

## Beyond dichotomy?

### Towards conceptual and theoretical variety in EU-China research

Julia Gurol

Published online: 3 August 2020  
© The Author(s) 2020

## 1 Introduction

In its most recent *Strategic Outlook on China*, the EU's China policy is described as multi-faceted. The EU considers China “simultaneously, in different policy areas, a cooperation partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives, [...] an economic competitor [...] and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance” (European Commission 2019). Likewise, China's most current policy paper on the EU speaks of the Chinese EU-policy as an “all-dimensional, multi-tiered” sector-by-sector approach (Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union 2018). When the EU and China evaluate their *Strategic Agenda for Cooperation* at the end of 2020, they can look back on efficacious collaboration in an array of policy fields, yet also on profound challenges and recurring skirmishes. Current EU-China relations face an uncertain future that is vastly determined by broader geo-economic and geopolitical developments.

While this multifaceted nature of EU-China security relations is acknowledged in the political reality, academic approaches could profit from more conceptual and theoretical variation with regard to research on EU-China security relations. This renders it interesting to map existing literature on EU-China relations with a two-fold objective: first, to sketch existing conceptual approaches and second, to point to existing cleavages with the ultimate aim to outline conceptual implications and avenues for future research. The remainder of this articles is as follows. The second section engages with conceptual difficulties in EU-China research, while the third section discusses empirical shortcomings. The last section is dedicated to discussion

---

J. Gurol (✉)

Seminar für Wissenschaftliche Politik, Lehrstuhl für Governance in Mehrebenensystemen,  
Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg im Breisgau, Freiburg i. Br., Germany  
E-Mail: [julia.gurol@politik.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:julia.gurol@politik.uni-freiburg.de)

the conceptual implications of the state of art and points towards possible future avenues for research.

## 2 Empirical shortcomings in EU-China research

While a lot has been written about EU-China economic affairs, their relationship in the security realm is a controversial and highly debated, yet under-researched issue. Taken that few world regions are under such scrutiny in current global politics as the EU and China, this is surprising. Albeit in very different manners, the two actors form central pillars of international politics, not only because they account for one third of global trade, but also because they represent a decisive axis in the current world order, as rightly pointed to by Shambaugh (D. Shambaugh 2005). Despite diverging political principles of inter-state and region-to-state relations, including state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and intervention policies, the EU and China have developed solid and recurrent interactions in a variety of policy fields. These range from people-to-people, social and cultural contacts, over economic negotiations to foreign and security policy. In doing so, they have substantially institutionalized their relations over time (Christiansen et al. 2019). Although the main drivers of EU-China relations remain of an economic kind, meaning primarily concerns with trade, investment and intellectual property issues (Kirchner et al. 2015; Huotari et al. 2017), the security dimension of their relationship has become more significant over time. It has by now developed into a vital pillar of EU-China relations. With respect to the *Comprehensive Strategic Partnership* (CSP) of 2003, and the *Strategic Agenda for Cooperation* of 2013, China and the EU have expressed the will to coordinate their foreign and security policy matters. Moreover, under the framework of the *Belt and Road Initiative* (BRI) they agreed to align their security policies to create a “secure and stable environment from China to Europe, including Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Syria” (Schweisgut 2015).

The expansion of EU-China security relations over time and concerning the array of security issues is an interesting and puzzling phenomenon. Although economic matters still dominate the EU-China agenda, the security domain is all but tenuous (Kirchner et al. 2015), not only because of the deepening economy-security nexus but also because of the rise of transnational security challenges like climate and energy security, maritime security or food security that equally affect the EU and China. Yet, for decades, EU-China security cooperation has been hindered by contradicting principles of foreign and security policymaking (D. L. Shambaugh et al. 2008). Although these principles are still adhered today and lead to increasing political frictions, the intensity and scope of EU-China security cooperation have widened over time. Within an overall relationship dominated by increasing mistrust and political tensions, this is interesting to look at. Despite this fact, the security domain of EU-China relations has hitherto received less academic attention in comparison to the economic field. A promising and empirically as well as conceptually rich exception is Kirchner et al.’s “Security Relations between China and the European Union” (2016). The authors assess EU-China security relations, taking a multi-disciplinary approach and a comparative perspective. They shed light on convergence

between the EU and China in an array of security areas, pointing towards possibilities for cooperation. Thereby they offer an empirically extremely rich examination.

The most recent book on EU-China relations is Thomas Christiansen's, Emil Kirchner's and Uwe Wissenbach's *The European Union and China* (2019). It covers a number of policy fields such as economy, security, development and politics and takes into account the geopolitical context of EU-China relations.

Notably, there is a need for books offering a systematic examination of what EU-China security relations entail in scope and degree as well as a conceptual, empirical and systematic assessment of the opportunities and challenges in EU-China security relations that goes beyond the black-and-white dichotomy of depicting China either as a threat or as a partner.

### 3 Conceptual difficulties in EU-China research

To summarize the previous section, research on EU-China relations beyond the economic scope has hitherto received scant academic attention (Bersick 2015) but is certainly growing. This section engages with different conceptual approaches to EU-China security relations.

As regards Western and Chinese research on EU-China relations, two conceptual disproportions should be specified. The first imbalance is the predominantly Eurocentric focus of European scholars, who commonly do research on European experience and on the EU's strategies towards a rising China (Huotari et al. 2017; Griese 2006). Less often they take into account the Chinese perspective, due to reasons of accessibility of data or lingual barriers (Gerring 2007). The second disproportion concerns Chinese research on the EU's foreign and security policy. While in general, the EU is a famous subject that features prominently with Chinese researchers, there are only few systematic studies on EU-China relations beyond the economic realm (exceptions include Lexiang 2000; Xuetong 2000). However, EU studies have become more popular in China and the group of so-called "Europe Watchers" has gained more acquaintance outside of China (Shambaugh et al. 2008; Bingran 2008). In this context a new strand of literature has emerged, which focuses on the EU as a security actor. For instance, Zhang (2016) examines the official Chinese media discourse on the EU's actorness in its security partnership with China. Wenxiu (2002) also touches upon security issues in EU-China relations in his article on the connotation and orientation of the *CSP* and Hongjian (2018) examines the structural changes and prospects of China-EU relations, just to name some examples.

Although the establishment of diplomatic relations between the EU and China dates back to 1975, research on their relationship emerged significantly later. Despite the drafting of a Cooperation Agreement in 1985, the EU and China devoted little attention to each other in their foreign policy strategies in the first phase of diplomatic relations. The upsurge of new cooperation projects since the 2000s (e.g. the *CSP* in 2003) and the revitalization and amplification of relations in form of a European

“pivot to Asia” (Casarini 2013; Parello-Plesner 2012)<sup>1</sup> resulted in amplified scholarly attention to the topic. The emerging new strand of literature is characterized by very different approaches towards how to conceptualize EU-China relations, as it is neither per definition an interregional<sup>2</sup> nor a bilateral state-to-state relationship but rather characterizes as a region-to-state relationship (Rüland 2006; Hänggi 2006). Neither among European nor among Chinese scholars there is consensus about whether the EU can and does hold an important position as a unitary actor within the international system (Liqun 2008). Thus, most scholars focus on what is commonly referred to as “Sino-European” relations, namely the relations of individual EU member states with China. The main argument justifying this focus is that especially the development of foreign and security policies remains largely prerogative to the individual EU member states (Maher 2016; Smith and Xie 2010). Researchers, who situate themselves within this strand of literature argue that it is not useful to consider the EU and China as equal counterparts. They pledge for analyses on bilateral level as some EU member states have much longer and more involved security relations with China, as for example France or the UK. Furthermore, researchers of this skein of thought put forward the argument that the policy-making process of an institutional body like the EU is a complex and interwoven process of formulation of common interests, which spans so many levels (supranational, national and subnational) that it is difficult to compare EU foreign policy and China’s foreign policy, let alone to find commonalities and differences (Algieri 2008).

With the rising discussion about the EU’s evolving role as a security actor, a different strand of research has developed that considers the EU as an international actor of increasing substance and rising agency (W. Wallace 1983; Lan 2005; Doidge 2011). Advocates of this approach emphasize the scholarly interest and political relevance of the EU’s emerging security policy. Although the EU’s role has mainly been attached to economic influence and normativity, while the US has been regarded as the most important security provider (Chaban et al. 2017), the EU’s role as a security actor has increased and so has its impact on EU-China security relations, they argue. Therefore, it is also of analytical value to assess EU-China relations on a region-to-state-level and treat the EU and China as two global actors with increasing importance (Kirchner 2015).

This assumption funnels into an overall debate about the EU’s security role in and together with Asia. While some scholars still argue that the EU is “free-riding” on US security guarantees in Asia (Keohane 2012; Stares and Regaud 1997), others claim that it is allegedly provided that Brussel is getting more involved in Asian security and is actively reaching out to many Asian countries as possible security counterparts (Berkofsky 2014; Casarini 2013; Parello-Plesner 2012; Cameron 2013; Kirchner and Sperling 2007). Advocates of this strand of research promote the idea of a European pivot to Asia that differs from the US pivot as an instrument of

---

<sup>1</sup> This pivot was based on the “Guidelines on the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy in Asia” and was put forward by the former High Representative for the EU’s Foreign and Security Policies, Javier Solana.

<sup>2</sup> Although some scholars would argue that a region-to-state relationship could be characterized as a quasi-interregional relationship, following the works of Baert et al. (2014), Rüland (2006), Hänggi (2006) or Gilson (2005), just to name some examples.

containment of especially China. Instead, the European pivot focuses on a deeper economic, political and security alignment and the extension of institutional ties with many Asian countries and China in particular.<sup>3</sup>

#### 4 Existing cleavages in EU-China research: breaking the dichotomy

Besides those rather conceptual differences, the mutual perceptions of the EU and China have changed over time, which has been reflected in the literature. Until today, the discussion mainly circles around the question of how to interpret China's rise economically, politically or security-wise as well how to evaluate its impact on the liberal international order. By now, two strands of literature have emerged over the question whether China's rise will result in increased responsibility (van der Putten and Chu 2012; Zhimin 2016) or whether it will lead to revisionism (Johnston 2003; Huiyun 2009; Legro 2007).

On the one hand, China's rise can be interpreted as a "threat" and its increasing engagement in its Western neighborhoods as a menace to national and international interests of the EU in ideological, economic, strategic and geopolitical terms (Broomfield 2003; Johnston 2003; Christensen 2015). In this interpretation China is seeking hegemony and thereby challenges other actors in the international system (Roy 1994; Griese 2006; Huotari et al. 2017; Benner et al. 2018). Especially from a realist perspective, the aspiration for power and economic wealth are used to explain China's extensive expansion policy (Sørensen 2013). Such studies mainly focus on power politics (Zweig and Bi 2005; Dannreuther 2014; Broomfield 2003). For instance, Duchâtel and Duplaix conclude their analysis of China's Maritime Silk Road (MSR) with the notion that it creates more competition than cooperation with the EU (Duchâtel and Duplaix 2018). Consequently, they stress the importance of finding new and innovative strategies to respond to well-funded Chinese industrial policies and power aspirations to be able to continue competing for international influence. With a similar impression, Benner et al. present their work on China's increasing efforts to influence Europe politically and consider China as a "challenge to liberal democracy as well as Europe's values and interests" (Benner et al. 2018, p. 2).

On the other hand, although China's rise challenges the international order, no military conflicts between the rising power and existing hegemony occur, as observed historically during the rise of other emerging powers. Thus, China's rise could as well be understood as peaceful (He and Walker 2015). Following this considerably smaller body of literature, there are not only constraints for cooperation with China but also opportunities for it (Kirchner et al. 2016; Maher 2016; Shambaugh 2007; Pradt 2016; Möller 2002; Cui 2018; Christiansen and Maher 2017; Christiansen 2016; Dorussen et al. 2017; Christiansen et al. 2019). Although it is necessary to acknowledge the existing differences and political tensions, China makes important

---

<sup>3</sup> It has to be mentioned that the EU maintains around 50 sectoral dialogue formats with China on multiple policy fields and issues. So far no other country except the US has received a similar amount of EU attention and resources (Berkofsky 2014).

contributions to the international system (Stanzel 2007; Shambaugh 2005). Examples for efforts of integration into the international system are China's active participation in the six party talks with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as well as its contribution of troops for UN deployment in conflict areas (Oertel 2011). The current common sense of this skein of thought is that cooperation between the EU and China in the security realm is possible but that deeper alignment is difficult due to contradicting foreign and security policy principles, deepening political tensions and geopolitical skirmishes (Stanzel 2007). Thus, there seems to be a "stalemate" (Godement and Vasselier 2017, p. 16) in EU-China relations that can be overcome with respect to being more competitive and cooperative at once, if recognizing that there is potential for cooperation with China despite remaining constraints and including the Chinese discourse and perspective on issues, which touch upon European interests (Dorussen et al. 2017; Kirchner 2015). As possible areas for security cooperation, these authors mention non-traditional issues. They argue that non-traditional security issues pose a serious threat to international society and therefore enlarge the scope of security to encompass also political, economic, financial, technological or cultural security, according to the authors.

Drawing on this, the literature explores whether the interdependence between the EU and China has increased, arguing that increased collaboration in the security realm is unavoidable (Stanzel 2007; Christiansen 2016; van der Putten and Chu 2012; Ghiasy and Zhou 2017). Concerning the different regions, where this interdependence plays out and leads either to increased rivalry and competition or to deepened alignment and cooperation, Central Asia and Africa are addressed most often (Kavalski 2007; Taylor 2009; Stahl 2011; Hackenesch 2011; Duggan 2017; Schiek 2017; Dave and Kobayashi 2018; Hartmann and Noesselt 2020). The Middle East in contrast is a comparably under-researched region, albeit similarly prone to Chinese influence. Studies on China in the Middle East are still outweighed by research on China in Africa, Southeast Asia and Central Asia although recently a plethora of publications has addressed this issue (Dorsey 2018a; Downs 2013; Jun and Lei 2010; Evron 2017; Haenle et al. 2018; Ehteshami 2018; Chaziza 2016; De-gang and Shaoxing 2015; Yang 2018; Sun and Zoubir 2018; Guroł 2020). Moreover, research is driven by China's energy concerns, the BRI or great power politics and to lesser extent by China's growing role as a security actor (Ehteshami and Horesh 2020; Dorsey 2018b). One exception are Huotari et al. (2017), who assess China's emergence as a global security actor and make a first step towards an encompassing evaluation of this emergence and its impact on core European interests in Central Asia and Africa. They share the political notion that China has indeed the potential to become a closer partner for the EU but that it will also continue to act as a competitor and adversary.

Although studies of European or Western analysts still outweigh the number of studies from China, an increasing amount of Chinese and English articles have been published throughout the past decades that assess China's views on the EU and EU-China relations in several policy fields. Following the Chinese academic and policy discourse, it becomes obvious that in general the Chinese perception of the EU was always closely connected to two factors: First, to power shifts in the global order and the role of China within this global order. Second, to the EU's

organizational structure and internal cohesion (Ye 2011; Zhang 2008). Furthermore, from the Chinese side, bilateral relations to distinct EU member states play a more profound role than region-to-state relations—in politics as in research. With the US' changing international role, a shift can be detected away from prioritizing US-Sino relations towards exploring possibilities and constraints for cooperation within the Sino-EU Partnership (Gabriel and Schmelcher 2017; Ross et al. 2010; Meijer and Jensen 2018).

Despite temporal setbacks, like the Eurozone financial crisis (De Ville and Vermeiren 2016; Zhan Zhang 2016), the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 (Gabriel and Schmelcher 2017) and the Brexit decision in 2017 (Yu 2017), the general picture emerging from the Chinese policy literature on the EU is favorable and primarily optimistic (Dong 2014; European Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 2008; Long and Dai 2018; Lan 2005). In some documents, the EU is even mentioned as “one of the key directions of China’s diplomacy” (Cui 2018) and according to Chen Zhimin, “Europe has been Chinese premier Wen Jiabao’s key foreign policy priority during his two terms (...) in office” (Zhimin 2012, p. 2). Advocates of this strand of research do not deny that there are ongoing disputes between different EU member states and China on bilateral level, concerning for example human rights, the Tibet issue and the remaining European arms embargo on China. However, they put forward the argument that despite these dissents that erupted after the EU-China “honeymoon” in 2003, the EU is still an important partner, in economic, political and security terms under the *Strategic Dialogue* framework. They advocate that the PRC should strengthen its public diplomacy mechanisms with regard to Europe to avoid the spread of misunderstandings and negative sentiments (Zhimin 2012, 2016; Song 2011).

The other perspective that Chinese scholars take on the role of the EU in world politics emphasizes the EU’s lacking actorness over possibilities for partnership or cooperation. Advocates of this strand of research criticize the lack of internal cohesion within the EU and the growing dissent between some of the member states (Feng 2018; Chang and Pieke 2018). For instance, Zeng (2017) argues that the EU plays only a marginalized role in China’s “new type of great power relations” although it had once been considered the second most important pole in China’s vision of a multi-polar world. Other scholars even argue that the EU’s international influence will decline and resort to market protectionism and seclusion (Zuokui 2017). Li Zhang (2016), who analyzes the EU’s actorness and partnership with China through an examination of the Chinese media discourse, detects that neither the “capability-expectations gap” (Hill 1993) nor the “expectation deficit” (Tsuruoka 2008) can explain the deterioration of EU-China relations but rather a lack of mutual understanding. She puts forward the argument that at the macro level, China expected a “united Europe to be a major force in the multi-polar system” (Li Zhang 2016, p. 476) and that this perception has continued despite certain setbacks (Li Zhang 2016). However, it is not only important to distinguish between different stages of EU-China relations but also between the role of the EU for China in economic or geopolitical and security terms. Several scholars argue that the EU would be secondary to China in the security realm if it wasn’t for the shrinking Sino-US

relation, while the EU has an important status for China in economic aspects (Zeng 2017; Dai 2010; Ye 2011).

To sum it up, Chinese scholars, who adhere to a rational choice reading of European policy behavior, consider cooperation and deeper alignment between the two as a win-win approach and stress the importance of cooperation despite deepening political tensions. Others stress normative differences and paint a more pessimistic picture of future EU-China relations (Feng 2010), especially against the backdrop of the growing constraints.

## 5 Incentives for future research and conceptual implications

The above literature review suggests several aspects, which would benefit from additional scholarly attention. In particular, three avenues for future research seem promising.

First, there is a considerable lack of research on the security dimension of EU-China relations, especially in comparison to studies on EU-China economic relations. Although it is undeniable that the main pillar of EU-China relations remains economy, the security realm is all but tenuous and has grown over time. Yet, this has not translated into a stronger research focus on EU-China security relations which remain a comparably under-researched topic. Moreover, the constraints of cooperation in the security realm and the possible threat, which China poses to Western actors, feature prominently in Western literature. Yet, there is a small amount of research, which deals with reasons for cooperation despite these constraints. This body of literature certainly requires a closer look. Empirically, very little is known about the rationales for security cooperation in the context of growing political tensions.

Second, there seems to be a strong dichotomy of considering China either as a threat or as a partner. In this regard, research that focuses on competition and conflict in EU-China relations heavily outweighs studies on the existing instances of cooperation that can be observed. Hence, scholarly literature can profit from overcoming this “either/or”-rationale and disentangling the complex nature of EU-China security relations. Incentives for future research emanate from this gap.

And third, there is an avenue for future research that approaches EU-China security relations from a constructivist perspective. Most studies that analyse EU-China relations tend to privilege interest-driven explanations and focus on material structures and their influence on the relationship. They assess EU-China relations from a rationalist interest-driven perspective that neglects the role constructions and identities of the EU and China although they repeatedly interact with each other and thereby shape and change both the behavior of the respective other as well as the overall structures of the international community. In this account, China's main stance towards the EU is interest-driven, focusing on trade and investments to boost China's economy. Sometimes scholars also assert that China is viewing the EU mainly as an opportunity to balance US hegemony.

Last but not least, the literature review reveals that it is necessary to conduct further thorough research on EU-China security relations incorporating the Chinese perspective. Supporting research that includes the Chinese perspective and discourse

will certainly provide interesting insights into the rationales behind EU-China relations in their current form and can pinpoint future developments.

**Funding** Open Access funding provided by Projekt DEAL.

**Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

## References

- Algieri, Franco. 2008. It's the system that matters: institutionalization and making of EU policy toward China. In *China-Europe relations: perceptions, policies and prospects*, ed. David Shambaugh, Eberhard Sandschneider, and Zhou Hong, 65–84. New York: Routledge.
- Baert, Francis, Tiziana Scaramagli, and Fredrik Söderbaum (eds.). 2014. *Intersecting interregionalism: regions, global governance and the EU*. United Nations University series on regionalism, Vol. 7. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7566-4>.
- Benner, Thorsten, Jan Gaspers, Mareike Ohlberg, Lucrezia Poggetti, and Kristin Shi-Kupfer. 2018. *Authoritarian advance: responding to China's growing political influence in europe*. Berlin: German Public Policy Institute.
- Berkofsky, Axel. 2014. The European Union (EU) in Asian security: actor with a punch or distant bystander? *Asia-Pacific Review* 21:61–85. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13439006.2014.978985>.
- Bersick, Sebastian. 2015. The EU's bilateral relations with China. In *The SAGE handbook of European foreign policy*, 2nd edn., ed. Knud Erik Jorgensen, 615–633. London.: SAGE.
- Bingran, Dai. 2008. European studies in China. In *China-europe relations: perceptions, policies and prospects*, ed. David Shambaugh, Eberhard Sandschneider, and Zhou Hong, 107–126. New York: Routledge.
- Broomfield, Emma V. 2003. Perceptions of danger: the China threat theory. *Journal of Contemporary China* 12:265–284. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1067056022000054605>.
- Cameron, Fraser. 2013. *EU-asia relations: a new start?* Brussels: EU-Asia Centre.
- Casarini, Nicola. 2013. *The European "pivot."* Paris: European Institute for Security Studies.
- Chaban, Natalia, Alistair Miskimmon, and Ben O'Loughlin. 2017. The EU's peace and security narrative: views from EU strategic partners in asia: the EU's peace and security narratives in asia. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 55:1273–1289. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12569>.
- Chang, Vincent K.L., and Frank N. Pieke. 2018. Europe's engagement with China: shifting Chinese views of the EU and the EU-China relationship. *Asia Europe Journal* 16:317–331. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-017-0499-9>.
- Chaziza, Mordechai. 2016. China's middle east policy: the ISIS factor. *Middle East Policy* 23:25–33.
- Christensen, Thomas J. 2015. *The China challenge: shaping the choices of a rising power*, 1st edn., New York: W.W. Norton.
- Christiansen, Thomas. 2016. A liberal institutionalist perspective on China-EU Relations. In *China, the European Union and the International Politics of Global Governance*, 29–50. New York; Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Christiansen, Thomas, and Richard Maher. 2017. The rise of China—Challenges and opportunities for the European Union. *Asia Europe Journal* 15:121–131. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-017-0469-2>.
- Christiansen, Thomas, Emil J. Kirchner, and Uwe Wissenbach. 2019. *The European Union and China*. The European Union Series. London: Palgrave.
- Cui, Hongjian. 2018. 中国—欧盟关系的结构性变化及前景 [Structural changes and prospects of China-EU relations]. 国际问题研究 [Research on international issues], Vol. 1
- Dai, Bingran. 2010. 后冷战时期地缘政治视野下的中欧关系 [China-EU relations in post-coldwar geopolitical perspective]. 外交评论 [Foreign Affairs Review] 1:63–77.
- Dannreuther, Roland. 2014. *International security: the contemporary agenda*. London: John Wiley & Sons.

- Dave, Bhavna, and Yuka Kobayashi. 2018. China's silk road economic belt initiative in Central Asia: economic and security implications. *Asia Europe Journal* 16:267–281. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-018-0513-x>.
- Degang, Sun, and He Shaoxing. 2015. From A by-stander to A constructor: China and the Middle East security governance. *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (in Asia)* 9:69–99.
- Doidge, Mathew. 2011. *The European Union and interregionalism: patterns of engagement*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Dong, Lisheng. 2014. Chinese perceptions of the European Union. *Journal of Contemporary China* 23:756–779. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2013.861172>.
- Dorsey, James M. 2018a. *China's step into the maelstrom of the Middle East*. East Asia Forum.
- Dorsey, James M. 2018b. *China and the Middle East*. Berlin, Heidelberg, New York: Springer.
- Dorussen, Han, Thomas Christiansen, and Emil Kirchner. 2017. *Security cooperation in EU-China relations*.
- Downs, Erica S. 2013. *China-Middle East energy relations*. Washington: Brookings.
- Duchâtel, Mathieu, and Alexandre Sheldon Duplaix. 2018. *Blue China: navigating the maritime silk road to Europe*. London: European Council of Foreign Relations.
- Duggan, Niall. 2017. The People's Republic of China and European Union security cooperation in Africa: Sino-EU security cooperation in Mali and the Gulf of Aden. *International Journal of China Studies* 8:1–23.
- Ehteshami, Anoushiravan. 2018. Gold at the end of the Rainbow? The BRI and the Middle East. *Global Policy* 9:387–397. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12552>.
- Ehteshami, Anoushiravan, and Niv Horesh. 2020. *How China's rise is changing the Middle East*, 1st edn., Durham modern Middle East and islamic world series, Vol. 48. London: Routledge.
- European Commission. 2019. *EU-China—A strategic outlook (JOIN(2019) 5 final)*
- European Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. 2008. 中国公众对欧盟及中欧关系看法的调查与初步分析 [Chinese public relations with the EU and China-EU Investigation and preliminary analysis of opinions]
- Evron, Yoram. 2017. China's diplomatic initiatives in the Middle East: the quest for a great-power role in the region. *International Relations* 31:125–144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117815619664>.
- Feng, Cunwan. 2018. 多重危机视角下的欧盟政策调整及中欧关系—上海国际问题研究院 [EU Policy Adjustment and China-EU Relations from the Perspective of Multiple Crisis]. Shanghai: Shanghai Institute of International Studies.
- Feng, Zhongping. 2010. 关于中国对欧政策的几点思考 [Reflections on China's Policy towards Europe]. *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* 5:59–67.
- Gabriel, Johannes, and Susanne Schmelcher. 2017. Three scenarios for EU-China relations 2025. *Futures* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2017.07.001>.
- Gerring, John. 2007. *Case study research: principles and practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ghiasy, Richard, and Jiayi Zhou. 2017. *The silk road economic belt: considering security implications and EU—China cooperation prospects*. edited by Stockholm Institute for Peace Research and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
- Gilson, Julie. 2005. New Interregionalism? The EU and East Asia. *Journal of European Integration* 27:307–326. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036330500190164>.
- Godement, François, and Abigaël Vasselier. 2017. *China at the gates: a new power audit of EU-China relations*. European Council on Foreign Relations. [https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/china\\_eu\\_power\\_audit7242](https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/china_eu_power_audit7242)
- Griese, Olaf. 2006. EU-China relations—An assessment by the communications of the European Union. *Asia Europe Journal* 4:545–553. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-006-0087-x>.
- Gurol, Julia. 2020. The Role of the EU and China in the security architecture of the Middle East. *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies* <https://doi.org/10.1080/25765949.2020.1728969>.
- Hackenesch, Christine. 2011. *European good governance policies meet China in Africa: insights from Angola and Ethiopia*. Bonn: Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik.
- Haenle, Paul, Wang Suolao, Yahya Maha, Hu Yixiong, and Jarrett Blanc. 2018. *Precarious future: China and the United States in the Middle East*. Beijing: Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy.
- Hänggi, Heiner (ed.). 2006. *Interregionalism and international relations*. Routledge advances in international relations and global politics, Vol. 38. London: Routledge.
- Hartmann, Christof, and Nele Noesselt (eds.). 2020. *China's new role in African politics: from non-intervention towards stabilization?* Routledge global cooperation series. London: Routledge.

- He, Kai, and Stephen Walker. 2015. Role bargaining strategies for China's peaceful rise. *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pov009>.
- Hill, Christopher. 1993. The capability-expectations gap or conceptualising Europe's interantional role. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 31:305–328.
- Huiyun, F. 2009. Is China a revisionist power? *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2:313–334. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/pop003>.
- Huotari, Mikko, Jan Gaspers, Thomas Eder, Helena Legarda, and Sabine Mokry. 2017. *China's emergence as a global security actor: strategies for Europe*. Berlin: Merics—Mercator Institute for China Studies.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain. 2003. Is China a status quo power? *International Security* 27:5–56. <https://doi.org/10.1162/016228803321951081>.
- Jun, Liu, and Wu Lei. 2010. Key issues in China-Iran relations. *Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies in Asia* 4:40–57.
- Kavalski, Emilian. 2007. Partnership or rivalry between the EU, China and India in Central Asia: the normative power of regional actors with global aspirations. *European Law Journal* 13:839–856.
- Keohane, Daniel. 2012. The EU's Role in East Asian security. In *Look east, act east-transatlantic agendas in the Asia Pacific*, ed. Patryk Pawlak. Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies (EUISS).
- Kirchner, Emil. 2015. China and the EU as global actors: challenges and opportunities for joint cooperation. *Economic and Political Studies* 3:98–113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20954816.2015.11673839>.
- Kirchner, Emil Joseph, and James Sperling. 2007. *EU security governance*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Kirchner, Emil, Thomas Christiansen, and Han Dorussen. 2015. *EU-China security cooperation in context*. EUI working papers, Vol. 2015/31
- Kirchner, Emil J., Thomas Christiansen, and Han Dorussen (eds.). 2016. *Security relations between China and the European Union: from convergence to cooperation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lan, He. 2005. “9·11”事件后的中欧关系及其发展前景 [Prospects for EU-China relations after 9/11], 1st edn., Guoji GuanCha.
- Legro, Jeffrey W. 2007. What China will want: the future intentions of a rising power. *Perspectives on Politics* 5:515. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592707071526>.
- Lexiang, Fang. 2000. 欧盟共同外交与安全政策的性质及其运作局限性 [The nature of EU's common foreign and security policy and its operational limitations]. 现代国际关系 [Modern international relations], Vol. 3
- Liquan, Zhu. 2008. Chinese perceptions of the EU and the China-Europe relationship. In *China-Europe relations: perceptions, policies and prospects*, ed. David Shambaugh, Eberhard Sandschneider, and Zhou Hong, 148–173. New York: Routledge.
- Long, Jing, and Xiaochen Dai. 2018. 欧盟及其成员国对华政策报告 [EU and its member states' China policy report]. 复旦大学.
- Maher, Richard. 2016. The elusive EU—China strategic partnership. *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944)* 92:959–976.
- Meijer, Hugo, and Benjamin Jensen. 2018. The strategist's dilemma: global dynamic density and the making of US “China policy. *European Journal of International Security* 3:211–234. <https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2017.17>.
- Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union. 2018. *China's policy paper on the European Union*
- Möller, Kay. 2002. Diplomatic relations and mutual strategic perceptions: China and the European Union. *The China Quarterly* 169:10–32. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009443902000037>.
- Oertel, Janka. 2011. Chinese and European engagement in UN peace operations. In *China, Europe, and international security: interests, roles, and prospects*, ed. Frans-Paul van der Putten, Shulong Chu. London: Routledge.
- Parello-Plesner, Jonas. 2012. *Europe's pivot to Asia*. European Council of Foreign Relations. [https://www.ecfr.eu/blog/entry/europes\\_mini\\_pivot\\_to\\_asia](https://www.ecfr.eu/blog/entry/europes_mini_pivot_to_asia)
- Pradt, Tilman. 2016. *China's new foreign policy*. Cham: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-33295-6>.
- van der Putten, Frans-Paul, and Shulong Chu. 2012. *China, Europe, and international security: interests, roles, and prospects*. London: Routledge.
- Ross, Robert S., Tunsjø Øystein, and Tuosheng Zhang. 2010. US-China-EU relations: towards a new world order? In *US-China-EU relations: managing the new world order*, ed. Robert S. Ross, Tunsjø Øystein, and Tuosheng Zhang, 283–295. New York: Routledge.

- Roy, Denny. 1994. Hegemon on the horizon? China's threat to East Asian security. *International Security* 19:149. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539151>.
- Rüland, Jürgen. 2006. Interregionalism in theoretical perspective: state of the art. In *Interregionalism and international relations*, ed. Heiner Hänggi, Ralf Roloff, and Jürgen Rüland. London: Routledge.
- Schiek, Sebastian. 2017. *Movement on the silk road: China's "belt and road" initiative as an incentive for intergovernmental cooperation and reforms at Central Asia's borders*. Berlin: SWP, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik.
- Schweisgut, Hans-Dietmar. 2015. *The European Union and China: global partners with global responsibilities*.
- Shambaugh, David. 2005. China engages Asia: reshaping the regional order. *International Security* 29:64–99. <https://doi.org/10.1162/0162288043467496>.
- Shambaugh, David L. 2007. China eyes Europe in the world: real convergence or cognitive dissonance? In *China-Europe relations: perceptions, policies and prospects*, ed. David L. Shambaugh, Eberhard Sandschneider, and Hong Zhou, 27–45. London: Routledge.
- Shambaugh, David L., Eberhard Sandschneider, and Hong Zhou (eds.). 2008. *China-Europe relations: perceptions, policies and prospects*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, Michael, and Huaixian Xie. 2010. The European Union and China: the logics of "strategic partnership". *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 6:432–448.
- Song, Lilei. 2011. 中国对欧公共外交:目标,进展与挑战 [China's European diplomacy to Europe: goals, progress and challenges]. *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*.
- Sørensen, Camilla T.N. 2013. *Is China becoming more aggressive? A neoclassical realist analysis*. Asian perspective.
- Stahl, Anna Katharina. 2011. Contrasting rhetoric and converging security interests of the European Union and China in Africa. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 4:147–173.
- Stanzel, Volker. 2007. The EU and China in the global system. In *China-Europe relations: perceptions, policies and prospects*, ed. David L. Shambaugh, Eberhard Sandschneider, and Hong Zhou, 251–263. London: Routledge.
- Stares, Paul, and Nicolas Regaud. 1997. Europe's role in Asia-Pacific security. *Survival* 39:117–139. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396339708442947>.
- Sun, Degang, and Yahia Zoubir. 2018. China's participation in conflict resolution in the Middle East and North Africa: a case of quasi-mediation diplomacy? *Journal of Contemporary China* 27:224–243. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2018.1389019>.
- Taylor, Ian. 2009. *China's new role in Africa*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Tsuruoka, Michito. 2008. "expectations deficit" in EU-Japan relations: why the relationship cannot flourish. *Current Politics and Economics of Asia*.
- De Ville, Ferdi, and Mattias Vermeiren. 2016. The Eurozone crisis and the rise of China in the global monetary and trading system: the political economy of an asymmetric shock. *Comparative European Politics* 14:572–603.
- Wallace, William. 1983. Less than a federation, more than a regime: the community as a political system. In *Policy making in the European community*, 2nd edn., ed. Helen Wallace, William Wallace, and Carol Webb. New York: Wiley.
- Wenxiu, Liu. 2002. 中国-欧盟经济关系的特点及发展前景 [the connotation and orientation of China-EU "comprehensive partnership"]. *山东大学学报:哲学社会科学版 [Journal of Shandong University: Philosophy and Social Sciences]* 2:49–54.
- Xuetong, Yan. 2000. 对中国安全环境的分析与思考 [Analysis and thinking of China's security environment]. *世界经济与政治 [World Economy and Politics]*: 5–10.
- Yang, Hai. 2018. Time to up the game? Middle Eastern security and Chinese strategic involvement. *Asia Europe Journal* 16:283–296. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-018-0509-6>.
- Ye, Jiang. 2011. 中欧全面战略伙伴关系面临新挑战 [China-EU comprehensive strategic partnership faces new challenges]: 1–9. 中国国际问题研究所 [China Institute of International Studies].
- Yu, Jie. 2017. After Brexit: risks and opportunities to EU-China relations. *Global Policy* 8:109–114. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12440>.
- Zeng, Jinghan. 2017. Does Europe matter? The role of Europe in Chinese narratives of "one belt one road" and "new type of great power relations": the role of Europe in Chinese narratives. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 55:1162–1176. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12535>.
- Zhang, Jian. 2008. 欧洲一体化的问题, 前景与欧洲国际地位 [Problems and future prospects of the EU's integration process and the EU's international status]. *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi*.

- Zhang, Li. 2016. "Reflexive expectations" in EU-China relations: a media analysis approach: "reflexive expectations", China, the EU. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 54:463–479. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12286>.
- Zhang, Zhan. 2016. A narrative future for Europe—China economic relations after the financial crisis. *Global Media and China* 1:49–69. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2059436416646270>.
- Zhimin, Chen. 2012. *Results, regrets and reinvention: Premier Wen's last China-EU summit*. Shanghai: Shanghai Institute for European Studies.
- Zhimin, Chen. 2016. China, the European Union and the fragile world order: China, the EU and world order. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 54:775–792. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12383>.
- Zuokui, Liu. 2017. The Chinese perception of the EU. In *China-EU relations*, ed. Hong Zhou, 189–200. Singapore: Springer Singapore. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-1145-0\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-1145-0_10).
- Zweig, David, and Jianhai Bi. 2005. China's global hunt for energy. *Foreign Affairs* 84:25–38.