Grandeur Forever?
The French Exceptionalist Tradition and Europe, 1946-2007

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Notes on Citations

For purposes of standardization, I have followed, in French references, the common French convention of not using capital letters in titles of books and journals.

All French references have been personally translated.

Table of Contents

Chapter I: Introduction..... 4

Chapter II: Militant vs. Supranational Exceptionalism (1946-58)..... 26

Chapter III: *Grandeur* Negotiated (1958-69)..... 52

Chapter IV: *Grandeur* Compromised (1969-2007)..... 75

Chapter V: Conclusion..... 102

Bibliography 106

Interviews and Debates..... 118

We get too much pleasure speculating
on our decadence or our immortality [...]
Eternal France, whose death is feared at any moment
Raymond Aron[1]

Chapter I

By the end of the Second World War, France had lost the unique characteristics of a global great power, that of the "means and willingness to make its conceptions and interest prevail sustainably, in an independent fashion, in numerous domains and over any other power."[2] Domestically, the country was losing its historical military dominance, demographic ascendancy, and economic prosperity, and was experiencing great political instability.[3] Abroad, France was losing its hold onto its worldwide empire, witnessing the birth of new nation-states and the gradual domination of the international system of states by two super-powers. The country was losing the material and ideational features which had once given it a central position in international politics.[4] This reality was recognised by many abroad, as well as domestically.[5]

However, despite their recognition of the country's geopolitical decline, French political leaders continued, immediately after the Second World War, to perceive the country as a historically "exceptional" nation-state.[6] As the post-war historians René

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[1] Raymond Aron, *France Steadfast and Changing: The Fourth to the Fifth Republic* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp.2-3.
[2] Robert Frank, *La Hantise du Déclin: Le Rang de la France en Europe (1920-1960), Finances, défense et identité nationale* (Paris: Editions Belin, 1994), p.125. I acknowledge that within the discipline of international relations, the definition of "power" is a highly contested one. I adopt here the definition formulated by Joseph Nye, which emphasizes both the material and normative aspects of power. In this view, "power is the ability to influence the behave[our] of others to get the outcome one wants [...] [by] coerce[ing] them through threats, [...] induc[ing] them with payments, or [...] attract[ing] and co-opt[ing] them to want what you want." Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), pp.2-3.
[3] Aron, *France Steadfast and Changing: The Fourth to the Fifth Republic*.
[4] E.g. Ibid; Gérard Bossuat, 'Les "Europe" des français au long du XXème siècle', in René Girault, dir., and Gérard Bossuat, collaborator, *Les Europe des Européens* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1993); De Porte, 'The Fifth Republic in Europe'; and George-Henri Soutou, 'France and the Cold War (1944-63), *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, vol.12, no.4, December 2001. I refer here to France's empire which had traditionally be seen and justified by French political elites as a political symbol of France's global status, more than as a source of increased economic prosperity. On this point, see: Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945', in Stanley Hoffmann et al., *A la recherché de la France* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963).
[5] France had arguably lost such characteristics by the end of the First World War. However, I take the Second World War as the event which marked the definite widespread belief of such loss status, among both the domestic and international communities. Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945'.
[6] On discussions concerning France's distinctiveness in various domains, see: Emmanuel Godin and Tony Chafer, *The French Exception*, (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005); Meunier , 'The French Exception' *Foreign Affairs*, vol.79, no.4, July/August 2000;

Girault and André Siegfried have observed, they continued to feel that France "possessed a certain intellectual radiance [...]—[and still had] a lesson to teach the world."[7] As the mainstream academic literature draws the attention to, out of the entire political class, one man, Charles de Gaulle, would be the incarnation of this sustained belief.[8] Not only would he "passionately" voice this, but he would support a proactive foreign policy designed to reassert France on the world political stage.[9]

In this context, French leaders would accept to cooperate with France's European neighbours to a degree it never had before. In spite of its possible assault on sovereignty, the emerging European economic and political entity would eventually be accepted as a tool to recover the country's prosperity, security, and, above all, its status as a historical unique nation-state. [10] To be sure, this would not be the sole framework of France's action. Many French political figures, including de Gaulle, saw the country as the leader and defender of the historical European entity, exploiting the advantages of cooperation in the emerging European entity, and, simultaneously, leading its independent global mission.[11]

Donald Morrison, 'C comme culture, D comme déclin, E comme erreur?', *Le Monde*, 30 November 2008; Jean-Claude Ribault, 'La "French food" tient son rang', *Le Monde*, 1 March 2009; Chris Pattern, 'Royal contre Sarkozy: le duel dont la France et l'Europe ont besoin', *Le Figaro*, 15 October 2007; and Geneviève Sellier, 'Remakes. Les films français à Hollywood', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, October 2007.

[7] Christopher M. Andrew, 'France: Adjustment to Change', in Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p.338; and René Girault, *Etre Historien des Relations Internationales*; Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998).

[8] E.g. Andrew De Porte, 'The Fifth Republic in Europe'; in Andrews and Hoffmann, eds., *The Fifth Republic at Twenty* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981); Christian Deubner, 'France, Contradictions and Imbalances', in Eleanor E. Zeff and Ellen B.Pirro, eds., *The European Union and the Member States* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2006); Anne Dulphy and Christine Manigand, *La France au risque de l'Europe* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2006); Sophie Meunier, 'The French Exception'; Frédéric Bozo, *La Politique Etrangère de la France depuis 1945* (Paris: Editions La Découverte & Syros, 1997) ; Julian Lindley-French, 'Jeux de pouvoir: un point de vue britannique sur la politique étrangère française', *Revue internationale et stratégique*, vol.1, no.45, 2002; Vasantha R. Raghavan, 'Un regard indien sur la politique étrangère française', *Politique étrangère*, vol.67, no. 4, 2002; and Dominique Moïsi, 'French Foreign Policy: The Challenge of Adaptation', *Foreign Affairs*, vol.67, no.1, Fall 1988.

[9] Pierre Kende, 'La France et l'Intégration Européenne', *Commentaire*, vol.2, no.6, 1979, p.182.

[10] Girault, *Etre Historien des Relations Internationales*; Dominique Moïsi, 'The Trouble with France', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 77, no. 3, 1998; Alain Guyomarch, et al., *France in the European Union* (London: Macmillan Press, 1998); De Porte 'The Fifth Republic in Europe'; and Andrew Moravcsik 'De Gaulle between Grain and Grandeur: The Economic Origins of French EC Policy, 1958-1970', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, vol.2, no.2 and no.3, Spring/Fall 2000.

[11] Dulphy and Manigand, *La France au risque de l'Europe*; and Gérard Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France. 60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943-2003)* (Bruxelles: PIE-Peter Lang, 2005).

1. Introduction

This thesis contributes to the understanding of the historical evolution of France's involvement in the European integration process in a specific way: it seeks to embed the mainstream Gaullist story in a long term historical perspective and analyse "psychological" and institutional factors which have sustained the sense of French exceptionalism in France's modern political tradition.[12] Some of the existing literature goes beyond the Gaullist time frame, analysing continuity in French foreign policy from the 4th Republic and the actual start of the European integration project.[13] However, the impact of France's long-term history and tradition tend to be sidelined or only briefly mentioned.[14] Moreover, those who do study it tend to overlook its application in the European era.[15]

One core contention of this thesis is that remedying this lacuna is essential to comprehend how the historical construction of the tradition of France as an exceptional nation-state has impacted all French political leaders, including those conventionally depicted as European supranationalists, such as Jean Monnet. The belief in French exceptionalism has historically been widely accepted by the French political elite, even if through varied justifications and applications. Irrespective of their political background and commitments, they have been convinced of, and have promoted

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[12] E.g. Richard Balm and Cornelia Woll, 'France: Between Integration and National Sovereignty', in Simon Bulmer and Christian Lequesne, *The Member States of the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France.60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943-2003)*; Deubner, 'France: Contradictions and Imbalances'; Dulphy and Manigand, *La France au risque de l'Europe*; and Meunier 'The French Exception'. I have placed the term psychological in quotation marks to highlight that I do not intend to go into detailed psychological analysis of French political figures. Rather, I aim to explore the impact of individual myths on the discourse and practice of political elite. I outline my argument and conceptual framework further below.

[13] I refer here specifically to the creation of the Council of Europe (1949), the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) (1951), and the Rome Treaty (1957). E.g. De Porte, 'The Fifth Republic in Europe'; and Girault, *Etre Historien des Relations Internationales*.

[14] E.g. Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France. 60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943-2003)*; Frédéric Charillon, 'Peut-il encore y avoir une politique étrangère de la France', *Politique étrangère*, vol.67, no.4, 2002; Steven Philip Kramer, 'The End of French Europe?', *Foreign Affairs, vol.*85, no.4, 2006; Dulphy and Manigand, *La France au risque de l'Europe*, and Moïsi, 'The Trouble with France'.

[15] E.g. Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945'.

through their usage of a shared vocabulary, France as a country holding "a lesson not to be learned from any other country."[16] This dominant rhetoric includes a set of terms such as "France's universal mission" and "global destiny," that were used to discuss France and, importantly, to justify its foreign policy practice. This language of exceptionalism expressed and legitimized a shared view amongst the French political elite concerning feelings both of responsibility and underlying superiority towards other nations.[17] From the immediate post-war to the post Cold War period, most French political figures inherited this historical tradition, adapting it to their own convictions and readings of domestic and international circumstances.

In particular, I argue that within the context of the emerging European political entity, the tradition of French exceptionalism was divided between two main strands holding a distinct position within this overall discourse. I analyse what I define as "militant" and "supranational" French exceptionalism expressed in the framework of European integration: both inherited the same long-standing tradition and were fundamentally characterized by a commitment to establish France's unique role in Europe. What made them distinct from other strands of French exceptionalism is that they remained convinced and committed to the universal values of the French society, whilst also committing the country to the wider European geopolitical entity.[18] Primarily, both supported the progressive development of a European economic and political unity within the existing international society. Their common assumption however, was that France was bound to hold a permanent exceptional role in the international system of states in general, and in Europe in particular. Their shared aim was to push European

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[16] Andrew, 'France: Adjustment to Change' ; p.338; and René Girault, *Etre Historien des Relations Internationales*.
[17] E.g. Ibid.; Sudhir Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); and Meunier, 'The French Exception'.
[18] I will analyse further the concept and politicy implications of national exceptionalism in general, and French exceptionalism in particular, in Chapter II.

states towards economic and political coordination, with the leadership of France—and if necessary, other "great European nations."[19]

What distinguished them from each other were their respective views on France's desirable level of commitment to the European project. For militant exceptionalism, the French nation-state had a global role to play, not only through the European project, but also independently. Militant exceptionalism's most ardent supporter, de Gaulle, was strongly committed to France's global foreign policy action. If the country was to be part of the European integration project, it was to retain its historical global role through dialogue and cooperation with all nation states in the international system. For supranational exceptionalism, incarnated by Monnet, France was to have a global role through a European political entity, which ultimately was to transcend, at least partially, the French nation-state.

The two exceptionalist strands' dominant language was accepted and internalised by their political supporters. After the analysis of this long-standing historical tradition, this thesis traces the evolution of the French exceptionalist tradition during a particular historical period in French political life, from 1958 until 2007. One of my core propositions is that, facing domestic and international constraints, de Gaulle adapted his ideal of global French exceptionalism, albeit unwillingly, gradually accepting the practice, and thereby legitimising, the establishment of a European exceptionalism entity, the principal expression of French supranational exceptionalism.

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[19] Lacouture, *Le souverein (1959-1970), De Gaulle*.

Moreover, after the General's departure, militant exceptionalism was itself "compromised" with his successors accepting Europe as the core axis of French foreign policy.[20] However, French militant exceptionalism also left an enduring legacy. In the words of Stanley Hoffmann,

> "the passage of time has made it materially and psychologically impossible to undo them [decisions including the French nuclear force, rejecting military integration in NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and ending an exclusively pro-Israel policy], as their wisdom or their advantages for France became generally recognized."[21]

This thesis furthers Hoffmann's point and argues that to understand the Gaullist continuity, we must further examine de Gaulle's personal impact, in terms of myth-building and institutional legacy. Crucially, we must distinguish between the foreign policy discourse and practice of French foreign policy-makers. Firstly, he himself became a "*lieu de mémoire*," celebrated for the pride he gave back to the French people most importantly through the proactive role he gave to the president of the Republic. [22] This is essential in that it served the continued political support for both strands of French exceptionalism.

Secondly, nonetheless, de Gaulle also left explicit global institutional frameworks. Through these, militant exceptionalism been sustained in practice, thus remaining the official doctrine informing France's proactive stance in Europe and, most importantly, the rest of the world. As a result, supranational and militant exceptionalism have been continuously combined throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War eras, thereby explaining France's uneasy commitment to the European project. French leaders have persistently maintained the image of the nation as a bridge between the "West and the

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[20] I explain in chapter IV the two meanings I attach to this word in this particular context.
[21] Stanley Hoffmann, 'Gaullism by any other name', *Foreign Policy*, vol. 57, Winter 1994-95, p.38.
[22] Defined as "'sacred context' [...] [and] variety of forms through which cultural communities imagine themselves in diverse representational modes." in Pierre Nora, dir., *Realms of Memory: The construction of the French Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p.ix. I explore this term further below.

East, and the North and the South" despite the expansion and evolution of international society. [23]

Having laid out the broad historical context and arguments of the thesis let me introduce the theoretical framework I have adopted. However, before presenting this, I make one crucial practical point. Beyond the contribution to the academic literature which this thesis aims to achieve, I believe that it could also contribute a larger audience. Beyond academic details, I argue that a deeper and thorough understanding of the issue can help us contextualise current trends in French-European Community/European Union (EC/EU) relations, one contemporary example being the rejection of the EU Constitution. Additionally, applying the same approach to other countries across the region would benefit the wider debate on how nation-states participate in the EU project. Finally, and more generally, the concept of national exceptionalism can help us understand different countries' conception to international relations in general.

2. The Approach

The thesis analyses continuity and change in France's foreign policy through the prism of the interplay between two strands of French exceptionalism after the Second World War and through the Cold War and post-Cold War eras. In doing so, it stresses the need to distinguish between discourse and practice, centred on de Gaulle himself. In short, the thesis asks if de Gaulle was the creator or the bearer of French exceptionalism. Moreover, it explores the legacy of his conception of French uniqueness. Before going into the details of the concepts and methodology of my argument, I clarify the approach

[23] Dominique de Villepin, 'OTAN: le risque c'est un rétrécissement de notre ambition,' *Le Monde*, 16 March 2009.

I use to answer it within the broader framework of the current International Relations literature and related fields of study. As the introduction highlighted, this endeavour is less concerned with specific historical events then with historical patterns of political thinking. This thesis therefore combines concepts and methods from a range of intellectual disciplines including International Relations Theory, History, and the History of Ideas.

International Society

In terms of international relations theory, this project is located within the English School—or the international society approach.[24] The core tenant of this tradition is that a society of states exists with states interacting with one another, deliberating and sharing common institutions.[25] The prevailing definition used to describe an international society is that of Hedley Bull and Adam Watson: "a group of states [...] which have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements," with institutions defined by their "catalogue of laws and conventions."[26] The main research agenda of this School has been to develop an enquiry of the "historical normative evolution of states systems," focusing on interpreting the language and discursive practices of state leaders, diplomats, intellectuals, and lawyers to analyse the normative structure of international

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[24] It was goes without saying that there are many different trends of thought and debates within the complex literature of international relations. For example, a neoliberalist approach, which "sees institutions as the mediator and the means to achieve cooperation in the international system [...] encourag[ing], and at times requir[ing], multilateralism and cooperation as a means of securing national interest" (here, the EC/EU), and concepts including "soft power", would have also been very relevant to this project. However, I believe that as this thesis also crucially emphasizes the historical development of France-EC/EU relations, as well as the issue of hierarchy between states within the international system, the English School framework is even more relevant. On the definition of the neoliberalist strand of international relations theory, see: Steven L.Lamy, 'Contemporary mainstream approaches: neo-realism and neo-liberalism', in John Baylis and Steve Smith, eds., *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.214; on the concept of "soft power", see: Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*.

[25] On a general presentation of the English School, see: Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998).

[26] Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p.1.

life. Within the international society approach, theorists have not ignored the study of military facts and the reality of the pursuit of self-interest, but have deliberately focused on the social aspects of the international political realm.[27] Building bridges between various disciplines including international relations theory, political theory, and history, English school scholars have adopted a critical approach to the study of international relations and have shed light on the underlying meanings and principles of particular world order visions developed, sustained, or undermined, by different agents, including political leaders.

With one fundamental assumption of this work being that ideas shape and constitute the realm of action, I therefore take the English School as a starting point. One implication of focusing more precisely on one society's historically dominant political thinking and its application within one specific time period is that I cannot trace in detail the direct causal mechanisms through which ideas in the political discourse affect the decision-making and political processes. I take the view that rhetorical patterns are not only descriptive but constitutive and therefore explanatory of social realities.[28] Accordingly, I do not claim that the French exceptionalist tradition has had an impact on all French political leaders, nor that, if that has been the case, it has had the same level of influence. Instead, I take the view that it has influenced the manner in which political leaders have expressed themselves and behaved, purposively and not. I therefore simply indicate the broad policy implications of alternative discourses without tracing them in detail.

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[27] Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School*.

[28] On the concept of discourse and its analysis in general, see: Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Jennifer Milliken, 'The Study of Discourse Analysis in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods' *European Journal of International* Relations, vol.5, no.2, 1999; and Friedrich Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

In recent years, a particular strand within the English School scholarship has focused specifically on identifying fundamental institutions of international societies, their justification, and their underlying values.[29] Broadly, the work of such scholars, including Tim Dunn and Christian Reus-Smit, has been to link dominant patterns of political thought within a specific historical period with institutions and international state practice resulting from it.[30] This thesis therefore follows such strand of analysis, highlighting the importance of studying historical patterns of thought, language, and argumentation in world politics to understand how they provide a common normative framework from which people borrow understandings and discourses to act upon the world.

Another critical strand developed within the English School tradition and followed by scholars such as Edward Keene, pays greater attention to European states in particular, and how they have determined and re-negotiated the criteria of membership over the course of the "expansion of international society."[31] This process is analysed as one whereby European states have dominated and legitimized their dominance over non-European states and communities, including through imperialism.[32] This thesis very much shares the assumptions of such work as Keene's, that of an existing hierarchy between states of the international system. However, as these projects aim to uncover relatively broad intellectual and historical developments over the course of several centuries, they lack a more detailed analysis regarding one time period and one nation-state, in which intellectual traditions have forged the distinction between "one exceptional and superior nation-state" and "others." I therefore take such studies as starting points, placing myself

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[29] Emanuel Adler, 'Constructivism and International Relations', in Walter Carlsnaes, et al., *Handbook of International Relations* (London: Sage Publication: 2002).

[30] For example of their work, see: Tim Dunne, 'The Social Construction of International Society', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol,, no.3, 1995; and Christian Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

[31] On the concept of the "expansion of international society" in general, see: Bull and Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society*.

[32] Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius,Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

in the English School tradition of "understanding," to amend prevailing conceptualizations of one historically dominant ideological current in the political thinking of a particular society—de Gaulle's conception of France's exceptionalism—and its application within a specific time period—European integration.[33]

History and ***the History of Ideas***

In addition to norms and institutions playing an increasingly relevant role within the study of international relations, and the English School in particular, the more specific analysis of the historical development of ideas has also come to the fore in recent years.[34] What characterises this new school of thought is its focus on specific historical contexts, rather than the traditional all encompassing approach of the English School. This more recent theoretical strand focuses on understanding the connection between political and social thinkers and leaders of one specific time period, and their relationship to the historical development of political thought, ideas in contemporary political debates, and international political practice.[35] In this context, the work of John G. Ruggie and Peter Katzenstein is particularly interesting to us.[36] For example, Ruggie has suggested that the United States' sense of exceptionalism held by national leaders, and itself the cultural construct drawn from the country's historical geopolitical position, has led them to act as though it has a unique "policing" role to play in the international arena.[37]

Political Tradition and National Identity

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[33] Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
[34] Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School*.
[35] Keene, *International Political Thought: A Historical Introduction*.
[36] For example of their work, see: John G. Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization* (London: Routledge, 2001); and Peter Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
[37] Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization*.

Having framed the thesis within the broad international relations literature, I now turn to defining the core theoretical concepts which I use. The object of this thesis is the evolution of the French exceptionalist tradition, one core foundation of France's national identity, and its link with international political practice. Consequently, two important methodological questions regard the approaches taken here to change and continuity in political traditions, and national identity.

Tim Dunne defines political traditions as "following four attributes: 'classification,' 'continuity,' 'abstraction' and 'exclusion'."[38] He respectively defines these terms as, "as a way of imposing order upon a complex and protean reality [...] abstracting, articulating recurrent patterns and continuities [...]tr[ying] to defeat its 'other' with strategies which involve the manipulation of language [...] and images."[39] However, I argue that this definition sidelines the role of individuals in developing and perpetuating traditions. This being one core foundation of the thesis, I adopt a definition formulated by Sudhir Hazareesingh, emphasising this aspect. In this view "a tradition is characteristically defined as the transmission of a relatively coherent body of knowledge or thought from one generation to the next."[40] Central to this definition is the expression of a particular form of continuity between past and present set of ideas, principles, and values of the social and political history of a country, forming "the principal basis for argument and action by organised political groups and movements."[41] Moreover, another crucial concept is that "ideology."[42] Although its definition remains highly contested, there is a general agreement that ideology is "an

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[38] Tim Dunne, 'Mythology or Methodology: Traditions in International Theory', *Review of International Studies*, vol.19, no.2, 1993, p.208-9.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*, p.5.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Although there is a wide debate as to whether ideologies are prescriptive or descriptive, and whether they can be given rational justification, this is not the subject of study here. This project remains focused on the study of the values and beliefs embedded in one political tradition, as well as its sociological and institutional components.

interpretive frame of reference which seeks to describe social, economic, and moral conditions in society in order to direct and mobilize groups towards specific political ends."[43] At the core of this frame of reference lies the definition of a particular discourse. This comprises most importantly, a common language, identically defined goals, and a set of principles describing the world in a particular way and providing a set of responses to a number of political and philosophical questions including the meaning of democracy, "the good life for society," and good government.[44] Moreover, as scholars such as Jürgen Habermas have discussed, this discourse become diffused through social communication which allows agents to fix and apply these principles of collective understandings across time and space in national communities.[45] These are then crystallized in collective institutions and actions. [46] Additionally, they form the overall contours and direction of global politics, rather than specific day-to-day policy choices which are always contingent. As Jean-Baptiste Duroselle points out, a tradition manifests itself by political acts, including foreign policy acts, representing more or less confused or precise conceptions of the national interest, itself linked to national identity.[47]

If the definition of national identity is itself contested, there is a general consensus that it is above all, a cultural construct. This is generally described as based on ethnic foundations—including a common language, customs, and manners—or a "desire to live together"—established by a contract between the state and popular sovereignty.[48]

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[43] Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*, p.6.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol.1. (trans. Thomas McCarthy) (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).
[46] Dominique Schnapper, Katarina Von Bülow, Hörst Möller, et al., eds., *Identité et Mémoire* (Paris: Culture France DL, 2007).
[47] Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945'.
[48] Karin Emile Bitar, 'Science Po et l'ENA: splendeurs et misères de l'élitisme républicain', in Karim Emile Bitar and Robert Fadel, eds., *Regards sur la France* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2007), p.597.; Benedict R. O'Gorman Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); and Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: an Enquiry into the Origins of nations and the politics of nationalism* (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1982). On the idea of foreign, and particularly European, imposition of state sovereignty, see John Plamenatz, 'Two Types of Nationalism', in E. Kamenka, *Nationalism. The Nature and Evolution of an* Idea (London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 1976).

In the words of Ernest Renan, this "desire to live together" stems from "one real or desired community of individuals who have shared a common past, [political, cultural] present and future [in competition with others]."[49] Benedict Anderson defines the "imagination" of such communities as led by political elites and intellectuals establishing a feeling of shared unique destiny between individuals, who have not necessarily met.[50]

Characterising all countries' nationalism, is thus a feeling of exceptionalism.[51] This sense is that of distinction linked to the perception of a unique national historical and cultural background, and is expressed differently throughout history and issue areas, and with varying justifications and intensity for each individual country.[52] Concerning Japan, some argue in favour of a sense of exceptionalism attached to the Japanese political elite and public's perception of the country as a regional "peace state" [*heiwa kokka*] since the end of the Second World War.[53] More recently, some have explained Iran's refusal, despite the Non-Proliferation Treaty which it has signed, to allow its nuclear installations to be controlled by the International Atomic Energy Agency as a reflection of its "ambition to have its 'rank' recognised [in the Middle East]" by the major actors in international society.[54] Moreover, some exceptionalisms are defined in relation to other specific ones. Some use French history as an example of a "conformist," parliamentary democracy, contrasting it with the more exceptional

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[49] Jean Baechler, 'Dépérissement de la nation?', *Commentaire* vol..11, no.41, 1988), p. 104.
[50] O'Gorman Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, p.6.
[51] For detailed historical accounts of national exceptionalisms, see: Deborah L. Madsen, *American Exceptionalism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998); Martin, S. Lipset, *American Exceptionalism: a Double-Edged Sword* (London: W.W. Norton, 1996); Stephen Haseler, *The English Tribe: Identity, Nation and Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996); and Godin and Chafer, *The French Exception*.
[52] On the concept of exceptionalism and nationalism in general, see: O'Gorman Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*; Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: an Enquiry into the Origins of nations and the politics of nationalism*.
[53] E.g. Yuki Tatsumi, 'Japan's Nuclear Option: A Debate Revisited', *St Antony's International Review*, vol.4, no.2, 2009.
[54] E.g. André Fontaine, 'L'Iran met en avant l'ambition de voir "son rang" reconnu', *Le Monde*, 19 March 2009, p.2. The major actors are identified by Fontaine as the "Western" states.

histories of Germany, Japan, and China.[55] This exceptionalist mythology informs the rhetoric of politicians, intellectuals, and the media throughout time.[56] It is an essential factor constituting the frame through which national communities see the world and their interest within it, whether it is its sense of duty, right, or self-preservation. [57]

I use here the distinction made by Hoffmann between "national conscience," "national situation," and the "nationalism."[58] "National conscience" is defined as "a feeling of "cohesion and particularity" which distinguishes a given group from another one.[59] This itself does not determine the national interest and subsequent action. These are determined by the "national situation" and political leaders' "nationalism." The "national situation" is made of objective facts—internally, the social structure and political system, and externally, geography and formal engagements—and subjective facts—internally, values, preconceptions, opinions, reflexes, and externally, traditions vis-à-vis communities. Moreover, "nationalism" determines how political leaders interpret what the "national situation" is. Together, they promote and diffuse the idea that one country has a coherent national identity and that a consensus concerning the nature of national identity does reign. This gives the nation its values and priorities in world affairs. In this case, the historical sense of a nation having been a great political and cultural entity can continuously have an impact on its international political practice. As Raymond Aron suggested, old nations, including France, do not need to reconfirm their nationhood daily but this does not mean they lose the capacity for collective exaltation. Individuals, including state leaders, keep their pride in deeds

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[55] Godin and Chafer, *The French Exception*, p.3.
[56] For historical accounts of the influence of political elites and intellectuals on national exceptionalism, see: Madsen, *American Exceptionalism.*
[57] For historical accounts of these phenomenona, see: Ruggie, *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization*; and Tatsumi, 'Japan's Nuclear Option: A Debate Revisited'.
[58] Hoffmann, *Essais sur la France: Déclin ou Renouveau?*
[59] Ibid, ,p. 389.

achieved together and, by aspiring to it, transmit it mythically to those who obey them.[60]

Accordingly, the critical question is identifying the "relative coherent body of knowledge," the agents involved in the transfer and general practical applications of it.[61] Before presenting the substantive argument of this chapter, it is therefore necessary to define the notions of "challenge to" and "continuity of" a tradition, how they interrelate, and clarify how I identify them.[62] Firstly, a "challenge" can "refer to radical changes or internal transformations in the major arguments of [former] adherents to a tradition. [Yet] changes and transformations to the internal ideological structure of a tradition need not threaten its existence."[63] As pointed above, traditions are ideological constructs with core and peripheral principles, with the latter holding different positions over time. In other words, a threat to a tradition arises when the coherence between its core values and arguments is disrupted. Continuity in a tradition therefore requires "at least on a very basic level, some internal coherence among its core values and arguments."[64]

Secondly, I defined political traditions also as expressed through foreign policy acts. A "challenge" can also come from internal and external conditions making a tradition's political applications hard to sustain. Yet again, changes and transformations to the external implementation of a tradition do not threaten its very existence: a threat to a

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[60] Aron, *France Steadfast and Changing: The Fourth to the Fifth Republic*.
[61] Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France* ; and Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945'.
[62] My first and third points in the following framework for "challenges to political traditions" refer to one developed by Juri Viehoff. On this conceptual division, see: Juri B. Viehoff, *The Dark Side of Internationalism? The Civilizing Mission Tradition, 1870-1960*, MPhil Thesis, Oxford University, 2007
[63] Juri B. Viehoff, 'The Dark Side of Internationalism?, p.86.
[64] Ibid.

tradition comes when the coherence between its core values, arguments, and political actions is disrupted.

Thirdly, a "challenge" can come from "conditions and developments in the world [...] mak[ing] adherence to a tradition increasingly hard to sustain. In particular, the generally accepted vocabulary in which tradition frames the issue may lose its overall appeal."[65] As a result, if this vocabulary remains widely accepted by the public to which it is directed at, the tradition can be considered as "continued."

Finally, the range of possible sources make the task of identifying the clear strands of exceptionalism a complex one, especially when we consider how much it is expressed across different domains. Karim Emile Bitar argues for two specificities in the development of the French national identity: the "desire to live together" and the central role played by the state.[66] This thesis therefore concentrates on the study of the historical pattern of thought concerning French exceptionalism, one specific aspect of French socio-cultural background, and its differing and common interpretation and application by state leaders in international political practice.[67]

In this vein, the work of Thomas Banchoff is particularly relevant for this thesis.[68] As he points out, such individuals traditionally think of themselves as not merely expressing their personal political opinions, but as providing reasoned arguments about

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Bitar, 'Science Po et l'ENA: splendeurs et misères de l'élitisme républicain'.

[67] I adopt here the following definition of political elites, "groups obtaining their power from dominant positions within the institutional structures of society, including political, economic and military organisations. Their cohesion comes from this institutional framework as well as common social, educational and training experiences, and collective knowledge and norms." Elisabeth du Réau, dir., *Europe des Elites? Europe des Peuples? La construction de l'espace européen 1945-1960* (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1998). My focus is on groups generally identified as "epistemic communities" in the realm of international relations theory. These are defined as "networks of knowledge-based experts." On this particular concept, see for example: Peter Haas, 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination', *International Organization*, vol.46, no.1, 1992.

[68] Thomas Banchoff, 'German Identity and European Integration', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.5, no.3, 1999.

international politics. Official discourses articulate state identity with political salience, identify particular collective memories as foundations for chosen policies, and reflect conceptions shared by the public and across the political spectrum rather than individual convictions. I traced the justification for French continued commitment to the European project and relations with the rest of the world, mostly through writings and speeches of French presidents and their close *entourage*, as well as secondary literature and press coverage for more recent events. I also carried out several interviews of French and foreign officials with the aim to grasp a more complete understanding of past and present political discourse and events. For the period between 1958 and 2007, I analysed the rhetoric and practice of the French Presidents.[69] In the case of the 5th Republic, the centralised executive system provided the president and his close *entourage* with enhanced executive powers, including in the definition and implementation of foreign policy.[70] This in turn, testifies to the relation between presidential thought, rhetoric, and practice.[71]

In order to counter any argument that such analysis might simply reflect populist rhetoric, I will make the following points. Here I use Duroselle's distinction between "extrovert" and "introvert" national foreign policy to counter the argument that such analysis might simply reflect populist rhetoric.[72] On the one hand, an extrovert national policy is characterised by the priority given to foreign goals—for example, power, security, glory, and "civilising mission." On the other hand, an introvert policy is defined by the priority given to internal goals— for instance, for prosperity and social cohesion—with foreign policy serving as a means to it. Generally, French domestic

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[69] I explain in chapter II my focus on specific individuals for the second branch of French exceptionalism.
[70] Maurice Vaïsse, *La Puissance ou Influence? La France dans le monde depuis 1958.* (Paris: Libraire Arthème Fayard, 2009). By "entourage." I refer to presidents' close advisors and ministers. I will discuss this issue further in chapter III and IV.
[71] Concerning Nicolas Sarkozy, whose first mandate will end in 2012, I analyse his discourse and policy during the Presidential campaign of in the first half of 2007, as well as the first 20 months of his presidency until March 2009.
[72] Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945', pp.345-401.

opinion has historically and traditionally been introvert in terms of foreign policy, but supportive of the idea of French uniqueness in the world. This tradition has very much continued since the end of the Second World War.[73]

Additionally, immediately after the War, with a declined prosperity, political instability, and uncertainty about France's new role in the changing international system the French public did support de Gaulle's more assertive foreign policy aimed at restoring France global *rayonnement*. As I will analyse further in chapter II and III, the readings of his memoirs and accounts of his thoughts and actions by his contemporaries and academics, clearly indicate that he was not solely motivated by obtaining the support of the French public opinion or focusing on security and economic interests. The General was also fundamentally driven by his conception of French *grandeur*. Moreover, this support was temporary, and the French public turned inward again after his departure.[74] Nevertheless, "exceptionalism" has come back repeatedly into the rhetoric of French leaders, as legitimisation for action. This indicates how much this tradition does not simply constrain but also constitutes the realm of action of French individuals, including political leaders.

When viewed from within the framework of the project's tradition, it will appear that the historical "habits and reflexes" acquired over time by its leaders making it conduct itself an exceptional nation, have continuously underlined France's commitment to foreign policy and European policy in particular. Moreover, it will also emerge that one political figure, de Gaulle, had a particularly strong influence on this tradition,

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[73] Ibid.

[74] E.g. Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France. 60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943-2003)*.

inheriting it, adapting it, and leaving a long during institutional legacy. The concept of *lieu de mémoire* will be explored further in chapter IV, as one factor explaining this Gaullist continuity.

3. Structure of the Thesis

Having outlined my major arguments and placed them within the framework of current international relations literature and other fields of study, I now turn to the structure of the thesis. The next three chapters will cover the discourse and practice of French exceptionalism before, during, and after de Gaulle's mandate as French President.

In Chapter II, I focus on the agents of and debates concerning French exceptionalism, briefly sketching the historical development of this tradition at the core of French nationalism, before 1946 and going back to the French Revolution. I then turn to the discourse and practice about French exceptionalism in the immediate post-Second World War period, including the onset of European integration to 1958. To do so, I firstly briefly examine the historical development of the idea of European political unity and its relation to France's national identity. Secondly, I discuss the two main strands of the tradition of French exceptionalism, within the context of early post-war European political life, militant and supranational, both simultaneously committed to European unity and French global uniqueness. I argue that although militant exceptionalism was a dominant expression of French exceptionalism between 1946 and 1958, it was only one strand of this broader tradition. In fact, after the Second World War, French supranational political thinking about European cooperation held a distinct position within the discourse about French exceptionalism. Indeed, it was rooted on the

principles of French global uniqueness within a greater Western exceptional entity, and argued for the necessity of France's leadership in promoting Western European unity. This differed from militant French exceptionalism with the former combining arguments about the necessity of intra-European economic and political coordination with that of France's outer-European exceptionalism. As such, militant exceptionalism represented both the a justification, in the discourse and practice, for minimalist European integration but also a rejection of it, promoting, as a priority, France's independent and activist global role.

In chapter III, I discuss the political application of militant exceptionalism on French political life as it was developed and applied during de Gaulle's mandate as French President of the 5th republic, between 1958 and 1969. I argue that, in practice, the General showed a capacity to adapt his original rhetoric of militant exceptionalism to changing circumstances, and particularly with regards to European political cooperation. This in turn, allowed for the European political project to become the principal axis of France's foreign policy, leading de Gaulle himself legitimising the core expression of French supranational exceptionalism.

Chapter IV argues that the socio-political rupture and the parallel developments in the international scene, which ended the Gaullist rule, challenged even more extensively militant exceptionalism and pushed his successors to support, in their discourse and practice, European integration as the main platform of French foreign policy. Gradually, French leaders accepted and further endorsed European economic and political integration through the Cold War and post-Cold War eras. With the European logic firmly accepted and internalised, global interdependence, and the development of

a multipolar system, it has become increasingly difficult to justify the responsibility of the French nation towards others, especially as this influence has come to be seen through the critical lens of neo-colonialism. Nonetheless, through the continued influence of de Gaulle in particular, militant exceptionalism has continued to be a core tenant of French foreign policy. In short, supranational exceptionalism became a core basis of French European policy, but combined with militant exceptionalism's continuing influence. One final` proposition of this thesis is that this continuity can be accounted for, most crucially, by de Gaulle's mythical and institutional legacy.

People so constant in its fundamental impulses that we can still recognize it in portraits made of it two or three thousand years ago, and at the same time so changeable in its daily thoughts and tastes that it finally becomes an unanticipated spectacle even to itself
Alexis de Tocqueville[1]

Chapter II

Militant vs. Supranational Exceptionalism (1946-58)

Scholars have conventionally pointed to the dual nature of French participation in the European project in the immediate post-Second World War period by defining two distinct groups within the political elite support, "national sovereignists" and "pro-Europeanists."[2] The former group is conventionally associated with one man, de Gaulle, analysed as having fiercely restrained European integration in the name of French sovereignty and uniqueness, and supported instead a limited, French-led intergovernmental Europe. On the other hand, the mainstream literature also recognises the support for supranational integration by some French political figures, including Monnet, pushing to abandon "outdated" concepts of national "glory" and "rank" in the name of peace and prosperity.[3] This chapter seeks to challenge this conventional approach.

In the first section, I broadly define the concept of national exceptionalism. I subsequently embed the mainstream Gaullist story in a long-term perspective analysing the historical development of the French nationalist foundations. I sketch the political evolution of French exceptionalism and its internalisation in French nationalism as a

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[1] Raymond Aron, *France Steadfast and Changing: The Fourth to the Fifth Republic* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960), p.v.

[2] I use here the expressions used by Balm and Woll, 'France: Between Integration and National Sovereignty'. In this thesis, I use the term "supranationalists" to avoid any ambiguities. Indeed, Charles de Gaulle and other opponents to supranationalism would have considered themselves "Europeanists" as defenders of some form of European cooperation (as it is still the case today). They would argue that the foundations of European integration, rather than supranational institutions, should be (and are really) national member states. I use the following definition of supranational and supranationalism: "refers to law or institutions that are above the state. The power and authority they exercise is not confined to one but many. Thus, supranationalism refers to decision-making bodies which supersede or override the sovereignt authority of individual states who are constituent members of the organization involved." Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newnham, *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), p.524.

[3] I have outlined mainstream works in Chapter I.

core principle. The main contention of this chapter is that, through this, the tradition has historically been supported by the majority of French political leaders. Subsequently, I focus on the immediate post-Second World War period, until 1958. I demonstrate that with the rise of the European political unity starting in the mid-twentieth century, the French tradition remained central to the national interest as perceived and promoted by French political leaders. However, within the context of emerging European political integration, it was itself divided between two main strands: militant and supranational French exceptionalism. Both were fundamentally committed to European unity and, simultaneously, characterized by the ideal of French uniqueness but differed on its level of international political expression. As such, Gaullist militant exceptionalism was one set of arguments in the general discourse about French exceptionalism. What distinguished it from other strands, and most crucially the supranational one, was its ambiguous commitment to the European project linked to its focus on the eternal nature of the French nation-state, its global role, and within this, its assumption that even relations with other European states were hierarchical. Before exploring French exceptionalism, I briefly investigate the historical construction of the principles and characteristics of French nationalism, starting with the Revolution of 1789 as its, formal and mythical, founding moment.

1. French Exceptionalism in the *Longue Durée*

French Nationalism

French nationalism emerged during the course of the eighteenth century and as a product of the Revolutionary movements.[4] The introduction of the concept of nationalism in the French political discourse was aimed at challenging domestic élites and the "reactionary" powers of the *Ancien Régime* and gain enhanced legitimacy vis-à-vis the monarchy by showing a different relationship between the state and the sovereign community. This mobilising force remained a dominant rhetoric as long as France's uneven economic development increasingly divided the interests of workers, middle classes, and peasants. It took the partial reconciliation of the monarchy with some republican principles, under the constitutional monarchy of Louis-Philippe (1830-48) that made possible the wider sharing of nationalist feeling.

In this process, the state became seen as a primary tool for social advancements by the nobility after the end of seigniorial control. [5] "In the [nineteenth century] [...] [the French state] survived wars, revolutions, and changing regimes, and with the eventual victory of liberal democracy in 1870, achieved popular sanctity as 'the one and indivisible French Republic'."[6] The tradition of the French state had originated very far back: the apotheosis of monarchical centralization was in many ways provided by Louis XIV. The Jacobinists retained the institution of centralized authority throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As de Tocqueville argued, "the Great Revolution failed to dismantle this centralised edifice, and instead inherited it." Moreover, it "bequeath[ed] it in turn to Napoleon who gave it its definitive modern shape." [7] Within it, political battles essentially took place between rival minorities—

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[4] Brian Jenkins and Nigel Copsey, 'Nation, Nationalism and National Identity', in Brian Jenkins and Spyros A. Sofos, *Nation and Identity in Contemporary Europe* (London: Routledge, 1996); and Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*.
[5] For detailed accounts of French nationalism, see: Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*; and Jenkins and Copsey, 'Nation, Nationalism and National Identity'.
[6] Ibid., pp.101-2.
[7] Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*, p.101.

urban, Parisian, bourgeois, and middle class—who exploited centralised authority to advance socially and economically.[8]

Additionally, only a highly-trained, disciplined, and efficient body of public servants, rather than representative institutions, had always been perceived as being able to be politically efficient and preserve the general interest as determined by the state. This conception of bureaucracy was deeply engrained in the ideology of the *Ancien Régime*. The first *grandes écoles* were founded by Louis XV.[9] This elitism was later consecrated by the revolutionary movement after 1789.[10] It later influenced the Napoleonic administrative reforms of the early nineteenth century and the reforms under the Provisional Government of the French Republic (1944-6) and the 5th Republic. These continued to transfer this elitist viewpoint to generations of graduates of the *grandes écoles* and particularly the *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* (ENA) (established in 1946), the training institute for the higher civil service. Through their interactions with the state, these elite groups gradually developed between themselves a sense of nationhood.

This left large proportions of the population—rural, provincial, peasant, and working-class—economically and socially isolated from the mainstream of national political life. A popular sense of nationhood only began to emerge during the second half of the nineteenth century when 'the masses' began to gain access to the political process. Firstly, this came through the state's granting of universal mass suffrage in 1848. Secondly, this shift was accelerated during the Third Republic, France's first liberal

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[8] Ibid.
[9] Bitar, 'Science Po et l'ENA: splendeurs et misères de l'élitisme républicain'.
[10] The idea that politics was accessible to all, according to their intellectual capacities rather than their social status, was itself a founding principle of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (article 6). Ibid.

parliamentary democracy. It is against this background that the 'nationalising' influences of mass civic schooling, military conscription, and the symbolism of tricolour and Bastille day reaffirmed the 'citizen' nation.[11]

Moreover, unlike many other countries, the French state continuously played an increasing role in domestic politics and socio-economic life. By the late nineteenth century, the majority of political traditions presented themselves in nationalist colours, with the element of exceptionalism integrated within their political discourse. "De Gaulle springs to mind immediately, of course, but also the Jacobin advocates [...] were similarly inspired by a mystical conception of national *grandeur*."[12]

France's Exceptionalism

The French of exceptionalism is not a simple local particularism; it is a sense of historical superiority with a political claim to a global civilising model.[13] I define it, in Aron's words, as "a need for the leaders, to shine, win just for the sake of winning [...] or behave with *panache* to give at least the appearance of greatness"[14]. The common language used to describe France's exceptionalism is "an inspired nation,"[15] "French civilization [as] universal,"[16] "[and] singular,"[17] having "given to the world the Declaration of the Rights of Man,"[18] France possesses "a lesson to teach the world – a lesson not to be learned from any other country."[19]

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[11] Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*.
[12] Ibid., pp.138-9.
[13] E.g. Andrew, 'France: Adjustment to Change'; Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*; and Meunier, 'The French Exception'.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Andrew, 'France: Adjustment to Change', p.337.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Patrick Roger, 'Trois premiers ministres dans le débat sur l'OTAN', *Le Monde*, 19 March 2009.
[18] Claude Imbert, 'The End of French Exceptionalism', *Foreign Affairs*, vol.68, no.4, 1989, p.49.
[19] Andrew, 'France: Adjustment to Change', pp.338.

Ever since Richelieu, all French governments have continuously sustained and recreated the goal of "maintaining" France's "rank" and respect in the international system.[20] French national exceptionalism was as much a genuine recognition and affirmation of shared cultural values as a continuous ideological construct. Broadly, as Philippe Moreau Defarges argues, this sense of uniqueness is drawn from three principal historical elements.[21] Firstly, from its geographic position, situated at the occidental extremity of Europe, facing "vast coastal fronts, promises of immense adventures," France built two colonial empires: the first one, from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-eighteenth century, which ended by the defeat in the Seven Year War and the Paris Treaty of 1763; the second one, was established in the nineteenth century and ended after the Second World War. Secondly, geostrategically, France was the dominant nation of Europe for two centuries, from the Treaty of Westphalia (1848), ending the Thirty Year War, to Waterloo (1815), with French armies conquering and "spreading" across Europe "new values" emerging from France, including that of equality and the "nation". Thirdly, this came culturally, with the whole of Europe speaking French during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and French leaders claiming the nation to be the birthplace of universal human rights.[22]

In the nineteenth century, the Great Revolution gave birth to different nationalisms including that of Bonapartism from 1815 (Emperor Napoleon I's fall) and 1851 (Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état*). This period was one of intense division, with an authoritarian state seeking to reconcile conflicting social interests and promote territorial expansion. The unity of the "great French nation" was incarnated in a strong leader with the quest

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[20] E.g. Philippe Moreau Defarges, 'Déterminants et orientations de la politique étrangère de la France. La France entre rang et Europe', in *Politique étrangère de la France*, no.332, June/July 2007 (Paris: La documentation française)Moreau Defarges, 'Déterminants et orientations de la politique étrangère de la France. La France entre rang et Europe'.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., p.6.

for national "glory," based on economic, military, and cultural imaginary to provide political legitimacy for expansionist strategy.[23] On the other hand, more moderate nationalist themes were also adopted by the republican tradition. With continued foreign attacks and territorial expansion, the end of the nineteenth century corresponded to a period during which the public's "taste for glory" declined. Yet, it was aggressiveness which the public and republican political movements were rejecting, not patriotism.

A political rhetoric reflecting the country's *grandeur* had become accepted as a source of political legitimacy. The period up to the nineteenth century represents one during which notions of French "uniqueness", "cultural dominance," and "rank," present in the public mind for centuries, became gradually institutionalised, diffused, and endorsed within the wider political spectrum and private realms through the socio-political discourse (e.g. Jules Ferry, poems, intellectuals), the state's education system (e.g. the ENA), structures (e.g. *les Grands Corps*, the Quai d'Orsay and *Etat-majors*), intellectual circles, and political parties (e.g. the successive Gaullist parties).[24] As Pierre Nora explains, the country's historical symbols as a whole (e.g. places and monuments including the Arc de Triomphe, events including festivals and Bastille Day, objects including the tricolour, *la Marseillaise*, and individuals including Voltaire and Rousseau) became an entire ***lieu de mémoire*** building and uniting the nation around the myth of an exceptional France.[25]

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[23] Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*.
[24] On the concept of the diffusion of French nationalism and exceptionalism, see: Jenkins and Copsey, 'Nation, Nationalism and National Identity'. The French state structure and its link to the defence of the national interest, see: Pierre Birnbaum, *Les sommets de l'Etat: Essai sur l'élite du pouvoir en France* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1977); and on its link with public policy making and society in general, see: Ezra N. Suleiman, *Politics, Power, and Bureaucracy in France: The Administrative Elite* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).
[25] Nora, dir., *Realms of Memory: The construction of the French Past*; Olivier Assayas, Interview by Peter Aspden, 'French Film, Global Culture', *Financial Times*, 12/13 July 2008, p.12; French official, Interview, 20 September 2008, Paris; Hubert Védrine, Online debate, *Le Monde*, 17 March 2009; Patrick Roger, 'Trois premiers ministres dans le débat sur l'OTAN'; and Rawi Abdelal and Sophie Meunier, 'The French Mark on Globalization', *Telos*, 13 October 2007.

Crucially therefore, French nationalism, with exceptionalism as one of its founding principle, was promoted by the state's political élite, themselves reacting to contemporary circumstances. The literature recognizes how French exceptionalism has been, simultaneously, continuously expressed to a typical Gallic obsession with material and especially intellectual decline.[26] From this, French political leaders founded, as early as the eighteenth-century, a foreign policy tradition on an equilibrium between a deep attachment to the national rank and anchoring in an international project.[27] This started to become widely shared in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the loss of French power in Europe in terms of territory, economic, demographic, and cultural domination.[28] Throughout this period and up to the mid-twentieth century, French political leaders took every opportunity to restate the uniqueness, the global responsibility, as well as the necessity to stop the decline of French cultural and political exceptionalist as a source of political legitimacy.[29] For example, and most importantly, France still possessed a large empire.[30] Through colonial expansionism the country, as Jules Ferry had declared in 1885 "shone" and expressed its right "to civilise inferior races. "[31]

This tradition continued in the early twentieth century and after 1945. Immediately after the Second World War, a majority of French political leaders, did not recognize France's loss of power, in material and ideational terms. These included de Gaulle and

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[26] Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945'; and Hazareesingh, *Political Traditions in Modern France*. For examples of this expression of a fear of French decline, see François Furet et al., *La République du Centre: La Fin de l'Exception Française* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1988); Imbert, 'The End of French Exceptionalism'; and Kramer, 'The End of French Europe?'; Stanley Hoffman, 'Français, calmez vous … la France ne tombe pas!', in Karim Emile Bitar and Robert Fadel, eds., *Regards sur la France* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2007). On the historical evolution of French decline, see: Aron, *France Steadfast and Changing, the Fourth to the Fifth Republic*.

[27] Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945'.

[28] I refer here particularly to to the wars of 1814, 1870 and the two World Wars (1914-18; 1939-45), industrial downturn, and the decline of the use of French language in the world. Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945'.

[29] E.g. Hazareesingh, *Political traditions in Modern France*; and Pascal Boniface, *La France est-elle encore une grande puissance?* (Paris: Presses de Science Po, 1998).

[30] Girault, *Etre Historien des Relations Internationales*.

[31] Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945', p..313.

parliamentarians of the new 4th Republic (established in January 1946) such as its two successive Presidents, Vincent Auriol and René Coty, ministers including Georges Bidault, Pierre Mendès-France, and Edouard Herriot, civil servants including Couve de Murville, and political figures outside of the regime of the 4th republic and in political parties, including de Gaulle leading the Rally of the French People.[32]

Yet, none agreed one what were the best means to ensure France's survival and status as a great power within the dramatically changing international system of which the principal characteristics were the decolonization process with the loss of France's empire and the bipolarization of power in the Cold War. The 4th Republic, a parliamentary system marked by the succession of twenty six governments in power between October 1946 (when it was ratified by national referendum) and June 1958 (when the 5th Republic was established), was incapable of sustaining a domestic policy of economic renewal and political stability, as well as a coherent foreign policy. [33] As Aron pointed out, "what had weakened the French role most was not a lack of resources, but the way in which [the 4th Republic] had proceeded with the problem of adaptation, with finding a medium between anachronism and resignation."[34] "Anachronism" was linked to the conservative figures' (as Mendès-France until he came to power in 1954) attachment to France's past glory and notably its empire. "Resignation" was the regime's incapacity to pursue a coherent and "assertive" foreign policy and its acceptance of European integration, seen as an attack to France's prestige by many within the French political class.

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[32] E.g. Alfred Grosser, *La IVème République et sa politique extérieure* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1967); Sabine Jansen, Pres., *Les grands discours parlementaires de la IVème République: de Pierre Mendès France à Charles de Gaulle (1945-1958)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2006); and Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La France de la quatrième république (1944-1958)* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1980).
[33] Rioux, *La France de la quatrième république (1944-1958)*.
[34] Hoffmann, *Essais sur la France: Déclin ou Renouveau?*, p.197.

Firstly, with continued heated political debates in Metropolitan France, showing the regime's increasing incapacity to deal with the decolonisation process, the 4th Republic first lost Indochina, leaving the United States to deal with a civil war France had been involved in for ten years (1945-1954). It then granted Morocco and Tunisia independence in 1956. Secondly, the 4th Republic's leaders, including Robert Schuman, saw in the European project their only "exit strategy" from which France would be able to become economically and politically stable again, and thus retain a sense of remaining a global nation-state. Yet, "after the catastrophe [that of the Second World War] came the effort to readapt, an effort that took two contradictory aspects: the movement toward "return to normal" and the movement toward "radical innovation."[35] Many in the political class, including de Gaulle, were strong opponents of the European integration process, rejecting notably the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) (1950), the plan for the European Defence Community (EDC) (1952), and the Rome Treaty (1957). These were perceived as promoting European and, most importantly, German interests, to the detriment of France's traditional independence and rank.[36] Others wanted to create stronger links with other nations including the United States (as Monnet), or to the Soviet Union (for the French Communist Party).

Moreover, a large section of the French public remained introvert and more concerned about immediate problems. Thus, as Duroselle suggests, "the true and lasting consequences of the catastrophe had not yet appeared in 1945."[37] Increasingly aware of this reality, French elites sustained the notion of French exceptionalism, some out of genuine belief and fear in France decline, and some because of political necessity. For

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[35] Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945', p.305.
[36] E.g. Aron, *France Steadfast and Changing, The Fourth to the Fifth Republic*.
[37] Ibid., p.332.

the former, the country had lost power and influence but this would only be temporary.[38] For the latter, they believed that their domestic support the restoration of national cohesion relied on this continued rhetoric.[39] Despite the loss of means, "each political faction, each school of thought, [sought] to satisfy to some extent French nationalism and [its] aspiration to *grandeur*."[40] Whatever were the motivations, the period between the end of the Second World War and de Gaulle's second return to power in 1958 therefore corresponded to one of amnesia in which the reconstitution of the nation's myth and its exceptionalism were used in the wide political spectrum.[41] How would the emergence of European political unity impact this long-standing national exceptionalist tradition?

2. The Emergence of European Political Unity

The general idea of a unity between European states goes as far back as the Middle Ages, in France as in the rest of Europe.[42] However, the precise intellectual construct of a European political project began later, in the eighteenth century. Elisabeth du Réau provides a thorough analysis of the diversified and divided intellectual and political history of 'Europe,' emerging and developing across the continent, and based on a wide range of factors: cultural, political, social, and economic. In France, individuals pushing forward European unity ranged from the duke de Sully in the seventeenth century, Rousseau during the Enlightenment, and Saint-Simon and Victor Hugo in the

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[38] Pierre Melandri and Maurice Vaïsse, 'De la prise de conscience de l'impuissance à la quête de l'influence', in René Girault and Robert Frank, eds., *La Puissance Française en Question! 1945-1949* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998).
[39] Girault, *Etre Historien des Relations Internationales*; and Bossuat, 'Les "Europe" des français au long du XXème siècle'.
[40] Aron, *France Steadfast and Changing, the Fourth to the Fifth Republic*, p.150.
[41] After leading a part of the French Resistance during the Second World War (from London and Brazzaville) and being head of the Provisional Government of the French Republic between 1944 and 1946; Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945', p.305.
[42] Justine Lacroix, *La pensée française à l'épreuve de l'Europe* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2008).

nineteenth century.[43] This intellectual and political tradition formed the cultural *arrière plan* for French political leaders. [44] Seen primordially as a "Christian Union," a European entity became also increasingly a source of hope for a *pax economica* through the Enlightenment, and political stability through the nineteenth century Congress of Europe.[45]

The history of support for European unity experienced great fluctuations. It declined during the nineteenth century with the rise of nationalism across Europe; and was revived later in the same century by individuals including lawyers and political scientists, such as Paul d'Estournelles de Constant and Louise Weiss, driven such motives as pacifism, religion, free-trade, and unity in colonial enterprise. The trauma of 1914 reinvigorated even more the widespread desire for unity and collective security. The interwar period corresponded to one of great intellectual works and support for European unity, including Aristide Briand. Characterised by multiple objectives and incentives, the European project nonetheless synthesised a common strong desire to institutionalise political pressures to transcend the Franco-German conflict and war in general. Crucially, it is at this time that the idea of Europe became entangled with universalist concepts: Europe had a unique role to play in the emerging international system of states.[46] However, the rise of nationalism, attachment to colonies, and the Russian revolution, would put a temporary end to any European political project

After the Second World War, the idea of European unity re-emerged. It was pushed forward by intellectual, political, and religious figures. This time, international

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[43] du Réau, *La Construction Européenne au XXème siècle: Fondements, Enjeux et Défis.*
[44] Girault, *Etre Historien des Relations Internationales.*
[45] Dulphy and Manigand, *La France au risque de l'Europe*, p.12.
[46] Ibid.

circumstances—including the First and Second World Wars, the decolonisation process, and the rise of two new superpowers—reinvigorated the felt need to prevent the decline of the continent, economically and politically, and from a civilizational perspective.[47] In France in particular, the belief in Europe's exceptional destiny was widely spread amongst the political elite, and reflected in the discourse of political figures, from the most nationalist, including de Gaulle, to the most supranationalist ones, including Monnet. De Gaulle, as Monnet, tended to speak of Europe as the centre of change and progress. [48] As the General expressed,

"I have always felt what the nations of Europe share in common. All being of the same white race, same Christian origin, of same lifestyle, linked to each other since forever by numerous relations of thought, art, science, politics, trade, it is conform to their nature that they come to form a whole, having in the centre of the world 'her' character and organisations,"[49]

And as Monnet declared,

"The nations of Europe by acting together can make a decisive contribution [to world growth and development] […] it [the cooperation between Europe and the United States] is the beginning on the road to the more orderly world we must have if we are to escape destruction."[50]

Moreover,

"Unity in Europe does not create a new kind of great power; it is a method for introducing change in Europe and consequently in the world […] mak[ing] these nations [in the rest of the world] also aware of their responsibilities […] to the rest of the world […] this [the new institutional process introduced through European unity] is the process of civilization itself."[51]

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[47] Ibid.
[48] Charles de Gaulle, *DM* (Paris: Plon, 1970); Pierre Maillard, *De Gaulle et le Problème Allemand: Les leçons d'un grand dessein* (Paris: François Xavier de Guibert, 2001); Jean Monnet, *Mémoires* (Paris: Libraire Arthème Fayard, 1976); and Jean Monnet, 'A Ferment of Change', in Brent F. Nelsen and Alexander Stubb, eds., *The European Union: Readings on the Theory and Practice of European Integration* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
[49] Jean-Claude Casanova, 'Le rêve des sage et l'ambition des puissants: de Gaulle et l'Europe', *Commentaire* vol.13, no.51, 1990, pp. 510-1.
[50] Monnet, 'A Ferment of Change', pp. 24-6.
[51] Ibid., p.25-6.

However, individuals in the different currents also expressed important national motivations for France's commitment to the European project: to promote a Christian Europe, contain communism, and most crucially, to maintain France's lost *grandeur* by countering decolonisation, and promoting prosperity and national security.[52] There was a general support for the idea that Europe represented a tool for this : "the various 'nationalist' positions adopted in the 1950s [...] confirmed the existence of a common core of beliefs which transcended the differences between nationalisms of Right and Left, namely the conviction that France was an exemplary nation with a world role."[53] In short, political leaders continued their perception and diffusion the image of France as holding a unique position, to be active in world affairs. Europe provided a vehicle to spread its universal message.

Nonetheless, French political leaders were divided as how to combine French sovereignty and the project of European unity. The European integration process of the post-Second World War period marked a schism within the French exceptionalist tradition between two main distinct strands.

3. The Two Faces of French Exceptionalism

French Militant Exceptionalism

Militant exceptionalists' aspiration to restore France's economy and political stability was driven by the goal to develop the country's resources commensurate with its

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[52] du Réau, *La Construction Européenne au XXème siècle: Fondements, Enjeux et Défis.*
[53] Jenkins and Copsey, 'Nation, Nationalism and National Identity', p.109.

traditional global "exceptional policy."[54] Additionally, if de Gaulle was not the sole one to hold this vision, he was one of its most ardent defenders.

According to this strand of thinking, France was unique due to its historical experience but also due to its own nature and genius.

> "Predestined to an imminent and exceptional destiny, my instinct tells me that Providence has created 'her '[France] for successes or exemplary traumas [...] but the positive side of my spirit convinces me that France is only really 'herself' at the 'first rank' [...] to me, France cannot be France without *grandeur*."[55]

Understanding the origins of French *grandeur* requires consideration of the influence of his family and some of his contemporaries.[56] His most influential figures included his father, Henri de Gaulle, from whom he inherited a fervent love of France. Furthermore, his family embodied the values of the traditional right of the end of nineteenth century France: attachment to the monarchy, Catholicism, and patriotism. His nationalism reflected the writings of authors including Charles Maurras, Charles Péguy, and Maurice Barrès, whom he read thoroughly during his adolescence: an epic vision of France, seen as eternal despite changing circumstances.

Moreover, the General's vision of France placed the country as superior within the international system of states.[57] "France is only really 'herself' at the top rank [...] our country [...] must, to prevent it from dying, aim high and stand straight." For its nature gave it a position of leadership with a unique global mission:

> "France must fulfil 'her' mission of global nation. We are everywhere in the world in the sense that, at no point in time, all men do not look towards us and wonders what

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[54] Aron, *France Steadfast and Changing, the Fourth to the Fifth Republic*, p.148.
[55] de Gaulle, *DM*, p.1.
[56] Gallo, *De Gaulle* ; and Lacouture, *De Gaulle*.
[57] E.g. Hazareesingh, *Political traditions in Modern France*.

France says. It is a great responsibility to be France, human power par excellence [...] Even if sometimes it [the world] pretends the opposite, to see us play the role which we deserve, because it feels that it will be in the advantage of all men [...] the road is rough. But how beautiful it is! The objective is difficult. But how great it is!"[58]

This position of superiority in the international system of states was to remain constant despite changing national and international circumstances: "For this wonderful country which, despite past difficulties and the disorder of 'her' internal political affairs, finds the means to have in 'her' hand all the elements of an extraordinary renewal."[59] De Gaulle's exceptionalism was thus a militant and adversarial one, attempting to maintain what he perceived to be, as other French political figures, France's "natural" international rank.

In this vein, de Gaulle showed great ambivalence towards the European project. He initially perceived European integration with great suspicion. Despite his support for Europe as the "mother of all civilisation" and his claimed belief in the possibility of the eventual development of a European entity," France was to remain eternally "superior."[60]

De Gaulle's initial interest in European integration was to restructure the post-war order in which the country would be able to maintain its status in Europe, and most particularly, relatively to Germany. In this he pushed for German control. The General therefore rejected the earlier project of European unification on the basis that they promoted the rearmament of Germany through the loss of French military power, and therefore undermined France's independence in the Western world, most crucially vis-

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[58] de Gaulle, Press Conference, 13 June 1958, *DM*, p.45
[59] Ibid.
[60] de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerres* ; Aron, 'Le grand dessein du Général', *Commentaire*, vol.6, no. 23, 1983, p.486 ; Max Gallo, *De Gaulle*, (Paris: Editions Robert Laffont, 1998) ; and Casanova, 'Le rêve des sage et l'ambition des puissants: de Gaulle et l'Europe', p. 510-1.

à-vis the United States.[61] Moreover, a Community relying on supranational organs led by statesmen acting by majority vote or civil servants representing the common interest rather than national positions, would not be possible for areas of great political relevance including diplomatic, military powers, and economic issues. Instead, the General promoted an intergovernmental Europe but one in which the "consistency, powers, solid structures" would rely on nation-states.[62] However, when he spoke of Europe, he meant a French Europe:

> "What is the purpose of Europe? It should be to allow us to escape the domination of the Americans and the Russians. The six of us ought to be able to do just as well as either of the superpowers [...] Europe is a means for France to regain the stature she has lacked since Waterloo, as the first among the world's nations."[63]

As a result, most crucially, he called for holding onto to France's empire and refusing that the country be subsumed in the Atlantic Alliance under the leadership of the United States. Immediately after the Second World War, he called for a return to alliances with the United Kingdom and the United States, with whom "they [would] act together in the future settlements [...] [and have] enough power so that nothing could be done which they had not themselves accepted or decided," and a continued global role with *all* nations.[64] For him, France had to remain independent and although part of the Atlantic Alliance and "European civilization," maintain dialogue with all nations, promote their independence, and thus retain what he saw as France's historical "universal nationalism," as the champion of sovereignty, stability, and peace in the world. In this, he revealed the tensions between his classic vision of politics and his

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[61] This including the rejection of the EDC proposal , the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), and the Rome Treaty. Lacouture, *De Gaulle La Politique (1944-1959).*
[62] Gallo, *Le premier des français (1946-62), De Gaulle*, p.129; and Aron, *France Steadfast and Changing: The Fourth to the Fifth Republic.*
[63] Balm and Woll, 'France: Between Integration and National Sovereignty', p.98.
[64] Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945', p.336.

capacity to adapt to changing international circumstances.[65] France did not have the means to recover this status by itself, and yet his acceptance of this reality was imbued with the vision that France would regain its place at the centre of Europe and the world. His mystical vision of the French nation-state stopped him from moving away from a French-centred viewpoint of the international system of states.

French Supranational Exceptionalism

If militant exceptionalists focused on the renewal of French national *grandeur*, many other individuals and groups prescribed to the move towards a supranational Europe. I focus instead on one individual as a test case for this thesis. In this I want to stress both his French *exceptionalism* and *French* exceptionalism. Firstly, if I focus on Monnet for the basis of my argument, I recognize that his support for European integration itself varied over time. His own support for supranationalism altered, and he himself realised the importance of nation-states as the basis of European integration.[66] Moreover, he was not the only one in support of European supranationalism promoting the move beyond national rivalries and conflicts, and to restore European stability and prosperity.[67] The European movement emerged mostly out of high-ranking engineering, business, academic, civil servant, and journalistic spheres in Europe in general and France in particular. In the French political arena, this covered the political spectrum from individuals such as Paul Reynaud on the right, Maurice Faure representing radical grouping, Schuman as part of the Popular Republican Movement,

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[65] Aron, 'Le général de Gaulle', *Commentaire*, vol.22, no. 88, 1999, p.867; and Pierre Hassner 'De Gaulle et les deux grands', *Commentaire*, vol.13, no.51, 1990.
[66] Monnet criticized intergovernmental integration as promoted by certain European leaders including de Gaulle. On this question, see: Jean Monnet, *Mémoires* (Paris: Libraire Arthème Fayard, 1976).
[67] Monnet, 'A Ferment of Change'.

and Guy Mollet on the Left.[68] Yet, in the mainstream literature, scholars describe Monnet, as the "leader" of this movement, driven by supranationalist objectives above French national interest.[69] As a result, he represents a hard case for my argument.

Secondly, Monnet's memoirs and secondary accounts expose how he was persistently guided by the quest for policy efficiency, as well as compromise and trust between individuals 'general interest of mankind'.[70] Monnet describes himself as a man whose life ambition was to serve the principles of humanism, common action, organisation, and the uniting of men above nation-states for the purpose of freedom, peace, and prosperity.[71] This he saw as not a simple "ideal" but also as a necessity and inevitability. According to Monnet, concepts of "national rank," "glory," and "traditional power" were considered not only secondary but also dangerous.[72] Son of a cognac producer, he engaged himself in various activities, travelling all over the world including Africa, China, as well as the United States and the United Kingdom, which he particularly admired.[73] Furthermore, Monnet vehemently expressed his opposition to war, which he considered as abhorrent and irrational.[74] He had first-hand experience of the First World War and the birth of League of Nations, the Second World War and the evolution of the Alliance's cooperation and war effort, the National Liberation Committee in Algiers, the Alliance's post-Second World War efforts and the creation of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilition Administration, the economic "modernisation" of France, and finally the creation and development of the European Economic Community (EEC).[75] Additionally, Monnet continuously pushed for further

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[68] Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La France de la quatrième république (1944-1958)*.
[69] E.g. Balm and Woll, 'France: Between Integration and National Sovereignty', Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945', and Dulphy and Manigand, *La France au risque de l'Europe*.
[70] Ibid; Roussel, *Jean Monnet*.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945'.
[73] Eric Roussel, *Jean Monnet* (Paris: Librarire Arthème Fayard, 1996); and François Duchêne, *Jean Monnet: The First Statesman of Interdependence* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994).
[74] Monnet, *Mémoires* .
[75] Monnet, *Mémoires*.

European integration throughout his career, and particularly after the Second World War. He played a decisive role in the elaboration of the Schuman Plan for the ESCS, as well as the, aborted, Pleven Plan for the EDC, the Rome Treaty, and, later, as President of the Action Committee for a United States of Europe, had promoted the United Kingdom's membership, Atlantic relations, and the political development of the EEC.

Monnet's beliefs and actions were rooted in the observation of a changing world in which the framework of old sovereign nation-states no longer provided the necessary foundations for solving contemporary challenges and achieving common interest. He was convinced that ultimately, nation-states would disappear and that therefore, the political uniting of Europe represented a step towards the organisational form of the future. However, if concepts including "glory" were considered "outdated," they were not completely excluded. Through his rhetoric and actions, Monnet proved to have been highly influenced by the French exceptionalist tradition, and he himself participated in legitimising it.

Firstly, Monnet, and his political partners, saw no contradiction between the relinquishing of sovereignty and equality that he was proposing and France's "greatness."[76] What he believed was that the country could no longer achieve this by itself, and transposed the traditional national "greatness" to the level of Europe. The country was to retain its "prestige, independence and progress"[77] in world politics within a great Western civilization, including the United Kingdom and the United States. He did not place France above all other nations, as de Gaulle did. He indeed

[76] Robert Marjolin, 'What Type of Europe?', in Douglas Brinckley and Clifford Hackett, eds., *Jean Monnet: The Path to European Unity* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1991).
[77] Monnet, *Mémoires*, p.624.

spoke of the greatness of all peoples of the world.[78] Nevertheless, he still spoke in terms of France as a power of "first order." Readings of Monnet's memoires reveal how he believed that through this process, France would be modern and recover 'her' rank again, next to other "great" and "modern"[79] Western nations.[80] His rhetoric and actions legitimised France as pushing the unity of the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Benelux countries, to promote its own as well as European recovery and *global rayonnement*. As he himself declared "Europe, if not France, would be a third Great Power, able to talk on an equal basis with the two giants. The old Continent, united in one state, would not be outclassed by any continent-state."[81]

He spoke and acted as if France, in Europe, and the United States would act on an equal footing in a united civilization progressing towards building a more orderly world. He did not believe this symbolised domination—territorial "imperialis[m]" and through this trigger a great power politics"—but rather the leadership towards responsible and "efficient" change: "Alone they [the United States] will not develop the political vision of which the world stands in need. I think that is our [Western Europe] task."[82] In the early Cold War years, this notably included the nuclear domain, with Europe "opening the way to a general control on the world scale" as he saw it "as the only region of the world capable of putting [it]self at the level of the other global power [the United States and the Soviet Union]"—, and establishing independent common supranational institutions—under the form of the Rome Treaty notably—as models for the rest of the world, to overcome traditional national feuds, economic downturn, and respond to

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[78] Roussel, *Jean Monnet*.
[79] Ibid., p.635.
[80] E.g. Ibid.
[81] Aron, *France Steadfast and Changing, The Fourth to the Fifth Republic*, p.150.
[82] Duchêne, *Jean Monnet: The First Statesman of Interdependence*, p.228; and Monnet, 'A Ferment of Change', p.26.

human needs around the globe.[83] The aim was to associate other states in the world to this independent European model of prosperity and peace, in particular the broader West and Africa.[84]

Secondly, if Monnet himself claimed not to be a "nationalist," readings of his memoirs and speeches also indicate Monnet's passionate devotion to his country. Despite being seen at the time as an American stage man, his modernisation plan was designed to stop "'her' [France's] dramatic late stance on the modern world," and establish the basis for an independent and powerful France.[85] Monnet indeed expressed himself in such a way to France's political class and public, as a means to obtain political support. He was indeed aware that many in his country did not believe him to have the interest of France at heart.[86] However, he also expressed those feelings in his memoirs and to close friends: "France [could and should not be reduced] to the rank of second order 'power'."[87] Monnet echoed a feeling which was widely shared amongst the political class at the time, that France held a "unique" place in the world, despite its recent traumatic experiences.[88] According to him, France had historical capacities and a global role to play. [89] But, if for de Gaulle, this was expressed as linked to France's "eternal" nature, for Monnet, it was linked to the country's material potential. Monnet recognised France's loss of economic power and socio-political stability as a result of the Second World War. Yet, he believed this was merely temporary for France had unique social and political particularities: it had extraordinary potential, which Monnet expressed as

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[83] Monnet, *Mémoires*, pp.617-9: Monnet, 'A Ferment of Change'.
[84] E.g.
[85] Irwin Wall, 'Jean Monnet, the United States and the French Economic Plan', in Douglas Brinckley and Clifford Hackett, eds., *Jean Monnet: The Path to European Unity* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1991).
[86] Roussel, *Jean Monnet*.
[87] Monnet, *Mémoires*, p.343.
[88] E.g. Soutou, 'France and the Cold War (1944-63).
[89] Monnet, *Mémoires*; Roussel, *Jean Monnet*.

"[post-Second World War social, economic, and demographic] energy."[90] He himself played a decisive role in France's post-war Modernization and Equipment Plan, in which he pushed for a "modern" France through enhanced economic growth, investment, productivity, and international competition.

Thirdly, Monnet was also a pragmatic, acknowledging the limits of his supranationalist vision throughout his career. As a result, he saw himself continuously negotiating with national demands and even declaring nation-states as the fundamental force for political and economic development.[91] After the failure to integrate Britain, "great power of the old world,"[92] in the European integration process, Monnet saw the "cornerstone" of Europe, as essentially based on a Franco-German *rapprochement*.[93] In this, he foresaw that European unity would not only soften national rivalries but would also help to tied West Germany to the rest of Europe, thus calming French fears. He knew he needed to reconcile dominant and disparate motivations: that of the French political leaders' to regain national prosperity and international status, particularly vis-à-vis the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) who itself was looking for political rehabilitation.[94] When French relations with the new Germany became tense again in the late 1940s, Monnet was critical in seeking new solutions to reconcile those pressures, attempting to push for integration beginning in one economic sector, and then expand the jurisdiction of new institutions in new sectors. Moreover, after the beginning of the Korean War, which he saw as a threat to European unity Monnet pushed forward—also with pressure from the United States for Europe, including West Germany, to rearm—the scheme to organise Europe's defence in order to forestall the rearmament of Germany

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[90] Monnet, *Mémoires*, p.338.
[91] Jean-François Poncet, 'Grands témoins', in Serge Berstein and Jean-François Sirinelli, dirs., Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, participant, *Les années Giscard: Valéry Giscard d'Estaing et l'Europe (1974-81)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2004).
[92] Monnet, *Mémoires*.
[93] Wall, 'Jean Monnet, the United States and the French Economic Plan'.
[94] Monnet, *Mémoires*.

as a nation-state. As he declared, the Pleven Plan would solve the problem of West German rearmament by "the same methods and in the same spirit as the ECSC [...] it proposes the creation, for common defence, of a European Army under the authority of the political institutions of a united Europe."[95] In this, Monnet pushed forward the institutionalisation of a relationship which has remained until this day the founding block of European unity, the Franco-German base, and positioned France as a crucial player—along with other "great nations" of the Western world, West Germany and the United Kingdom—to become the core of European unity.

Monnet, he gave the country a leading role in the founding years of the European integration process, establishing France as a "unique" player in the history of European integration: in the Council of Europe (1949), Schuman Place for the ECSC (1950), the Pleven Plan for the European Army (1950) and the revival of the European idea after the EDC crisis, leading to the Treaty establishing the Common Market and Euratom. The nation remained important but new realities had to make everyone accept new forms of economic and political organisations.[96] In this, he echoed Robert Schuman declaration that, "the European Community [is] the means to build a wider entity in which France [will] play 'her' [traditionally global] role, but in a different way."[97] Crucially, in his actions, he therefore promoted the desirability and inevitability of leadership of France in Europe, and through this, conferred legitimacy to the notion of French exceptionalism.

In short, it was a different form of political uniqueness which Monnet and the supranationalists proposed for France, and the rest of European states: a European

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[95] Wall, 'Jean Monnet, the United States and the French Economic Plan', p.108.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Dulphy and Manigand, *La France au risque de l'Europe*.

exceptionalism, with France holding a unique place within it. It remained to be seen how a strongly integrated Europe could, in practice, serve an exceptional France.

4. Summary and Significance

Portraying the world with France in a central and superior position has been one fundamental feature of the majority of French political leaders since the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that the specific content of what it entailed has varied significantly, and that it has been defined and used for different argumentative purposes by different political actors, there has been a fundamental common language underlying a way of thinking and acting about France in international society. Through this, it was diffused across time and space, and thereby reverberating beyond the domain of political leadership.

Moreover, within this context, I argue that the tradition of French exceptionalism needs to be analysed in parallel to a wider analysis of political arguments about European political development, in order to make sense of French political commitment, and particularly ambiguous, to European integration after the Second World War. In light of this analysis, the French exceptionalism tradition can be divided into two main strands in the post-war European context: militant and supranational French exceptionalism, both legitimising European integration and French exceptionalism within it.

Militant exceptionalism, as incarnated by de Gaulle, was therefore one expression of a long-term historical tradition. The General inherited and adapted this long-term

historical tradition in the French political life of the post-Second World War to his own conception of eternal French *grandeur*, expressed within, through, and independently of Europe. Additionally, supranational exceptionalism was a set of arguments that defined France's exceptionalism in a particular way. I argue that, as a result, supranational exceptionalism, up to 1958, conferred legitimacy on French exceptionalism even if it claimed to promote the move beyond nation-states and past concepts of glory and prestige. In the rhetoric and action of its main political figure, Monnet, it remained a supporter of the desirability and inevitability of France's exceptionalism.

Some miserables, who have never done anything, reproached me some changes. But the world in which I was to act hasn't changed, has it? As if a continuous policy was one always identical! They probably imagine that living consists in imitating one's childhood, and wanting potted jams above anything else!
Charles de Gaulle[1]

Chapter III

Grandeur Negotiated (1958-69)

The previous chapter offered a description of the historical evolution of French exceptionalism within the construction of French nationalism, and its international political application, up to 1958. I analysed the conceptual division of this tradition into two main strands in the political context of post-war Europe, as well as the actual political practice of one of them, supranational exceptionalism, as promoted by Monnet. A crucial question seems to be the actual political application of the second strand, militant exceptionalism, by its most fervent supporter, de Gaulle. I therefore now turn to the period between 1958 and 1969, that of the General's mandate as first President of the 5th Republic. Scholars conventionally depict de Gaulle's foreign policy as one of inflexible proclamation of French *grandeur*, rejecting any form of international dependence, including European integration.[2] This chapter seeks to contend this portrayal.

I first discuss de Gaulle's accession to power. I focus on the factors which enabled him to establish the 5th Republic, with a presidential system giving him the authority to proclaim and institutionalize his conception of the national interest centred on the notion of French *grandeur*. I then turn to analyse his evolving European strategy in the

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[1] Maillard, *De Gaulle et le Problème Allemand: Les leçons d'un grand dessein*, p.240.
[2] E.g. Balm and Woll, 'France: Between Integration and National Sovereignty' ; and Dulphy and Manigand, *La France au risque de l'Europe*; and Deubner, 'France, Contradictions and Imbalances'.

face of domestic and international constraints.[3] De Gaulle did remain attached to France's security and global status. Most importantly, he did so through his attachment to French independent military means, including, most crucially, an independent *force de frappe*, and global activism with, for example, France's links to African states.[4] However, after having vehemently proclaimed a militant form of French exceptionalism until 1958, once in power, de Gaulle revealed a great capacity to adapt, and most crucially, with regards to European integration. Some scholars do recognize this evolution.[5] I seek to further explore such contention through the prism of five core events in de Gaulle's European policy. The principal proposition of this chapter is that de Gaulle, through "negotiated *grandeur*", gradually accepted Europe, and the EC in particular, as the main framework of France's foreign policy. If this was motivated by nationalist ends, his pragmatism nonetheless led him to conciliate his own original version of militant exceptionalism. Accepting the practice of deeper and wider European integration as the main expression of French exceptionalism led him to legitimise the European focus of French supranational exceptionalism.

1. Proclaiming the Doctrine

The Failures of the 4th Republic

De Gaulle showed great determination in his accession to power. During his *marche du désert* (1946-58), de Gaulle had the support of various groupings and individuals, including Couve de Murville and Antoine Pinay who later worked under his

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[3] For a discussion on de Gaulle's "changing idea of Europe," see: Jeffrey Vanke, 'Charles de Gaulle's Uncertain Ideas of Europe', Desmond Dinan, ed., *Origins and Evolution of the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[4] France retained an independent force de frappe, which for de Gaulle was a core foundation for France to remain independent within the Atlantic Alliance and Europe. Moreover, France retained crucial ties with outer-European nation-states, including crucially in Africa and the Middle East. Lacouture, *Le souverein (1959-1970), De Gaulle*.
[5] E..g. Maurice Vaïsse, *La Puissance ou Influence? La France dans le monde depuis 1958* (Paris: Libraire Arthème Fayard, 2009).

presidency. However, this was never enough to bring him back to power and establish a regime which he intended to enforce. De Gaulle was too nationalistic for many in the French population and political class. Attached to France's traditional global role, he openly accused the regime of failing France with its unstable parliamentary system incapable of maintaining France's rank at such a crucial time in history. Moreover, the supranationalists, for example, including Monnet and François Mitterrand, feared his rejection of the European project.[6]

However, the 4th Republic proved to be perceived as too weak. The Algerian decolonization crisis triggered the General's return to power. As Aron argued, "it was public dissatisfaction with France's status at a time of considerable prosperity that killed the 4th Republic."[7] The perception of the 4th republic as a weak and incoherent regime was shared by a majority of the political élite and public opinion. In this, de Gaulle provided an alternative. Moreover, the army, having just lost Indochina, and the million or so settlers of European origins, the *pieds noirs*, owning land and industries in Algeria, refused for the French regime to "abandon" Metropolitan France's largest trading partner and only colony to be under direct jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry, and therefore an integral part of France.[8] Algeria had become the symbol of France's international status.

De Gaulle incarnated this symbol. He promised to keep Algeria French if he were to be brought back to power. His determination to restore France's political and social cohesion, as well as its global status, were for a part of the population and especially the military elite and political class a credible alternative to the 4th Republic. After the

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[6] Lacouture, *De Gaulle*.
[7] Hoffmann, Essais sur la France: Déclin ou Renouveau?, p.197.
[8] Andrew Shennan, *De Gaulle* (London: Longman, 1993).

destruction of the Sakhiet village, Tunisia, by French planes fighting the National Liberation Front (*FLN*), which caused an international outcry and domestic upheavals in mainland France and Algeria, de Gaulle came to symbolise the last resort for the French military commanders to keep "French Algeria." With the support of some political figures, including René Coty and Guy Mollet, some members of the military bureaucracy, including General Massu, the *pieds noirs*, and the French army in Algeria, de Gaulle, on 1 June 1958, was granted ***les pleins pouvoirs*** for six months as well as the authority to draw up a new Constitution.[9] De Gaulle organised a referendum to vote on the new Constitution within months of his arrival to power, building up a domestic consensus based on his ideal of French exceptionalism, *grandeur*.

"*La Grandeur*"

I analysed in chapter II, how de Gaulle himself inherited a long-standing tradition and adapted it to his own fundamental belief French *grandeur*. Yet, his attachment to this conception of France was also based on reasoned thinking. He thought of the discourse about *grandeur* as a political tool indispensable to "revive in a nation which was for a very long time a great power the sense of being master of its own destiny as far as possible. It reflect[ed] the need to restore the self-respect which the nation [had] lost during its long ordeal."[10]

In this vision, de Gaulle saw himself as a heroic leader, a saviour of France. From an early age, all his decisions and efforts were geared towards this goal:[11] "Adolescent, what became of France [...] interested me above everything else [...] I did not doubt

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[9] Ibid.
[10] Hoffmann, 'De Gaulle, Europe and the Atlantic Alliance' *International Organization*, vol.18, no.1, 1964, pp.2-3.
[11] Gallo, *De Gaulle*; and Lacouture, *De Gaulle*.

that [...] one day [...] I would have this opportunity."[12] Moreover, he identified completely with France and saw himself as being its voice: "what there is in me of affective imagines France naturally as the princess of fairytales or the Madonna on wall frescoes, destined to an imminent and exceptional destiny.'[13] Moreover, "I am as you know the supreme responsible figure. I am the one who holds the destiny of the country [...] my dear old country, here we are together, once again facing a very difficult task."[14] This would take time and might not be strictly followed by his successors. Therefore de Gaulle was determined to establish his very personal vision of France's exceptionalism, *grandeur*, and to institutionalise it for his future successors. To achieve this, de Gaulle undertook internal and external changes from which he believed, when it was ready, France could start its ascension again.[15]

2. Shaping the Doctrine

The 5th Republic

According to De Gaulle, a legitimate regime, one which preserved and promoted French *grandeur* in the face of internal and external threats, relied first and foremost on the nation. Legitimate institutions were indispensable for a genuine support of national policy. However, de Gaulle also rejected parliamentarism as the primordial basis of political authority.[16]

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[12] Lacouture, *Le rebelle (1890-1944), De Gaulle*, p.32.
[13] de Gaulle, *L'appel (1940-1942), Mémoires de guerres*, p.1.
[14] de Gaulle, Television Speech, 29 January 1960, *DM*, p.212.
[15] E.g. Hoffmann, *Essais sur la France: Déclin ou Renouveau?*; and Lacouture, *Le souverein (1944-1959), De Gaulle*.
[16] E.g.

'For twelve years, the party regime, floating on a population deeply divided, in the middle of a terribly dangerous universe, revealed itself incapable of assuming the conduct of political affairs... only representing fractions, those governments did not represent the general interest... there is not one Frenchman who doesn't know that our future is void to a deadlock if France doesn't have to guide her, a State which is capable of doing so. It is the condition for everything... I have the task, with my government, to propose to the population new institutions, for that there can be in the Republic, power strong, stable and efficient enough to answer to her destiny.'[17]

"His essential obsession was not to combat the Republic but to remedy its congenital weakness by 'equipping the state within institutions designed to restore [...] the stability and continuity of which it ha[d] been deprived for 169 years."[18] As a result, the new Constitution was a hybrid of a Presidential and Parliamentary system in which there was a dual executive between the president and prime minister.

Once in power, de Gaulle himself, to begin with, would incarnate the national interest. He represented "something primordial, permanent, and necessary."[19] Here, the General combined his constitutional ideology and reading of history with a particular belief in his own personal destiny, saviour of the nation, as analysed above. De Gaulle believed he was "a man who belong[ed] to nobody and everybody."[20] The crucial link was between him and the people, the "masses and their guide."[21] He did not feel he was re-creating collective consciousness or being dictatorial, but that he was merely proclaiming the true nature of the country. "Convince[d] of expressing the deep sentiment of the country, I have supported for our institutions a new system [...] allowing the state to be efficient, authoritarian, continuous when facing political difficulties."[22] This would provide France with the necessary leadership to initiate and define policy, and promote the common good, above particular interests.[23] If the people

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[17] Gallo, *De Gaulle*; de Gaulle, Press Conference, 13th June 1958, *DM*, p.45.
[18] Nora, 'Gaullists and Communists', p.232.
[19] Hoffmann, *Essais sur la France: Déclin ou Renouveau?*, p.194.
[20] de Gaulle, Press Conference, 19th May 1958, *DM*,, p.37.
[21] Hoffmann, *Essais sur la France: Déclin ou Renouveau?*, p.195.
[22] de Gaulle, Speech, 1 November 1946, *DM*, p.32.
[23] Hoffmann and Hoffmann, *De Gaulle Artiste de la Politique*.

themselves could not always see it, he could; and therefore, he believed that if the French people were willing to allow him, he would bring the common good to the perception of all, embodying the general will of his people and maybe even the European continent and the world.[24] In Jean Lacouture's words, de Gaulle was: "part legislator, part Roman dictator, part prince."[25]

De Gaulle and his followers enforced a stronger and stabilized executive in order to restore French power in the world. Parliamentary government under the Third and Fourth republics had seen the legislative dominating the executive which had been unable, in the eyes of Gaullists, to provide effective leadership due to the domination of private interests and the absence of stable majorities among the divided parties. Because these divisions continued, the only way to ensure executive stability and power was to make the executive less dependent on changing parliamentary majorities and to endow it with enlarged competence including in the foreign policy domain. The president's primacy was ensured through formal and informal networks. In terms of formal control, firstly, this came through the limitation of policy making power almost entirely into the hands of the President, the Prime Minister, and their cabinets. Secondly, in this, the President's control of decision-making was reinforced through various channels including, the power appoint high administrative office, including the Prime Minister, a strongly hierarchical structure within the diplomatic body, the expansion of his role in negotiating treaties and international agreements, and the president's had primacy in defence policy, "nuclear monarchy."[26] Moreover, when legislation or international agreements, passed by parliament or negotiated by the

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[24] Lacouture, *Le souverein (1959-1970), De Gaulle*, p.347.
[25] Ibid., p195.
[26] Vaïsse, *La Puissance ou Influence? La France dans le monde depuis 1958*, p.16. In refer here particularly to the General Secretary to the President, the Cabinet Director, the General Secretary to African Affairs, and the Head of Etat-major who had a regular contact with the General.

Government, appeared to the president as dangerous to the constitutional order or seriously threatening France's world position, he had the power to submit them for approval to the people by referendum. Finally, if the threat to French independence or the danger to the regular functioning of the institutions was perceived so great that these specified powers were not sufficient, the president could decide independently to take executive or legislative measures he alone considered necessary.[27]

When the proposal for a constitutional reform establishing the presidential election by direct majority voting was publicly accepted, in 1962, the president became the ultimate and official "guarant[or] [of] the national interest, the integrity of the territory, and the respect of Treaties.[28]

Informally, the General also often avoided contact with the Quai d'Orsay, the French foreign ministry, preferring surprise effects and personal affirmation. The interpretation of the organization of the state machine was such that de Gaulle was the only individual to maintain a general perspective of the entire foreign policy of the country.[29] Through these, the General ensured that his close advisors assisted him in the definition and application of his foreign policy vision.[30]

Foreign policy principles and the beginning of an enduring compromise

De Gaulle's view of the international system, in general, was very much the dominant one of the end of the nineteenth century: one founded on the importance of alliances, force, and the impermanent nature of ideologies and regimes.[31] It held at its core the

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[27] Shennan. *De Gaulle*.
[28] Vaïsse, *La Grandeur: Politique étrangère du Général de Gaulle, (1958-1969)*, p.16.
[29] This also included the vision of the state administration and the ultimate authority held in the hands of the President himself. Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Lacouture, *La Politique (1944-1959), De Gaulle*, p.623.

nation as supreme political value: "all human activity is ordered around the nation, supreme collectivity rooted in a territory, shaped by history, armed by the state, united by interest, animated by culture, led by the hero."[32] For this, states had to build up their own security relying on alliances, as temporary means to their own stability. Following this logic, NATO was an important alliance, ensuring France's, and Europe's, security and global prestige. But it was not to be the only alliance on which France, and Europe, would rely on in order to ensure their sustainable security. Both had to develop their own military powers. Conscious of power differences with two rising global powers, de Gaulle saw the promotion of a society of nation-states, playing a role adapted to their personality and will, as the only sustainable basis for equilibrium in the international system, and most importantly as a tool to secure France' international influence.

If de Gaulle proclaimed his support for national independence of all states, in this France was to remain "superior."[33] He was combating established hierarchies to put in place one which he deemed better: one guided by an ensemble of independent great powers, including France.[34] He did not expect "smaller" powers to count as much as "great" ones. De Gaulle's vision was that of a world in two layers of activity and power. The first layer was comprised of all states interacting in moderate international activity and equally entitled to act and to be free from outside activity. The second one was comprised of great powers. These were not just the United States and the Soviet Union, but China, perhaps Japan, and a "European Europe" led by France and possibly the United Kingdom and West Germany.[35]

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[32] Alfred Grosser, *Affaires extérieures: La politique de la France (1944-1989)* (Paris: Flammarion, 1989), p.155.
[33] E.g. Lacouture, *De Gaulle;* and Aron, 'Le grand dessein du Général'.
[34] Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945', p. 393.
[35] Aron. 'Le général de Gaulle'.

De Gaulle's nationalism was not simply one of passive admiration but, more crucially, one of strong activism: the need to learn from history, to respect the national culture, and to serve the nation. De Gaulle recognised that France was in the post-war period, a "middle power." The humiliating years of the interwar period and, most seriously, the experience of Second World, had eroded France's self-perception as global exceptional power. Yet, his continued rhetoric and policy of *grandeur* were to bring change, including most crucially, a leading, independent France.[36] *Grandeur* was therefore not a specific doctrine attached to a static vision, as he himself expressed, but, on the contrary, one of adaptation and an "art" of appearances to give France the appearance of a great nation-state. [37] Here, what was 'right' was not necessarily what was reachable: it was enough to move in that direction."[38] If de Gaulle promoted independence, it was not to isolate France but for it to regain pride and participate in global decision-making on its own terms, recognised by the other great players. In practice, de Gaulle was continuously attempting to convince others to follow him. He was inflexible, exploiting all possibilities of influence, and refusing engagements which could affect France's freedom of manoeuvre. Behind this rhetorical claim therefore lied the necessity to adapt to changing domestic and international conditions.

De Gaulle's 1962 decision to "let go of" Algeria—infringing on a promise which had brought him to power fours years earlier—was itself justified in the name of French *grandeur*. Until then, according to him, a symbol of France's exceptionalism had now become an impediment to it. Decolonisation was now widespread, and France, in recognition of universal human rights, could no longer afford to be seen by its

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[36] Lacouture, *La Politique (1944-1959), De Gaulle*; and Maurice Vaïsse, *La Puissance ou Influence? La France dans le monde depuis 1958* (Paris: Libraire Arthème Fayard, 2009).
[37] Hoffmann and Hoffmann, *De Gaulle Artiste de la Politique*; and de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerres*.
[38] Hoffmann and Hoffmann, *De Gaulle Artiste de la Politique*.

international counterparts as a power undermining on national rights. Letting go of a political and financial burden would allow France to be the champion of national causes and a source of global stability. Moreover, the costs of the oversupply of products imported to an overstretched metropolitan market, and the Algerian war which drained the French Treasury, were too high for a weakened France.[39] Finally, Gaullist foreign policy was also a key instrument in the President's domestic agenda: creating consensus and reaching out to political constituencies which were hostile to him. Granting Algeria its independence also permitted him to get the support of many on the Left, especially the French Communist Party. His optimistic claim of France's role in the world applied through the pursuit of an independent foreign policy satisfied both Atlanticists and Europeanists, as well as groups including the communists who welcomed de Gaulle's anti-American rhetoric and strong sovereignists refusing the recognition of national decline. As Brian Jenkins and Nigel Copsey argue, it was on this basis 'that, with the advent of the Fifth Republic, de Gaulle was able to construct a synthesis which neutralized many of the classic contradictions between Left and Right views of the nation'[40], creating a consensus based on a deep-rooted tradition of "exceptionalism."

The discourse remained the same, but the policies varied according to external and internal circumstances. This was illustrated in the Algerian compromise, and a similar pattern was sketched in his European policy. Once in power—now with two new super-powers, the threat of the Soviet Union, emerging nation-states, and the European integration begun—de Gaulle realized that the outward trappings of an internationally

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[39] Vanke, 'Charles de Gaulle's Uncertain Idea of Europe'.
[40] Jenkins and Copsey, 'Nation, Nationalism and National Identity', p.109.

recognized "great nation-state," required new foundations: decolonization, nuclear power, the Atlantic Alliance, but also European integration.[41]

3. An Era of Compromise

In this final section, I explore de Gaulle's continuous attempts to maintain the original practical implications of his conception of French exceptionalism in the face of constraints, and especially international ones. If de Gaulle had been unsupportive of any form of European integration before his arrival to power, once elected president, he came to accept the process and even push it forward, even if his initial ambiguity about the European project would remain. I analyse here five key moments in de Gaulle's presidency which illustrate his European pragmatism and legitimised French supranational exceptionalism behind a sustained rhetoric of militant exceptionalism.

The Rome Treaty

The establishment of a new Constitution in France gave de Gaulle, as president of the new republic, the authority to reject the Rome Treaty, signed a year before in 1957, and to come into force in January 1959.[42] Yet, de Gaulle accepted it mainly in the pursuit of French economic interests. This move was not simple political expediency—to answer the demands of pro-EEC Socialists and Christian Democrats who entered his government in June 1958—but also an illustration of the General's ability to adapt in order to realise his vision for France and Europe.[43] Under the influence of his foreign affairs minister, Maurice Couve de Murville, his financial minister, Antoine Pinay, and his financial advisor, Jacques Rueff, he accepted the Rome Treaty, and even played a

[41] Gallo, *La solitude du Combattant (1940-1946) and Le premier des français (1946-1962), De Gaulle*.
[42] Vanke, 'Charles de Gaulle's Uncertain Idea of Europe'.
[43] Ibid.

crucial role in pushing forward the completion of the Common Market —including the replacement of national policies of tariff barriers and agricultural prices by a common system of taxes and subsidies—by facilitating its implementation in France through the Rueff-Pinay economic reform agenda of 1958. This was for de Gaulle exclusively to push the necessary economic reforms for France to modernise its agricultural sector as well as to compensate for the opening of it domestic market to more competitive foreign industrial products, including that of West Germany.[44] Yet, he did not believe in the erosion of "old concerns" of nation-states—including prestige and security—by economic concerns.[45]As many have argued, and as de Gaulle's memoirs reveal, the economic implications of allowing and pushing for the Common Market to take effect were justified in terms of enabling the French nation-state to remain an independent and unique global entity.[46] The actions he followed were made under the condition that they would be accompanied by an agricultural policy and that its institutional framework would not go beyond the economic agenda:[47] Moreover, "de Gaulle [...] did favour various kinds of transnational exchanges], and he did not curtail cooperative policies among partners in the realm of economic and monetary affairs [...] so long as there was no risk of one nation being dominated by a bigger one."[48]

However, in doing this, de Gaulle legitimised the creation of an economic and political Europe. De Gaulle accepted, albeit for its prosperity, France's dependence on a wider economic entity. Crucially, his actions allowed a reinforcement of communitarian legislation with the transfer of sovereignty to the supranational level by supporting

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[44] Moravcsik 'De Gaulle between Grain and Grandeur: The economic Origins of French EC Policy, 1958-1970'; and Maurice Vaïsse, *La Grandeur: Politique étrangère du Général de Gaulle, (1958-1969)* (Paris: Fayard, 1998).
[45] Ibid.
[46] E.g. Moravcsik 'De Gaulle between Grain and Grandeur: The economic Origins of French EC Policy, 1958-1970'; Shennan, *De Gaulle*; and de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerres*.
[47] Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France. 60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943-2003)*; Vaïsse, *La Grandeur: Politique étrangère du Général de Gaulle, (1958-1969)*; and Alain Prate, *Les Batailles économiques du général de Gaulle* (Paris:Plon, 1978).
[48] Hoffmann, *Essais sur la France: Déclin ou Renouveau?*, p.284.

some transfer of power to Brussels through the creation of a European Fund for Agricultural Orientation and Guarantee.[49] De Gaulle began to accept, albeit with continuous uncertainty, the possibility of France modernising through Europe and thus to be exceptional in the world as part of Europe, and not just through Europe, as an independent state. This would be reinforced in further European political developments.

The Fouchet Plan

From the very beginning, de Gaulle considered the EEC was a threat to national sovereignty and an impediment to de Gaulle's support for a confederal Europe, independent from the United States. The economic foundations laid by the ECSC and Rome Treaty too narrow a scope for Europe to play the global role he envisioned it to play:

> "In the eyes of France, this economic cooperation is not sufficient. Western Europe – whether it concerns her actions vis-à-vis other populations, or her own defence, or her contribution to the development of regions who need it, or her duty of détente and international equilibrium – must constitute herself politically. In fact, if she did not manage to do this, the EC [European Community] itself would not be able to strengthen itself nor even survive in the long-term [...] in truth, we cannot insure the economic development of Europe without her political union."[50]

Through all his efforts, de Gaulle showed he believed in the necessity of building an independent political Europe containing West Germany, reducing the role of the existing EEC, and rebalancing Atlantic relations. In this, a NATO-dependent Europe was to be replaced by a "European Europe" led by France, countering the other member states', and supranationalists', tendencies to dependent on the United States.

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[49] Gérard Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France. 60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943-2003).*
[50] de Gaulle, Press conference, 15 May 1962, *DM*,, p. 418.

De Gaulle's project of political union, elaborated in 1961 by an intergovernmental commission headed by Christian Fouchet, a close advisor to de Gaulle, and supported by Konrad Adenauer, West German Chancellor, was initiated as early as 1958 and evolved until 1962. It consisted of foreign policy, defence, teaching, culture, and economic cooperation in parallel the institutions established by the EC Treaty.[51] The project proposed the establishment of a strictly intergovernmental basis for cooperation, with a leading council of heads of states, voting by unanimity, a coordinating European assembly drawn from national parliaments, and a political commission coordinated by national representatives to replace the existing commission and governing the new entity under the leadership of national civil servants.

Moreover, it was centred on France. The political commission was to be established in Paris. In parallel, de Gaulle rejected the possibility of the military development of the FRG. His policy was to support the continued ban on German nuclear arms. The European entity would rely therefore, entirely on French military forces, even if de Gaulle spoke of the eventual development of an independent and powerful European Europe.[52] According to the General, this role of leader had to be even stronger as long as other member states showed desire for supranationalism.[53]

However, after acrimonious discussions and the drafting of three proposals, de Gaulle's attempts to establish a confederal community failed with the other European members and the supranationalists seeing in his plan a desire to reject the United States, keep the United Kingdom out of a political union, stop any form of further integration, and impose a French hegemony upon the Community.

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[51] Lacouture, *Le souverein (1959-1970), De Gaulle*.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Loth. 'Pour une nouvelle lecture de la politique européenne du général de Gaulle', in Institut Charles de Gaulle, Actes des Journées internationales tenues à l'UNESCO, Paris 19-24 novembre 1990, *L'Europe, De Gaulle en son Siècle* (Paris: la Documentation française: Plon, 1992).

The Elysée Treaty

Despite this setback, de Gaulle continued to promote his grand design but now accepted a co-leadership with West Germany. Before his arrival to power, de Gaulle had changed his early post-war policy of "repressive dislocation and control of the left shore of the Rhine."

> "There is a solidarity between Germany and France. From this solidarity depends the security of both nations [...] all hope of uniting Europe in the political domain as well as the domain of defence and economics [...] the destiny of the whole of Europe from the Atlantic to the Ural."[54]

A *rapprochement* initiated under the 4th Republic, was transformed by a friendship between the General and Adenauer which began soon after his Presidency began (Colombey-les-deux-églises, France, September 1958). Together they reaffirmed and institutionalised the Franco-German union for the future of European cooperation: the Elysée Treaty of January 1963.[55]

De Gaulle saw the Treaty signed with West Germany as a direct replacement of the Fouchet Plan with this time, Germany as France's main partner in reinvigorating the push towards a European Europe:

> "The two countries have decided and have engaged themselves to be an integral part of Europe as we have established it from the Rome Treaty [...] it is true that by having a closer cooperation, Germany and France give an example which can be useful to the cooperation of everyone."[56]

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[54] de Gaulle, Press conference, 15 May 1962, *DM*, p. 422.
[55] Georges-Henri Soutou, 'Le général de Gaulle et le plan Fouchet', in Institut Charles de Gaulle, Actes des Journées internationales tenues à l'UNESCO, Paris 19-24 novembre 1990, *L'Europe, De Gaulle en son Siècle* (Paris: la Documentation française: Plon, 1992).
[56] de Gaulle, Press conference, 14 January 1963, *DM*, p. 97.

However, "for de Gaulle, the question was not to look for [...] reconciliation but to be recognised as a winner and to [...] impose the will of France."[57] The post-war division of Germany would not last indefinitely, and to retain peace and the balance of power in Europe, it was essential to channel the power of the German population under the aegis of France, to ensure the maintenance of the post-war frontiers, and the establishment of an independent and internationally recognised European power.[58] A West Germany pinned down to Europe would allow it to remain distant enough from the two super-powers and under the control of France. Moreover, beyond the EEC framework, although the General supported its security, the FRG was not involved in discussions with France, the United Kingdom, and the United States regarding international affairs. Accordingly, for de Gaulle, these were a matter of "great nations."[59]

Seen again as an outright attempt to restore French hegemony in Europe, and push the United States away, the German Parliament, influenced by Jean Monnet and other member states', added to the Treaty a preamble which reaffirmed the Atlantic character, its commitment to NATO, and the widening of the EC to include the United Kingdom. For de Gaulle, this signed the "sterilization" of the Treaty, and pushed him away from his European commitments.[60] For a time, de Gaulle would attempt to pursue his vision more independently, rejecting any form of European integration.

The "Empty Chair" Crisis

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[57] Berndt von Staden, 'Charles de Gaulle et la politique extérieure de la République fédérale d'Allemagne', in Institut Charles de Gaulle, Actes des Journées internationales tenues à l'UNESCO, Paris 19-24 novembre 1990, *L'Europe, De Gaulle en son Siècle* (Paris: la Documentation française: Plon, 1992), p. 344.
[58] Alfred Grosser, 'France-Allemagne: le moteur sans carburant', in Karim Emile Bitar and Robert Fadel, eds., *Regards sur la France* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2007); and Edward A. Kolodziej, 'De Gaulle, l'Allemagne et les superpuissances: l'unification allemande et la fin de la guerre froide', in Institut Charles de Gaulle, Actes des Journées internationales tenues à l'UNESCO, Paris 19-24 novembre 1990, *L'Europe, De Gaulle en son Siècle* (Paris: la Documentation française: Plon, 1992); and Maillard, *De Gaulle et le Problème Allemand: Les leçons d'un grand dessein*.
[59] Lacouture, *Le souverein (1959-1970), De Gaulle*.
[60] Ibid.

After 1963, and de Gaulle's European failures, he adopted a more global approach to promote France's influence. Moreover, the economic and military power gained by France in this period made him gain more confidence in pushing for his original objectives.[61] The EEC framework remained a necessary tool, but it was to be contested more heavily and put aside temporarily, if it prevented the completion of France's objectives. De Gaulle's most staunch opposition to supranational political integration came during the "empty chair" crisis (1966-7) during which he refused supranationalism in two ways: firstly, through the rejection of the European Commission substituting the authority and responsibility of member states; secondly, through his refusal to expand Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) within the EEC decision-making procedure.[62] This crisis brought a temporary end to European political discussion on further integration.

With European integration brought to a deadlock, he followed his objectives independently in an attempt to influence his allies and the countries to which he was addressing himself. This was pursued with the Soviet Union and its satellites (October 1964, June 1966 in Ukraine, September 1967 in Poland, May 1968 in Romania) but also China (recognised in January 1964), Mexico (March 1964), South America (October 1964), Cambodia (August 1966), and Québec (July 1967) to promote

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[61] Ibid.

[62] At the time the evolution of the Community posed the issue of the modalities of common management and the necessity for an agreement on agricultural financing. Indeed the common market coming to fulfilment with the increasing number of products under the Common External Tariff system, the Commission believed it was time to transfer more budgetary and resource control power into the hands of supranational institution, itself and the European Parliament (EP), in order to be able to make more decisions in a number of budgetary realms. With the 5th Republic's first direct presidential elections scheduled in December 1965, the Commission president, Walter Hallstein, believed de Gaulle would accept in order to obtain concession on the CAP, for the domestic agricultural lobby groups. De Gaulle however vehemently opposed reinforcing the powers of the EP and Commission. He ordered for the French permanent representative in Brussels to return to Paris and announced a boycott of meetings concerned with new EEC policies—the policy of the "empty chair." Behind this crisis, de Gaulle also proved to have great suspicion vis-à-vis some initial agreements made under the Rome Treaty, including to the schedule set forth in the Treaty of Rome, establishing an expansion of QMV within the EEC decision-making procedure, in particular in issues of transport, agriculture, and foreign trade, seen as infringing France's decisions in the economic, social, and political realms. The crisis ended in 1967 with the "Luxembourg Compromise," pushed forward by de Gaulle, and providing member states veto power within the European Council, on decisions going against "vital national interests." On this topic, see: Vanke, 'Charles de Gaulle's Uncertain Ideas of Europe'.

cooperation and ultimately make "liberty, equality, fraternity" the basis of a new order.[63]

De Gaulle's actions were not an indication of his complete rejection of any European integration framework, but of an attempt to "shock and awe," to establish a new treaty with new engagements according to his vision, and which therefore concealed for many years his failure to establish a firm Franco-German partnership in which he could secure French leadership of a coherent European bloc.[64] He condemned more than anyone else the expansionism and totalitarism of the Soviet Union, its promotion of German division, and support of the German Democratic Republic. However, he did not believe in the permanent nature of ideologies, and supported the historical and geographical reality of the "European civilization:" "one of France's aims is the union of Europe in its entirety, by practicing between her West, centre and East, détente, entente and cooperation [...] by the strengthening of the Common Market so that it can lead and not be subordinated by the West of our continent." [65] What he saw was the Atlantic Alliance enlarged to Slavic Europe with Anglo-Saxon allies having renounced their hegemonic tendencies. Moreover, he believed that France was to be the leader, pursuing a policy to reunite Europe from the "Atlantic to the Ural," regaining her historical influence vis-à-vis Eastern states.[66] However, his hopes were however shattered by the Soviet repression (August 1968) against the "*Printemps de Prague*" (May 1968).

The Reintegration of the United Kingdom

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[63] De Gaulle visited successively Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Brazil.
[64] Vaïsse, *La Grandeur: Politique étrangère du Général de Gaulle, 1958-1969*.
[65] de Gaulle, Television speech, 31st December 1967, *DM*, p. 270.
[66] Ibid.

The period after 1968, characterised by social upheaval, the continued crisis of Franco-German relations, and the Prague crisis, symbolised a real "coup" to France's cohesion, prestige, and capacity to act externally.[67] This forced de Gaulle to adopt a more conciliatory approach towards France's allies and to return to a restricted form of Western European and Transatlantic frameworks, and particularly with the United Kingdom rather than West Germany.[68] Until then, the General had rejected British membership twice, in 1963 and 1967, on the basis that the United Kingdom's economic and political links to the United States and the Commonwealth would "dilute" the Common Market and prevent the development of a "European Europe." However, continuously pushed by his own advisors, his new foreign affairs minister, Michel Debré, himself more anglophile than Maurice de Courville, the other member states, and with his own loss of authority and legitimacy, the General realised that he would not be able to indefinitely reject the country's membership—with others linked to its membership in de Gaulle's mind.[69] A meeting was organised between de Gaulle and the ambassador Christopher Soames in February 1969.[70]

The aims of this meeting have been intensely disputed.[71] However, scholars seem to agree on the fact that, in the General's mind, this was to discuss the possibility of the United Kingdom joining a political Europe in the near future and the subsequent necessity to envisage another line of conduct with necessary adaptations to an enlarged European entity. Moreover, concerning political and military cooperation, de Gaulle reiterated his desire for a privileged position for independent European "principal"

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[67] On the issue of monetary non-cooperation between France and Germany in the 1960s, see: Maillard, *De Gaulle et le Problème Allemand: Les leçons d'un grand dessein*.
[68] Hoffmann, *Essais sur la France: Déclin ou Renouveau?*
[69] E.g. Erling Bjöl, 'De Gaulle, l'Europe et le Danemark' ; and Joseph T. Caroll, 'Le général de Gaulle et la demande irlandaise d'adhésion à la CEE', in Institut Charles de Gaulle, Actes des Journées internationales tenues à l'UNESCO, Paris 19-24 novembre 1990, *L'Europe, De Gaulle en son Siècle*, V (Paris: la Documentation française: Plon, 1992).
[70] Maillard, *De Gaulle et le Problème Allemand: Les leçons d'un grand dessein*.
[71] Ibid.

powers, this time mentioning the FRG and Italy within the Alliance, which might ultimately make NATO redundant.

The meeting was therefore a continued attempt to push forward his vision of a French-led European Europe, with this time, the possibility of a co-leadership and bilateral discussions between France and the United Kingdom over the two countries' different conceptions of political and monetary cooperation, and links to the United States and the Commonwealth. When the content of the meeting was divulged to the Press, de Gaulle appeared as if he had again shuffled the game of European politics, envisaging the entry of the United Kingdom in the EC, establishing a new Directory of four, and questioning the role of other countries, the Franco-German axis, the Common Market, and NATO. This led to a continued period of dispute between France and the rest of the Community as well as with the United Kingdom.

With de Gaulle maintaining France's independent *force de frappe*, its links to the Atlantic Alliance, its detachment from NATO's integrated military structure, its global military, economic, and cultural links with other nation-states, including in Africa, and its rejection of European supranationalism. Nonetheless, the pragmatism which he continuously revealed during his presidential mandate led him to return to European politics as one of France's main foreign policy framework. By the ends of the 1960s, he had had to accept the institutions established by the Rome Treaty, including the European Commission which he had always rejected, and allowed for the possibility of sharing the European leadership, with what he considered another historical "exceptional" power. If this did not represent a fundamental change of line in the General's conception of French exceptionalism, it legitimised, in practice, France as

one nation amongst others working towards the construction of an exceptional European entity, the principal expression of French supranational exceptionalism.

4. Summary and Significance

Militant exceptionalism was, for de Gaulle and his political entourage, a project with a distinct political purpose: to allow France to remain, after the Second World War, a major player of the global international system of states. Militant exceptionalism vis-à-vis European nation-states, which I defined in Chapter II and sketched here the international political applications, was itself only one dimension of a much broader national political project in which de Gaulle saw himself engaged in the sphere of international politics between 1958 and 1969. Nonetheless, not only did he bore a deep-seated tradition of French exceptionalism, but he adapted and applied it to his own political ambition, convictions, and style. Through the establishment of a centralised presidential regime and an assertive foreign policy, all firmly grounded in the principle of French *grandeur*, de Gaulle established himself as a national saviour.[72] Central to this was his refusal to accept bonds that could have subjected France's fate to the decisions of others, including European technocrats and other member states, long after the ties were no longer in the interest of the nation.[73]

However, after having fervently pushed for French global activism, once in power, this same man came to accept and even promote the European project as one core element of French foreign policy. Whilst I have shown de Gaulle's determination and his skepticism, and at times rejection, of European integration, I have demonstrated his

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[72] E.g. Bozo, *Two Strategies for Europe: De Gaulle, the United States, and the Atlantic Alliance*.
[73] Lacouture, *Le souverein (1959-1970), De Gaulle*.

capacity to adapt, albeit unwillingly, to contemporary circumstances and, in this, allow for the development of the European political project. This is a fundamental point for it shows that de Gaulle placed France as one leader in the construction of a European "third Great Power," the founding view of supranational exceptionalism. [74]

Nevertheless,

> "By refusing to accept this disaster [1940 defeat] as anything but temporary, [de Gaulle] managed by extraordinary stubbornness and political skill [...] to recover for France at least the outward trappings of great power status."[75]

For the General, French *grandeur* was importantly reliant on "appearances." De Gaulle's European policy was two sides of the same coin: Europe was "practical" in that it allowed the General to provide France with international prestige. Europe was also "purposive," and that required a firm rhetoric and policy of differentiation towards other European member states. The domestic and international pressures for European integration, within which French militant exceptionalism was taking place, made de Gaulle combine the rhetorical and practical acceptance of integration taking place in Europe, with the criticism and rejection taking place domestically, in Europe, and beyond, where institutional channels were set up to perpetuate the practice of French militant exceptionalism.

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[74] Ibid., p.286.
[75] De Porte, 'The Fifth Republic in Europe', p.253.

The matter will be to transform you into a romantic character before ten years [...] the major characters of our history are in our minds because they were at the service of something other than reality

André Malraux to Charles de Gaulle[1]

Chapter IV

Grandeur Compromised (1969-2007)

In the previous chapters, I sketched the internalization of the French exceptionalist tradition in France's nationalism up to the Second World War and its application in the context of the emerging European integration process between 1946 and 1969. I presented two specific strands of French exceptionalism, namely militant and supranational exceptionalism, and argued that de Gaulle was one bearer of a deep-seated tradition alongside other political figures including Monnet. I further argued that the political project endorsed by Monnet, despite its emphasis on the necessity of European supranational integration, was still committed to the assumptions of French exceptionalism in general. Specifically, I described how this was legitimised through Monnet's speeches to the French public as well as his political actions. Finally, I showed how once in power, de Gaulle's militant exceptionalism embraced a pragmatic approach, accepting and thereby legitimising the principal expression of French supranational exceptionalism, the development of a European entity as the principal channel of French foreign policy.

What then has been the legacy of both exceptionalisms after de Gaulle's departure? In this chapter, I turn to the period between 1969 and 2007, that of the General's successors throughout the 5th Republic. The mainstream view is that after him, all broadly accepted further European integration whilst also perpetuating de Gaulle's

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[1] Gallo, *La statue du Commandeur*, *De Gaulle*, p.9.

legacy of global activism.[2] Accordingly, a Gaullist insistence on French independence and *grandeur*, in a continued bipolar system, allowed French leaders to maintain for the country a position of Third force in world politics. It was thus a lack of "and imagination [...]" and realism in the face of changing international conditions which explains the continuity in French foreign policy since the end of the 1960s.[3] After the Cold War, in the absence of imagination, attractive alternatives, and realism, French leaders maintained this stance as a means to maintain France's influence.[4] Thus, de Gaulle is conventionally portrayed as not only having incarnated French exceptionalism during his Presidential mandate, but that of having provided the agenda for his successors, Georges Pompidou (1969-74), Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (1974-81), François Mitterrand (1981-95), Jacques Chirac (1995-2007), and Nicolas Sarkozy (2007-).

This chapter seeks to provide a significantly different perspective on de Gaulle's legacy. It makes two major points regarding change and continuity of French exceptionalism in the post-Gaullist era. Firstly, there have been internal and external challenges to the Gaullist policy, in particular public discontent with a militant foreign policy perceived to be increasingly costly, and international circumstances rendering redundant the portrayal of an exceptional French nation-state. In this, Europe has been increasingly accepted and promoted by the French political leadership.

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[2] Bozo, *Two Strategies for Europe: De Gaulle, the United States, and the Atlantic Alliance*; Hubert Védrine, 'Refonder la politique étrangère française', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 2000; De Porte, 'The Fifth Republic in Europe'; and Stanley Hoffmann, 'La France dans le Monde (1979-2000)', *Politique étrangère*, no.2, 2000.

[3] Samy Cohen, dir., *Mitterrand, la fin de la guerre froide et l'unification allemande. De Yalta à Maastricht* (Paris: PUF, 1998) ; Hubert Védrine, 'Refonder la politique étrangère française'.

[4] Hoffmann,'La France dans le Monde (1979-2000)'; and Bozo, *Two Strategies for Europe: de Gaulle, the United States,and the Atlantic Alliance*.

Secondly, however, this has been combined with the continued discourse and practice of French militant exceptionalism. "*Grandeur* compromised," the title of this chapter, therefore refers both to the attempt by de Gaulle's presidential successors to find a synthesis between the acceptance of the European logic and his legacy, as well as the claim, by "hardcore" Gaullist party successors, that this represented a betrayal of de Gaulle's original political philosophy. One principal contention of this chapter is that such combination must be explained in light of two crucial factors. Underlying the institutional apathy explaining why the French global universalist project has remained, by and large, unchallenged in the political discourse and practice, are psychological and institutional factors. Psychological factors have served both militant and supranational French exceptionalism. However, I further discuss how de Gaulle's legacy has also included formal global institutional frameworks maintained, accepted and perpetuated by his successors, resulting in the deep underlying perpetuation of French militant exceptionalism, and therefore France's continued uneasy commitment to the European project. I take the example of de Gaulle's decisions concerning France's involvement in NATO's internal military structure as well as the institutionalisation of historical and cultural links with African nation-states.[5] Before presenting the substantive argument of this chapter, however, I specify that all of de Gaulle's successors have had very different personalities and political convictions, which I discuss, without going into too detailed account, throughout this chapter.

1. The Choice of Europe and the Challenges to Militant Exceptionalism

[5] For purposes of conciseness, I purposively sideline, without denying their importance, French presidents' economic and political policies vis-à-vis other regions of the world, for example the Middle East and South America, and in other sectors, including culture. Ever since de Gaulle, this has been a core axis of French foreign policy, and notably institutionalized in the position of the culture ministry. On this issue, see: Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 'Quel projet français pour le monde de demain?', in Karim Emile Bitar and Robert Fadel, eds., *Regards sur la France*; and Nathaniel Herzberg, 'L'action culturelle à l'étranger réunie sous un seul nom : Institut français', *Le Monde,* 28 March 2009.

The Public Desire for Change and the Leadership's Pragmatism

Political support for de Gaulle's policy was gradually eroded during his own presidency, starting in the mid-1960s.[6] Firstly, de Gaulle's principles and rhetoric seemed increasingly out of touch with the realities of his time: "economic enrichment, [...] individualism, and consumer euphoria."[7] Most Frenchmen were unwilling to incur indefinite deprivation for enhanced international prestige of uncertain material benefit.[8] These trends began with the 1963 miners strike, the public uproar against the 1963-7 economic stabilization plan and its negative economic and social consequences, and crucially, with de Gaulle failing to achieve an absolute majority in the first round of the first election of a president of the 5th Republic by universal suffrage in 1965. Public unease continued with de Gaulle's choice, in 1966, to retrieve France's army from NATO's integrated military structure, causing the loss of 30 000 jobs, the General's second rejection of the United Kingdom's EEC membership application, his Quebec speech (July 1967), his positioning on Israel (November 1967), and his policy of *rapprochement* vis-à-vis the Soviet Union which came to be heavily criticized after the Prague *coup* (May 1968).[9]

"At the beginning of 1968 [...] at all levels a diffused uneasiness exist[ed] [...] and everybody [felt] that the regime [was] wearing down, that the charisma of the President of the Republic [was] not what it used to be, that the end of the rule [was] coming."[10]

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[6] Nora, dir., *Realms of Memory: The construction of the French Past.*
[7] Nora, 'Gaullists and Communists', p.230.
[8] Edward A.Kolodziej, *French International Policy under de Gaulle and Pompidou: the Politics of Grandeur* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974).
[9] De Gaulle's "Quebec speech" was famous for de his phrase "Long live free Quebec". Regarding Israel, de Gaulle declared, on 27 November 1967—after the 6 Day War, from 5 to 10 June 2967—that Israel, "organizes, on the territories which [it] has taken, an occupation which can only be accompanied by oppression, repression, expulsion", Dominique Vidal, 'Ce que voulait de Gaulle en 1966', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, April 2008. These outright declarations triggered international outcry especially in the United States, where they were interpreted as opposition to the United States and its allies, Canada and Israel.
[10] Roussel, *Georges Pompidou*, p.237.

The General's capacity, until now, to gather domestic support even when his decisions were initially unpopular was slowly undermined by their cost of French international isolation.

Secondly, de Gaulle's foreign policy became increasingly criticized by political parties, interest groups, and the press.[11] As Hoffmann points out, an assertive foreign policy was seen as not producing the desired results, impeding the European integration process, and not leading to a détente with the Soviet Union.[12] As a result, de Gaulle also gradually lost the capacity to use his foreign policy as a key instrument in reaching out to political constituencies which could be hostile to him.

This discontent against de Gaulle's principles and "solitary conduct of power" came to be expressed most vehemently during the May 1968 crisis.[13] The crisis was itself a revolt against the government, accused of letting the younger generation, including students, behind. De Gaulle in particular, was accused by many of his lack of certainty and continued independent leadership.[14] This accumulated resentment came to be officially expressed during the 1969 referendum which, officially held on the revision of the Constitution for the transformation of the Senate into an advisory body and for the extension of powers to regional councils, was in fact a plebiscite. With the proposal only rejected by 52.4% of voters, and despite the advice of his advisors to the contrary, de Gaulle resigned from the French presidency in April 1969, staying true to his promise of respecting national sovereignty.[15]

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[11] Maurice Vaïsse, *La puissance ou l'influence? La France dans le monde depuis 1958*.
[12] Hoffmann, 'Gaullism by any other name'.
[13] Roussel, *Georges Pompidou*, p.227.
[14] Ibid.
[15] De Gaulle had left the Provisional Government of the French Republic in January 1946, perceiving the parliamentary regime as too weak and incoherent in the conduct of French foreign policy, and himself lacking enough political support to carry out his conception of the national interest. He followed this same logic on 27 April 1969. Rioux, *La France de la quatrième république (1944-1958)*.

De Gaulle's model not only imploded but also exploded. The 1968 crises—domestic and international—revealed to the world, and to France itself, the country's economic, social, and political downturn.[16] With the severe Soviet repression in Prague, it now seemed that de Gaulle's policy of détente with the Soviet Union had failed. Whereas France led the forces of détente before, it was now constrained to adapt to initiatives taken by others, principally West Germany and the superpowers. The Prague coup was a wake up call for French political leaders: France could no longer pretend to hold the status of a great power, achieving its security and diplomatic goals by insulating itself from the Alliance and most importantly, the United States and Europe, with West Germany exercising an increasingly influential diplomatic and economic role.[17]

"Not France, but China, Germany, and Japan were the principal propelling forces. France found its security, as before, in the hands of the giant states while pressed increasingly elsewhere by others [...] [its] bid to speak for the 'Third World' similarly met with dubious success."[18]

This continued throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War eras. Internationally, during the Cold War, France had to face economic crises, limitations of strategic arsenal, American partial international, a continued reinforcement of Soviet, and German increasing assertiveness in Europe. After the Cold War, French fear of renewed German power re-emerged, and the country had to face challenges such as conflicts in the Balkans, the Middle East, Africa, and issues concerning the environment increasingly perceived as requiring European and global political coordination. [19]

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[16] Roussel, *Georges Pompidou*.
[17] Kolodziej, *French International Policy under de Gaulle and Pompidou: the Politics of Grandeur*.
[18] Ibid., p.398.
[19] I refer here especially to the economic crisis of the early 1970s, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) of 1972 and 1979 (SALT-I and SALT-II), the United States' disengagement as a result of its engagement Vietnam War (1965-75), and the Soviet Union's reinforcement of its arsenal and extension of its political and military support to African (for example, Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia) and Middle Eastern states (including Yemen and Afghanistan).

Pompidou, the General's close follower throughout his political career, since 1944, had been central in directing domestic issues under de Gaulle, and had revealed a strong sense of pragmatism.[20] When he came to power, replacing the General in 1969, he focused on internal difficulties—deficit, unemployment, growing inequalities, and modernising programmes—with domestic social and economic reforms becoming the priorities of his presidential mandate. In his view, contemporary international politics required first and foremost the industrial modernisation of France. This would "allow France to master her destiny."[21] After de Gaulle, foreign policy was to become a less absolute priority and less assertive, with more openness and dialogue with France's allies.[22] Pompidou set France on a foreign policy trend, which all his successors would follow, either for reasons of similar pragmatism or convictions of interdependence, including European integration.[23]

None rejected the principle that France was indeed an exceptional power. However, all recognised the necessity for the French nation-state to accept global interdependence. Moreover, the reading of their memoirs and secondary accounts indicates that they shared neither de Gaulle's deep conviction attachment to France as "an eternal country."[24] If Pompidou emphasised a *rapprochement* with the United Kingdom, Giscard d'Estaing, as Mitterrand, focused on building a relationship with West Germany. Mitterrand was also a great critic of the Soviet Union, and sought *rapprochement* with the United States and France's Western Allies in general, thus

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[20] Georges Pompidou, *Pour rétablir une vérité* (Paris: Flammarion, 1982), and George-Henri Soutou, *Un politique: George Pompidou* (Paris: PUF, 2001).
[21] Kolodziej, *French International Policy under de Gaulle and Pompidou: the Politics of Grandeur*, p.437.
[22] Pompidou, *Pour rétablir une vérité*; and Roussel, *Georges Pompidou*.
[23] Maurice Vaïsse, *La puissance ou l'influence? La France dans le monde depuis 1958*.
[24] On Giscard d'Estaing, see: Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, *Le Pouvoir et la Vie*, (Paris: Compagnie 12, 1988), and Serge Berstein and Jean-François Sirinelli, dirs., Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, participant, *Les années Giscard: Valéry Giscard d'Estaing et l'Europe (1974-81)*, Paris: Armand Colin, 2004); on Mitterrand, see: François Mitterrand, *De l'Allemagne, de la France* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1996), and Hubert Védrine, *Les Mondes de François Mitterrand: A l'Elysée (1981-95)*. On Chirac, see and Eric Zemmour, *L'homme qui ne s'aimait pas* (Paris: Balland, 2001); Jacques Chirac, *Une nouvelle France*, (Paris: Nil Editions, 1994); and on Sarkozy, see: Christopher Bickerton, 'Decoding Sarkozy', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, February 2009, and Nicolas Sarkozy, *Testimony* (Petersfield, Hampshire: Harriman House, 2006).

dispelling with the image of anti-Americanism which had prevailed under de Gaulle.[25] All accepted Europe as a core foundation of French foreign policy.

Europe: the Exclusive Axis of French Foreign Policy

If de Gaulle's successors intended to lead a less assertive foreign policy, Europe was to be its central axis.[26] France needed its partners, most crucially its European ones for its own economic development and to sustain its role in international relations.[27] However, as de Gaulle had himself realised towards the end of his mandate, gone was the feasibility of a strictly intergovernmental Europe restricted to the Six under French leadership and joined to Eastern Europe through a special partnership between France and the Soviet Union.[28] After him, there was thus no more mentioning of his earlier call for a Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals."[29] In short, Pompidou and his successors called for the completion, enlargement, and deepening of the community, with France as its helm.

Pompidou, by declaring himself a supporter of "Europe to be a confederation of states who voluntarily 'alienate' their sovereignty," led, after de Gaulle's departure, a significant shift in French the discourse and practice of its European policy.[30] Following the precepts of the Rome Treaty, confining European integration mainly to the economic sector, he first focused on the commercial realm, with the fulfilment of

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[25] Roussel, *Georges Pompidou*.
[26] E.g. Kolodziej, *French International Policy Under de Gaulle and Pompidou: The Politics of Grandeur*; Vaïsse, *La puissance ou l'influence? La France dans le monde depuis 1958*; and Dulphy and Manigand, *La France au risque de l'Europe*. In this following section, I purposively do not go into detailed accounts of the evolution of the European integration process since 1969. My aim here is to emphasize de Gaulle's successors focus on European integration as the principal axis of French foreign policy. I therefore focus on specific events illustrating this evolution.
[27] De Porte, 'The Fifth Republic in Europe'.
[28] Kolodziej, *French International Policy under de Gaulle and Pompidou: the Politics of Grandeur*, p.401.
[29] Mitterrand attempted to relaunch the ideas of wide continental unity, under his 1991 project of a confederal Europe, but without success, and instead pushed forward the EU framework.
[30] Vaïsse, *La puissance ou l'influence? La France dans le monde depuis 1958*, p.119.

the Common Market, including a financial agreement on the CAP, and monetary union, deemed to be primary goals.[31] He also ended the United Kingdom's European accession, seen as burden for France to sustain cooperation with her European partners.[32] He simultaneously pushed for regular meetings between the six economic and finance ministers for the coordination of their economic policy and proposed a common policy on foreign investment and fiscal harmonisation.[33] This approach was further pursued by his successors, with Mitterrand playing a crucial role in the adoption of the Single European Act (SEA), of February 1986, a significant step in the European integration process with the aim of implementing the European Single Market by 1992.

If Pompidou had led this change mainly out of pragmatism, his successors, Giscard d'Estaing and Mitterrand, were more convinced Europeanists.[34] Giscard d'Estaing had joined Jean Monnet's Action Committee for a United States of Europe in March 1969, with his party, the Independent Republicans. He had claimed during his Presidential campaign, in April 1974, that Europe would be his "essential priority," a strong and united Europe to face global challenges.[35] Mitterrand also held strong European convictions drawn from his belief in European civilization.[36] He had participated in the Hague Conference (May 1948) on the Congress of Europe and had voted in favour of the Pleven Plan on the EDC, and later the Rome Treaty.[37]

This was however not the case of Chirac and Sarkozy: their acceptance of Europeanization seemed closer to Pompidou's conception and therefore more instrumental in nature.[38]

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[31] Kolodziej, *French International Policy Under de Gaulle and Pompidou: The Politics of Grandeur.*
[32] De Porte, 'The Fifth Republic in Europe'.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Dulphy and Manigand, *La France au risque de l'Europe.*
[35] Ibid.; and Maurice Vaisse, 'Valéry Giscard d'Estaing de la défense de l'Europe à la défense européenne', p.226.
[36] Ibid; Védrine, *Les Mondes de François Mitterrand: A l'Elysée (1981-95).*
[37] Christian Lequesne, *La France dans la Nouvelle Europe: Assumer le changement d'échelle.*
[38] Interview European official, Siena, 26 september 2008; and Interview with French official, Paris, 20 September 2008.

All presidents's openness towards Europe was symbolised by their choice of political advisors and ministers, if not supranationlists, increasingly "europeanized." All promoting the increasing European approach of the successive presidents. These included Pompidou's foreign minister, Jacques Chaban-Delmas and Maurice Schumann, Giscard d'Estaing's European Affairs minister, André Chandernagor, Mitterrand's close advisors Hubert Védrine, Elisabeth Guigou, Roland Dumas, Jacques Attali, and Jean-Louis Bianco, Chirac's foreign ministers Dominique de Villepin and Michel Barnier, and Sarkozy's advisors Henri Guaino, and his foreign minister Bernard Kouchner.[39] Yet, it is crucial to point out that the presidentialisation and personalisation of foreign affairs, including European politics, remained constant, if not strengthened through the Cold War and post-Cold War eras, restraining the influence of diplomats and ministers.[40]

As the idea of European integration became increasingly accepted, it became the central axis of all aspects of French policy: not only economic, but also political. This began informally under Pompidou and Giscard, and officially under Mitterrand. The external relations of the Community were strictly limited, by the Rome Treaty, to the commercial realm and representation in international economic institutions. However, this changed by the late 1960s with the international monetary crisis, and even more with the end of the Cold War.[41] In 1973, the economic crisis had induced Pompidou to push for the establishment of regular meeting framework for heads of states pushing for a new system of summitry convening the summits of December 1969 (Hague), October

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[39] Védrine, *Les Mondes de François Mitterrand*; and Vaïsse, *La puissance ou l'influence? La France dans le monde depuis 1958*; Interview with French official, Paris, 20 September 2008.

[40] The position of European Affairs minister was established under Giscard d'Estaing with the increasing number of meetings organized in Brussels and European integrative force in general. Vaïsse, *La puissance ou l'influence? La France dans le monde depuis 1958*.

[41] Gérard Bossuat, 'Histoire et relations extérieures de le Communauté européenne', in Anne Deighton and Gérard Bossuat, eds., *The EC/EU: a World Security Actor?* (Paris: Editions Soleb, 2007).

1972 (Paris), and December 1973 (Copenhagen). Whereas de Gaulle favoured summit diplomacy on a world scale, his successors preferred to scale down to the European level.[42] Under Giscard, economic and monetary cooperation continued, but political cooperation also became an important component of his European policy.[43] Under Mitterrand, the necessity of a European foreign policy became a principal conducting line.[44]

At the end of the Cold War, international circumstances pushed Mitterrand and his successors even more in that direction. With a unified Germany and the end of the Soviet Union, this was seen as a potential threat to France's security and prestige in Europe.[45] He promoted the creation of a Rapid Action Force (1983), the Schengen agreements (June 1985), as well as the creation of the SEA. This latter gave act to a unified common market integration, as well as political cooperation, with the extension of communitarian cooperation to domains including social policy, research and development, regional policy and, importantly, foreign policy cooperation, which was then incorporated as the European common foreign and security policy (CFSP) under the second pillar of the Maastricht Treaty (1992).

This move continued under Chirac as he facilitated for Europe to play a greater role in military operations, as in the Balkans, development programs and humanitarian interventions, and general foreign policy coordination. Important political moves included, the 1996, EU incorporation of the Petersberg tasks within the Amsterdam

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[42] Vaïsse, *La puissance ou l'influence? La France dans le monde depuis 1958*, p.119.
[43] I refer here particularly to Giscard push for a common European policy in the Middle East in particular during the Venice Council of June 1980. Vaïsse, 'Valéry Giscard d'Estaing de la défense de l'Europe à la défense européenne'.
[44] Dulphy and Manigand, *La France au risque de l'Europe*.
[45] Vaïsse, *La puissance ou l'influence? La France dans le monde depuis 1958*.

Treaty, signalling the progressive framing of the CFSP. [46] Furthermore, in 1998, this evolution was pushed forward by Chirac at the St Malo Anglo-French summit, and again in 1999 with the appointment of Javier Solana as the first High representative of the CFSP.[47] More recently, Sarkozy has continued this move, not only perpetuating the integrative logic of the CFSP, but also trying to himself personalise the EU's foreign policy stance. This was the case, for example, in French Plans for the "Union for the Mediterranean", pushed forward in July 2008, and the Russo-Georgian crisis of August 2008.[48]

French leaders, after Mitterrand, also supported Europe to have a global cultural influence in the world.[49] After a powerful economic Europe, Mitterrand and his successors endorsed a "Europe of excellency." [50] The Single Market began this with the development of European technology, through Eureka, a European spatial program, and a European citizenship status.[51] The objective was to give back to Europe her place in the world.[52] Mitterrand and his successors now adopted a language and political practice indicating a belief in the necessity for European civilisation "to make history," independently of other nations or blocs. [53]

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[46] The Petersberg tasks were established in 1992 by the Western European Union to cope with the potential destabilising of Eastern Europe.

[47] I purposively sideline, without denying their importance, but for purpose of conciness, all decisions marking the evolution of European CFSP.

[48] Interview with French official, Paris, 20 September 2008; Euractiv, 'EU Defence MinistersDraw Lessons from Georgia Crisis', 1 October 2008; Euractiv, 'Commission Further Waters Down Med Union Proposal', 21 May 2008.

[49] Bossuat, 'Histoire et relations extérieures de le Communauté européenne'.

[50] Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France. 60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943-2003)*.

[51] Francois Mitterrand, in Francois Mitterrand and Vaclav Havel, *Sur l'Europe* (Paris: Editions de l'Aube, 1991), p.15; and Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France. 60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943-2003)*, p.172.

[52] Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France. 60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943-2003)*.

[53] Francois Mitterrand, *De l'Allemagne, de la France*, p.78; Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France. 60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943-2003)*; and Vaïsse, *La puissance ou l'influence? La France dans le monde depuis 1958*.

In short, the principles and practical implications of de Gaulle's militant exceptionalism were challenged as soon as he left office. This marked the transfer of the ideal of exceptionalism from France to Europe, in principle and in practice, with the country accepted as an integral part of a European political entity. However, the rhetorical insistence by French leaders on European integration did not stop them from conceptualizing and supporting international relations in terms of the pursuit of national prestige.[54] De Gaulle's mythical and institutional influence was crucial in this evolution.

2. *Grandeur* as a Gaullist Cloak

The actual role of the President of the Republic

As analysed in chapter III, the defence of France's *grandeur* was the overarching objective of de Gaulle and of his entourage.[55] However, there are of course important caveats. It is crucial to remind ourselves that the Constitution established by de Gaulle in 1958 did not formally provide for the monopoly over foreign policy which de Gaulle himself exercised during his term in office. The determination and conduct of the nation's policy, including foreign policy, was to be officially driven by the government.[56] The National Assembly retained a limited, yet real, power to block executive action.

The role de Gaulle gave to the President was very much the result of his interpretation of the Constitution and politics in general. As demonstrated in chapter III, de Gaulle's

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[54] Norman Bowen, 'Multilateralism, Multipolarity, and Regionalism: The French Foreign Policy Discourse', *The New York Times*, 25 Februrary 2003.
[55] Nicolas Wahl, *The Fifth Republic: France's New Political System* (New York: Random House, 1959).
[56] Ibid.

global activism as President of France was more linked to his personality than what had been formally integrated in the Constitution. If the legality of the Constitution allowed space for it, it was not certain it would be perpetuated. However, de Gaulle and, in this *grandeur*, became, throughout the period analysed, completely dissociated from its own political coalition and became the presidential reference point of France's modern collective and national memory.

The Gaullist Myth

De Gaulle survived firstly as a political leader, then as a sort of national reserve.[57] Malraux had foreseen this when de Gaulle was still in power, and this came to be realised, if not immediately, gradually, through the Cold War and post-Cold War eras. "The statesman [de Gaulle] who, during his lifetime, was more hotly contested that any other has become, within twenty years of his death [1970], [became] [...]a mythified historical memory"[58] Additionally, it was not just de Gaulle which became a national myth but the principles which he continuously referred to, *grandeur*.

This was the result of conscious and subconscious actions by the General himself, as effects were not completely premeditated. Firstly, a whole series of circumstances and events occurred before the Gaullist myth reasserted itself and become celebrated. In these, the "high priests of memory" played an essential role. These included the media, intellectuals, biographers, academics institutions, and the Gaullist political party.[59]

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[57] Hoffmann, 'Gaullism by any other name'
[58] Pierre Nora, 'Gaullists and Communists', p.205-17.
[59] I refer here for example to his subject becoming one for examination, and the Charles de Gaulle Institute. In Jean-Pierre Rioux's seminar at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Marie-Hélène Pradines catalogued 77 baccalaureate exam questions concerning de Gaulle from the period 1978-88. Ibid., p.209.

Secondly, as pointed out in chapter III, he had spent great efforts representing himself a symbol, "the providential hero."[60] What had begun on 18 June 1940, continued throughout his political career as a historical memory-building process consisting not only of rhetoric but also of active demonstration. In this process, de Gaulle drew appeal on the historical legitimacy of the ideal of the "true France" which he evoked and claimed to embody. Through the invocation, and reconstruction, in his speeches and writings, of great historical memories, he embodied all the various historical phases of the French nation-building, including Christian, medieval, absolutist, revolutionary, Napoleonic, and republican France, and thereby claimed to symbolize "[national] natural continuity."[61]

Crucially, if his militant exceptionalism had become a little too assertive for many French public and political leaders, de Gaulle and *grandeur* nonetheless had a continued and profound hold on French public opinion and leaders. In the words of Duroselle,

> "It is not certain that the policy of *grandeur* will survive de Gaulle, for realism is constantly gaining. But it would be a mistake to believe that such a concept—*grandeur*—is totally opposed to French aspirations [...] the art of de Gaulle has been to wipe out humiliation several times in his life. This [had] appeal for the people and he felt it."[62]

The survival of de Gaulle "revealed in the country a sustained nostalgia for nationalism."[63] As seen in chapter III, he had come to power as a result of a real demand for national revival domestically and internationally. De Gaulle had given back the French their pride, through certain amnesia. His successors could not ignore this, and they themselves played a key role in perpetuating the Gaullist myth.

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[60] Ibid., p.214.
[61] Ibid., p.233.
[62] Duroselle, 'Les changements dans la politique extérieure de la France depuis 1945', p.358.
[63] Andrew Knapp, *Gaullism since de Gaulle*.

Moreover, militant exceptionalism was not simply rhetoric of national *grandeur* justifying any policy, it was attached to a political framework institutionalising de Gaulle's meaning of French exceptionalism. The General "not only ruled the country for a long time but crystallized itself in institutions that are still in place today [the 5th Republic]; it has become a part of the French national memory."[64] What de Gaulle attempted was not only to incarnate France during his term in office, but to set a precedent for his followers.[65]

> "It is true [...] that the shift of the centre of gravity of the political system to the chief executive has allowed and fostered the development of regalian practices [...] the image and place of the king [...] after the general left office [...] the contraption began to function as a memory machine."[66]

Additionally,

> "The new pomp and formality surrounding life at the Elysée palace, the home of the French Presidents, indicate[d] a desire to give the office added lustre. The insistence on little details like the restoration of the chapel in the Palace, the obligation to serve only native French drinks at receptions [...] reveals further the pride and traditionalism of a regime that [was] dedicated to restoring the greatness of 'eternal' France, and not merely that of the Republic."[67]

The symbolisms which he provided the function of the President, as unifier of the nation and defender of French *grandeur*, would continuously serve both militant and supranational exceptionalism. Once de Gaulle had set the precedent of a proactive President of the Republic, defender of French *grandeur*, none of his followers desired to be seen as breaking with this, even his staunchest critics. All his successors indicated

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[64] Nora, 'Gaullists and Communists', p.220.
[65] E.g. Hoffmann, *Essais sur la France: Déclin ou Renouveau?*; and Lacouture, *Le souverein (1944-1959), De Gaulle*.
[66] Nora, 'Gaullists and Communists', p.233.
[67] Wahl, *The Fifth Republic: France's New Political System*, p.73.

a concern in making their mark as Gaullist heads of state. All espoused the "omniscient presidency," starting with Pompidou and followed by all his successors.[68]

Giscard d'Estaing had claimed before his arrival in office that he was convinced that power should not be solitary, that he would begin a "new era of French politics."[69] Yet, as he himself observed,

> "It is necessary to take into account [...] fundamental aspects of a country: *its sensibility*, security, in the short and long-term, the relations with other nations and leaders [...] French diplomacy has constant positions which are not necessarily conform with the individuals in power."[70]

Readings his memoirs reveal how him being elected President of France with all the powers this incurred, as well as the respect and expectations from public, Giscard d'Estaing felt like he had to maintain a certain rhetoric and practice.[71] He felt the pressure that if he broke against this dogma "he would be considered a traitor to the nation."[72]

Mitterrand had been the General's most persistent detractor. Yet, the General, and his active conduct of foreign policy, remained simultaneously a reference for him.[73] With Mitterrand in power, the Gaullist dogmas which had been maintained for twenty years were preserved, starting with the most basic: presidential control of foreign policy with the foreign minister under tight supervision and the socialist party's contribution

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[68] Georges Pompidou, *Le nœud gordien* (Paris: Plon, 1974), Vaïsse, *La puissance ou l'influence? La France dans le monde depuis 1958*, p.27.
[69] Ibid., p.74; and Gérard Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France. 60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943-2003)*, p.145.
[70] Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, 'Interventions', in Serge Berstein and Jean-François Sirinelli (Dir.), *Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (particip.), Les années Giscard: Valéry Giscard d'Estaing et l'Europe (1974-81)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2004), p.107.
[71] Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, *Le Pouvoir et la Vie*.
[72] Ibid., p.238.
[73] Hubert Védrine, Les Mondes de François Mitterrand: A l'Elysée (1981-95).

minimal. This was, in Bossuat's terms, "a modern form of *enlightened despotism*."[74] Furthermore, "in his style, in his historical and literary approach to politics, in his duration in power, Mitterrand has proven to be the most Gaullist of de Gaulle's successors."[75]

The fact that even the General's critic adopted the very principles which de Gaulle had embodied, allowed for them to become widespread within the French political spectrum.

> "The fact that the general's most persistent detractor adopted the very institutions that de Gaulle had created and that those institutions were put to the test by the experience of 'cohabitation' absolved them of any suspicion of partisan bias [...] Mitterrand's work made it possible and legitimate for the left to offer de Gaulle its posthumous support."[76]

This continued afterwards, through successors themselves belonging to the Gaullist party. The more it became accepted by de Gaulle's close successors, the greater psychological impact it had on the public and political partisans, including Chirac and Sarkozy, and therefore perpetuated.[77]

De Gaulle's influence on Chirac was weak. As Madelin analyses, throughout his education and political career, Chirac was indifferent to de Gaulle. Chirac was more influenced by Pompidou and Pierre Juillet, an advisor to de Gaulle but against his principles, who led him to adopt a more conservative political stance with a Gaullist rhetoric, and therefore become more of a "populist Gaullist"[78]. Concerning Sarkozy, he has placed himself against the conservative movement of the French political spectrum,

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[74] Hoffmann, 'Gaullism by Any Other Name' ; Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France. 60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943-2003)*, p.165.
[75] Moïsi, 'French Foreign Policy: The Challenge of Adaptation', p.160.
[76] Nora, 'Gaullists and Communists', p.209. In which a right-wing prime minister and legislature held power under a left-wing president.
[77] Hoffmann, 'Gaullism by Any Other Name'.
[78] Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France. 60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943-2003)*, p.186.

with "many hop[ing] for an end to 'French exceptionalism,'" including in the relationship between the President and Prime Minister.[79] Foreign policy would no longer be "based on the wished of one man, even if he is The President of the Republic."[80] As he himself observed, "the world [had] changed a lot since the time of the General de Gaulle [...] the old style of politics and governing the country would no longer be accepted today" and France had to become even more concilitatory vis-à-vis its international partners.[81]

However, for both, being President of the French Republic had a great impact. Despite their initial claimed distance from de Gaulle, both accepted the Gaullist interpretation of foreign policy as their exclusive domain and with this the conception of *grandeur*. Since he has been in office, "many of Sarkozy's flagship policies since coming to office have not been followed through," including his maintenance of Gaullist principles including, at the level of the state the relationship between President and Prime Minister.[82] The readings of memoirs and secondary analysis indicates how both were and are extremely concerned about following the footsteps of the General, including providing intense efforts to give themselves the stature of Gaullian heads of state.[83]

If all followed de Gaulle's interpretation of a globally active French head of state for various personal convictions and relations to the General, all nonetheless served French supranational and militant exceptionalism through their acceptance of the the Gaullist

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[79] Bickerton, 'The Real Meaning of Sarkozy'.
[80] Sarkozy, *Testimony*, p.178.
[81] Ibid., p.187.
[82] Bickerton, 'Decoding Sarkozy'.
[83] Sarkozy, *Testimony* Madelin, *Jacques Chirac. Une biographie*, p.523; Interview with European official, Siena, 26 September 2008; and Interview with French official, 20 September 2008.

legacy.[84] De Gaulle had become a myth and invoking his approach provided, and still does, political legitimacy. Prisoner of a successful rhetoric, they would also have to adopt institutional pathways set during de Gaulle's presidency, by himself and his close political *entourage*.

3. Uneasy Coexistence Between Exceptionalisms

Not only did de Gaulle establish domestic institutions for general activism, "imprecise enough to give successive governments considerable leeway," but he did formalize crucial institutional networks but he also provided, and participated in the provision of a precise framework for a global foreign policy, through which his successors came to express his conception of French exceptionalism.[85] In spite of the fact that both his political approach and institutional framework have been gradually undermined throughout time, as French leaders have increasingly accepted France's global interdependence, his rhetoric and institutional pathways have been perpetuated. In this sense it is possible to observe a deeper underlying continuity of militant exceptionalism in the post-Gaullist French institutional make-up. I take here two examples: that of France's involvement in NATO and the country's ties with African nations.

NATO

De Gaulle's decision to bring the French Army out of NATO's integrated military structures, in the name of military autonomy and *grandeur*, became, if gradually, nonetheless reversed by his successors. Under continued domestic pressure with the

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[84] Ibid; Nicolas Sarkozy, *Testimony* and Zemmour, *L'homme qui ne s'aimait pas*.
[85] Hoffmann,'La France dans le Monde (1979-2000)'; p.39.

continued "obsession" regarding France's independence, and despite the relative freedom of manoeuvre enjoyed by the president in the foreign policy sphere, de Gaulle's decision remained held for a long time. However, this was essentially in political discourse.[86] Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing both maintained his decision. But, by the end of the Cold War, as early as 1990, with the recognition that France's ability to play a significant unilateral international role was significantly decreasing, Mitterrand allowed for the French ambassador to NATO to begin discussion regarding France's reintegration. Although this remained confidential, it remained nonetheless real. Chirac carried this out more openly, taking decision to reintegrate the Council of Ministers and the military committee of NATO in December 1995.[87] This was completed by Sarkozy in March 2009.[88]

Today, France is now, in practice, completely allied with the United States and supportive for European structure.[89] Yet, the issue remains a political one. The persistent domestic pressures for national military independence and global activism remained after the end of the Cold War.[90] When, in early 2009, Sarkozy announced the decision to fully reintegrate NATO's military structure, he was declared as leading a deep rupture with France's status by a great number of political figures. This included individuals on the left, such as Hubert Védrine, foreign minister under Mitterrand, as well as within his own political party, by de Villepin.[91] De Gaulle had allowed for France's global role, and this could not be broken. In their words, "for many countries in the world, the decision by France to join the integrated military structure of NATO is

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[86] Anand Menon, *France, NATO and the Limits of Independence (1981-97)* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), p.3.
[87] Frédéric Bozo, 'OTAN: la réintégration n'indique pas en soi un alignement sur les Etats-Unis', *Le Monde*, 11 March 2009; and Dominique Vidal, 'Ce que voulait de Gaulle en 1966', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Avril 2008.
[88] Bernard Kouchner, 'La France dans l'OTAN, fidèle à son destin', *Le Monde*, 17 March 2009.
[89] Gresh, 'Enquête sur le virage de la diplomatie française'.
[90] Anand Menon, *France, NATO and the Limits of Independence (1981-97)*.
[91] Christopher Bickerton, 'The Real Meaning of Sarkozy'.

a symbol of France's renunciation of a certain degree of autonomy of thought and action in international relations."[92] Moreover, "the independence of France is linked to our singularity and our diplomatic vocation to be a bridge between the East and the West, the North and the South."[93]

If this seemed a rupture, it was not such a profound one in terms of rhetorical and practical support for French militant exceptionalism. I make here two crucial points. Firstly, the decision to reintegrate NATO's integrated military structure was made with a continued rhetoric, by the French presidents and their *entourage*, that it was in cohesion "with [France's] destiny," its independence, and particularly vis-à-vis the United States, a symbol of the Gaullist legacy.[94] As Kouchner expressed, France has a "destiny," and is a country "'who' continues to speak to the world."[95] Secondly, in practice, it was accompanied with great negotiations concerning France's primary role within the military structure and persistent support of France's nuclear independence. If the decisions have not yet been made official, it seems that the French leadership negotiated for France to retain key positions, including for the allied command transformation, in Norfolk, United States, and that of another operational command structure in Lisbon, Portugal.[96]

Sarkozy's decision was taken as a result of pragmatism in the face of international circumstances and a gradual process of reintegration. It is unclear whether this decision has come from pressure exercised by the French military, other pressure groups within

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[92] Hubert Védrine, Live interview in *Le Monde*, 17 March 2009.
[93] Dominique de Villepin, 'OTAN: le risque c'est un rétrécissement de notre ambition', 16 March 2009.
[94] Bozo, 'OTAN: la réintégration n'indique pas en soi un alignement sur les Etats-Unis'; Bernard Kouchner, 'La France dans l'OTAN, fidèle à son destin'.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Bozo, 'OTAN: la réintégration n'indique pas en soi un alignement sur les Etats-Unis'. The first position is particularly symbolic as it would position France, along with the United States, as the only country to hold a supreme commanding post.

the French leadership, or presidential personal concerns. Yet, it seems that the decision to reintegrate was done importantly in order to remain an active defender of French sovereignty and particularly exceptionalism in the eyes of the French public and political elite.[97] To this day, even if the French public is decreasingly concerned about foreign policy, appearing as an active head of state, defender of French *grandeur*, remains an important source of domestic political legitimacy, in the eyes of political parties and the French public.[98] In this sense, de Gaulle allowed for the perpetuation of his own conception of a deep-seated tradition, not only through a latent influence, but also through such institutionalised decisions as that concerning France's commitment to NATO. It appears that as this has come to be compromised, Sarkozy is now attempting to maintain this image through other rhetorical and practical means, including through Europe, and independently, through France's political and cultural with different regions of the world in general, and Africa in particular.

La Françafrique

The historical ties between France and African countries, in economic, cultural, and social terms were institutionalised by de Gaulle during and after the Second World War, particularly after 1958, as a means to maintain France's status as a global power.[99] *La Francafrique* is the term used to define those official and unofficial links between France and Africa, mostly West and Central Africa, established after decolonisation. Through these, French leaders, and most importantly, de Gaulle, aimed at developing a combination of evolving commercial practices and social networks supporting local

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[97] Interview European official, Siena, 26 September 2008.
[98] Bickerton, 'The Real Meaning of Sarkozy'. Bickerton argues that this was done particularly for the French political elite. However, I argue that the French public does remain attached to notions of national sovereignty and exceptionalism. The refusal of the EU Constitution, expressing, most importantly, a rejection of supranationalism and neoliberalism, does illustrate this trend.
[99] Hoffmann, 'La France dans le Monde (1979-2000)'; and Andrew Wallis, *Silent Accomplice: the untold story of France's role in the Rwandan genocide* (London:I.B.Tauris, 2006).

communities and particularly political figures, including Gabonese, Congolese, and Cameroonians.[100] Those actions were decided with the ultimate objective in mind to sustain France's geopolitical interest of security and prestige in a continent increasingly taken over by other external forces including Great-Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union.

What have now been coined "Gaullist networks in Africa," have been maintained through key French advisors to the presidents, including Roger Bourgi, "their historical chief." [101] Giscard, Mitterrand, and Chirac were particular supporters of *La Francafrique*, for whom it represented a key symbol of French global status. De Gaulle's institutionalised networks allowed for them to perpetuate their view. Mitterrand, for example, accepted this heritage of commercial links, military pacts and direct links with African leaders, continuing African summits and official state visit, as well as France's military presence in the region.[102] Chirac also perpetuated this as well as Sarkozy through their continued commercial agreements and support to African political figures.[103] If the latter first claimed he would "sign the death act of *La Francafrique,*" recent developments seem to indicate the opposite, i.e. the perpetuation of such networks.[104]

Despite the fact that these have been increasingly criticised through the lens of neo-colonialism, French presidents have all indicated their commitments to French

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[100] Védrine, *Les Mondes de François Mitterrand: A l'Elysée (1981-95)*. Commercial agreements included the trade of African natural resources such as oil and French manufactured goods including arms.
[101] Ben Hall and Barney Jopson, 'Sarkozy seeks Peace Role in Africa', *The Financial Times*, 25 March 2009; Bernard, 'Roger Bourgi: l'héritier des secrets de la Françafrique'; and Gresh, 'Enquête sur le virage de la diplomatie française'.
[102] Védrine, *Les Mondes de François Mitterrand: A l'Elysée (1981-95)*.Mitterrand visisted Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Mauritiania, Burundi, Senegal, Rwanda in 1982, Cameroun 1983, Zaire, Burundi, Central Africa in 1984, Guinea, Tiogo, Mali, Burkina Faso in 1986. France had military bases including in Djibouti, Central Africa, Tchad, gabon, Ivory Coast, Mayotte, and La Réunion.
[103] Bernard. 'Roger Bourgi: l'héritier des secrets de la Françafrique'; and Philippe Leymarie, 'Signaux Contradictoires sur le continent noir', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Juillet 2008.
[104] Ibid.

historical ties with Africa, and, most crucially, through networks set by de Gaulle and during his presidency. When under de Gaulle, these were the instruments for placing France as an eternal universal player these same channels have been kept by his successors more out of pragmatism.[105] However, the assumption, which the discourse and practice legitimize, remains intact: that France has a unique global role to play.

4. Summary and Significance

For most of the post-war, the concept of exceptionalism summarizes the self-understanding underpinning French foreign policy. As Kouchner declared during the 2009 debate regarding France's reinsertion into NATO's integrated military structure,

"I myself believe in the force of initiative of a country who continues to speak to the world, to the poorest in particular who wait from France to play 'her' particular music, for 'her' to act [on the world stage]."[106]

The majority of French political leaders have shared and promoted the assumption that France is exceptional, even if they differed on its definition, justification, and political application. They also recognised France's need for Europe, for its prosperity, security, and global influence. Yet, in this recognition of global interdependence, and in the project of European integration in particular, both militant and supranational exceptionalism have been fundamental aspects, with both sharing the core assumption of France as having a global, and thereby unique, role to play.

"To have 'her' voice heard requires first of all to rely on a[n] [institutional] platform from which we can convince our allies, make them even maybe change their opinions, and oppose ourselves to any adventurous adventure [...]Today, France accepts a greater

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[105] Bernard, 'Roger Bourgi: l'héritier des secrets de la Françafrique' ; and Gresh, 'Enquête sur le virage de la diplomatie française'.
[106] Kouchner, 'La France dans l'OTAN, fidèle à son destin'.

responsibility. 'She' asserts a decisive, and obviously difficult, role in the conduct of complex world affairs."[107]

In the case of supranational exceptionalism, the war, and in particular the Second World War, required institutional safeguards as an essential means to prevent the return to conflicts. However, in spite of these transformations, the core assumptions of French uniqueness remained intact.

This chapter has made two major points with respect to the challenge and continuity of the French exceptionalist tradition between 1969 and 2007. Firstly, the public's desire for change and de Gaulle's successors stronger pragmatism and European convictions made France's integration in Europe the major political project, expressed in the discourse and practice of French political leadership. The European logic has now become part of internal politics and an accepted priority for most French political figures. Additionally, the means to resurrect this past *grandeur* have been increasingly undermined. The language and exercise of superiority vis-à-vis European and non-European peoples, became increasingly outmoded in the eyes of the French public and political elite, and untenable from the perspective of international society. Militant exceptionalism has therefore not disappeared but has continued, after de Gaulle, to be inserted in more pragmatic foundations of regional and global settings. However, despite the adaptation to contemporary transformations, continuity developed after de Gaulle involved retaining the assumption that France retained a universal role to play, through Europe and independently. This remained a crucial principle of French foreign policy throughout the Cold War and post-Cold War eras. This chapter has argued that de Gaulle's psychological and institutional legacy is crucial to understand the continued

[107] Ibid.

perpetuation of a form of militant exceptionalism ever since his departure. It has looked at how de Gaulle set a precedent for his successors, in the proactive role of the President of the 5th Republic, and how, with time, himself becoming a *lieu de mémoire*, association with his character and French *grandeur* has become an accepted source of political support.

Secondly, however, de Gaulle not only set a precedent for general activism but precise institutional legacies, including through NATO and *la Francafrique*, making his successors to follow and perpetuate his conception of French exceptionalism. In short, there has been a deeper underlying continuity of militant exceptionalism in the post-Gaullist era. As a result, combined with the increasingly accepted logic of supranational exceptionalism, French foreign policy has been characterised by a continued uneasy coexistence, ever since de Gaulle came to power. French leaders have remained prisoner of a successful institutionalised rhetoric, preserving the appearance and practice of militant exceptionalism, and thereby widening the gap between France, the EU, and the evolving international society.

The prestigious or painful history of a country matters at all times
for the elaboration of its foreign policy
Gérard Bossuat[1]

Chapter V: Conclusion

In this thesis, I have presented the idea that for a significant period of time, since the eighteenth century, a tradition of exceptionalism has been internalised and developed within French nationalism by a distinctive group of political figures. This French exceptionalist tradition had at its core the assumption that the country had a global role to play vis-à-vis European and non-European states. The language and arguments that were used to justify this position were that France is "an inspired nation," "[and] singular," and relied on concepts and ideals of progressive universal culture and political values.

This work has elaborated on the evolution of this distinctive tradition within French nationalism about the country's place in international politics in and beyond Europe. Through the various chapters, I have analysed its specific application within the context of post-war European integration and how its particular political language evolved and was applied by two main strands, incarnated by de Gaulle and Jean Monnet, both simulatenously to the European and French exceptionalism. For a short period during de Gaulle's presidency, militant exceptionalism became dominant, but was itself challenged during this time and afterwards when the General's successors accepted the European integration process as the core axis of France's foreign policy.

However, the 'story' I have told is not only one of division, rise, internal transformation and challenge, but also of continuity and combination. Ever since de Gaulle, the use of

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[1] Gérard Bossuat, *Faire l'Europe sans défaire la France. 60 ans de politique d'unité européenne des gouvernements et des présidents de la République française (1943-2003)*, p.22.

the concept of French exceptionalism has indeed remained, a central aspect of French modern political life.

Does this story of French European exceptionalism end with the period which I have covered in this thesis? Political concepts, such as 'superiority,' promoted by political leaders and accepted by the public, have been increasingly challenged, domestically and within the international system in general. Based on perceived unjustisfied discrimination and paternalistic perspectives on who should lead the world and for what reasons, French exceptionalism seems a completely inappropriate viewpoint in today's international society. The right of self-determination and equality are today, in normative and legal terms, widely shared. Moreover, France, since the 1960s, has been fully committed to the European project, at least, in legal terms.

Nevertheless, as this thesis has revealed, the specific term of "French exceptionalism in Europe and the world in general" have not completely disappeared from the vocabulary of French political leaders. This has remained a core legitimacy principle of French foreign policy. The end of the Cold War did continue to be a watershed for questions of French exceptionalism in international relations. The end of the bipolar system paved the way for a multipolar world whereby new countries, international organizations, and agents have been playing an increasingly important political role in international society. Today, exceptionalism has been reduced to political rhetoric and expressed in a few domains including French culture.

"There is not much left [of French exceptionalism, in terms of foreign policy] [...] [due to] globalization [notably]. So, what is left [...] is to a certain extent the desire to maintain [its] voice, or path, in the world and the maintenance of a cultural exception."[2]

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[2] Hoffmann, 'Français, calmez vous ... la France ne tombe pas!', p.292.

What is left is a cloak of militant exceptionalism as an elite project disjointed from the reality of the domestic public's main concerns and the evolution of international society.[3]

In retrospect, the 1960s onwards were a moment during which French political figures hoped to maintain the nation's status particularly in and through Europe. Now, France is still pushing for this, yet with increasing difficulty. "'The national novel' is coming, if not to an end, to its limits. The European story is only starting, yet with difficulty."[4] This is due in part to the legacy of one man, de Gaulle. At a moment when the nation-state is perceived as increasingly weaker vis-à-vis international institutions such as Europe, French leaders have sought to address the public's uncertainties by celebrating a man for whom the nation-state was the only stable entity of reality, and the French nation the only one promised to Eternity.[5]

What I have not done is to look at how French leaders have attempted to counter this loss of status "through" Europe, thereby internalising its own sense of exceptionalism within the European entity. Some scholars have analysed how European policies for development, for example, are contemporary forms of domination.[6] What would be crucial to further explore is the French political elite's behaviour within the European decision-making process, and particularly concerning the EU's relation with other parts of the globe in which France perceives itself as having particularly important historical ties, such as Africa.

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[3] Alain Gresh, 'Enquête sur le virage de la diplomatie française'; and Stanley Hoffmann,'La France dans le Monde (1979-2000)'.
[4] Hoffmann.'La France dans le Monde (1979-2000)' p.317.
[5] E.g. Jean-François Revel, 'Etrange unanimisme'.
[6] On the political and legal development of a hierarchy in the international system of states, between European and non-European ones in particular, see: Juri B. Viehoff, *The Dark Side of Internationalism? The Civilizing Mission Tradition, 1870-1960*. On the concept of European exceptionalism concerning the EC/EU and its policies in particular, see: Hartmut Behr, 'The European Union in the Legacies of Imperial Rule? EU Accession Politics Viewed from a Historical Comparative Perspective', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol.13, no.2, 2007; and Kalypso Nicolaïdis, 'Southern Barbarians? A Post-Colonial Critic of EUniversalism', Draft Paper, April 2008.

So is this side of French exceptionalism doomed to be perpetuated? This tradition has been at the core of the French sense of identity. As I myself demonstrated, despite the fact that France is now advanced in the European project and Europeanization process, the concepts and arguments that formerly regulated and legitimized French international political practice in Europe and the rest of the world have continued if not strengthened in international relations. Looking at Sarkozy's stance during the French Presidency of the European Council, between June and December 2008, his tackling of the current global economic crisis, the continued push for French political figures in influential positions of international institutions, and support for the global status of French culture indeed could bring us to such conclusion.[7]

Nevertheless, I think it is also important to recognize the rise of a new generation of political figures in France that are increasingly Europeanized and globalized through channela such as education programs including Erasmus and formal exchange programs between French schools and faculties, and foreign universities, and immigration patterns which are forcing upon the French to question their past and their identity including the myth of de Gaulle.[8]

We cannot predict the behaviour and reactions of future French leaders. What I do submit as a conclusion of this thesis is that unless we study the origins of French exceptionalism, and its pitfalls, we may be doomed to accept and thereby legitimise its continued repetition independently and through the European project.

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[7] On Sarkozy's management of the economic crisis and its political symbol, see: Bickerton, 'The Real Meaning of Sarkozy'. On the role of French culture, see: Nathaniel Herzberg, 'L'action culturelle à l'étranger réunie sous un seul nom : Institut français'. On French elites within international institutions, see: Abdelal and Meunier, 'The French Mark on Globalization'.
[8] Interview with French official, Paris, 20 September 2008; Nora, 'Gaullists and Communists'.

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Interviews and Debates

Interview with Ambassador Maurice Gourdault-Montagne, Ambassador of France to the United Kingdom.

Interview with Patrick Child, European Commission official

Interview with Lucile Schmidt, French civil servant, Ministry of Culture

Live debate on LeMonde.fr with Hubert Védrine, former French foreign minister