Managerial Norms and Society

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Abstract:
Management assumes responsibility for targets which stretch well beyond the firm, efficiency or profitability. For instance, ISO compliance requires managerial responsibility for reducing corruption and increasing measurable corporate social responsibility. Management moves, then, from a familiar narrow concern with efficiency bounded by the firm to less-familiar open-ended normative commitments: how people should behave, how firms should benefit various external

constituencies. 'External' targets necessarily impact on 'internal' organisation: the two become inseparable.

Managerial norms and practices create/construct objects - categories, individuals, relationships - that can be monitored and managed. The norms create markets, make activities marketable, and widen the market. These activities are then the prerogative of managers and effect societal norms. The drive towards comparability for example, renders everything comparable with everything: even emotions can be compared with productivity. The normative influence of management extends more and more to social life. Managerial norms interact with different types of norms, such as legal norms, cultural norms, religious norms, moral norms, and so on.

The reference to management in areas hitherto structured strongly by law (public management) raises the question of the coexistence of legal norms and managerial standards.
The strength of these norms is their empirical strength, but empiricism based on the market: objects become visible, calculable and governable. The influence of management extends well beyond the firm and formal organisations, infiltrating ever further into family, personal and social life. Crucially, through processes such as marketisation and clientisation, they give access and exclude specific individuals and groups from market. The consequence of this expansion is that management neutralizes politics and weakens it, reduces the legal effect.

The issues raised by questioning how societal norms are managerialised and normalised encompass all areas of management research. However, we are particularly interested in papers from colleagues working in marketing, organisation studies, operations science and logistics, management and moral and political philosophy, philosophy and theory of law.
A historical approach is also needed to understand the evolution of the relation between managerial norms and society.