dimensional role as the epitome of all that is wrong with civil–military relations, although the archival record shows a far more complex reality. John F. Kennedy receives more credit than is his due in his relationship with General Maxwell Taylor. Taylor is seen coming to the young President’s rescue, when, in fact, Taylor contributed both wisdom and folly in near-equal measure.

There is much in this book to commend to the careful reader more fully versed in these case studies. Herspring’s introductory framework and general conclusions about institutions and their processes can be effectively applied to narrower, more exhaustively researched cases. Had he done so, this book would almost certainly be among the essential readings on this topic.

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The impact of business associations and the practice of lobbying in China have been largely ignored by the literature. These are extremely sensitive topics in China and thus very difficult to research. Business associations have traditionally been little more than an arm of the state. Moreover, insofar as business associations deviate from their traditional form and function, they do not fit into any of the prevailing models of Chinese political economy. Scott Kennedy’s excellent new book, The Business of Lobbying in China, confronts these challenges and provides a much-needed fixative to this lacuna in the literature.

Kennedy quickly dispenses with the conventional wisdom that “Chinese firms are not interested in public policy because they are subject to a state-controlled associational system” (p. 2). He then moves on to demonstrate the poor fit of several of the prevailing models of China’s political economy in explaining the phenomenon of business associations and lobbying in China. First, taking aim at the state corporatism model, Kennedy argues that many Chinese business associations are, like their government counterparts, largely decentralized. They demonstrate a non-hierarchical, “flat” organizational structure that is not subject to control by trans-sectoral associations. Moreover, there is considerable overlap, competition, and horizontal division between many of these associations.

If this suggests a growing degree of pluralism, Kennedy is quick to qualify such a conclusion. While documenting a number of instances of association autonomy, Kennedy also shows that associations are required to register with the government and that they are often staffed in part by government officials. These constraints, ironically, force these associations to interact with the government along a “variety of avenues, indirect and direct” (p. 45). Kennedy is thus careful never to overstate the significant yet necessarily modest degree of pluralism exhibited by these associations. Finally, Kennedy also rejects
clientelism as a primary explanatory variable, asserting at one point that “even companies that had good connections credibly downplayed their importance” (p. 110).

Rather, Kennedy argues that what is occurring combines elements of all three of these models. His central thesis is that variation in the manner and the outcomes of government–business interactions in China “are related to the varying economic circumstances of individual firms and the sectors of which they are a part” (p. 56). Kennedy supports these claims with three sectoral case studies: steel, consumer electronics, and software. The chapter on steel nicely updates Edward Steinfeld’s earlier analysis (Forging Reform in China: The Fate of State-Owned Industry, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), while the consumer electronics and software chapters offer fascinating new insights into the dynamics within these sectors. Each of these chapters is organized around a thorough description of the associational structure for the specific sector and concludes with several case studies that illustrate how these associations actually work.

One question that remains somewhat ambiguous at the conclusion is the specific causal relationship between politics and policy. Conceptually, Kennedy treats policy as an outcome of lobbying. Yet his case studies imply strongly that particular policies can induce or undermine collective action—and thus the form of political activity—among these business associations. Price floor and standardization controversies demonstrated a singular lack of cohesion among associations, whereas taxation served to unite these same associations. Most important, these dynamics hold across the sectors examined by Kennedy. While I think that Kennedy is correct that, on balance, politics determines policy, I would have preferred a more detailed discussion on why a reversal of the causal relationship between politics and policy provides a less robust explanation.

That aside, Scott Kennedy has produced an exceptional book that should be required reading in graduate and upper-level undergraduate courses on China’s political economy and the political economies of developing countries more generally.

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International norms on the use of force were badly shaken by the civil conflicts of the 1990s. Although the end of the Cold War seemed to open huge possibilities for new actors and actions, the rules on the legitimate use of force had been designed to prevent external aggression and respect the norm of non-