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On the Efficient Use of Mathematics in Economics: Some Theory, Facts and Results of an Opinion Survey

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SUMMARY

We consider mathematics to be an input into the production of human and knowledge capital in economics. The competitive and the interest group models are analyzed as to their predictions about the efficient use of this input. Many stylized facts are found to be consistent with the interest group model and the implication of an excess use of mathematics. Mathematics in journal articles is shown to have grown significantly during the postwar years. In a survey, 250 economists express the view that there is too much mathematics in professional journals. Only a minority of respondents rejects the view that interest group behaviour is taking place.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Wir betrachten die Mathematik als einen Produktionsfaktor zur Erzeugung von ökonomischem *human capital* und Wissen. Das Wettbewerbsmodell und das Modell der Interessengruppen werden auf ihre Aussagen bezüglich des effizienten Gebrauchs des Inputs ≪Mathematik≫ analysiert. Es zeigt sich, dass viele Tatsachen mit dem Modell der Interessengruppen konsistent sind und auf einen zu häufigen Gebrauch der Mathematik hinweisen. Der Gebrauch von Mathematik hat in wissenschaftlichen Artikeln während der Kriegsjahre signifikant zugenommen.

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avons utilisé les modèles de la concurrence et des groupes d'intérẹt. Bien des faits viennent corroborer la pertinence du modele des groupes d'intérẹt et, comme conséquence, le recours excessif aux mathématiques. On voit ainsi que, dans la période de l'après-guerre, les mathématiques ont occupé une place croissante dans les revues scientifiques. Dans une enquete, 250 économistes disent que les mathématiques tiennent une trop grande place dans leurs revues professionnelles. Et seule une minorité d'entre eux rejette la capacité explicative du modèle des groupes d'intérẹt.

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