

Timo Koivurova, QIN Tianbao, Sébastien Duyck & Tapio Nykänen  
(eds.), *Arctic Law and Governance: The Role of China and Finland*  
(London: Hart Publishing, 2017)

This edited collection of essays is the product of a two-year project to assess and compare Chinese approaches to the Arctic with Finnish and/or EU approaches. These three entities are quite distinctive in population, politics and power and hence are not an obvious triumvirate. Nevertheless, the books' chapters draw out interesting points of comparison. China is a relative newcomer to international relations and economic development in the Arctic. Backed by both military and economic clout, it triggers concerns amongst Arctic inhabitants and other stakeholders regarding its ambitions. Such worries are not helped by China's closed political decision-making and limited official statements on its Arctic policies. This project, therefore, aims at increasing knowledge and understanding of China's interests and expectations in the region.

The introduction to the book provides a good summary of the analyses that follow in the self-standing chapters which are themselves grouped into three Parts: Chinese Perspectives; Comparison between Finland and China; and Comparison between the EU and China. As a collection of essays, the book does not have a single or overarching thesis as such but a number of common themes are identified in the introductory and concluding chapters (by the 4 editors). One repeated them is climate change and pollution. Climate change is not coming to the Arctic: it is already here. China is the World's biggest fossil fuel consumer and responsible for 29% of global greenhouse gas emissions (the EU, 11%). However, black carbon - a short term climate forcer - in the Arctic comes mostly from Europe. Europe is also a more significant source of the persistent organic pollutants (POPS) that end up in the Arctic (7). Another theme is economic development: even if the rights to exploit natural resources lie with the Arctic States and the peoples within them, the viability of doing so pivots on demand - and that demand is predominantly Chinese and European (8.)

The chapters go a long way to making up for China's decision not to publish a comprehensive Arctic strategy or make regular and clear statements about its Arctic plans. China is not necessarily to be blamed for this: China is a lot more significant in the Arctic than the Arctic is for China, even if the book demonstrates that Chinese interest (and interests) in the Arctic have grown swiftly in recent years.

QIN Tianbao and LI Miaomiao's chapter, "Strengthening China's Role in the Arctic Council" calls for an official Chinese Arctic strategy but is itself rather more candid than an official State policy document is likely to be and as a result, probably more useful. The two authors make a rather bold proposal that China become a fully-fledged *member* of the Arctic Council (42), which will raise a few eyebrows amongst the more territorially sensitive of the Arctic States. Let's just say that an official, published Chinese Arctic strategy is the more likely of the two scenarios in the near-term!

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Ren Shidan turns to Chinese Arctic research and points to, amongst other things, frustration with Russia regarding access (53). She argues for freedom of research in the Arctic and rejects arguments that Chinese research is a foil for long-term plans to strip the region of resources. However, her concerns regarding Norway's interpretation of the Svalbard Treaty (concerns shared by a number of European states) turn the chapter back to resource development (55-57).

Julia Jalo and Tapio Nykänen identify Chinese priorities in the Arctic based on *World Affairs* (a government-controlled magazine and unofficial mouthpiece). Only nine articles on the Arctic have been published since 2004 (indicating that the Arctic is still a relatively peripheral zone in Chinese politics). However, eight of these articles were published in 2008 or later, peaking when Chinese sought and accepted its seat as an observer at the Arctic Council in 2013, suggesting that interest is growing. The authors recognise that China is often viewed as a 'threat' in the Arctic, especially by those taking a classical realist approach, but they conclude that either China is indeed playing down its real intentions or that (more likely in their view) China is genuinely concerned about climate change and other environmental problems in the Arctic. In either case, they agree with QIN Tianbao and LI Miaomiao that a published strategy would help to clarify the situation.

Xiaoyi Jiang and Xiaoguang Zhou then consider maritime sovereignty and rights in the Arctic, looking in particular at the potential of the Northern Sea Route as an alternative to (or at least a supplement to) the Malacca route - even if they also note that Chinese shipping companies are adopting a 'wait-and-see' approach (96). They comment that China "has virtually no influence on the decision-making process at ministerial meetings" (of the Arctic Council)(90) and, like the other Chinese contributors, note that China is trying to be viewed as a partner in the Arctic rather than a threat (95).

Part II brings us to Finland with Lassi Heininen's assessment of Finland, the EU and China and the asymmetry between them. Climate change - and China's potential to take a lead role - is once again a key theme (107). Heininen sees common interests in shipping (Finland builds; China ships) (109); scientific research; resource governance and international cooperation (129). However, Finland and China also have shared interests in resource development in the Arctic (Finland produces; China buys) (118-120).

Tapio Nykänen presents the other chapter in this Part, using critical geopolitics to explore how the Arctic is framed in Chinese and Finnish Discourses. He agrees with the other writers that China is trying to build trust in the Arctic, seeking to present itself as a constructive partner (137). He analyses China's position as a self-declared 'near-Arctic state', pointing out that geographically, it is extremely far from the Arctic Circle but arguing

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that instead it is *geocritically* close (140). Nykänen recognises China's contributions to Arctic science but sees a political undercurrent to this: science is a 'door' through which China can claim a legitimate interest in Arctic governance (140).

Chapter Eight (Timo Koivurova, Waliul Hasanat, Piotr Graczyk and Tuuli Kuusama) is based on interviews with participants in the Arctic Council system, Chinese officials and scholars. It produces original, qualitative research on China's position within the Arctic Council and identifies issues that would be unlikely to be uncovered by looking only at official publications. For example, the authors report that some Chinese officials are unhappy with the Nuuk criteria on observers (169)). They also identify a problem in the delegations which both lack continuity and do not always match the mandates of the working groups (175-177).

On fisheries, Sébastien Duyck sees shared interests in China and the EU - both being major fisheries jurisdictions and being outsiders seeking to ensure that their industries are considered in any new regime for the Central Arctic Ocean (Chapter IX). China, Duyck points out, is a 'developing country' and positions itself as a 'leader' of the G77 (196). Its policies on fisheries differ from the EU, being more defensive of High Seas freedoms and rational use, compared to a more conservationist (or even preservationist) orientated EU (197-198).

Adam Stepien considers China's and the EU's respective engagement with indigenous peoples. China maintains the questionable position that it has *no* indigenous peoples inside of China (222). On the one hand, this means that China is not unnecessarily concerned with establishing precedents that could complicate matters at home (*cf* its position on international straits and Arctic shipping) but on the other hand, means that it has no experience and limited understanding of the stakes for indigenous people. China talks the talk (for example supporting indigenous rights in the UN - as long as it is clear that they don't apply to or in China! (223)) but its engagement is uncoordinated and inconsistent (216). Environmental impacts are once more brought to the fore as Stepien explains that European and Chinese emissions are a major threat to indigenous communities (210-211). The EU, recognising the Sámi as the only indigenous people within the EU itself, has a more proactive stance on Arctic indigenous peoples and is, in theory, supportive of indigenous rights (218). That does not mean, however, that the EU always gets things right.

Nengye Liu and Kamrul Hossain address navigation in the Arctic and highlight the dependence of China's economic strategy on shipping (243). The Northern Sea Route (less so the Northwest Passage) holds the promise of faster, cheaper shipping untroubled by the politics of alternative routes but, for now, this is still only a promise. While the shipping

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companies take things cautiously, the government has published the first Chinese guidelines on Arctic shipping (244). Like Xiaoyi Jiang and Xiaoguang Zhou, they note that China did not get involved in the development of the Polar Code and wonder if Chinese delegates to the IMO could take a more active role (247). They also suggest that China work alongside Japan and South Korea to promote (and defend) its shipping interests at the Arctic Council (249).

The concluding chapter by the four editors draws together the main findings of the contributions, reiterating the centrality of climate change and the consequent expectations of a natural resources boom (253-254). They note the resistance of the Arctic Eight to (too much) non-Arctic State involvement and how the Arctic Council system keeps the most powerful outsiders - like the EU and China - relatively subdued (261). Like most recent academic work on the Arctic, the final conclusion is that the answers are there and can be reached peacefully. International law has the answer to most questions; and for the others, it has processes by which to find, peacefully, those answers.

Although a number of writers call for a Chinese Arctic policy or strategy, this book gives us much more than any state policy every could. The original research and analysis by both Chinese and European scholars helps readers understand the dragon and, hopefully, fear it less. Nevertheless, there are subtle differences in approaches, with the Chinese authors tending to play down China's resource ambitions and emphasise science and environmental concerns with some of the European contributors implying that China's scientific contributions are driven by those very resource ambitions. I would wholeheartedly recommend this collection to anyone working on international law, international relations or economic development in the Arctic. Well edited, it is an accessible read for students as well as more seasoned academics. Even were the Chinese government to respond to the call to publish a formal strategy, it will not replace the excellent scholarship in this book.

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