the predictable consequence is an erosion of the sense of common purpose and of the social relationships that enable corporation. And when university management is measured and rewarded according to international rankings, the predictable consequence is that universities become more like what the rankings measure.

Muller concludes by arguing that there is nothing intrinsically pernicious about metrics. They can contribute to improved performance, but only if they are designed to function in alliance with professional judgement: judgement about whether to measure, what to measure, how to evaluate, whether to attach rewards and penalties to measurements, and to whom to make results available. Measurement without such judgement provides us with distorted knowledge, and it may ultimately draw attention away from what we really care about.

As Muller acknowledges, these arguments are not new. Yet this does not make the book any less important. Indeed, there are good reasons to think that the allure of metrics will not fade any time soon. Those at the top of organisations must make decisions despite having limited time and ability to deal with ever increasing information overload. In such an environment, the temptation to resort to metrics is hard to resist. Moreover, the erosion of societal trust is likely to fortify the demand for metrics. As Muller notes, metrics are a safe bet for those disposed to doubt their own judgement. In sum, I can think of no better way for decision-makers to become acquainted with the pros and cons of metrics than to read Muller's book.

Thomas Barnebeck Andersen
University of Southern Denmark
barnebeck@sam.sdu.dk

David Epstein: ***Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World***
New York 2019: Riverhead Books, 352 pp.

'Jack of all trades, master of none' is a saying often used to refer to someone who has good skills in several domains but lacks a deeper expertise in a specific field. Here Epstein praises these 'Jacks of all trades' and the ways in which they can thrive. The book reads like a novel focusing on specific aspects of the generalist mindset supported by a narrative exposing how it helped several individuals to attain success. All in all, the main argument can be grasped in the first few chapters, with the rest of the book adding some nuance with the help of interesting anecdotes that sustain readers' curiosity.

The book opens with the stories of two successful athletes, Roger Federer and Tiger Woods. The latter had been trained by his father to play golf since his childhood and achieved an incredible professional golf career, inspiring mothers and fathers all over the world to train their children in the same way, teaching them a specific skill from childhood in order to raise a champion. Conversely, Roger Federer achieved success in his discipline following a different pathway, taking the generalist turn, practising several sports to then settle on tennis later in life and become the best at it. Tiger Woods embraced deliberate practice from childhood onward, and through repetitive training coupled with continuous feedback this permitted him to steadily improve and become a top athlete. This type of practice is well described by Malcolm Gladwell in the book *Outliers: The Story of Success* and is manifested as the '10 000 hours rule' by which anyone can become an expert in a skill by investing 10 000 hours in practice. On the other hand, Federer started with a 'sampling period' that permitted him to develop a broad range of motor skills that then later in his life he applied to the game of tennis. Delib-

erate practice has been adopted by both athletes – on a narrow set of skills for Woods and on a wide spectrum of abilities for Federer. Seemingly, 10 000 hours of practice may not to expertise not only if applied to the training of one specific skill but also to learning broadly through different activities.

From Federer's role model it can be deduced that late starters have still the chances to reach the peak in their new enterprise, possibly, doing even better than the early starters. Arguably, this is true as late starters manage to develop several skills practising widely, that they manage to apply in new domains using a flexible and interdisciplinary mindset. Moreover, range can be a unique asset in the labour market that might permit individuals to effectively contend with the automation of jobs. Technologies such as computers and artificial intelligence are effective in specialised, repetitive types of work that are easily replaced by robots. Conversely, humans seem to be unique in the pursuit of different tasks, managing to connect knowledge from different disciplines better than any machine could currently do.

Epstein puts great emphasis on learning and on how range can be developed through practice. In this regard, self-learning through practice is considered to be crucial for allowing individuals to try different solutions to a problem and expand the set of skills they have. However, learning should be a slow and painful process. Epstein presents several examples on how short-term, easy acquisition of knowledge is ineffective in the long run. Conversely, slow and painful learning better crystallises know-how that can be easily retrieved also in future instances.

Epstein praises the generalist mindset from different perspectives, focusing at great length on the enumeration of its key characteristics. First, the 'Jack of all trades' should be able to draw analogies between different domains finding solutions to problems by retrieving expertise from areas that are not strictly related to the one at hand. Therefore, creativity and innovation are a strong asset for a generalist mindset. Second, Epstein describes the "outsider's advantage" when exposing how an inexperienced individual might have an advantage in finding solutions compared to an insider. This seems to be especially true, when the two types are facing an unexpected problem. In such cases, the novice has an advantage in applying innovative problem- solving that a specialist would not have if s/he is mired in knowledge acquired in the past. Third, the generalist benefits from a flexible mindset that enables him/her to update beliefs in the face of new events. To strengthen this argument, Epstein exposes the findings of Philipp Tetlock and Dan Gardner's 'Superforecasters' focused on the characteristics that make individuals a top forecaster of future events. One of these is the ability to update sedimented beliefs. In addition, generalists benefit from the use of different tools to solve problems, combining different approaches to the issue at hand by showing flexibility and creativity.

Overall, the argument and the empirical evidence presented in praise of the generalist mindset highlight the importance of detachment from one's work. Detachment is alleged to help one to more easily find solutions by seeing the broad picture with an objective point of view, instead of being blinded by a passionate subjective perspective. Relatedly, grit is underlined as crucial to the attainment of a goal, but too much grit is revealed to be counterproductive as that might lead to the pursuit of targets that are not anymore worth reaching. Therefore, short term planning is suggested instead of long-term planning, acknowledging that the path to success is disordered. For this reason, the difference between two approaches – 'test and learn' and 'plan and implement' – are also discussed. The former makes it possible to try

things, to learn by doing; the latter presumes a period of planning followed by the implementation of the project designed beforehand. Epstein considers the test and learn approach to be inherent to a generalist mindset and to be the most effective in the long run, as it enables flexibility and adjusting to the situation at hand, compared to the plan and implement approach, which suffers from rigidity and the flaws of long-term planning.

Epstein's main arguments in support of the generalist mindset are interesting to read and at first easy to agree with. However, there are major weaknesses. First, the evidence supporting his claims too often sound like they have been cherry-picked to reinforce the argumentation. Second, it is difficult to draw a causal link between range and success. Factors other than a generalist mindset could be at play. For example, detachment from one's passions might be more relevant than range in achieving success. An alternative argument to 'range versus specialisation' could be 'attachment versus detachment'. Third, Epstein does not discuss much how a generalist or specialist mindset comes about. The emphasis is placed on learning and practice and how these can help develop range. However, it might be that a generalist or specialist mindset are strongly related to a certain combination of intelligence and personality traits. For example, openness to new experiences might enhance the likelihood of an individual adopting the generalist mindset. If this is so, how much range can be learned? Can one shift from a generalist to a specialist mindset during life?

Overall, 'range' is like an airport book, with a nice cover, a catchy title, and a good argument well supported by the overall narrative that makes it pleasurable to read. Moreover, in a time in which hyper-specialisation seems to be the rule and repetitive jobs are being automated by artificial intelligence, some thoughts on the merits of range and how it might be a safety net to robotisation are welcome. Therefore, the book makes for a good read in order to better grasp how a mindset based on range is constructed and how compared to hyper-specialisation it might grant some critical advantages in contemporary society. As the full saying goes: 'Jack of all trades, master of none, but oftentimes better than master of one.' There seems to be some truth in this that is worth exploring.

Risto Conte Keivabu
risto.contekeivabu@gmail.com,
risto.conte@eui.eu
European University Institute, Florence

Julia Moses: ***The First Modern Risk: Workplace Accidents and the Origins of European Social States***
Cambridge 2018: Cambridge University Press, 332 pp.

Trying to unpack the umbrella concept of the 'welfare state', an increasingly voluminous scholarship looks at the historically gradual accumulation of policies responding to national grievances. Picking up the gauntlet, Julia Moses delves into the history of compensation for workplace accidents, which formed 'an essential yet often neglected foundation of the subsequent history of European statehood' (p. 4). The depth of the research is impressive. Above and beyond process tracing in three complex cases, namely Britain, Germany, and Italy, the book also takes into account emerging transnational discourses, epistemic communities and diffusion (p. 12). Though the central emphasis is on the 'historical role of government in managing social risk' (p. 3), the author's ultimate aim is to transcend conventional modernisation theory by looking at the co-constitutive relationship of agency, structure, and contingency.

Unlike the logic of industrialism or power resource models of various types, which offer cross-country comparisons to