled the public.[18] Forty years ago one might have assumed that officials thought and spoke differently in private. Yet documents now available reveal that confidential discussions in cabinet sessions and diplomatic exchanges, as well as de Gaulle's one-on-one conversations, were equally dominated by economic concerns. So, too, were de Gaulle's memoirs. Thus one might expect that a "traditional" account attributing French policy to geopolitical ideology would, at the very least, seek to explain why de Gaulle systematically misled even close associates about his motives and provide some evidence that this was the case. I know of not a single historian who has even attempted to do so.

Thoughtful traditionalists concede the problematic nature of arguing against the overwhelming weight of the documents. Some years ago, in challenging my formulation of the revisionist argument, Marc Trachtenberg wrote,

> In forming one's own beliefs, the key test has to do much more with plausibility than with evidence. In this case, de Gaulle (as Moravcsik recognizes) really believed in the importance of "building Europe"—a "European Europe" able to chart its own course in international affairs. Moravcsik would have us believe that de Gaulle took this goal seriously, but that it had essentially no impact on his policy toward the EEC. My own assumption, without looking at a single document, was that this could not possibly be correct.[19]

Trachtenberg's self-awareness is admirable. Even more admirable is his understanding that an honest historian may be obliged to reverse course in the face

18. E.-N. Dzelepy, "Du traité franco-allemand à la crise du Marché Commun ou le mutuel jeu de dupes de de Gaulle et d'Adenauer," *L'année politique et économique,* Vol. 36 (April 1963), p. 140, refers to this as "la thèse officielle française" and discusses this issue.

19. Marc Trachtenberg, "De Gaulle, Moravcsik, and Europe," *Journal of Cold War Studies,* Vol. 2, No. 3 (Fall 2000), p. 115.

of overwhelming evidence. His contribution to the current forum is instructive, for he has now moved closer to the revisionist account.[20]

Unfortunately the historians in *Globalizing de Gaulle* who adopt a traditional interpretation are less self-aware than Trachtenberg. In this they typify various tendencies in contemporary scholarship on Gaullist statecraft. One is for scholars simply to assume what they set out to prove. Carine Germond, for example, concedes in her chapter of *Globalizing de Gaulle* that she is skating on thin evidentiary ice in explaining the 1967 veto of Britain by reference to geopolitics. Yet this does not deter her from concluding, without additional documentary evidence, that: "Although de Gaulle mostly resorted to economic arguments, it is obvious that he opposed the French application politically as a threat to French influence in Europe."[21] As we have seen, even a cursory examination of the last decade of scholarly literature—or Ludlow's chapter in *Globalizing de Gaulle*—suggests that this conclusion is anything but obvious.

I initially read Ellison's chapter in *Globalizing de Gaulle* as an example of the tendency among traditionalists to cite secondary sources on military, alliance, and nuclear policies rather than sources on EEC affairs. He asserts that de Gaulle's veto of Britain was motivated by the same grand geopolitical goals that underlay his rejection of the MLF: the "restoration of French power" and "reconstruction of the Western alliance." He simply refers—without citing page numbers or any concrete evidence—to secondary works by Maurice Vaïsse, Frédéric Bozo, and Georges-Henri Soutou.[22] Ellison was generous

20. For Trachtenberg's current view, see his "The de Gaulle Problem" in this issue.

21. Germond, "A 'Cordial Potentiality'?," pp. 52, 55–56. To defend this claim, Germond contends that French arguments about British macroeconomic weakness were insincere. Yet this is obvious: no revisionist has ever argued that France blocked Britain for macroeconomic reasons, and there is now clear evidence that, indeed, de Gaulle's assertions about the matter were tactical. On this point, Martin's recent work is useful. See Garret Martin, "'Grandeur et Dépendances': The Dilemmas of Gaullist Foreign Policy, September 1967 to April 1968," in N. Piers Ludlow, ed., *European Integration and the Cold War: Ostpolitik-Westpolitik, 1965–1973* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 44–45. Germond, after briefly acknowledging economic interests, also blames the lack of Franco-German political cooperation ("the failure of genuine bilateral cooperation") for exacerbating the "empty chair" crisis. See Germond, "A 'Cordial Potentiality'?," p. 47.

22. Ellison, "Britain, de Gaulle's NATO Policies, and Anglo-French Rivalry," pp. 136, 148. Elsewhere in the chapter, Ellison is coy, talking around the lack of a documented link between geopolitical and economic policies: "[The 'empty chair'] crisis was seemingly detached from France's strategy toward NATO but when correlated with it, the impression was given that de Gaulle was on the move" (p. 140). This omission of political economy belies Ellison's own considered view on French EEC policy, which is that "French opposition to Britain's first application was based essentially on mainly commercial concerns" and the second veto was motivated "largely on the basis of France's view of British agriculture and the state of the pound and Britain's weakened economic position in November 1967" (Personal communication, 17 February 2011). Moreover, Ellison in his first book persuasively interpreted French policy toward the Free Trade Area negotiations of 1958–1960 as primarily motivated by economic interest. See James Ellison, *Threatening Europe: Britain and the Creation of the European Community, 1955–1958* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), pp. 184–185.

enough to read a draft of this essay in which I criticized him for this position, however, and he pointed out that his exclusively geopolitical account of French motivations resulted from the primary intent of the essay: to understand the Anglo-American response to French alliance and nuclear policy.

Martin's concluding chapter to *Globalizing de Gaulle* defends the traditional interpretation in greater detail.[23] In doing so, he illustrates other traditionalist tendencies. One is to rely on circumstantial evidence. Martin seeks to establish two facts: (1) de Gaulle sought to realize grand geopolitical ideals; and (2) he pursued geopolitical schemes like the Fouchet Plan. Yet such evidence is largely irrelevant and at best insufficient. No revisionist denies that de Gaulle possessed a geopolitical vision or that he proposed the Fouchet Plan, or even that geopolitical imperatives and "grand visions" may have mattered in policies regarding NATO and nuclear weapons. The debate is over whether these actions were decisive for French policy *toward the EEC.* Citing circumstantial evidence about geopolitical views alone is, moreover, overtly biased—for it neglects equally strong circumstantial evidence about de Gaulle's role as the great economic reformer of postwar France. To argue backward, explaining policies simply by finding a plausible geopolitical "interest" and assuming rather than demonstrating the causal link to EEC policy, is to assume what evidence-based historians should be setting out to prove. Critical empirical judgments about the relative weight of economics and geopolitical ideology should rest instead on the balance of concrete evidence explicitly linking those motivations to specific policy decisions on Europe.

Martin, to his credit, makes some attempt to do this. Yet he is able to support a traditional geopolitical interpretation of EEC policy only by citing documents selectively. Space permits consideration of the two most significant examples.

Consider, first, de Gaulle's celebrated press conference of 14 January 1963, during which he announced the "vetoes" of British EEC membership and the Multilateral Force (MLF). Martin cites de Gaulle's answer to a question on the MLF to support the claim that his basic motivation in all of his European policy, including his EEC decisions, was "to modify transatlantic relations along the principles of independence and alliance."[24] Yet de Gaulle's response to this question focuses exclusively on nuclear policy and the MLF, and never mentions the Common Market or the British veto. By citing only a response that pertains to geopolitics and drawing an inference about

23. This is the tendency Mark Kramer emphasizes as well in the introduction to *Globalizing de Gaulle,* where he writes that Martin "contests [the] characterizations" that de Gaulle was "guided more by domestic exigencies." See Mark Kramer, "Introduction: De Gaulle and Gaullism in France's Cold War Foreign Policy," in Nuenlist, Locher, and Martin, eds., *Globalizing de Gaulle,* p. 15.

24. Martin, "Conclusion," p. 297.

de Gaulle's motivations with regard to European policy generally, Martin ignores de Gaulle's answer to the immediately preceding question, which was explicitly about the French position on British membership in the EEC.

The text of de Gaulle's answer to the press conference query about Britain and the EEC is striking evidence in favor of a revisionist account. Save for one passing, vague reference to the common Soviet threat, none of this 1,877-word response mentions military issues, nuclear weapons, or NATO. Instead, de Gaulle delivers a lecture almost exclusively devoted to political economy, based on a detailed analysis of the shifting sectoral comparative advantages of the UK, U.S., and continental economies over the previous century. He begins by noting: "In this very great affair of the European Economic Community and also in that of the eventual adhesion of Great Britain, it is the facts that must first be considered. . . . What are these facts? . . . The Treaty of Rome was concluded between six continental states, states that are, economically speaking, one may say, of the same nature."

The statement reaches its apex, commentators agree, in the following passage:

> England in effect is insular, she is maritime, she is linked through her exchanges, her markets, her supply lines to the most diverse and often the most distant countries. She pursues essentially industrial and commercial activities, and only meager agricultural ones. . . . The means by which the people of Great Britain are fed are in fact the importation of foodstuffs bought cheaply in the two Americas and in the former dominions, and at the same time giving, granting considerable subsidies to English farmers. These means are obviously incompatible with the system the Six have established quite naturally for themselves. The question . . . whether Great Britain can now place herself like the Continent and with it inside a tariff that is genuinely common, renounce all Commonwealth preferences, cease any pretense that her agriculture is privileged, and, more than that, treat her engagements with other countries of the Free Trade Area as null and void—that question is the whole question [*Cette question-là, c'est toute la question*]. It cannot yet be said that it is resolved. . . . The entry of Great Britain . . . will completely change the whole of the actions, the agreements, the compensation, the rules that have already been established between the Six. . . . Then it will be another Common Market. . . . Further, this community, increasing in such fashion, would see itself faced with problems of economic relations with all kinds of other states, and first with the United States. One can foresee that the cohesion of its members, who would be very numerous and diverse, would not endure for long, and that ultimately it would appear a colossal Atlantic community under American dependence and direction, and which would quickly have absorbed the community of Europe. . . . It is not at all what France is doing or wanted to do—and what is a properly European construction.[25]

25. Western European Union Assembly, General Affairs Committee, *Tenth Ordinary Session: Political*

This passage is unambiguous. The essential "facts," de Gaulle stresses, are economic. The primary regional issue motivating the veto ("Cette question-là, c'est toute la question") is not the threat Britain might pose to plans for nuclear (military or alliance) policies but the threat Britain's historical trading relations pose to the ongoing effort of the Six to engage in profitable commercial cooperation. Externally, the threat posed by the United States is not that it will absorb Europe into the NATO alliance system, but that it will divide and conquer Europe in GATT negotiations.

Martin is only slightly less selective when reading a second document: de Gaulle's remarks to his press secretary, Alain Peyrefitte, ten days later. There the president mentions that, with the Soviet threat receding, Europeans have an opportunity to take a tougher stance vis-à-vis the United States; "otherwise the integrated Europe will dissolve like sugar in coffee."[26] This is the type of delightfully quotable bon mot de Gaulle often uttered—akin to the "colossal Atlantic community" evoked in the press conference. But what exactly did he mean? Advocates of the conventional interpretation tend to interpret such remarks automatically as a signal that de Gaulle had an integrated geopolitical policy aimed at defending French independence against the political-military influence of the United States and NATO. Yet the context of his remark does not support this view. De Gaulle continues,

> What the Anglo-Saxons want is a Europe without shores, a Europe that would no longer have the ambition to be itself. A Europe without borders. Europe *à l'anglaise.* Europe in which England would not have transcended its ancient practices to become really European. It is, in reality, the Europe of the Americans. Europe of the multinationals. A Europe that in its economy, and still more in its defense and politics, would be placed under an inexorable American hegemony. A Europe in which each European country, to start with ours, would lose its soul.[27]

Here again de Gaulle dwells almost entirely on economics, except for the brief throwaway hint that the Anglo-Saxon impact might be felt "still more" in pol-

Union of Europe (Paris: Western European Union, 1964), pp. 86–87. A tape of most of this passage can be found online at http://www.ena.lu/press_conference_held_charles_gaulle_yves_courriere_rtl_14_january_1963-2-11609. Most analysts consider this the critical passage. See, for example, Robert Bloes, *Le "Plan Fouchet" et le problème de l'Europe politique* (Bruges, Belgium: Collège d'Europe, 1970), p. 417.

26. The text can be found in Alain Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle,* 3 vols. (Paris: Fayard, 1994–1997), Vol. 1, p. 367.

27. Ibid. Elsewhere in the conversation, in response to a question about the Polaris issue and the Nassau agreement, de Gaulle briefly mentions the *force de frappe* and offers a vague comment, unrelated to EEC policy, in which he ties together political, economic, military, and cultural policy (in that order). See ibid., p. 364. But because he had already decided to veto British membership, the recent nuclear events could not have been the cause of the veto. See ibid., p. 335.

itics and defense.[28] Yet because the passage neither speaks explicitly about the Common Market and the veto nor discusses geopolitical issues in detail, it is difficult to know how much weight to accord it.

Only one passage in this conversation explicitly links the EEC (and the veto of British membership) to French vital interests. De Gaulle closes the discussion by reminding Peyrefitte,

> Nevertheless one should not forget the essential thing. The essential thing is that the English and their procession of satellites, once they take their place, will want to discuss again the problems already resolved among the Six, but this time with a majority that will no longer want to build Europe in the spirit with which the Six have started to do it. Every country will pick up its marbles again. Is that what we want? Do we want to destroy the machine that we are in the process of building—and not without pain?[29]

Here de Gaulle's stated motivation is unambiguously commercial. By early 1963 the Fouchet Plan negotiations had collapsed, so the reference to issues "already resolved" could only mean completing progress toward EEC agricultural and tariff policies, just as in de Gaulle's remarks at the press conference two weeks before. Compared to other parts of the conversation, this passage is more emphatic (two references to *"l'essentiel"*), more explicit in its connection to the EEC decision, and more extensive and detailed in its reasoning. Yet Martin ignores it entirely.

What we see is that even among the sources selected by traditionalists as most favorable to their case, any hint of a direct link between geopolitical interests and EEC policy coexists with more emphatic, explicit, and extensive evidence of commercial and economic motivations. As a result, the traditional interpretation can be sustained only through casuistic and selective interpretation. These two documents are typical, both in quantity and in quality, of the existing textual evidence concerning French interests with regard to the EEC in the 1960s. Indeed, if anything, they understate that evidence. Dozens of unambiguous statements from de Gaulle and other government officials link commercial motivations to EEC policy, whereas relatively few link French EEC decisions to geopolitical interests. By the standards of diplomatic history, where one normally finds smoking guns pointing in many interpretive directions, the preponderance of evidence in this case is striking.[30] It is high

28. It is, of course, possible that de Gaulle and other French leaders supported economic welfare solely to promote geopolitical power. But this would overturn the traditional geopolitical account. On this point, see Moravcsik, "Beyond Grain and *Grandeur*," pp. 131–133.

29. Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle,* Vol. 1, pp. 364–366.

30. I make this case in detail in Moravcsik, "De Gaulle between Grain and *Grandeur*, Parts I and II,"

time for diplomatic historians of the period to accept this result. Whatever secondary concerns de Gaulle may have had, commercial (especially agricultural) interests were the most emphatic, explicit, and extensive motivations underlying French EEC policy.

Contextual Evidence for the Revisionist Economic Interpretation

Despite the empirical findings of EEC historians, most scholars of the Gaullist period stick to their traditional views. Martin, Germond, and Ellison are typical. In drawing conclusions about European integration, they ignore the shifting consensus of historians who work on the EEC directly. In doing so, they overlook the only chapter in *Globalizing de Gaulle* devoted entirely to the EEC—written by Ludlow, the leading diplomatic historian of his generation researching EEC negotiations. His chapter adds something to our discussion because it rests primarily on contextual rather than documentary evidence. (Ludlow also knows the documents and has analyzed them elsewhere.)

In interpreting historical episodes, it is important—as Trachtenberg pointed out above—not simply to read the documents in abstraction, but to consider historical context. Sadly, however, traditionalists often only pretend to heed this advice. They cite evidence about de Gaulle's general geopolitical views and then speculate about how his European policies can be made consistent with those views—even in the absence of direct links. This sort of argument, as noted above, is circular, biased, and of limited relevance to the core interpretive issues at hand. With contextual evidence as with documentary evidence, the proper way to proceed is, in addition to classic analysis of documents, to collect systematic empirical evidence about contextual factors *directly relating* to European policy: domestic political alignments, the timing of decisions, the nature of the decision-making process, and the consistency of diplomatic tactics.[31] This is what I did in my previous work on this topic; and it is what Ludlow does with heretofore unmatched precision. By conducting solid multi-archival research, he has contributed more than anyone else in recent years to our understanding of negotiations in this era.

The result is an interpretation as single-mindedly revisionist, perhaps

esp. "Part II," pp. 27–29. Although some have criticized this work, no one has produced a significant amount of documentary or contextual counterevidence, and most historians of EEC policy now accept it.

31. In previous work, I have used "four types of evidence"—namely, "discourse, cleavages, resolution of conflict, and timing"—to evaluate the relative explanatory power of different factors. See Moravcsik, "De Gaulle between Grain and *Grandeur,*" pp. 20–22; and Moravcsik, *The Choice for Europe,* p. 28.

even more so, than my own work or that of Milward and Lynch. To be sure, Ludlow was not always a revisionist. His 1997 book, *Dealing with Britain,* on the United Kingdom's first membership bid, takes a thoroughly traditionalist view. Explicitly distancing himself from de Gaulle's public remarks at the press conference of 1963 and elsewhere, Ludlow in 1997 maintained that de Gaulle's "underlying motives . . . had little to do with the detailed questions of trade, agriculture and institutional arrangements."[32] De Gaulle's real concern, Ludlow claimed, was instead to maintain "French leadership," oppose "American influence," combat "Atlanticist" ideas, and support the "centrality of the Franco-German pairing." To be sure, de Gaulle wanted to ensure that France would not "suffer economically," but his "central aim" was still to use "Europe as a means to increase the power of France to act autonomously," particularly with regard to the "future construction of a European political union."[33]

Today Ludlow, like most of the best younger historians of the EEC in the 1960s, has taken the admirable step of adopting a more revisionist view, a view more consistent with the evidence. The primary motivation behind French EEC policy in this period, Ludlow now argues in *Globalizing de Gaulle* (and in most of his recent writing), was to secure reciprocal export opportunities for French industry and to protect export markets and subsidies for French agriculture. A coordinated EEC position in GATT and the exclusion of Britain from Europe were necessary to safeguard those gains. The primary benefits were agricultural: "French European policy accomplished much, and success was most evident in agriculture." Secondary successes in-

32. Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain,* pp. 208–209. Like most traditional interpreters, Ludlow in 1997 acknowledged that the 1963 press conference, like other public utterances, was "remarkable" for the number of references to the real commercial issues of British membership (p. 211). But he dismissed this evidence because he believed that de Gaulle was dissembling in public. Yet he provided no evidence to support this belief and never explained why de Gaulle would have dissembled—nor why the charade would have been kept up in private. Part of the problem is that Ludlow confused two issues. He believed, rightly, that de Gaulle's arguments about the "impasse" in negotiations were objectively false. The British were making concessions but had perhaps miscalculated by bargaining hard, thus giving de Gaulle "an element of plausibility." Ludlow concluded, wrongly, that this weighed against the economic account (pp. 211–212). Ludlow was mistaken because, like Trachtenberg in his critique of my JCWS article, he overlooked de Gaulle's real political-economic objection to British membership. De Gaulle's objection was never based on a disagreement over issues that could have been resolved in the ongoing negotiations. If it had been, France could simply have forced Britain to sign an appropriate agreement committing to French preferences. The problem was that de Gaulle expected, accurately, that future British governments, once inside, would adopt positions on both CAP and GATT that would be contrary to French political-economic imperatives. There was no way for Britain to pre-commit not to do this. In this sense, the veto was, from de Gaulle's perspective, inevitable and necessary. For a discussion, see Moravcsik, "Beyond Grain and *Grandeur,*" pp. 124–125.

33. Ludlow, *Dealing with Britain,* p. 209. Geopolitical influence has, of course, an economic element, and Ludlow even in 1997 was a balanced enough historian to acknowledge it. But it is important to note that in 1997 Ludlow's interpretation of Gaullist motives carefully distinguished these geopolitical motivations from political-economic ones, which he treated as secondary, noting only in passing that "France would, moreover, suffer economically" and that GATT negotiations, "too," might have an impact on France.

cluded dismantling internal EEC tariffs and forging a common GATT position that achieved "genuine liberalization in the industrial sector, but not much more than token change in world agricultural trade."[34] To France, these interests were not peripheral but vital, for the CAP had become an "economic necessity." Few citations could be more emphatic than the statement by de Gaulle's agriculture minister, Edgar Pisani, that "to imagine for French agriculture the absence of a Common Market is to imagine a revolution in France."[35] De Gaulle pursued these priorities, Ludlow maintains, with "single-minded determination."[36]

Just as revisionist is Ludlow's description of how French policy consistently compromised de Gaulle's prized ideal of "national sovereignty" in order to secure vital economic interests. Colorful though de Gaulle's rhetorical criticism of EEC supranationalism may have been, "the reality of French behavior toward the supranational institutions throughout the 1958 to 1969 period was . . . very different from that implied by these public attacks." French EEC policy from 1958 onward was a series of compromises with supranationalism. From 1958 on, Ludlow writes, "the French developed a close pattern of cooperation with the supposedly despised and illegitimate European Commission"—an "alliance of convenience" in defense of the CAP and the common commercial policy, the most centralized portions of the EEC.[37] Indeed, this began earlier, with the decision to remain within the EEC itself—Ludlow does not go back this far—thereby reversing de Gaulle's privately expressed intention to oppose all such cooperation among the Six, including the EEC.[38] All this flatly contradicts Martin's traditionalist claim that if France "had to choose between a bad Europe and no Europe at all, it would always choose the latter."[39]

Even more devastating to the traditional geopolitical account is Ludlow's thoroughly revisionist economic account of the "empty chair" crisis of 1965–1966. At the time, many outsiders saw a perfect storm brewing in the EEC, in which de Gaulle's concerns about supranationalism, combined with the crisis of NATO, would "significantly impact or disrupt life within the Commu-

34. Ludlow, "From Words to Actions," pp. 74–75.

35. Ibid., p. 68. A more reliable source than Pisani is de Gaulle himself, who noted in a French cabinet meeting that agricultural reform, impossible without assured exports to West Germany, was the most important issue facing France after Algeria. Without success, he predicted, "we will have another Algeria on our own soil." See Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle,* Vol. 1, p. 302.

36. Ludlow, "From Words to Actions," p. 76.

37. Ibid., p. 68.

38. Hervé Alphand, *L'étonnement d'être: Journal 1939–1979* (Paris: Fayard, 1977), p. 283.

39. Martin, "Conclusion," p. 296.

nity."[40] Such predictions rested on the traditionalist premise that EEC policy and politico-military policy were linked.[41] Martin argues that these events freed de Gaulle to place absolute priority on the defense of "sovereignty." In a recent essay, Soutou goes even further, arguing that de Gaulle had "tolerated" EEC integration solely for geopolitical "tactical reasons" up to this point. Both de Gaulle and Pompidou believed that France's partners were using the EEC simply "as an indirect means to bring France back into NATO integration."[42] Now that West European political cooperation had been taken off the agenda, de Gaulle went all-out to quash supranationalism and to "force France's EEC partners to move away from integration, in favor of a 'Europe of States' dealing with both superpowers under French leadership, and to adopt his views about a reconstruction of the whole continent through 'détente' with the USSR."[43] For traditionalists, EEC cooperation is always ultimately about geopolitics and sovereignty. Little direct evidence exists for these traditionalist conjectures—but I will not dwell on that here because I already discussed documentary evidence above.[44] Instead, I focus on contextual evidence brilliantly marshaled by Ludlow.

Building on previous revisionist work, Ludlow argues that the specific tactics and policies France chose contradict the traditional interpretation in almost every respect. If geopolitics had been dominant, we should observe a fundamental shift in French policy at this point *against* EEC cooperation. Yet we do not see any such shift. Instead we see the opposite.

40. Garret Martin, "To Link or Not to Link? 1966 and the Changes in France's European Policy," in Katrin Rucker and Laurent Warlouzet, eds., *Quelle(s) Europe(s)? Nouvelles approches en histoire de l'intégration européenne / Which Europe(s)? New Approaches in European Integration History* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2006), p. 292.

41. By this point or even earlier, scholars agree, de Gaulle had given up on the idea of serious geopolitical cooperation among the Six. Alliance relations were in disarray. Martin treats this as a fundamental shift in French policy in 1966, but the evidence suggests—following Ludlow—more continuity than change from 1963 on. Cf. Martin, "To Link or Not to Link?"

42. Georges-Henri Soutou, "The Linkage between European Integration and Détente," in Ludlow, ed., *European Integration and the Cold War,* p. 22.

43. Ibid., p. 21.

44. Even Soutou, an uncommonly cautious documentary historian, falls into the traditionalist's trap of documenting geopolitical claims with citations that more strongly support the revisionist economic interpretation. Soutou cites discussions with Peyrefitte during the "empty chair" crisis. Yet in these same discussions de Gaulle explicitly states that any political cooperation with West Germany is unlikely. He thus emphasizes the economic motivations for provoking the crisis. One quotation from the pages cited by Soutou must suffice: Peyrefitte asks de Gaulle how he intends to proceed with more issues on the table than he can handle: political union, defense, the MLF, Franco-German cooperation, agriculture, the Common Market. De Gaulle responds: "How I want to handle it is very simple. On account of the agricultural crisis, what I want to do is remove the provision in the Treaty of Rome, under the terms of which, not later than next 1 January, decisions will be made by majority. Much more: The Commission proposals (amendments), if they are not rejected unanimously, [would] stand. From

> It is striking how carefully the French behaved even during this two-year apogee of their crusade against supranationality. . . . French representatives seem to have made a genuine if fruitless effort to avert a breakdown. . . . During the crisis months . . . the French were careful to moderate the effects of their symbolic withdrawal. They thus withdrew their permanent representative . . . but instructed his deputy to remain. . . . [De Gaulle's] controversial decision not to allow the Community budget for 1966 . . . was taken only once he had verified that an emergency procedure existed. . . . The compromise on majority voting left both the Treaty text and Council rules unaltered and merely acknowledged the difference in views. . . . None of the member states, France included, wanted the European Commission to be led by an ineffective cipher. Instead the French appeared to derive real satisfaction at [the commission's] effectiveness . . . in the Kennedy Round of GATT negotiations.[45]

A traditional interpretation offers no plausible explanation for this sort of behavior.[46] Ludlow rightly concludes that French demands for reform, which he felicitously describes as "talking loudly but not carrying a big stick," were in fact "never intended to bring about a total transformation of the Community's character."[47]

Events in the period between the "empty chair" crisis of 1965–1966 and the end of de Gaulle's presidency in April 1969 further confirm the revisionist interpretation. On the traditional understanding, French policy should have shifted against EEC cooperation as hope of geopolitical cooperation among the Six receded even further. But policy remained unchanged: the veto of British membership was reaffirmed in 1967, CAP financing negotiations moved along the same trajectory through 1969, the Luxembourg Compromise was maintained, and the EEC consolidated itself—all generating workable rules for cooperation. Even Martin acknowledges, without seeming to grasp that the deliberate separation of geopolitics and economics undermines his own traditionalist interpretation, that "a growing realization [spread] that the Community needed to be 'insulated' from the wider dispute between the French and their Western partners."[48] Traditional analysts cannot account for this separation of economics and geopolitics. Most of them conjecture, with-

that moment on, we would be on the moon. It's impossible! We cannot permit that!" His priorities and reasoning are clear. See Peyrefitte, *C'était de Gaulle,* Vol. 2, pp. 284, 295–296.

45. Ludlow, "From Words to Actions," pp. 70–71.

46. In "'Grandeur et Dépendances,'" p. 47, Martin observes that de Gaulle was willing to compromise on NATO policy—for example, in discussions of the Harmel Report—but he offers no consistent explanation. Soutou seeks to save the traditional interpretation by arguing that de Gaulle at the last minute rashly departed from his "prudent" geopolitically-motivated policies, a purported blunder for which Soutou offers neither evidence nor explanation. See Soutou, "Linkage," pp. 16–17.

47. Ludlow, "From Words to Actions," p. 79.

48. Martin, "To Link or Not to Link?" p. 293. For similar interpretive difficulties, see Vaïsse, *La grandeur*, pp. 543–603.

out compelling evidence, that it was the result of a series of unexpected ad hoc changes in policy, perhaps caused by de Gaulle's distraction or disillusionment with previous policy.[49] The revisionist interpretation is more consistent and plausible: France and the other five EEC members were able to pursue separate geopolitical and commercial policies because French policies vis-à-vis the EEC and NATO had never been closely linked in the first place.

Ludlow adds one final element: French proposals such as the Fouchet Plan and reform suggestions preceding the "empty chair" crisis were tactics in bargaining for French economic advantage. He persuasively shows that de Gaulle's demands on sovereignty and geopolitics, even though they were not his primary objectives, enhanced the "effectiveness of de Gaulle's European policy" with regard to CAP, association agreements, and external tariffs, as well as the EEC's institutional design in economic policy-making.[50] Ludlow exploits his impressive mastery of multinational archives, but the range of evidence does not blunt the simplicity of his conclusion: "The more extreme demands for widespread institutional change," he writes of the Fouchet Plan and "empty chair" crisis, "ought to be seen as tactical ploys. . . . The gap between rhetoric and reality was quite deliberately maintained by the French."[51] France's extreme "ideological opposition" was, in the end, a "ruse."[52]

Ludlow's argument here is speculative and perhaps even a bit overstated, but I believe it is essentially accurate. Instead of calling de Gaulle's proposals a "ruse," it might be more accurate to portray the French leader as sincere in seeking to promote geopolitical cooperation and institutional reform (the latter perhaps also to lock in French economic gains), but no doubt France did benefit tactically.[53] Moreover, in stressing the international advantages of grand European proposals, Ludlow neglects the domestic ones. He overlooks the fact that, at least until 1963, de Gaulle was constrained at home to maintain a coalition with pro-European parties—and even thereafter pro-European sentiment still mattered electorally. Yet these are small

49. Martin does not know what to make of this. In "To Link or Not to Link?" (pp. 293–294), he conjectures that this was in part because the French hoped the advancement of the EEC would lead to a softening of the positions of the Five on NATO, but he provides no evidence beyond the speculation of Émile Noël—who was in no position to know. Martin goes on to note that "the French president continued to pay lip service to the idea of political cooperation between the six Member states of the EEC, but . . . he did very little to help those initiatives succeed. . . . As he mentioned during his press conference on 28 October 1966, nothing useful could be achieved in Europe, including a political union between the members of the EEC, as long as both East and West had not solved their differences. Thus, de Gaulle no longer saw the EEC as an important forum for his European policy" (p. 295, also 294). Oddly, he does not draw from this the obvious implication.

50. Ludlow, "De Gaulle," pp. 78–79.

51. Ibid., pp. 64–66, 69–73.

52. Ibid., p. 79.

53. See Moravcsik, "Beyond Grain and *Grandeur*," p. 119.

matters. Ludlow's chapter demonstrates just how strongly the contextual, as well as documentary, evidence favors the revisionist interpretation. De Gaulle seemed surprisingly uncommitted to his more "sovereigntist" proposals, such as the Fouchet Plan and the more extreme proposals in the "empty chair" crisis, and they were perhaps more influential as tactical efforts to enhance French bargaining clout over economic issues than as ends in themselves.

The Curious Ambivalence of Contemporary Revisionism

Yet in one curious respect the work of younger revisionists continues to obscure the course of the broader debate on de Gaulle's EEC policy. Recent accounts by diplomatic historians, of which Ludlow's chapter is one example, tend to frame new revisionist economic interpretations primarily as criticisms of earlier, nearly identical, revisionist arguments. This is curiously misleading. Now that Ludlow has embraced an economic interpretation, nearly all of his concrete arguments track earlier revisionist accounts. He rightly praises the work of other young scholars, such as Knudsen, whose commitment to interpreting French behavior in political-economic terms is even more explicit and extreme than Ludlow's own. Yet Ludlow frames his work as a criticism of earlier revisionist work.

The question arises: Why do Ludlow and other revisionists select fellow revisionists as the primary targets of criticism—indeed, almost the only target—when in fact their views are closer to those of other revisionists than to those of nearly all other historians of de Gaulle? Are there any genuine evidentiary or interpretive disagreements? I am curious about this because in recent years no other scholar has received more sustained criticism from Ludlow and others than I. In *Globalizing de Gaulle,* Ludlow asserts that although I am "right to emphasize the French role in promoting agricultural integration," I "overstate the extent to which the quest for a CAP became the defining characteristic of French engagement with the EEC."[54] This is not simply a small difference of factual interpretation. In another essay published in 2010, he criticizes me for excessive "theoretical parsimony," "unnecessarily simplistic mono-causality," and "stripping away essential historical context."[55] What motivates such epithets? Three possibilities deserve consideration.

54. Ludlow, "De Gaulle," p. 74.

55. N. Piers Ludlow, "Governing Europe: Charting the Development of a Supranational Political Sys-

One possibility is that Ludlow's displeasure rests on *divergent interpretations of basic national interests.* The language he uses in his criticisms of me implies that revisionists should embrace a more modest, less "mono-causal" role for political-economic, especially agricultural, interests ("the quest for the CAP"). Yet neither Ludlow's own work, nor that of the revisionists he criticizes, supports such a conclusion. Ludlow argues that the welfare concerns of powerful domestic economic constituencies, most importantly farmers, dominated French EEC policy during this period—a position indistinguishable from prior revisionist work. His overall summary of French "policy ambitions" could have been written by Milward or by me: "a highly advantageous CAP, but also . . . the Community's association regime with the former French empire, the . . . Community's tariff strategy, and the institutional evolution of the EEC."[56] Ludlow also writes: "For most of the first four of European integration's five decades of operation, moreover, the CAP was also incontestably the most complex, the most ambitious, and the most controversial undertaking by the European institutions."[57]

At the same time, it would be wrong to view the empirical conclusions of previous revisionist work as "mono-causally" economic or agricultural. Consider the specific book Ludlow criticizes in the passage cited above, my *Choice for Europe.* The book concludes that major EEC decisions over a quarter century can be explained only by taking into account ideological/geopolitical interests alongside political-economic ones, and that their relative weight varied considerably over the decades. In no more than half the cases did political-economic factors alone explain national interests. In more than a quarter of the cases, geopolitical factors had a very significant impact on the outcomes. The EU would have been very different without them.[58] True, Milward and I both maintain that political-economic factors tended, in most cases, to play a more important, even decisive, role—but that is no different from what Lud-

tem," in Wolfram Kaiser and Antonio Varsori, eds., *European Union History: Themes and Debates* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 114.

56. Ludlow, "De Gaulle," p. 79.

57. N. Piers Ludlow, "The Making of the CAP: Towards a Historical Analysis of the EU's First Major Policy," *Contemporary European History,* Vol. 14, No. 3 (August 2005), p. 347. See also N. Piers Ludlow, "The Green Heart of Europe? The Rise and Fall of the CAP as the Community's Central Policy, 1958–1985," in Patel, ed., *Fertile Ground for Europe?* pp. 79–98.

58. My overall conclusion is that the impact of geopolitics and ideology "over the past forty years . . . on European integration, though clearly secondary, has nonetheless been significant. . . . The EC would have evolved differently. . . . The likely outcome absent the impact of geopolitical concerns would have been a trade arrangement closer to the free trade area repeatedly proposed by Britain, backed by a series of bilateral and global agreements on multilateral trade and investment. Such an arrangement would likely have enticed Britain to participate and, as a result, would have permitted—as the French always feared—only *ad hoc* bilateral arrangements for agriculture." See Moravcsik, *Choice for Europe,* p. 477.

low, Knudsen, and others argue. Arguably, newer revisionist work is even more one-sidedly economic.[59] *Choice for Europe* is, moreover, multicausal not only because it accords importance to non-economic factors in explaining national interests, but also because it rests on the premise that an explanation of any negotiated outcome requires, at a minimum, three distinct sets of theories and factors to explain the sources of national interests, the substantive outcomes of interstate bargaining, and the choices to delegate to institutions. Any difference between the "economistic" nature of newer and older revisionist work is minor.

A second possibility is that Ludlow's critique rests on *divergent interpretations of interstate bargaining.* Does Ludlow have a different view from that of previous revisionists, including me, about how France and other European states negotiated? Based on his writing in *Globalizing de Gaulle,* I cannot see how this could be so.[60] Ludlow advances two points: first, de Gaulle's hard bargaining on institutional and geopolitical issues like the Fouchet Plan and the "empty chair" crisis, including the threat of withdrawal from the EEC, was largely a bluff; and, second, his idiosyncratic geopolitical and institutional demands, even if they were ultimately not credible, strengthened an otherwise weak French bargaining position over the CAP.

Both of these arguments extend, rather than refute, arguments found in previous revisionist literature. More than a decade ago, I analyzed in detail how unseriously de Gaulle pursued his agenda for institutional reform of the EEC during the "empty chair" crisis. Such contextual evidence was one of the most important components of the case I made in *Choice for Europe* (and in the JCWS) for a revisionist interpretation.[61] I also termed the Fouchet Plan a "smokescreen," "deliberate deception," and a "strategy of seduction" that

59. This is not simply my own impression of Ludlow's work but also the view of Mark Kramer (an outsider to this debate) in his introduction to *Globalizing de Gaulle.* Kramer summarizes Ludlow's position as an economic interpretation—without mentioning geopolitics or ideology at all. See Kramer, "Introduction," p. 6. See also the sections of Ludlow's article cited in notes 32, 33, and 34 above.

60. There may be some differences over the relative importance of small countries or Commission activities in 1960–1961, though I suspect they have been exaggerated. But Ludlow does not raise these issues in *Globalizing de Gaulle.*

61. In *Choice for Europe,* p. 229, I wrote: "If de Gaulle's goals were audacious, his tactics were prudent. Unable to risk destroying the EC or derailing the CAP, he never so much as hinted at withdrawal. Top French officials assured their counterparts that France could envisage no alternative to membership. The French ambassador departed, but his assistant remained; written procedures kept essential business moving. French diplomats boycotted Council and COREPER [*French Comité des représentants permanents*] meetings on new policies, such as fiscal harmonization, but not study groups and management committees concerned with existing policies. . . . At home the French government defended the EC. . . . The government prepared its domestic budget for the planned reduction in internal EC tariffs, which it carried out on schedule at the end of the year despite the boycott. In short, far from challenging economic integration, de Gaulle was exploiting its irreversibility to press others for institutional reform."

masked French pursuit of narrower national interests.[62] De Gaulle's grand schemes helped to disguise the pecuniary benefits France gained from the EEC, rendered more credible de Gaulle's threats to leave the EEC, and made France seem more pro-European than it actually was—to its international advantage.[63] I also considered the impact of such tactics on domestic politics, arguing that de Gaulle benefitted there as well. Ludlow deserves much credit for extending this interpretation in a number of insightful ways. He adds detail to our knowledge about European Union negotiations in this period. Elsewhere he has raised some intriguing issues about the actions of the EEC in the period from 1960 to 1962 and the role of small countries like the Netherlands. Yet none of this justifies his suggestion that previous revisionist work is at odds with his own.

This leaves a third possible explanation for Ludlow's criticisms of excessive "theoretical parsimony" and "mono-causality" among previous revisionists. Having spoken with many EEC historians, including Ludlow himself, about this—I have come to think such criticisms reflect unnecessary interdisciplinary misunderstandings. Ludlow implies that the pejorative qualities he criticizes are specific to social science and that "most historians" eschew them in favor of "nuance."[64] This criticism has no substantive basis; rather, it is stylistic. Many diplomatic historians distrust the way political science and economic history are presented. They object, in particular, to scholarship that explicitly states competing theoretical interpretations up front and assesses the relative weight of competing explanations according to explicit methodological standards.

Many diplomatic historians object to clear statements of theories, hypotheses, and methods because they assume that this forces social scientists to choose *a single one* among a number of monocausal interpretations while entirely ignoring complexity, contingency, and multicausality. In other words, they seem to believe that social science assumes parsimony, privileging it for its own sake. Although this may be true of poor social science—just as "nuance" for its own sake may characterize bad history—it is simply incorrect to describe social science in general this way. Like history, the proper aim of empirical social science is to reach an evidence-based assessment of the relative empirical weight of and interaction among various causes, while taking due account of accident and contingency. One customarily assumes

62. Moravcsik, "Beyond Grain and *Grandeur*," p. 119. I have since moderated my views slightly for the reasons outlined in the preceding paragraph, but I stand by the basic claim.

63. Moravcsik, "De Gaulle between Grain and *Grandeur* (Part I)."

64. Ludlow, "Governing Europe," p. 114.

that the empirical truth lies somewhere on a spectrum between competing interpretations—otherwise one or the other of contending interpretations would be a straw man unworthy of serious consideration. One assumes, moreover, that randomness plays some role. Thus few, if any, social scientists believe that a single factor, whether economic, geopolitical, or ideological, explains all of European integration or any single episode in it. We saw above that, in practice, the revisionist work Ludlow attacks as "parsimonious" or "mono-causal" is no more so than his own; it is just more explicit about what it is doing.[65]

The trajectory of historiography on de Gaulle's foreign policy illustrates some of the virtues of explicitly stating theories, conjectures, and methods—as political scientists and economic historians customarily do. Two of these virtues are particularly relevant here.

First, scholars are encouraged to consider a full range of available alternative explanations for any given phenomenon. Historians and commentators have written more about de Gaulle than about any other postwar global leader. Yet for decades they recapitulated a single traditional ideological and geopolitical account of the motivations behind his EEC policy, while hardly considering an alternative revisionist economic one.[66] Even today, the belief that the entire spectrum of de Gaulle's foreign policy stemmed from a single vision still dominates the literature. This conservatism—which, far more than economic revisionism, genuinely deserves Ludlow's epithets "mono-causal" and "overly parsimonious"—stems in part from a lack of theory. Certainly Milward and I are not greater experts on de Gaulle's personal biography or historical context than some, but theory guided us to consider a more inclusive and nuanced set of possible explanations. Moreover, theory suggests a greater range of potential evidence beyond documents, including strategic consistency, the nature of domestic support, timing, and other contextual factors.

A second, related virtue is that explicitly stating theories and methods helps clarify the broader implications of concrete empirical findings. We have seen that disagreements and misunderstandings within and across disciplines have plagued scholarly discussions of de Gaulle's foreign policy. Analysts of de Gaulle's foreign policy continue to ignore important revisionist findings about

65. To demand, as some diplomatic historians seem to do when they criticize social science for its "one-sidedness," that a "nuanced" case must spread the explanatory weight around would be to impose just as arbitrary a bias on the material as does the historian's parody of a social scientist, who is said to insist that one explanation must prevail entirely. The only way to determine the proper balance is to examine the evidence. In *Choice for Europe* I concluded that the evidence suggests commercial factors contributed more consistently and emphatically—and certainly more than the existing literature leads one to believe—but this is an empirical assessment, not an assumption.

66. Ludlow acknowledges that, in raising economic motivations, revisionists like Milward and me seek "to challenge a number of scarcely contested assumptions." See Ludlow, "Governing Europe," p. 114.

the motivations underlying his EEC policies. Criticism of essentially identical findings in political science has permitted traditionalists to continue to believe things about the period that are simply invalid.

The most important lesson from all this is that all of us who study European integration, whether we do so using explicit theory and methods or not, could benefit from a more tolerant and sympathetic engagement with one another's work, across disciplinary boundaries. I am on record arguing that traditional historical methods of archival analysis and close reading should have a more prominent place in political science—and that we should use modern technology to help this process along.[67] I have learned much from historians in conducting research on de Gaulle—and I continue to do so.[68] Recently some diplomatic historians of the EEC have expressed interest in a more intensive engagement with social scientific theories of integration, but I am struck that much of this work neither involves social scientists nor describes social science theory and method in a nuanced or accurate way.[69] Thus, both fields would seem to have much to gain from sincere and profound interdisciplinary collaboration. Such interchange not only would improve future scholarship but would also help clarify what we already know, based on the considerable progress that political scientists and economic and diplomatic historians alike have made in understanding the sources of de Gaulle's foreign policy.

67. Andrew Moravcsik, "Active Citation: A Precondition for Replicable Qualitative Research," *PS: Political Science and Politics,* Vol. 43, No. 1 (January 2010), pp. 29–35.

68. Among the historians who read my previous work on de Gaulle before publication were Charles Cogan, Gordon Craig, N. Piers Ludlow, Alan Milward, Georges-Henri Soutou, and Marc Trachtenberg. For detailed comments on my article here, I am grateful again to Cogan, Ludlow, and Trachtenberg, as well as Frédéric Bozo, James Ellison, Carine Germand, Garret Martin, and Leopoldi Nuti.

69. Some scholars claim to favor interdisciplinary cooperation but reject existing trends in social science largely on the basis of criticisms of social scientists who believe in "monocausal" accounts and "law-like statements . . . characteristic of the natural sciences." But no such social scientists actually exist, at least in EU studies. Moreover, the critics explicitly restrict their willingness to cooperate to those social scientists who already conform to the particular theories they favor. This is an ironic position for scholars who criticize theory-driven social science as too narrow-minded and praise historians for their inductive, flexible, contextual understanding of reality. Meaningful interdisciplinary exchange, unbiased debate among alternative interpretations, and the advancement of interpretive insight into the past cannot emerge in this way. See Wolfram Kaiser, Brigitte Leucht and Morten Rasmussen, "Origins of a European Polity: A New Research Agenda for European Union History," in Wolfram Kaiser, Brigitte Leucht, and Morten Rasmussen, eds. *The History of the European Union: Origins of a Trans- and Supranational Polity, 1950–72* (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 6–7.