

Awakening to China's Rise: European Foreign and Security Policies toward the People's Republic of China, by Hugo Meijer. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. xv+318 pp. US\$75.50/£75.00 (cloth); also available as an e-book.

Observers of Europe's relations with China have struggled for several decades to find evidence that the continent's decision-makers take issues of security and international norms as seriously as they pursue economic gains. Hugo Meijer's book is an empirically rich testament to just how much this situation has changed in recent years. Drawing on an impressive range of interviews with high-level decision-makers and ample policy documents and secondary materials, its main innovation is to focus on the big three European states of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. This provides a more granular analysis of policy making at the state level than is usually found in books on China and the European Union (EU) as a whole.

The book is divided into two sections: the first contains separate chapters dedicated to the long-term historical relationships of each of the three states with the Indo-Pacific region, leaving more recent developments to the second section. Because the three states are treated separately, there is quite a lot of repetition of the narrative about how they were awakened from an almost exclusive focus on building economic relations only when China became visibly assertive in the second decade of the new millennium.

If the historical accounts had been folded into one chapter, more space could have been devoted to explaining the significance of key events. Some of these are not mentioned, such as the imposition of economic sanctions on France for selling arms to Taiwan in 1991–92 and the granting of lucrative contracts to German industry that quickly followed, which is an early case of the divide-and-rule tactics that have been honed by Beijing in the years since then. The 1995–96 Taiwan Strait crisis is also absent, even though this accelerated the most important dynamics that have shaped China's strategy toward Europe down to today, such as the rise of popular nationalism in China, changes to its military doctrine, and the acceleration of the PLA's modernization. By paying more attention to what was learned by all sides from such early cases, additional light could have been shed on the later developments that the book covers, such as China's intentions when developing special relations with the new EU member states in Eastern and Central Europe.

More information about the changing structure, membership, and functions of the EU would also have helped to explain how the policies of the three states have been enabled and constrained by EU membership since the end of the Cold War. The book could have also included an explanation of how Chinese and European decision-makers have had to contend with the tensions between unipolarity, bipolarity, and multipolarity since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

While Beijing's divide-and-rule strategy was honed in Europe, it is now a hallmark of China's economic statecraft around the world. Coverage of the broader

geostrategic context is necessary for understanding how China sees the role of Europe in protecting what it now defines as its “core national interests.” The full significance of the European decision not to lift the arms embargo imposed after the Tiananmen Massacre, for example, is lost without stressing how the outcome was shaped by anger in Washington over the prospect of European arms being used to kill American soldiers as tensions escalated over the campaign of Chen Shui-bian to be reelected as president of Taiwan. Today, as the prospect of war over Taiwan looms yet again and European leaders express concern over their lack of strategic autonomy, it is more important than ever to ask what they have learned from such crises.

If greater attention had been paid to the broader context in section one, a more analytical exploration of contemporary issues could have been developed in section two. This is particularly true of the detailed and convincing coverage of how the three European states have tried to manage China’s use of its growing power across a range of issues. The account of China’s strategic use of information technology makes especially good use of recent cases, such as the regulation and banning of Huawei. Two appendices also provide useful information about British and French naval deployments in the Asia-Pacific and copious data on FDI flows, trade, and arms transfers.

Again, however, the separate treatment of the big three states tends to give a sense of repetition rather than any systematic evaluation of how well their policy makers have addressed the most sensitive political and security issues. What comes out most clearly from the evidence is the abject failure of the world’s longest-established and best-resourced security services and diplomatic corps to foresee the challenges posed by China’s rise. The pages brim with examples of senior military and intelligence experts who naively assumed that China’s military and economic power was too obsolete to pose a threat for the foreseeable future, until it was actually encroaching on contested maritime territories in the South China Sea.

If Meijer had pushed his interviewees harder, something more might have been revealed about their evident incompetence. Pursuing this angle of inquiry is especially important while Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is placing the European policy makers and elites who have guided relations with autocratic regimes under increasing public scrutiny. Vital questions of competence and complicity are raised by the acceptance of the convenient myth before the Ukraine war that trade and investment would lead to political liberalization in China and to Beijing’s more constructive engagement with the international system, epitomized by the claim of David Cameron’s premiership to have brought the relationship between the United Kingdom and China into a “golden era.”

Even as China’s behavior was becoming increasingly aggressive, this naivete was challenged by a small number of academics. Meijer makes little use of such siren voices, however. The survey of the chronic lack of European capacity by François Godement and his colleagues at IFRI in Paris is relegated to the footnotes, and

no use is made of the work of the late Kay Möller, who was the first to locate the significance of China-Europe relations in the global context and to draw attention to China's ability to divide and rule.

It would also have been good to see more discussion of the implications of Brexit, which raises intriguing questions for evaluating the shaping of China policy by European states. For example, does the United Kingdom's departure provide evidence to support the argument that the best way to deal with China is to prioritize the trans-Atlantic relationship over the European project, as witnessed by AUKUS? Has more room for maneuver been created by Britain's liberation from EU structures, such as the veto power of small states that are highly susceptible to Chinese pressure? It would be of great interest to a wider audience to weigh such arguments against the probability that Brexit has reduced the leverage of the United Kingdom to manage disputes and to draw up new agreements with China and other states in the Indo-Pacific.

Given the challenge of writing a research monograph on Europe-China relations at a time of breakneck change in global politics, it is not surprising that the book does not address all these questions. Its impressively long historical perspective and wealth of information, especially the extensive interviews with top decision makers, make it a valuable contribution to the still sparse academic literature on a subject of growing importance and interest. It is probably the most up-to-date account available, mentioning Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in several places, although the COVID pandemic is not discussed. As Meijer makes clear in the conclusion, the book raises as many questions as it answers. Hopefully he will go on to write about these, using a stronger analytical framework to shed more light on the political significance of the valuable empirical evidence that he has collected. Perhaps "Sleeping through China's Rise" would be an apt title for the sequel.

Christopher R. Hughes
London School of Economics and Political Science

Law as an Instrument: Sources of Chinese Law for Authoritarian Legality, by Shucheng Wang. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. xv+223 pp. US\$110.00 (cloth), US\$80.00 (e-book).

Scholars of Chinese law have long raised questions about instrumentalist uses of legal forms and terminology by the PRC Party-state to further its policy and political aims. Shucheng Wang's latest book raises the level of discussion from a critique of practice to a comprehensive theory of the role of law in the China as a legalistic