



Universidad Autónoma
de Madrid

Biblos-e Archivo
Repositorio Institucional UAM

Repositorio Institucional de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

<https://repositorio.uam.es>

Esta es la **versión de autor** del artículo publicado en:
This is an **author produced version** of a paper published in:

Mediterranean politics 28.5 (2023): 812-833

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2022.2035136>

Copyright: © 2022 Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

El acceso a la versión del editor puede requerir la suscripción del recurso

Access to the published version may require subscription

The Limits of China's Engagement in the Mediterranean: Role Conflict and Emerging Mistrust in Spain-China relations

Mario Esteban^{a*} and Ugo Armanini^{b**}

^a Autonomous University of Madrid & Elcano Royal Institute, Spain¹.

Orcid.org/0000-0002-6168-398X

^b Elcano Royal Institute & Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain.

Orcid.org/ 0000-0003-2689-2572

* 215-B [III] Facultad de Profesorado, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 28049 Madrid, Spain. mario.esteban@uam.es

** uarmanini@rielcano.org

The Limits of China's Engagement in the Mediterranean: Role Conflict and Emerging Mistrust in Spain-China relations

Spain has recently endorsed a more critical stance towards China. This article explains this posture through the application of role theory and the concept of (mis)trust. Role conflict has intensified from the interplay between China's new roles of great power and economic and technological competitor, Spain's higher expectation towards China, and Spain's self-identified role, greatly influenced by its relations with its traditional European and US allies. This has generated mistrust, and Spanish authorities have shown greater concerns about Chinese behaviour. As a result, they have turned to a more conditional co-operation as evidenced by a series of recent foreign policy outcomes on the BRI, foreign investment, and 5G networks.

Keywords: Spain; China; role conflict; mistrust; co-operation.

Introduction

The People's Republic of China (China) has emerged as an important actor in the Mediterranean, mainly as a major economic partner and more recently through the deployment of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) [Chaziza, 2018; Eckman, 2018]. Against this background, Spain and China have witnessed a multi-dimensional development of their bilateral relations which has led to a renewed Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in November 2018. Spain has followed since the presidency of Felipe Gonzalez (1982-96) a consistent state policy towards China, aiming to materialize trade and investment opportunities while avoiding tensions. Nevertheless, Spanish authorities are endorsing in the last few years a more critical approach toward China, emphasizing the need of different rules of engagement, as illustrated by their refusal to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the BRI. Hence, Spain endorses the shift in the China strategy of the institutions of the European Union (EU), Spain's main partners inside the EU, France and Germany, and its main defence ally, the United States (US), who pay growing attention to economic and geopolitical competition with China [Government of Spain, 2021: 64; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, 2015: 102].

This article applies role theory and the concept of trust to discuss the evolution of Spain's China policy, analysing how it is shaped by the changes and interaction between the

different roles of Spain and China and their impact on Spain's trust towards China. Taking an interactionist perspective, this paper builds on the literature on role conflict and state's interaction, in combination with the concept of trust, and explores the process whereby role conflict generates mistrust, which in turn creates negative perceptions towards future outcomes in the bilateral relation hindering co-operation.

China's international role has recently transitioned from developing country to great power, building on its economic and technological development and increased international influence. This shift has heightened the dissonance between China's behaviour and Spanish expectations, especially those regarding economic opportunities in the Chinese market. In addition, this transition has seen the unforeseen emergence of China as an economic and technological competitor, amplifying this dissonance as this competition is considered unfair. The aggravated role conflict that ensues has generated some mistrust, which hinders bilateral co-operation. This dynamic has become apparent in a series of recent Spanish policies, signalling some reversal in bilateral relation or a more stringent control of Chinese activities. Spain's critical stance is also the consequence of its role within the EU and as an American ally. For Spanish authorities, relations with the EU institutions, key member states (France and Germany) and the US remain more important than bilateral relations with China [Government of Spain, 2021: 66-67; Ivan Gil, 2021]. Hence, the hardening of EU and US positions towards China also influences Spain's own policy towards Beijing, while Chinese efforts to shape Spain's foreign policy are less effective [Esteban & Otero Iglesias, 2020: 155-156].

The rest of the article discusses Spain's evolving perceptions of China and its impact on Spanish policy analysed through seven sections. The first section develops the theoretical framework, bridging role theory and the concept of trust. Section two briefly presents the main sources used in this paper to identify Spain's roles in its relationship with China and evidence of trust/mistrust. Section three outlines the main trends in Sino-Spanish relations. Section four analyses how China's recent role of great power has increased Spanish expectations and the dissonance between the roles Spain assigns to China and China's behaviour, resulting in aggravated role conflict. Section five examines evidence of resulting mistrust, which undermines Spanish perceptions of China and the appetite for co-operation with this country. Section six explores the implications of aggravated role conflict and mistrust through a series of recent Spanish policies, which exemplify Spain's shift towards a more conditional co-operation with China. The final section concludes.

Theoretical Framework

The literature on international relations commonly refers to roles as repertoires of behaviour inferred from others' expectations and one's own conceptions [Walker, 2017; Thies, 2015: 294]. Based on existing theoretical approaches, this article characterises four concepts: Self-identified, ascribed and performed roles, plus role conflict. Self-identified roles encompass state's self-perceptions and expectations about appropriate behaviour and their place in the international system, as well as their understanding on the expectations of other actors they engage with [Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012: 94; Harnish, 2011: 8]. Roles ascribed to other actors encompass external expectations about their behaviour, whereas performed roles correspond to actual foreign policy behaviour. Accordingly, this article endorses an interactionist perspective to understand role dynamics [Gurol & Starkmann, 2020: 4] as the interplay between these three categories suggest that roles are co-constituted in a subjective and interactional way [Harnish, 2012: 52; Wehner, 2015: 437]. The fourth element is role conflict, which emerges when there is a mismatch between roles or their constitutive elements.

In addition, this paper differentiates between master and auxiliary roles. Master roles are salient in every situation and determine the number and the nature of potential auxiliary roles, which are those that only apply to specific issues or in the interactions with specific actors [Breuning, 2019; Thies, 2012: 33-34; Whener, 2015: 435-9]. Thies proposes eight different master roles, which equates states positions in the international system, including that of great power, the one with the highest degree of capabilities in the system. Based on this master role, two auxiliary roles will be considered: partner and competitor. Thies' structure-oriented approach, inspired by realism, gives a predominant weight to material structure and capabilities [Walker, 2017; Wehner, 2015: 437-8]. Although it may downplay ideational factors, it also suggests subjective elements [Thies, 2012: 28-32], and ultimately, master roles remain the outcome of an interactive role location process [Breuning, 2019] from which one can infer the social nature of the [international] structure and the importance of agency.

This article applies these role theory concepts to the evolution of Spain-China relations. This application is one-sided, as it focuses on a Spanish perspective, and hence, on Spanish self-identified roles and the roles it ascribes to China. However, this analysis also operates within a triadic framework, which takes into consideration the roles performed by China, and those ascribed to Spain by its main European and US partners, which contribute to Spain's self-identification. The dynamics and evolution of these three sets of roles and their implications for Spain-China relations are analysed building on the argument of Gurol & Starkmann [2020] that

co-operation emerges and intensifies when role's compatibility increases – and role conflict decreases – to develop is corollary: intensified role conflict affects co-operation because it generates mistrust.

Previous literature has identified that trust or mistrust facilitate or hinder state's relations and co-operation, and some authors have applied the concepts to China's relations with other international actors [Hoffman, 2002; Huang, 2017; Rose & Skykora, 2017; Ruzicka & Keating, 2015; Stuart, 2015; Wheeler, 2012]. It has also highlighted that trust has been mobilized and scrutinized by policy-makers. This is the case of Sino-Spanish relations as (bilateral) trust has been explicitly promoted by both Chinese and Spanish authorities during several high-level diplomatic exchanges [Presidency of the government, 2018a, 2018b]. This also holds at the EU-level which is a crucial factor of Spain's relations with China. In the words of the high representative of the European Union, Josep Borrell, the focus of the renewed EU-China relationship should be on 'trust, transparency, and reciprocity' [Borrell, 2020].

As the theory of trust is yet to be consolidated, and its definition is debated [Berzins, 2004; Larson, 1997: 703; Ruzicka & Keating, 2015: 3-5], this article adopts a multidimensional approach of the concept [Berzins, 2004: 19] from which several elements can be selected and applied in conjunction to role theory. By combining Hoffman's definition of the concept – 'trust refers to an actor's willingness to place its interests under the control of others based on the confidence that those actors will honour their obligation to avoid using their discretion in a harmful manner' [2002: 394] – with other academic contributions, several characteristics of trust can be identified. Trust is inherently predictive because it is subjective assessment of future intentions and behaviours [Ruzicka & Keating, 2015: 7]. It entails the risk of a negative outcome but refers to one's positive belief it will not face this outcome [Hoffman, 2002: 377; Huang, 2017: 54; Wheeler, 2012] because the trustee will 'do what is right', which entails 'normatively positive' perceptions towards him [Hoffman, 2002: 381-2]. Trustors behave accordingly, bearing the risk of negative outcomes or refraining from preventing them [Berzins, 2004: 25; Wheeler, 2012]. Trust intensity and scope can vary. Literature suggests different levels of trust, including, for example, predictability (of the trustee's behaviour), credibility (the commitments it pronounces are trustworthy) and good intentions (it always act with benevolent intentions) [Larson, 1997: 714]. It is also based on previous experience, historical interactions and co-operation, in form of a 'learning process' [Berzins, 2004: 18; Larson, 1997: 717, 726; Rose & Skykora, 2017]. Finally, Hoffman offers interesting insights on trust's measurement. He suggests public statements on trustworthiness are less reliable than private statements, and that mistrust, or a low level of trust, favours more stringent oversight [2002: 385-91].

Based on these elements, mistrust is characterized by: negative normative perceptions of the (un)trustee, which lacks credibility; an increased reliance that future outcomes may negatively affect one's interests; and subsequently, a more stringent oversight of the bilateral relation with the other. Mistrust will be identified through evidence of Spanish perceptions of mismatch between Chinese official statements and concrete action, the disbelief that China will 'do what is right', the identification of China-related risks or threats, and enhanced monitoring mechanisms on Chinese activities.

This article explores how these elements of role theory and mistrust may interact. It endorses the argument of Gurol & Starkmann [2020] that role convergence favours co-operation, while role conflict obstructs co-operation. It also posits that this is the case because role conflict generates mistrust which in turn favours negative beliefs over future outcomes. More specifically, it prompts Spanish authorities to disbelief China may take into account their roles and expectations or change its behaviour so as to ensure it is not harmful to Spanish interests. The predictive nature of (mis)trust may also explain why emerging or increased role conflict does not necessarily imply a reversal in bilateral co-operation, but a shift towards conditional co-operation for the future, as in the case of Spain's relations with China.

Data and Methodology

To assess the roles of Spain and China plus the state of trust from the Spanish side, this paper is mainly based on the analysis of primary sources. This includes the most recent Spanish foreign affairs and defence general strategies, issued respectively in 2015 and 2021, the four successive Spanish Asia strategies (2000, 2005, 2008), the 2018 country strategic plan on China and two relevant sectoral strategies on R&D, artificial intelligence, and industrial policy (2018 and 2019). These strategic documents are completed by official statements from the Spanish Ministry of Foreign affairs and the joint declarations establishing (2005) and upgrading (2018) the comprehensive strategic partnership between Spain and China. In line with Michalski and Pan [2017], these sources will be considered as 'officially sanctioned' and 'stylized expressions' of the self-identified roles of Spain and those it ascribes to China. Findings are triangulated with interviews conducted by the authors with Spanish officials in the context of high-level visits and exchanges between China and Spain. Those are particularly crucial to explain some changing perceptions of China and meet Hoffman's suggestion to analyse private statements. Some secondary sources are also incorporated to develop and support the analysis, including publications from the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (IEEE) and the *Revista*

Española de Defensa (Spanish Defence Magazine), which are linked with the Ministry of Defence and shed light on Spain's domestic strategic debate.

An Overview of Spain-China Relations

The end of Franco's dictatorship improved political relations between Spain and China, in particular since the first government of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) in 1982. Since then, the two major Spanish parties, the PSOE and the Popular Party (PP), have regarded friendly relations with China as a prerequisite for beneficial economic relations with this country. Thanks to this consensus, Spain's China policy has been a state policy, as evidenced by the continuity in its successive Asia strategies and diplomatic approaches. The appointment of Eugenio Bregolat as Spanish ambassador in China by two different governments of the PSOE (1986-91 and 2011-13) and one of the PP (1999-2003) illustrates this continuity. Features of Spain's friendly China policy included: being the first EU country to revive high-level diplomatic visits after the repression of the Tiananmen's movement in 1989, a strict one-China policy, a non-confrontational approach on human rights issues and advocacy for lifting the EU's arms embargo on China. These initiatives by different Spanish governments were based on the confidence that intensified and normalized relations between China and democratic countries would contribute to the liberalization of the former as it was the case for Spain during Franco's regime [Bregolat, 2007]. This state policy led in November 2005 to the signing of a strategic partnership agreement between China and Spain [People's Republic of China & Kingdom of Spain, 2005] and was appreciated by Chinese authorities to the point that then prime minister, Wen Jiabao, labelled Spain in 2009 the 'best friend of China' in the EU [Expansion, 2009].²

The 2008 financial crisis and the Eurozone crisis brought new momentum to the bilateral relationship. China became a salutary export market at a time of looming internal demand and a welcomed source of foreign direct investment and public financing. In the aftermath of the Eurozone crisis, China held around 12 per cent of Spain's foreign debt, becoming its second largest international creditor behind France [Otero-Iglesias, 2014]. But there was no major strategic acquisition of Spanish assets at the time, except for the indirect takeover of EDP Spain, the Spanish branch of the Portuguese energy company *Energias de Portugal*. Other strategic acquisitions took place after the Spanish financial crisis. They include Ginkgo Tree Investment's purchase of 35 percent of the shares of *Madrileña Red de Gas* in 2015, and COSCO Shipping Ports' acquisition in 2017 of 51 percent of Noatum Ports, the operator of the container terminals of Bilbao and Valencia and of dry docks in Madrid and Zaragoza [China

Global Television Network, 2018]. However, those economic crises also fostered China's relations with other EU countries and some of them have proved more accommodating with Chinese interest, lowering Spain's significance as a political partner. Greece offers a key example in the Mediterranean. In contrast with Spain, Greece has endorsed positions favourable to China at the expense of EU unity, on the South China Sea and China's human rights record, signed a BRI MoU, and joined the sub-regional forum 17+1 [Plamen Tonchev, 2018: 44]. In addition, Greek political elites continue to mainly see China as 'strategic partner', a less critical approach than that of their Spanish counterparts, which now perceive it as a partner, competitor and rival simultaneously [Busse, Esther Franke, Loss, Puglierin, Riedel Zerka, 2020].

Although trade and investment links have become the main drivers of China's engagement with Spain, their volume is not particularly significant. Only Spanish imports from China stand out, as this country has become Spain's main provider outside of the EU. Spanish exports to China and investment levels cap at the EU and EuroMed 7³ average and remain significantly lower compared to those with Spain's main EU partners. China is the 10th destination for Spanish exports – 2.3 percent of Spain's total exports – and the 7th biggest foreign investor in Spain [Empresa Exterior, 2020; Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, 2020]. Spanish authorities have acknowledged this gap in their China strategy – the Plan *País con Actuación Sectorial Estratégica* (Country with Strategic Sectoral Policy) (Plan PASE) – and seek to develop existing potential in exports, bilateral investments and Chinese tourism [Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, 2018].

This is not to say that the political dimension of the relationship has become obsolete. The bilateral Comprehensive Strategic Partnership was upgraded in 2018 during President Xi Jinping visit to Spain [Presidency of the Government, 2018c]. Both sides have emphasized their excellent political relations after that. For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic when Spain was a privileged recipient of China's mask diplomacy [Esteban & Armanini, 2020]. Chinese authorities have also restated their recognition for Spain's support at the EU level [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2020]. However, China has found other EU member states that are more accommodating to its interests and the prospects of co-operation initiatives with Spain desired by China, such as Spain's adhesion to the BRI and a significant role for Chinese providers in the rollout of Spanish 5G network, are unlikely [Spanish diplomats, personal interview, Madrid, 20 January 2020]. The reservations of Spanish authorities to boost co-operation with China on those fields, which was particularly obvious and symbolic when they refused to sign an MoU on the BRI during Xi Jiping's 2018 state visit, are a sign of the adoption of a more critical stance towards China. Perceived divergences at the

normative level, including lack of transparency, or insufficient social-environmental standards, have prevented Spain to politically endorse this initiative, reflecting its self-identified role as a normative power, in line with its main references within the EU (France, Germany, and the EU institutions). Spain has also demonstrated a Europeanist position on other issues, like the establishment of EU-level and national investment screening mechanisms, and securitization of EU's fifth generation technology (5G) mobile networks.

China's role as Great Power and Spanish Expectations: Role Conflict Amplified

Spain displays of normative conditions for closer engagement with China emerge from its shifting perceptions of this country and the interplay among the roles China performs, the roles Spain assigns to China, Spain's self-identified roles, including that of a member of the EU and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the roles ascribed to Spain and to China by Spain's traditional partners inside these two institutions.

Historically, the roles Spain has assigned to China have been mainly based on the expectation that the country would liberalize and that it would offer Spain economic opportunities as in terms of exports and outwards investment [Bregolat, 2007]. This was reflected in Spain's successive Asia strategies since the publication of the *Plan Marco Asia Pacífico* (Asia Pacific Framework Plan) 2000-2002. These documents also evidence how these expectations have been challenged by China's role performance. This has prompted continuous Spanish demands for more balanced trade relations [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000], which have been included, later on, in the *Plan Plus China* [Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, 2008: 26]. The 2018 Plan PASE reaffirms the objective to increase and diversify Spanish exports towards China, acknowledging Spanish underperformance in that respect. Spanish authorities have also pushed for enhanced market access and equal treatment for Spanish companies in the Chinese market, which explains their positive reactions to the negotiations on the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI), as evidenced during the visit of China's top diplomat, Yang Jiechi, in September 2020 [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Co-operation, 2020], and after its signing in December 2020.

More recently, the gap between Spanish expectations and China's role performance has intensified given China's transition towards a master role of global power, herein equated with that of great power. Spanish authorities assign this role to China, and its Chinese counterparts also do so, at least in some cases, as highlighted by recent role-theory literature [Gurol & Starkmann, 2020: 6-8; Michalski & Pan, 2017]. This role builds on China's impressive socio-economic development, its enhanced financial and technological capabilities, its global

diplomatic outreach and its more active foreign policy. This translates into an increased international influence, also in Spain's privileged spaces of diplomatic engagement, like the EU, Latin America and Africa [Sendagorta, 2021a: 31:25-31:50].⁴ This role of great power is also associated by Spanish authorities with significant international leadership and [limited] 'international responsibility' on issues of particular relevance for European countries, like non-proliferation in Iran and the Korean Peninsula [Government of Spain, 2021: 15; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, 2015: 125]. This new master role has generated higher expectations from Spanish officials, which consider that it implies new responsibilities [Mendez Gimenez, 2020: 56:50-57:10],⁵ including in the economic field. As Josep Borrell, the former Spanish minister of Foreign Affairs, put in 2019: '[China's new status of] world power [...] entitles new responsibilities and requires for competitive advantages to be abandoned, as they do not correspond with the new reality of China.' [Cai, 2019]. Hence, Spanish authorities have issued more pressing demands on issues like reciprocity and level-playing field as for now China's behaviour in that respect is deemed unsatisfactory [Mendez Gimenez, 2020: 58-30-58:50].

The ensuing role conflict is further intensified by China's new auxiliary role as economic and technological competitor, all the more because this competition is perceived as unfair. This role has initially not been foreseen by Spanish authorities. Spain's 2015 Strategy for External Action refers to China's leadership in high technology industries as a 'radical change of scenario' [Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, 2015: 21] especially as Spain's perceives it has been outcompeted in sectors like artificial intelligence [Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities, 2019: 5, 18, 19, 44]. This has raised Spanish expectations for level playing field, in the absence of which China would undermine Spain's innovation capacities, especially given the high level of ambitions of the Made in China 2025 strategy [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Co-operation, 2018: 19].

Beyond this bilateral interaction, Spain's policy towards China has been also conditioned by its self-identification as member of EU and NATO, which incorporates the expectations of its main partners in those institutions. Early documents mentioned the goal to 'harmonize' (Spanish and) EU policies with those of the US [Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, 2005: 19]. US expectations remain relevant, especially on technological issues, and have generated pressure, both at the NATO and the bilateral level, to limit Chinese 5G technology in Spain [Arostegui, 2020; Wintour, 2020]. Although Spanish authorities have not endorsed a formal ban of Chinese providers, the preliminary draft of the 5G Cybersecurity Act [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation, 2021] adopts a broad risk

assessment which examines the suppliers' 'independence from external interferences', raising concerns among Chinese technological actors [Representatives of Huawei Spain, personal interview, Madrid, 8 June 2021].

Spain has also identified the EU as a useful platform for engagement with China since the adoption of the *Plan Marco Asia Pacífico* in 2000. This is even more the case as the growing asymmetry in the master roles of China and Spain becomes more apparent, making it a necessity to negotiate in satisfactory terms [Sendagorta, 2021a: 35:10-35:20]. Spain's stance towards the BRI illustrates this point, approaching this issue from a European perspective within the framework and the principles of the EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy. The existence of this specific EU strategy has greatly contributed to Spain's refusal to endorse the BRI as asked by China [Sendagorta, 2021b: 2:41:25-2:41:57]. This self-identified role echoes that ascribed to Spain by its main partners, like France and Germany, which also advocate a unified and coherent EU approach towards the BRI. Therefore, Spain has supported the reassessment of EU-China relations signalled by the EU Commission Joint Communication, which stated that China is a 'co-operation [and] negotiating partner' but also an 'economic competitor in the pursuit of technological leadership, and systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance' [European Commission, 2019]. This has also translated into renewed calls to address the current lack of reciprocity in the relations with China and to achieve level-playing field, for example, thanks to the CAI, which should improve market access for EU investors in China.

Emerging Mistrust: Spanish Concerns about China's Behaviour

The concept of trust has been promoted by China's public diplomacy at the bilateral and EU level. China's policy papers on the EU have explicitly mentioned the goal to enhance and deepen mutual trust [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2014; Yang, 2018]. This was reiterated during the Covid-19 pandemic. China's minister of foreign affairs Wang Yi declared that '[Chinese authorities] count on Spain, an important EU member, to promote greater trust and wider co-operation between China and the EU, and open up new prospects for the relations between the two sides through the fight against COVID-19' [Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union, 2020]. Spanish diplomacy has also referred to the concept of trust, which has been bilaterally endorsed in the 2005 Joint declaration which called to strengthen 'relations of mutual trust' [People's Republic of China & Kingdom of Spain, 2005]. Spain's 2008 China strategy stated that the bilateral political dialogue had a

‘privileged margin of trust’ which constituted a ‘valuable and permanent asset’ [Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, 2008: 23].

However, a sense of growing role conflict has also generated mistrust, which involves the realization that unconditional co-operation is unlikely to change China’s role performance, and that the latter may not take Spain’s interests into account. This section presents a set of evidence which point to this emerging mistrust including the lack of credibility of China’s commitments and a heightened sense that China’s behaviour may entail negative outcomes for Spanish interest, leading to a greater monitoring of Chinese activities.

Spanish literature puts into question China’s credibility given the gap between Chinese public commitments and its actual behaviour [Fernandez Palacios Martínez, 2019; Martínez Nuñez, 2018]. This is confirmed by Spanish authorities, which have acknowledged the contradictions between China’s rhetoric and actions, be it in the economic field, on issues like free trade, market access or level-playing field [Mendez Gimenez, 2020: 58-30-58:50], or between China’s official support in favour of EU’s unity and integration process, and some modalities of its engagement with the EU and its member states, including a preference for bilateral agreements on the BRI or the establishment of sub-regional fora, which have both been questioned for aggravating division trends inside the EU [Spanish diplomats, personal interview, Madrid, 15 June 2016 and 20 January 2020]. This gap between official policy and action has also been noticed regarding international law in general, and some specific issues as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea [Mendez Gimenez, 2020: 59:10-59:32]. Spanish minister of foreign affairs, Arancha González Laya, has recently emphasized Spain’s attachment to freedom of navigation and international maritime law while addressing the issue of the security situation in the South China Sea with China’s top diplomat Yang Jiechi [Presidency of the Government, 2020a].

Scepticism on China’s behaviour also comes with the increased perception that it may harm Spanish interests. This includes aforementioned concerns about Chinese unfair technological competition and its impact on Spanish innovation [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Co-operation, 2018: 19], and the threats posed by China’s (and US) industrial protectionism which resembles neo-mercantilism, detrimental for international trade [Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, 2019: 12-13]. Spanish defence strategies also corroborate risks perceptions of Chinese actions in the South China Sea [Paíno Peña, 2018], as a destabilizing factor that could negatively impact the whole international community [Presidency of the Government, 2013, 3] and jeopardize Spanish interests for freedom

navigation and free trade [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Co-operation, 2018: 13].

Loss of credibility and increased risk perception seem to favour a more stringent oversight of China's behaviour. This is suggested by the apparent adoption of a result-driven characterization of trust in the bilateral relation by Spanish authorities. Recent mentions of trust have been associated with concrete measures which materialize economic opportunities for Spanish companies, like the signature of MoUs aimed to facilitate Spanish exports to China and a series of private agreements which opened a 'gateway for Spanish businesses into the Chinese market' [Presidency of the Government, 2018b, 2020b]. This focus on results may be linked with increased scepticism than co-operation with China may deliver promised outcomes and signals a loss of credibility. This has been reflected in the institutional bilateral mechanisms established in 2018, which have been explicitly requested by Spanish authorities as tools to monitor the concrete progress achieved in bilateral co-operation, and avoid inconclusive outcomes [Spanish diplomats, personal interview, Madrid, 29 November 2018]. This is arguably also one of the motives behind the recent legal proposal presented by the PSOE to strengthen Spain-China bilateral relations based on the Joint declaration of 2018 [Congress of Deputies, 2021: 16-17], which calls for a concrete implementation of the identified areas of co-operation, while reaffirming Spanish demands for better market access in China.

Beyond that, Spanish authorities seem to have undertaken a broader revaluation of the implications of China's behaviour for Spanish interest, with an emerging debate on the desirability of Chinese investments between sectors and China's economic engagement in Latin America [Sendagorta, 2021a, 37:55-38:10; 38:55-38:50]. Chinese activities in the Mediterranean have also recently been raised in the Spanish 2017 Defence Strategy, which mentions that the Mediterranean has become an 'area of projection for several states and international actors and axis of strategic dynamics of global interest' including China's 'trade expansionism' in ports as part of the BRI [Ministry of Defence, 2017: 45-7] although this brief formulation is not linked with concrete risk or threat perception on the matter. Arguably, this owes to China's approach in the region which relies primarily on soft power and economic ties, its low security profile in the area, as well as the lack of an explicit challenge to Western influence [Abdel Ghafar & Jacobs, 2020: 5; Tonchev, 2020], with the exception of Chinese reactions to military operations in Libya in 2011 and its opposition to western-led resolutions on Syria at the UN Security Council [Reuters, 2011; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, 2017: 12].

Recalibrating the Relation: Towards Conditional Co-operation

There are a few policies that could be discussed in more detail to evidence Spain endorsement of a more conditional approach towards China. This includes Spain's recent policies on the BRI, Chinese investments and the securitization of Chinese 5G technology.

Spain position on the BRI evidences that Spanish former expectations on good political relations with China leading to privileged economic opportunities have been discarded, precluding Spanish political support for the initiative. Spanish authorities have acknowledged the potential of the BRI as 'a connectivity platform to foster exchanges and co-operation in third countries' [Presidency of the Government, 2018a: 1] and have maintained their participation in the Belt and Road forums [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Co-operation, 2019]. But this expected role contrasts with the limited opportunities offered for non-Chinese companies, and the lack of BRI projects in Spain, except for the Madrid-Yiwu rail connection, which has not met the expectations of the Spanish authorities to reduce bilateral trade deficit [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Co-operation, 2018: 17].

In addition, this intersects intrinsically with normative considerations as specific economic opportunities require a set of normative principles yet to be fulfilled under the BRI and that former Spanish foreign minister Josep Borrell explicitly presented: 'financial, labour and environmental sustainability', comprehensive connectivity, respect of international law and inclusive level playing field [Cai 2020]. These principles are enshrined in the EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy and followed by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which Spain joined as founding member [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Co-operation, 2018: 17].

Spanish stance on the BRI echoes that of France, German, and the EU institutions which call for a coherent and unified stance towards China and this initiative and have refused to endorse it on a bilateral basis. Spanish authorities used to be more willing to engage bilaterally with China [Bregolat, 2007; Spanish diplomats, personal interview, Beijing, 14 November 2018; Spanish diplomats, personal interview, Madrid, 18 March 2019], but they now consider that their bargaining position benefits from co-ordination with the main EU players [Sendagorta, 2021a: 35:10-35:20]. At the same time, this is in line with Spain's commitment to EU's cohesion aiming to reinforce the EU's role as an important international actor, which has translated in an earlier opposition to a subregional forum of co-operation between Mediterranean EU countries and China [Esteban, 2018: 46]. China's engagement has already jeopardized EU's unity, with the example of Greece's veto against a EU statement at the United Nations Human Rights Council on China's human rights record [Spanish diplomats, personal

interview, Madrid, 15 June 2016 and 20 January 2020]. In the eyes of Spanish authorities, Italy signature of an MoU on the BRI with China in 2019 has also been at odds with the goal of EU's unity, at least at the symbolical level [Spanish diplomats, personal interview, Madrid, 20 January 2020], a view shared by French, German, and EU officials [Le Figaro, 2019; Tidey, 2019].

Spain is also supporting a more coherent EU approach towards China through defensive economic measures, such as an investment screening mechanism. This adds to a certain lack of trust towards China, owing to the institutional nature of its party-state regime and the murky connections between Chinese companies and the state given their corporate structure. This has led to increasing efforts to better scrutinize Chinese investments through the adoption and upgrading of investment screening mechanisms inside the EU. Spain supported the adoption of an EU-level screening mechanism proposed by France, Germany and Italy, and it is one of the 14 EU countries with a national screening mechanism [European Commission, 2020; Tartar, Rojanasakul & Scott Diamond, 2018].

In addition, Spain's national mechanism has been recently updated [de Alvear Trénor 2020; Official State Gazette, 2020] amid concerns of foreign takeovers following the Covid-19 crisis. Spanish authorities do welcome Chinese investments, but those which target strategic sectors are more sensitive and have raised concerns. This was already reflected following the Spanish financial crisis when a series of potential acquisitions by Chinese firms remained unsuccessful. For example, that of *Red Eléctrica de España* by State Grid Corporation of China, CESCE by Fosun, and Repsol and *Canal de Isabel II* by China Investment Corporation [Esteban, 2018].

Finally, concerns about China's role as a technological leader and evidence of mistrust are reflected in the securitization of the involvement of Chinese providers in 5G networks in Spain. This issue is of particular relevance, as it shows a significant limitation, if not a reversal, of Spain's co-operation with Chinese firms, especially Huawei, which has been a major equipment supplier of Spanish 4G networks and during Spain's initial 5G rollout [El Mundo, 2016; Virki, 2020]. Spanish authorities have recently reassured their Chinese counterparts about the future of the bilateral technological co-operation [Presidency of the Government, 2020a] but Spain has nevertheless engaged in a reassessment of the balance between economic benefits and security risks. While refraining to ban Chinese firms from critical infrastructures, Spanish authorities and companies are looking to diversify their suppliers. This is illustrated by the announcements made by Telefonica to replace the core technology of its Spanish networks with a multi-provider architecture which will likely exclude Huawei by 2024 [La Vanguardia, 2019],

its decision to replace the Chinese firm by Ericsson and Nokia in the 5G radio access network [del Castillo, 2021] and the decision made by its German branch to switch from Huawei to Ericsson's technology for its 5G core [Busvine & Seythal, 2020]. The recent Draft Bill on security in 5G networks and services issued by the Spanish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation also point towards this direction [2021: 14]. Article 10 specifies risk assessments will not only be conducted in a technical perspective, but that they will also take into consideration vulnerabilities linked with supply chains. Criteria for analysis aim to achieve guarantees against foreign interferences, and include, among others, the suppliers corporate and social capital structure, its links with and risk of pressure from third countries and the characteristics of the political regime of those countries. This also highlights Spain's commitment to its ascribed role by its traditional allies as it has endorsed a cautious and securitized European approach regarding 5G networks [NIS Co-operation Group 2020].

This position is coherent with cyber-security threats linked to China, which also undermine trust in this country. Intelligence reports have identified China as the second source of origin of cyber-attacks perpetrated in Spain [Ministry of Defence, 2019: 10] and the 2017 national security strategy highlights that security concerns over next gen technologies preceded the outbreak of the US-China trade war [Ministry of Defence, 2017: 86-87]. As the IEEE points out, part of the debate eventually revolves around implications of technology in terms of power which encompasses national security risks but also economic benefits, and translates into economic, social, and political influence [Gacho Carmona, 2020: 19].

Conclusions

Spain-China relations have experienced a substantial development in the last decades, especially since the 2008 financial crisis. Both countries have acknowledged the potential to further develop their ties as stated in the Joint Bilateral Declaration signed during President Xi Jinping's state visit to Spain in November 2018. Nevertheless, Spain's refusal to endorse the BRI during the same visit has also signalled a shift towards more conditional co-operation.

This article has analysed this shift as the outcome of a combination between role conflict and mistrust. China's role of great power has induced higher Spanish role expectations and intensified the role conflict between the roles of an economic opportunity and a liberalizing country Spain has assigned to China since the early 1980s, and the latter's actual role performance. This role conflict has been further aggravated by China's new auxiliary role of economic and technological competitor. Spain's stance towards China is also influenced by Spain's relations with its traditional allies, which are crucial in framing the roles it ascribes to

China, as well as Spain self-identification of what its appropriate behaviour should be. Spain has endorsed a Europeanist normative approach towards China as it favours a coordinated approach with France, Germany and the EU institutions. Spain appears also concerned not to jeopardize its relationship with the United States, which remains a privileged partner despite disagreements on the unilateralist foreign policy pursued during the Trump Administration.

Role conflict has also generated mistrust, as evidenced China's credibility loss, the realization that China's behaviour may entail negative outcomes for Spanish interests and negative perceptions towards the Chinese political and economic regime, leading to a greater monitoring of Chinese activities. This interplay between role conflict and mistrust has pushed Spain to endorse a more conditional approach to cooperate with China, as exemplified in a series of recent Spanish policies on the BRI, foreign investment and Chinese 5G technology.

This paper has applied role theory and mistrust as states were monolithic actors. Further research could explore how sub-state dynamics generate the adoption of roles [Walker, 2017], in particular, how trust, or mistrust from different individuals and groups may influence the roles state's assign to their international counterparts.

Notes

Notes

1. This research was supported by the Spanish Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness [R&D project grant number CSO2017-82921-P].
2. For detailed analysis of the evolution of Sino-Spanish relations, see [Esteban, 2016] and [Herrera Feligreras, 2015].
3. Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain.
4. Appointed Director General of Foreign and Security Policy in 2020. He was also Director General for North America, Asia and the Pacific from 2015 to 2018.
5. Deputy Director for Eastern and Southern Asia at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation until 2020.

References

- Abdel Ghafar, A. & A.L. Jacobs (2020) *China in The Mediterranean: Implications of Expanding Sino-North Africa Relations*, Brookings Institution.
- Arostegui, M. (2020) US Pressures Spain on Chinese Tech Firms, *Voice of America*, 22 February.
- Bengtsson, R. & O. Elgström (2012) Conflicting Role Conceptions? The European Union in Global Politics, *Foreign Policy Analysis* 8, pp.93–108.
- Berzins, C.A. (2004) The puzzle of trust in international relations: Risk and relationship management in the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, PhD thesis, University of London.
- Borrell, J. (2020) Trust and reciprocity: the necessary ingredients for EU-China co-operation, European External Action Service. https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/79355/Trust%20and%20reciprocity:%20the%20necessary%20ingredients%20for%20EU-China%20co-operation
- Bregolat, E. (2007) *La segunda revolución china* (Barcelona: Ediciones destino).
- Breuning, M. (2019) Role Theory in Politics and International Relations, in: A. Mintz & L. Terris (Eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Behavioral Political Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Busse, C., U. Esther Franke, R. Loss, J. Puglierin, M. Riedel & P. Zerka (2020) EU Coalition Explorer: Policy Intentions Mapping, European Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.ecfr.eu/eucoalitionexplorer/policy>
- Busvine, D. & T. Seythal (2020) Telefonica Deutschland picks Ericsson for 5G core network, *Reuters*, 2 June.
- Cai, J. (2019) Belt and Road reflects reality that China is now a world power, Spanish foreign minister says, *South China Morning Post*, 24 April.
- Chaziza, M. (2018) The Chinese Maritime Silk Road Initiative: The Role of the Mediterranean, *Mediterranean Quarterly* 29(2), pp.54–69.
- China Global Television Network (2018) Noatum Ports to boost China-Spain maritime co-operation, State Council Information Office of China, 22 August.
- Congress of Deputies (2021) Official Bulletin of Parliament n° 240, 16 March, Spain.
- de Alvear Trénor, I. (2020) Nueva regulación de las inversiones extranjeras directas en sectores estratégicos de España y la UE, incluido el de Defensa, Elcano Royal Institute.

- del Castillo, A. (2021) Telefónica adjudica a Nokia y Ericsson su 5G en España, *Expansión*, 14 June.
- Ekman, A. (2018) China in the Mediterranean: An Emerging Presence', *Notes de l'Ifri*, French Institute of International Relations.
- El Mundo (2016) Huawei cumple 15 años en España asomada al 5G, 19 December.
- Empresa Exterior (2020) Gran potencial de crecimiento de las exportaciones españolas a China y a ASEAN, 24 Juna.
- Esteban, M. (2016) Spain's Relations with China: Friends but not Partners, *Chinese Political Science Review*, 1(2016), pp.373–86.
- Esteban, M. (ed.) (2018) *Relaciones España-China* (Madrid: Elcano Royal Institute).
- Esteban, M. & M. Otero-Iglesias (2020) Spain Longs for a Stronger Europe in the Face ff US-China Antagonism, in: M. Esteban, M. Otero-Iglesias *et al.* (Eds) *Europe in the Face of US-China Rivalry* (Madrid: Elcano Royal Institute).
- Esteban, M. & U. Armanini (2020) China-Spain relations amid COVID-19 in a comparative perspective: An enduring partnership facing potential uncertainties, China-CEE Institute.
- European Commission (2019) *EU-China –A strategic outlook*, Brussels.
- (2020) List of screening mechanisms notified by Member States. https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2019/june/tradoc_157946.pdf
- Expansión (2009) Zapatero busca en China un socio para salir de la crisis, 31 January.
- Fernández- Palacios Martínez, M. (2019) La OTAN cumple 70 años en plena adaptación a un nuevo entorno estratégico, *Revista Española de Defensa*, 32(367), pp.52–5.
- Gacho Carmona, I. (2020) The European Union before China's rise as a tech power: the 5G case, Opinion Paper 23/2020, IEEE.
- Government of Spain (2021) *2021-2024 Foreign Action Strategy*.
- Gurol, J. & A. Starkmann (2020) New Partners for the Planet? The European Union and China in International Climate Governance from a Role-Theoretical Perspective, *Journal of Common Market Studies*.
- Harnish, S. (2011) Role Theory: Operationalization of key concepts, in: S. Harnisch, C. Frank & H. W. Maull (Eds.) *Role Theory in International Relations* (London: Routledge).
- (2012) Conceptualizing in the Minefield: Role Theory and Foreign Policy Learning, *Foreign Policy Analysis* 8, pp.47–69.
- Herrera, A. (2015) *España y China (1973-2005): Del reconocimiento diplomático a la Alianza Estratégica* (Ediciones Bellaterra).

- Hoffman, A.M. (2002) A Conceptualization of Trust in International Relations, *European Journal of International Relations*, 8(3), pp.375–401.
- Huang, H. (2017) The Role of Trust in China-ASEAN Relations: Towards a Multi-level Trust Building for China and ASEAN, *International Journal of China Studies* 8(1), pp.45-69.
- Iván Gil (2021) Sánchez sitúa a EEUU como "aliado principal" y marca distancias con China y Rusia, *El Confidencial*, 18 January.
- La Vanguardia (2019) Telefónica reducirá su dependencia de Huawei en el núcleo de la red 5G en su apuesta por varios proveedores, 17 December.
- Larson, D. (1997) Trust and Missed Opportunities in International Relations, *Political Psychology*, 18(3), pp.701–34.
- Le Figaro (2019) Paris souhaite l'unité européenne sur les 'nouvelles routes de la soie', 21 March.
- Martínez Núñez, J.F. (2018) Los nuevos desafíos de la alianza atlántica, *Revista Española de Defensa*, 31(347), pp.22–5.
- Michalski, A. & Z. Pan (2017) Role Dynamics in a Structured Relationship: The EU-China Strategic Partnership, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 55(3), pp.611-627.
- Mendez Gimenez, P. (2020) Europe in the Face of US-China Rivalry, Presentation at the Webinar, Madrid, 30 January. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8d5wioxALI>
- Ministry of Defence (2017) *Estrategia De Seguridad Nacional*, Government of Spain.
- (2019) *Ciberamenazas y Tendencias 2019*, Government of Spain.
- Ministry of Economic Affairs and Digital Transformation (2021) *Borrador de Anteproyecto de Ley sobre requisitos para garantizar la Seguridad de las redes y servicios de comunicaciones electrónicas de quinta generación*, Government of Spain.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2000) *Plan marco Asia Pacífico 2000-2002*, Government of Spain.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation (2005) *España hacia Asia y el Pacífico: Plan de Acción 2005-2008*. Government of Spain.
- (2008) *Plan Asia Pacífico 3: 2008-2012*, Government of Spain.
- (2015) *Strategy for External Action*, Government of Spain.
- (2017) *Spain in the United Nations Security Council: A comprehensive review 2015-2016*, Government of Spain.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Co-operation (2018) *Una visión estratégica para España en Asia 2018-2022*, Government of Spain.

- (2019) The Minister of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Co-operation has travelled to China to attend the 2nd Belt and Road Forum (Beijing, from 25 to 27 April 2019), Government of Spain, 29 April.
- (2020) Meeting between Minister for Foreign Affairs and Director of Central Foreign Affairs Commission of Chinese Communist Party, Yang Jiechi, 3 September.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (2014) *China's Policy Paper on the EU: Deepen the China-EU Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for Mutual Benefit and Win-win Co-operation*, People's Republic of China.
- Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism (2018) *PASE (País con Actuación Sectorial Estratégica) China*, Government of Spain.
- (2019) *Directrices generales de la nueva política industrial española 2030*. Government of Spain.
- (2020b) China: Relaciones bilaterales, Government of Spain.
<https://www.icex.es/icex/es/navegacion-principal/todos-nuestros-servicios/informacion-de-mercados/paises/navegacion-principal/el-pais/relaciones-bilaterales/index.html?idPais=CN>
- Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (2019) *Estrategia española de I+D+I en inteligencia artificial*, Government of Spain.
- Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union (2020) State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi Speaks by Phone with Spanish Foreign Minister Arancha González Laya, 13 May.
- National Statistics Institute (2020a) Número de turistas según país de residencia, Government of Spain.
- (2020b) Población extranjera por Nacionalidad, Sexo y Año, Government of Spain.
- NIS Co-operation Group (2020) *Cybersecurity of 5G networks: EU Toolbox of risk mitigating measures*, European Union.
- Official State Gazette (2020) Real Decreto-ley 8/2020, de 17 de marzo, de medidas urgentes extraordinarias para hacer frente al impacto económico y social del COVID-19, BOE-A-2020-3824, Government of Spain.
<https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2020/03/18/pdfs/BOE-A-2020-3824.pdf>
- Otero-Iglesias, M. (2014) How much Spanish sovereign debt does China hold?, Elcano Royal Institute.
- Paíno Peña, L. (2018) Geopolítica en el Indo-Pacífico: el factor militar en la nueva China, IIEE.

- People's Republic of China & Kingdom of Spain (2005) *Declaración Conjunta entre la República Popular China y el Reino de España*.
- Presidency of the Government (2013) *The National Security Strategy: Sharing a Common Project*, Government of Spain.
- (2018a) *Declaración conjunta de la República Popular China y el Reino de España sobre el fortalecimiento de la Asociación Estratégica Integral en un cambio de época*, Government of Spain.
- (2018b) España y China suscriben Protocolos sanitarios para la exportación de uva de mesa y de carne y productos curados de porcino españoles al país asiático, Government of Spain.
- (2018c) Spain and China further develop strategic relations by signing some 20 agreements, Government of Spain.
- (2020a) Arancha González Laya se reúne con el Director de la Oficina de Asuntos Exteriores del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de China, Government of Spain.
- (2020b) China autoriza la exportación de carne y productos del porcino a ocho nuevos establecimientos españoles, Government of Spain.
- Reuters (2011), UPDATE 1-Russia, China urge adherence to Libya resolutions, June 16.
- Rose, C. & J. Skykora (2017) The trust deficit in Sino-Japanese Relations, *Japan Forum* 29(1), pp.100–24.
- Ruzicka, J. & V. C. Keating (2015) Going global: Trust research and international relations, *Journal of Trust Research* 5(1), pp.8–26.
- Sendagorta, F. (2021a) España ante la rivalidad estratégica entre China y Estados Unidos, Presentation at the Webinar, Madrid, 22 June.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=975KCQtusfA>
- (2021b) The Indo-Pacific: A privileged space for enhanced EU-Japan geostrategic co-operation, Presentation at the Webinar, Madrid, 9 March.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jmi8rySztKg>
- Silver, L., K. Devlin & C. Huang (2020) Unfavorable Views of China Reach Historic Highs in Many Countries, Pew Research Institute.
- Stuart, K. (2015) China and India: A 'New Great Game' founded on historical mistrust and current competition, Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies.
- Tartar, A., M. Rojanasakul & J. Scott Diamond (2018) How China Is Buying Its Way into Europe, *Bloomberg*, 13 April.

- Tidey, A. (2019) Macron invites Merkel and Juncker for meeting with China's Xi Jinping, *Euronews*, 26 March.
- Thies, C.G. (2012) International Socialization Process vs. Israeli National Role Conceptions: Can Role Theory Integrate IR Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis?, *Foreign Policy Analysis* 8, pp.25–46.
- (2015) China's Rise and the Socialisation of Rising Powers, *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 8(3), pp.281–300.
- Tonchev, P. (2018) Sino-Greek relations: Marked by values or opportunism? in: T. Nicholas Rühlig, B. Jerdén, F.-P. van der Putten, J. Seaman, M. Otero-Iglesias and A. Ekman (Eds) *Europe in the Face of US-China Rivalry* (Madrid: Elcano Royal Institute).
- (2020) A new kid on the block? China in the security conundrum of the eastern Mediterranean, Elcano Royal Institute.
- Turcsanyi, R., R. Sedlaková, J. Cenek, K. Kironska, A. Findor, O. Buchel, M. Hruska, A. Brona, U. Berzina Cherenkova, M. Esteban, B. Gallelli, J. Gledic, P. Gries, S. Ivanov, B. Jerden, M. Julianne, T. Matura, T. Ruhlrig & T. Summers (2020) Sinophone Borderlands Europe Survey, Palacky University Olomouc.
- Walker, S.G. (2017) Role Theory as an Empirical Theory of International Relations: From Metaphor to Formal Model, *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.
- Wehner, L.E. (2015) Role Expectations as Foreign Policy: South American Secondary Powers' Expectations of Brazil as a Regional Power, *Foreign Policy Analysis* 11, pp.435–55.
- Wintour, P. (2020) US defence secretary warns Huawei 5G will put alliances at risk, *The Guardian*, 15 February.
- Wheeler, N. J. (2012) Trust-Building in International Relations, *South Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 4(2).
- Yang, Y. (2018) Full text of China's Policy Paper on the European Union, *Xinhua*, 18 December.