

Mavroidis, Petros C. and André Sapir. *China and the WTO: Why Multilateralism Still Matters*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2021. x + 242 pages. Paperback, \$27.95.

This book is a timely reading from Professors Petros Mavroidis and André Sapir. They provide a detailed account of China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and review the growth of China, post-accession, including rising concerns and challenges. The solution proposed is multilateralism. The authors believe it is time to negotiate a new WTO deal with exclusive requirement on state-owned enterprises (SOE) and technology transfer (TT). Arguing against Thucydides' Trap, the authors referenced the current multilateral rules-based system and the cost of unilateral behavior. Although acknowledging trade is part of the wider theme of international relations, they emphasized that the enduring cooperation should be carried out through the WTO.

There are seven chapters in the book besides the introduction and concluding remarks. From the beginning (Chapter 1), the book starts with historical information on the tie between China and the WTO and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), its predecessor, and the euphoria its member countries showed toward this new member at its accession. It provides a background for the readers to understand the context for later-on challenges. Following the historical review, it explores the details of this trade conflict in Chapter 2 by focusing on two main concerns: SOE and TT and revealing the limit of the current WTO legal regime in resolving these two items. As a comparison, Chapter 3 examines accession cases to WTO/GATT from other countries such as former Soviet bloc countries, Arab countries, and Japan. There are both similarities and differences of the experiences between these countries, especially, Japan and China. Chapters 4 and 5 discussed courses of action already taken by countries, e.g., United States, and the ones proposed by academia. It argues against unilateral threats, tariffs, the "do nothing" suggestion, and further affirms the gaps in the WTO Protocol of Accession which implies that it is not legally and

policy-wise possible to resolve this dispute in its current form. Subsequently, Chapter 6 starts with how to change the course of action with proposals on changing WTO rules. It clearly states that this amendment of the rules should not be China-specific and should address SOE and TT concerns explicitly for all members. At the end, Chapter 7 iterates the urgency of actions amid further changes of the economy in China. The authors believe that rule-based trading system is the way to avoid conflict compared with power-based system when involving big countries like China.

The uniqueness of this book lies in its connection between the prevailing argument of trading problems with China and the detailed account of WTO/GATT rules. This is the result when an economist and legal expert join effort together. The blend discussion from economic, legal, and international relation perspectives brings a holistic view for the readers who may be more familiar with overly saturated news media headlines on the trade conflict between the United States and China, but have never had the opportunity to get close to the original legal trading documents of WTO. It uses limited text efficiently depicting the historic picture of the original process from reaching out to GATT by China to eventually accession to WTO, which is very beneficial to social scientists who are not trading experts in aiding their non-trading focused research for this topic. Another key contribution of this book is to simplify the main concerns of this trading conflict by focusing on SOE and TT throughout the book and suggesting solution from WTO framework angle not targeting single countries. As stated by the authors, the advantage of multilateral solution will address these trading issues which are not unique to China. This way of thinking will lift the overall strength of WTO instead of only providing a patch for gaps. The weakness of this book, or maybe a topic for future volume, is the lack of discussion on the prerequisite condition to enter a new negotiation of WTO. The authors advocate for treating this new negotiation with urgency. However, a multilateral solution will not arrive unless all participants have the intention to cooperate

and believe in its success when completed. This book is easy to follow and has extensive references of existing research, which should be helpful to the readers for further studies.

In summary, this book provides a comprehensive discussion about the accession of China to WTO and its rising challenges. It proposes a multilateral approach to resolve these issues through a new WTO negotiation to set up the explicit ground rules for all member countries. It should be an interesting read for anyone that cares about trading conflict resolution in WTO and related impact from China. In addition, it can serve as a good reference book for social scientist in the fields of economics, history, international relations, and political science.

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*The opinion in this review is solely of the author's and does not represent any institution.

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