The tyranny of metrics

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The material is drawn from the following book:

- ▶ Muller, J. Z. (2018). *The tyranny of metrics*. Princeton University Press.

Key components

- ► the belief that it is possible and desirable to replace judgment, acquired by personal experience and talent, with numerical indicators comparative performance based upon standardized data (metrics)

- ▶ the belief that making such metrics public (transparent) assures that institutions are actually carrying out their purposes (accountability)

- ▶ the belief that the best way to motivate people within organizations is by attaching rewards and penalties to their measured performance, rewards that are either monetary (pay-for-performance) or reputational (rankings)

Appeal of metrics

- ► distrust of judgment

- ► managerialism and organizational complexity

- ► apotheosis of choice

Distortion of information

- ▶ measuring what is most easily measurable

- ▶ measuring the simple when the desired outcome is complex

- ▶ measuring inputs rather than outputs

- ▶ degrading information quality through standardization

Gaming of metrics

- ▶ gaming through creaming

- ▶ improving numbers by lowering standards

- ▶ improving numbers through omission or distortion of data

- ▶ cheating

Appendix

References

Muller, J. Z. (2018). *The tyranny of metrics*. Princeton University Press.