it ethically correct to do so, and does the hologram have any rights? In this case, the saying *'just because you can do it doesn't mean you should'* holds true.

One last point before ending this review is the book's critical discussion of freedom of thought. Social media platforms can silence and manage content online. However, as we give up more of our personal information and preferences in the digital world, algorithms can easily force us to do things that we might not do, as in the smartwatch example above. This is a new form of surveillance, which we accept when we do not carefully read the conditions of use and simply tick the 'Agree' box. Therefore, we need to rethink politics. Therefore, it is crucial to recognise that information has become a form of power and that only a few people have access to it.

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Dennis C. Grube: *Why Governments Get It Wrong: And How They Can Get It Right*
London 2022: Macmillan, 240 pp.

In this ambitious book, Dennis C. Grube sheds light on an ongoing question in politics: Why do some governments seem to fumble through, while others seem to be on top of everything? The book provides a framework that can be applied so that governments can 'get it right' and improve our lives in the process. Grube sets the stage with an international scope and a non-partisan perspective on what needs to be considered when governments—or anyone in politics—present, create, communicate and implement policies meant to initiate change. The book also offers a unique perspective on the causes of government failure, with a comprehensive historical analysis of the challenges faced by policymakers in de-

signing and implementing effective policies. Furthermore, this work provides practical recommendations for policymakers seeking to navigate complex institutional environments.

One of the central themes discussed in this book is the importance of understanding the political and bureaucratic contexts in which policies are developed and implemented. In particular, Grube argues that effective policy design and implementation require a deep understanding of the institutional and organisational contexts in which policies are situated. This requires policymakers to pay attention to the complex details of policy implementation rather than simply focusing on policy design. In modern politics, we are often faced with wicked problems whose solutions are not easy to find. For this reason, it is of utter importance that we pay attention to more than just the problem. We cannot rely exclusively on data and evidence; we need to have a persuasive story and narrative, as well as provide a trustworthy solution to the problem.

One of the key contributions of Grube's book is his emphasis on the need for policymakers to be mindful of the unintended consequences of policy interventions. He argues that policymakers must be aware of the potential for policies to create such negative consequences and must be prepared to address these in a timely and effective manner. Grube provides a range of examples of policies that have had unintended negative consequences and emphasises the importance of ongoing policy monitoring and evaluation to identify and address these negative effects.

This analysis is supported by a range of case studies from around the world, including examples from the United States, Australia and the European Union. Using his background as a former advisor and speechwriter to two former premiers of Tasmania, Grube examines health care, education and environmental regulation,

among others, and provides detailed examples of successful and unsuccessful policymaking efforts. In each case, he underscores the importance of attention to detail, effective communication and sustained policy monitoring and evaluation, as well as provides practical recommendations for policymakers seeking to improve policy outcomes.

Another significant contribution of Grube's book is his emphasis on the importance of evidence-based policymaking. He argues that policymakers must be willing to engage in rigorous research and analysis to develop policies based on sound evidence. In this regard, he provides examples of successful policymaking efforts that have relied on rigorous research and analysis and, once again, emphasises the importance of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of policies to identify areas where further research might be needed.

Furthermore, Grube's analysis highlights the importance of effective communication and stakeholder engagement in building policy support. He argues that policymakers must effectively communicate the benefits of policies to the target beneficiaries and be open to collaboration with diverse stakeholders. Grube provides detailed examples of close collaboration and engagement in successful policymaking efforts and offers practical recommendations for policymakers seeking to build coalitions and networks of actors to support policy change.

Grube also emphasises the importance of leadership in driving effective policymaking. He states that effective policymakers must be able to inspire and motivate their colleagues and take calculated risks in pursuit of policy goals. This requires a combination of strategic thinking and effective communication. For Grube, successive governments must strike the right tone, and effective storytelling is crucial when it comes to gaining support. Further-

more, he believes that policy framing is a key element in gaining followership. If people do not follow the logic behind the arguments, it can be tough to gain support, even for policies backed by data.

While this book represents a valuable contribution to policy analysis and design, it is not without its weaknesses. First, the book focuses primarily on the challenges of policymaking and lacks a comprehensive analysis of the factors that contribute to policy success or failure. For example, the book does not give much attention to the role of external factors, such as economic conditions, technological change or global events, in shaping policy outcomes. While the case studies are informative, they are not exhaustive and may not fully capture the complexity of policymaking in different contexts. Moreover, when external events are mentioned, they are portrayed as events that can cause the right momentum for a policy to be proposed or implemented. It does not consider the ambiguity that lies in never knowing when they occur. Therefore, it will not always be a sustainable plan to map out policies that can potentially be efficient when a natural disaster, global pandemic or economic hardship comes along.

Another potential weakness of the book is that its recommendations may be difficult to implement in practice, particularly in contexts rife with political polarisation or institutional fragmentation. Grube's recommendations emphasise the importance of collaboration, evidence-based policymaking and stakeholder engagement, but these goals may be difficult to achieve where competing interests or ideological divisions exist. For example, in some cases, policymakers may face pressure to prioritise short-term goals or partisan agendas over longer-term policy objectives. With different varieties of democracies, different power struggles may arise. In a majoritarian democracy, voters have greater transparency when it comes to punishing the

elected government in case it does not do as promised, whereas in a consensus democracy, it is more difficult for voters to blame only one party for the successes and failures. All governments are affected by external factors, unions, interest organisations and lobbying actors. Yet, some democracies have a stronger tendency to let those affect the policies and ultimately have a greater effect on the support or opposition towards it.

Finally, the book lacks a clear theoretical framework or conceptual model for understanding policymaking. While Grube's analysis is informed by a range of historical perspectives, the book does not offer a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding policymaking processes and outcomes. This may limit its appeal to readers seeking a more theoretically rigorous analysis of policy.

Despite these limitations, this work remains a valuable contribution to the field of policy analysis and design. Grube's analysis is supported by a range of case studies from around the world and provides a wealth of practical recommendations for policymakers seeking to navigate complex institutional environments. The book also emphasises the importance of attention to detail, effective communication, stakeholder engagement, evidence-based policymaking and leadership in driving effective policymaking. By highlighting the challenges and opportunities involved, this work provides a valuable resource for policymakers, scholars and practitioners seeking to improve policy outcomes.

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Sabrina P. Ramet: *East Central Europe and Communism: Politics, Culture, and Society, 1943–1991*
New York 2023: Routledge, 358 pp.

This work is an insightful addition to the already vast literature on the communist takeover of East Central Europe, which led to the creation of the communist societies that dominated this part of the world from the end of the Second World War to the end of the 1980s and early 1990s. Ramet primarily focused on examining politics, culture and society, with particular attention to 'the unintended, dysfunctional consequences of communist policies' (p. 2). This somewhat sets her book apart from other volumes that deal with the same topic. At the very beginning of the volume, she highlights two principles that the communists in Europe wanted to attain as their ultimate goals in creating new societies: 'equality (even though not to the exclusion of privileges for high-ranking communists or of the political dominance of the Politburo and Central Committee of the communist party) and control of political life, the economy, the arts, and social life in general, as well as, in those countries where it was possible, the religious organizations' (p. 3).

The volume reads very well; it is easy to follow because it is organised chronologically and is divided into several sections devoted to different periods in the development of the communist regimes. The section preceding all others, *Communism's unintended consequences: An introduction,* provides information on the objectives and the rationale of the volume, setting the tone and direction taken by the author's writing. Here, Ramet first introduces information on the general traits of the communist system in East Central Europe, effectively defining the given system and the manner in which it functioned. At the same time, she provides contextual information on the states she is about to discuss in more detail in the following sections.