

*More praise for*  
**THE TYRANNY OF METRICS**

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“[Muller] says that an over-reliance on metrics can lead us to disproportionately value the things that are easiest to measure. . . . These and the many other criticisms of metric fixation the author offers are well argued and will feel all too familiar to teachers and school leaders alike.”

—JAMES BOWEN, *Times Education Supplement*

“A timely and important critique of the pervasive tendency to define success in terms of quantifying human performance, accountability and transparency, a trend that has invaded every profession.”

—*Paradigm Explorer*

“Short, unpretentious, scholarly, and full of insights.”

—PIERRE LEMIEUX, *Regulation*

“For every quantification, there’s a way of gaming it. So argues this timely manifesto against measured accountability.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“In this clear and compelling book, Jerry Muller shows how our attempts to improve organizational outcomes through quantitative measures have metastasized into a culture of gaming and manipulation. Through carefully researched case studies on education, healthcare, and compensation, *The Tyranny of Metrics* makes a convincing case that we need to restore judgment and ethical considerations at a time when shallow quantification threatens the integrity of our most important institutions.”

—RAKESH KHURANA, *Harvard Business School*

“Have you ever wondered why universities make the mistake of hiring presidents with little or no experience in higher education, or why, nine times out of ten, these foreign imports fail? Then read Jerry Muller’s new book and you will understand such folly as one more instance of an unhappy, massive trend—abandoning the situated judgment of experienced professionals in favor of the supposedly objective judgment promised (but not delivered) by the magic bullet of metrics: standardized measures and huge data banks touted as generating insight and wisdom all by themselves. Muller dismantles this myth in a brisk and no-nonsense prose that has this reader crying ‘yes, yes’ at every sentence.”

—STANLEY FISH, author of *Winning Arguments* and *Think Again*

“Quantification, once only a tool, has become a cult. I can think of no better deprogrammer than Jerry Muller, whose renowned skills in dissecting political and social doctrines are evident here. *The Tyranny of Metrics* should be essential reading for managers and the managed alike.”

—EDWARD TENNER, author of *The Efficiency Paradox:  
What Big Data Can't Do* and *Why Things Bite Back:  
Technology and the Revenge of Unintended Consequences*

“In *The Tyranny of Metrics*, Jerry Muller has brought to life the many ways in which numerical evaluations result in deleterious performance: in our schools, our universities, our hospitals, our military, and our businesses. This book addresses a major problem.”

—GEORGE A. AKERLOF, Nobel Prize-winning economist

“*The Tyranny of Metrics* is an important and accessible book about a growing problem. It comes as close as anything I’ve read to showing us how to break out of the dysfunctional cycle of measuring, finding out that measuring doesn’t get us where we want to go, but then measuring some more.”

—DAVID CHINITZ, School of Public Health,  
Hebrew University Hadassah Medical School

“Broad in scope and ambition, persuasively argued, and engagingly written, *The Tyranny of Metrics* is a very compelling book.”

—MARK SCHLESINGER, Yale University



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Jerry Z. Muller is the author of many books, including *The Mind and the Market: Capitalism in Modern European Thought*, *Adam Smith in His Time and Ours* (Princeton), and *Capitalism and the Jews* (Princeton). His writing has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, and *Foreign Affairs*, among other publications. He is professor of history at the Catholic University of America.



# THE TYRANNY OF METRICS



# **THE TYRANNY OF METRICS**

**WITH A NEW PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR**

**JERRY Z. MULLER**

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**FOR PETER J. DOUGHERTY**



“Those who believe that what you cannot quantify does not  
exist also believe that what you can quantify, does.”

**—AARON HASPEL**

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