

THE GAULLIST POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND THE EXCEPTIONALISM OF A COMPLETE LEADER

Rodica LISEANU

”Carol I” National Defence University, Bucharest, Romania (rodica.liseanu@yahoo.com)

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Abstract: Charles de Gaulle, « Le Général », is one of the emblematic figures of our century, an undisputed hero whose impact on the French nation and people was revolutionary, transformational and inspirational. The article proposes a qualitative, correlational meta-analysis, which stimulates reflection on his noble personality, on his visionary spirit, on his qualities as an affable negotiator. His virtues shape his destiny as a leader who worked in the spirit of dialogue, negotiation for modernization and freedom.

Because of his exceptionalism, Charles de Gaulle can be considered a multidimensional leader. Characterised by a total leadership, his figure encompasses transactional, transformational, charismatic, informal, spontaneous leadership. Arguing through a deepening of scientific theories and exemplification of all these frameworks provides an elaborate and carefully researched perspective of a unique figure in French history.

Keywords: persuasion, political systems, strategic management, transactional leadership, transformational leadership.

1. INTRODUCTION

A personality of great complexity, a military, political, social and cultural figure, General de Gaulle managed to gather people of all political persuasions around his architectural idea of France. His political ideology, known as *Gaullism* was pragmatically built on the role of the state, the independence of the nation and the primacy of the national interest. The idea saw France as an independent, powerful nation that was not subordinate to other nations or organisations.

Charles de Gaulle can easily be included in the panoply of complete leaders because of the complexity of his personality. In his case, several types of leadership merge. We find him described as a transactional, strategic, transformational, visionary, charismatic, *great man leader*, a typology associated with the concept of a *complete leader*.

According to a review in *L'Observateur*, French scientist and demographer Alfred Sauvy notes that, following the Second World War, the world is divided into the *First World* - of capitalism, the *Second World* - of Soviet socialism, and the *Third World*, of the ex-colonies. The concept of the *Third World*, which he initiated (1952), changed history, although it was widely criticised and was still used after 1991, even in the context of the fall of the socialist Second World. It referred to demographically, economically and civically-politically underdeveloped countries. At the other end of the spectrum were the *First World* countries, the capitalist states, generally democracies that were consolidated or stable in terms of political institutions. These include the USA, France, Germany, Australia, Japan, with a modern infrastructure that encourages people to pursue their own interests, not just economic ones. [1]

2. SYMBOLS AND REPRESENTATIONS OF A MASTERFUL MAN OF ACTION

2.1. Perspectives on the international context

In terms of unity, the fracturing of Berlin marked the split and consolidation of Europe into two spheres of influence. While in 1945-1948 Stalin created a Soviet sphere in which the Eastern European states threatened the Western ones, in 1949-1956, after the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on 4th April 1949, the NATO bases were consolidated and the Western European states were integrated. France is one of the 12 founding members of the Organisation. Thus, in addition to the USA and Canada, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Northern Ireland and the Netherlands also joined from Europe. [2]

After the *Cuban missile crisis* [3], the Soviets focused on penetrating developing countries so that Europe experienced '*bipolar stability*', which allowed representatives of Britain (Prime Minister Mcmillan), France (Prime Minister Charles de Gaulle) and the United States (President John F. Kennedy) a period of time to draw up convergent plans on the status of the Alliance, the future of Europe, including nuclear weapons. This was a period when Britain was no longer a world power, but the illustrious Winston Churchill (Prime Minister 1940-1945; 1951-1955) was to pursue an egalitarian policy in diplomatic relations with the US and the Soviet Union, citing Britain's heroic involvement in the Second World War and demonstrating, through his oratorical skills, his power to influence the strategic calculations of the superpowers. Charles de Gaulle himself characterized him as "*made to act, to risk, to play his role very emphatically and unscrupulously, [appearing to be] the great champion of a great society and the great artist of a great History.*" [4]

Subsequently, the *Suez Crisis* of 1956-1957, also known as *Operation Musketeer*, took place during Churchill's successor as Britain's Prime Minister - the peaceful and diplomatic Anthony Eden (1955-1957) who resigned for medical reasons in favour of Harold Macmillan (1957-1963), renowned for his pragmatism. This was a war in which France and Britain attacked Egypt to regain control of the Suez Canal, a Franco-British property nationalised in 1956 following a 1955 British contract to pay Gamal Abdel Nasser's Egypt \$40-60 million in financial aid to use in building the Aswan Dam on the Nile. Israel, on the other hand, demanded an end to attacks on Israeli settlements and civilians and respect for the right to navigate the canal. Hence the name Arab-Israeli conflict. The war ended with a clear defeat for Egypt, but the intervention of the USSR led to the withdrawal of French, British, American and Israeli troops, and treaties were signed to mark the end of Franco-German rule in the Middle East after more than a century.

After Suez, the conclusions of France and Britain were diametrically opposed. Macmillan was aiming for a rapprochement with the US and a strengthening of Anglo-American relations with a view to a shift from power to influence, while de Gaulle was aiming to accelerate the course towards independence, which he believed would strengthen European security, by adopting a dismissive behaviour that would inconvenience and hurt. Macmillan, however, deftly took care to act from the side-lines, leaving the authority of American plans at the centre, thus prompting the US to consult Britain in its decision-making, thus annihilating de Gaulle's defiant intentions. Despite all misleading appearances, de Gaulle was not anti-American in principle during the Cuban missile crisis, himself offering unconditional help to American officials, but he could not accept a possible subservient relationship to the United States. However, France was dependent on American support in avoiding monetary collapse, its security also depended on US protection, and it also received weapons for its soldiers.

2.2. Political systems in France. Overview

France's complex history evokes moments of triumph, but tumultuous ones too. It has experienced different political systems, being in turn a Federal monarchy (481-987), feudal (987-1610), Absolute (1610-1791), Constitutional (1791-1792, *July Monarchy* (1830-1848), Imperial monarchy (I 1804-1814, II 1852-1870) and Republic (I =1792-1804, II =1848-1852, III =1870-1940, IV =1946-1958, V =1958-present), alternating with longer or shorter periods such as the First (1814-1815) and Second Restoration (1815-1830), the 100 days between the return of Napoleon I and the dissolution of the Napoleon II Commission, the executive after his abdication (1815), France Combatant (1940-1943), the French Committee of National Liberation (1943-1944), the Provisional Government (1944-1946).

After the French Revolution (1789), perhaps the turning point in history, there were five great periods, generically known as the *First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Republics*. Throughout these, the relationship between the political and administrative apparatuses was ideally centred on administrative interests.

The Fifth Republic was the most important period in French history. It had prominent representatives who gave a new dynamic to the current European construction, including, chronologically, Charles de Gaulle, George Pompidou, François Mitterrand, Jacques Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy, François Hollande and finally Emmanuel Macron.

3. LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Charles de Gaulle was Prime Minister of the Fourth Republic from 1958-1959 and President of the Fifth from 1959-1969. With a distinguished military career and a brilliant political career, he gave birth to the political movement that bears his name - *Gaullism*. Moreover, he was a promoter of reform and a revolutionary spirit. As for his social reform, "*when General de Gaulle took power, there were a million television sets in France... When he left, there were ten million...The state is always a show business. But yesterday's state-theatre was something completely different from today's state-TV.*" [5]

Born in Lille (22 November 1890) into a Catholic, nationalist, patriotic family, he opted for a military career as early as 1908. He first experienced the harshness of war as a lieutenant in the First World War, being wounded three times in combat. He married in 1921 and had three children.

He was an open-minded personality, especially as long as cooperation was in the interests of France, and he wanted his nation to always be a reliable ally. Captain de Gaulle began to become involved in the affairs of state, and in 1931 he was appointed adviser to the General Secretariat of National Defence in Paris. In the period between the two world wars he became increasingly concerned with the relationship between the army and politics, and was preoccupied with army reform. In 1937 he became colonel, in 1939 commander.

On 1st June 1940 he is appointed General and a few days later becomes Under-Secretary of State for National Defence and War in the Paul Reynaud government.

After the Normandy landings in June 1944, de Gaulle urged General Eisenhower, commander of the Allied forces, to liberate Paris, which he did on 25 August 1944. As president of the provisional government, he quickly disagreed with the Constituent Assembly on the role of political parties and the concept of the state, and decided to resign in January 1946. Nevertheless, he accomplished the mission for which he was nicknamed '*Liberator*': he liberated the territory, erasing the shame of the years of Marshal Philippe Pétain whose government had lost its legitimacy in 1940, restored the Republic, organised free and democratic elections, and undertook economic and social

modernisation. For his outstanding merits in liberating France from the Second World War, he was awarded the "Grand Master of the Order of Liberation". [6] After 1947 he dreamed of working towards constitutional reform. The Fourth Republic was heading for a deep crisis because of ministerial instability and powerlessness in the face of the Algerian War which had just broken out on 1st November 1954.

On 1st June 1958, de Gaulle becomes the last President of the Council of the Fourth Republic. In a referendum on 28 September 1958, the French vote 79.2% in favour of the Constitution, and on 21st December 1958 they elect him President of the French Republic by indirect universal suffrage. Nowadays, often evoked, it is rarely practiced on a positive note. [7] The Constitution of the Fifth Republic was one of the great reforming victories initiated by the founder de Gaulle in the contemporary era and beyond, which still forms the basis of the French state today. As the General himself said at the press conference on 31st January 1964, "a Constitution is a spirit, institutions, a practice". [8] The spirit refers to the Restoration of the State and, if possible, to the restoration of the parliamentary regime of the Republic.

Over time, leadership theories have set out to analyse and explain a relatively new and very complex concept. In the work Leadership style vs Leadership typology, the authors emphasises four important theoretical perspectives in the field of leadership, in a chronological order: *The Great Man Theory, Trait Theory, Behaviourist Theories, Contingent Theories, Transactional Leadership Theory, and Transformational Leadership Theory*. The first dominates the 19th century, the others are representative of the 20th century. [9]

The Great Man Theory is the most appropriate and comprehensive to capture the greatness of Charles de Gaulle and his decisive impact on history. Popularized by Thomas Carlyle, the theory is based on the idea that such a leader is born, not made. The born leader is described as the man endowed with certain special abilities characteristic of heroes or divinity, incompatible with ordinary people. However, a mention is required, The messianic leader is providential precisely because of his humble character.

Leadership trait theory has focused on analysing mental characteristics, physical and social traits to discover which qualities are common among leaders and which combinations of qualities are responsible for leadership.

Behaviourist theories focus on the behaviour of leaders and not on mental, physical or social characteristics.

Contingent Theories. Leadership effectiveness is dependent. Certain individuals can perform most effectively in certain environments or in partnership with certain people, otherwise performance can be at its lowest.

Transactional leadership theory values the interactive nature between leader and subordinates in a mutually beneficial relationship. The leader offers psychological, economic and political rewards that are positively received by subordinates.

Transformational leadership theory is about cultivating a sense of belonging to the organisation, developing attachment emotional attachment of subordinates to the organization and to the group, the leader inspires, is flexible, empathetic and relaxed. Motivational resources are involved. [10]

4. CHARLES DE GAULLE - THE COMPLETE LEADER

The French Fifth Republic is a semi-presidential republic (concept created by Marcel Duverger) in force since 4 October 1958 until today. The semi-presidential republic is a regime of separation of powers in the state, in addition to the classical models of presidential and parliamentary regimes.

The French Fifth Republic was led by a total, complete leader, as we can characterize Charles de Gaulle, thanks to his ability to rule himself and others with a clear mind and a firm hand. A leader who leads others with diplomacy and tact has intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, is persuasive, a good negotiator, manages teamwork convincingly.

On a visit to Paris in 1959 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, President Eisenhower approached the French leader with the firmness of one of America's greatest military commanders, but also with falsity, asking, "Why do you doubt that America could identify its destiny with that of Europe?" [11] Politely, de Gaulle did not hesitate to recall the lack of American intervention in the First World War in support of France until three years later, which brought it to the brink of collapse, and the belated involvement in the Second World War when France was already occupied. It highlights the traits of the *spontaneous leader* who naturally, without hesitation, knows how to impose himself emotionally, to maintain a cordial, jovial, but firm and imposing tone of discussion at the same time. In this note of discussion, the transactional leader also stands out, establishing a negotiating, recalibrating relationship that leaves nothing to chance.

In the nuclear age they got involved late once again. In the same discussion, a question also arose on this sensitive issue of how national military forces within the alliance could be integrated into a single military plan.

While for de Gaulle nuclear forces were a political-institutional rather than a technical issue, Eisenhower had in mind strategic options, finding a wartime command structure, not political and diplomatic ones, like his French counterpart. De Gaulle had already answered the question a year earlier, on 14 September 1958, when he proposed the Political Directorate within NATO, presenting the American and British heads of government (Eisenhower himself and Macmillan) with the memorandum containing his ideas on the appropriate structure of the Alliance. [12] By putting forward procedural, bureaucratic schemes designed to dissipate de Gaulle's attention and determination, the two ended up realising that they no longer had before them the ephemeral and indeterminate profile of the French head of state in the Fourth Republic. Thus, in 1966, he acceded to the option of France's complete withdrawal from NATO's integrated military commands, while not questioning the Washington Treaty and still wanting the Atlantic Alliance to exist.

Subsequently, the John F. Kennedy administration proclaimed the *Declaration of Independence* between the United States and a United Europe on 4 July 1962, supporting the integration of all NATO nuclear forces. Within Europe, Franco-German cooperation was the focus of French foreign policy. Gaullist France envisaged a unity based on states, an organised Europe, respecting the borders of Bismarck's Germany.

In his article *Political Rationalities in State Reform: the Case of the Fifth Republic*, Philippe Bezes argues that "the development of state reform policies in the 1960s is a contemporary social fact whose originality must be highlighted." [13]

In his view, since the 1960s autonomous reform programmes have had a strong impact on the relations between the administration and political power, the organisation and division of labour in ministries and offices, the management of material and human resources, the employment systems of public officials, and the whole process of bureaucratisation of the state's administrative systems. All these policies of the administrative system have had a driving and supportive role, but they have also encountered bottlenecks. The decrees of 1964 are directly linked to the emergence of the new Gaullist regime whose prime ministers were first Michel Debré and then Georges Pompidou, the renewal of the civil service in 1989 is due to Prime Minister Michel Rocard, under François Mitterrand, and the general review of public policies is linked to the name of Nicolas Sarkozy. [14]

The Fifth Republic appeared in its history as a fairly simple regime: a President of the Republic was elected every 7 years by the people, supported by a parliamentary majority bound to it by a more or less solid contract, animating political life. Alongside him, ministers with a prime minister at the helm prepared political action. As de Gaulle's Prime Minister, Michel Debré always brought his ideas and ideas to the consultation process for his views on general policy and on the personalities who were to become government collaborators.

De Gaulle was a leader loved by the people for his impetuosity, for his authority, for the high expectations he set for himself and others. His profile was built solidly, gradually, on honesty, dignity, patriotism, unwavering values and principles.

From being elected comes the framing of a new type of leadership - *informal leadership*. [15] In community dynamics, informal leadership is elected, recognisable, respected, honest, credible, cooperative, participatory. His participative attitude is concrete and measurable. From a very young age, he participated in combat operations during World War I, later he led France against Nazi Germany in the Second World War and also fought for the restoration of democracy from 1944 to 1956 as head of the French provisional government. At the opposite pole, the *formal leader* is appointed and imposes his authority with difficulty or not at all, and the organisation loses cohesion.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the American psychologist Bernard M. Bass theorized transformational and transactional leadership styles, both models characterising the prodigious personality of Charles de Gaulle.

4.1. Transactional leader

Transactional leadership focuses on organisation, performance and supervision. It is built on the power of competitive advantage. Gaullism as an embodiment of pragmatic leadership emphasizes stability and consolidation of society, a strong economy, through executive pragmatism.

De Gaulle's qualities as a strategic leader were formed gradually through interaction with members of the groups in which he developed, due to the environment in which he was born and raised. He was born into a conservative family with five children, hence his modesty and predisposition to be popular, open and proactive. In 1912, he graduated from Saint-Cyr Military College. After the participation during World War I and World War II, on June 1940 he emigrated to Great Britain because he refused the armistice with Germany. Before the liberation of France in 1944, Charles de Gaulle was the leader of the government-in-exile.

Characteristic of transactional leadership is also de Gaulle's defiant interventionism towards British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to ensure that French interests were taken into account during the negotiations for World War II. In his June 18 appeal from the BBC studio, de Gaulle demanded: "*Whatever happens, the flame of French resistance must not and will not be extinguished.*" [16]

Charles de Gaulle has a very active leadership style, with clear objectives, focused on negotiation, associated with rewards and sanctions. He is constantly concerned with cultivating the intellect, both for himself and his subordinates. Appreciates interactions based on mutual trust, motivation and collective effort.

4.2. Transformational leader

Transformational leadership is also called *The new leadership*. It incorporates the visionary and charismatic leadership. He is the educated leader whose lines of descent fostered the culture. Going through several generations of the extended family, we can say that he belonged to the aristocracy. His mother, Jeanne Maillot came from industrial entrepreneurs, his father, a professor of French history and literature, in turn, had roots in

the aristocracy of Normandy and Burgundy, his great-grandfather was a prosecutor of the Administration of the Paris Region.

The charismatic leader builds his offensive on one main quality – charisma, a rather rare asset that is undoubtedly corroborated with optimism, constructive enthusiasm and devotion.

Charles de Gaulle was, first of all, a military thinker and a great reformer.

From an action perspective, charismatic leaders can be crisis or visionary leaders. [17] In this regard, he mobilized the French to resistance from London when The Pétain government requested an armistice from Nazi Germany.

4.3. The decline of a leader - caution and reserve

In 1965 he was already 75 years old, he didn't want to run again for fear of falling like Pétain or Churchill, he had become more reserved and cautious. In his political career, he wanted Georges Pompidou as his successor, but the Socialist opposition leader François Mitterrand was a charismatic personality with a good chance of taking power, and he could not afford to risk it. He also ran in the 1965 presidential election, the first direct universal suffrage election for a seven-year term. He won in the second round on 19 December 1965 and was re-elected with 54.49% of the votes cast, and resigned four years later. As history shows, he was succeeded by his protégé Georges Pompidou and later by his declared enemy François Mitterrand. [18]

If Pompidou's popularity was already declining in 1967, it was precisely because of the antagonism between the President of the Republic and his Prime Minister. De Gaulle was dissatisfied, disappointed and even felt betrayed. Georges Pompidou refused to apply the General's policy, giving way to demagogic assaults, hence his meteoric decline. The night of 10-11 May 1968 was dubbed the "*night of the barricades*". Students occupied the Sorbonne and the Odéon Theatre and set up barricades just as Pompidou was on a tour of Iran and Afghanistan, and de Gaulle was due to pay an official visit to Bucharest between the 14th and 18th, the first visit by a French president to Romania.

The youth revolts were born of frustration, a desire for autonomy and required prompt intervention, and a youth culture was emerging. They hastened Charles de Gaulle's political demise and deepened the rift between him and Georges Pompidou, whom he was convinced had been plotting to provoke his resignation. Georges Pompidou, who had already been Prime Minister for six years, promptly announced his candidacy if de Gaulle did not complete his term. These student uprisings were perhaps also prompted by the novelties of the 1950s, when young people from the upper and middle classes in the Anglo-Saxon world were bringing to the fore a new lifestyle, a new fashion, a new energy. From overseas, the process was being reversed: the famous Parisian haute couture was gradually being replaced by unisex, mass-industry jeans. The vulgarisation of the tastes of middle- and upper-middle-class youth could be the basis of the revolutionary politics of the middle-class youth of 1968. [19] We can thus speak not only of a social revolution, but also of a cultural revolution, a search for autonomy, affirmation and freedom.

"The resignation of General de Gaulle in 1969 and the introduction of the new presidential system voted in 1962 reinforces the bipolarity of French political life". [20]

In *Diplomacy*, Henry Kissinger admiringly describes Charles de Gaulle as an iconic figure, recounting a meeting he had with him during President Richard Nixon's visit to the Elysée Palace in Paris in March 1969, when the so-called General gave a grand reception. Asked directly "*Why don't you withdraw from Vietnam?*", Kissinger, then former Secretary of State and security advisor in the Nixon presidency, often considered the real president who left the White House only in 1976 (with the election of Jimmy Carter), was to reply hesitantly that such a withdrawal would undermine American

authority. In an icy offensive, de Gaulle insisted, asking where such a loss of credibility might occur.

The mention of the Middle East reminded de Gaulle of the painful loss of influence in the Suez Canal area which caused him to wistfully remark, "*How strange. I thought it was precisely in the Middle East that your enemies had credibility problems.*" [21] Not coincidentally de Gaulle's discussion partner on the Vietnam War, Kissinger played a key role in world diplomacy between 1969 and 1977, most notably through his decisive contribution to ending it, and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973.

After the student and workers' riots of May 1968 and the referendum of 28 April 1969, de Gaulle resigned and retired to Colombey-les-deux-Églises (Haute-Marne), 250 km from Paris, where he spent his weekends when he was free, retiring from political life for good and resuming his memoirs. Although his foreign minister at the time, Jean de Lipkowski, suggested cancelling the referendum, de Gaulle was aware that his political image was deteriorating and his popularity was waning, and that failure to support him would be humiliating. He died on 9 November 1970, aged 80, 18 months after retiring from political life, of natural causes. He died simply, as he lived. He did not want a national funeral, the army being the only official participation in the discreet setting in which he wanted the funeral ceremony to take place. In Paris, however, a solemn service was held in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, attended by 63 heads of state. An extraordinary council of ministers declared 12 November a day of national mourning. Georges Pompidou was to declare in a televised address that after this painful moment for a nation, "*France is a widow...*" [22]

CONCLUSIONS

Charles de Gaulle remains the most prominent personality of the modern era in France, a total leader who influenced and changed the trajectory of the nation, its people and inspired other leaders. He was not only President of France and the French people, but also a general, a politician, from 1940 - head of the French government, from 1945 - Prime Minister of the post-war provisional government elected by Parliament. He resigned a year later, but in 1947 he even created his own party - the Assembly of the French People. In 1958, he became Prime Minister again, and was notable for drafting a new Constitution, becoming President of the Republic in 1959. He was an ardent supporter of the independence of the French people and their interests, encouraging them to act according to their own will, never to give up their sense of identity, never to be or feel subordinate to anyone.

He was a visionary, a diplomat, a patriot with high aspirations, aware of the inequality of forces between the US and France, but unfailingly dignified, a good strategist, capable, vigilant. Through his friendship with the German Chancellor Adenauer, he strengthened the Franco-German relations that still form the basis of European integration today. De Gaulle was always guided by Cardinal Richelieu's dream of being the leader of a supreme France and succeeded in transforming it into a great world power, in 1960 even becoming the world's fourth nuclear power.

The complexity and greatness of his personality contributed to the brilliance of France today. He managed and reconstruct post-World War II France, created the Fifth Republic, and introduced a new constitution.

In *The Study of Sociology*, the sociologist Herbert Spencer highlights that the leaders are products of the society - "you must admit that the genesis of a great man depends on the long series of complex influences which has produced the race in which he appears,

and the social state into which that race has slowly grown....Before he can remake his society, his society must make him.”[23]

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