

NEW BOOK ON RANKING BY PÉTER ÉRDI

Péter Érdi: Ranking – The Unwritten Rules of the Social Game We All Play.

Oxford University Press, New York, 2019
256 pages, ISBN-13: 9780190935467. £22.99

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/ranking-9780190935467>

The main title of the book “Ranking” is a buzzword hardly requiring detailed explanation. It is, nevertheless, supplemented with a subtitle that is certainly flashy and alluring, but an earlier manuscript version had a different one maybe more relevant to the content of the book: “The reality, illusion and manipulation of objectivity.”

A book review has been published recently [Schubert, 2020]; some excerpts may serve as teaser for the book.

“It is an informative and amusing book that can be recommended for everybody except for those who expect some readily usable recipes for ranking exercises. The author collected a treasury of stories and reflections connected with comparison, rating and ranking from the widest possible area of sports, arts, sciences, politics, media and shopping, just to mention a few. The book's main concern is not how to rank, but rather how and in what extent ranking can be avoided.”

“The chapter Ranking games [...] highlights a topic of great interest for scientometrists: university ranking. Tracing back such efforts as early as 1863, the author takes account of the best-known ranking systems (ARWU, THE, QS), and depicts a wide panorama of views and opinions

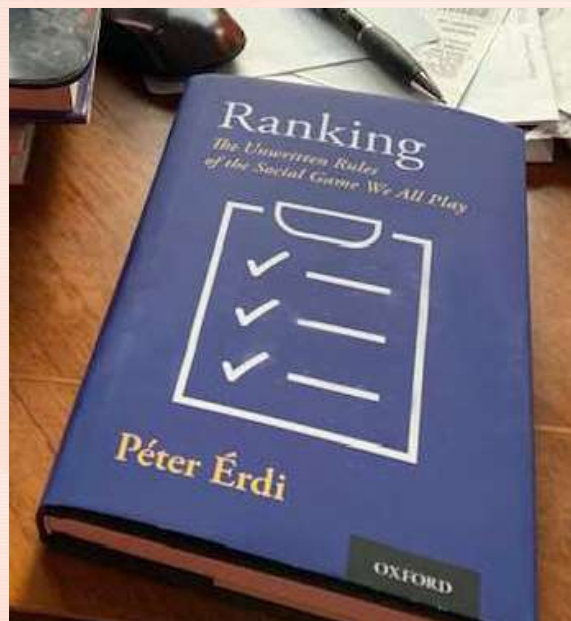


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of those affected on either side of the evaluation process, as well as of neutral analysts.”

“The author emphasizes that the objectivity of ranking is often illusory and subject to manipulation. Yet, most rankings, whether based on human opinion or computer algorithms, are far from being random, therefore they capture some element of reality.”

András Schubert

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REFERENCES

- Schubert, András (2020)
DOI:10.1007/s11192-019-03335-1
(to be published in *Scientometrics*, Vol. 122, No. 3)