

论文

实验经济学的兴起、发展及其在中国的应用前景

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摘要:

实验经济学是过去三十年中经济学发展最快的分支领域之一,近年来,田野实验的快速发展进一步加快了经济学的实验化进程。可以说,经济学家已经越来越依赖于实验来理解和解释经济现象与行为。不过这一状态来之不易。实验经济学一直是在驳斥与怀疑之中成长的,直到现在,围绕实验经济学的方法论而展开的争论也还在继续。本次访谈邀请了当前国际实验经济学的领军人物丹尼尔·豪瑟(Daniel Houser)教授和在方法论上造诣颇深的罗卫东教授就实验经济学方法上的一些关键问题进行阐述,内容涉及实验经济学为什么会兴起并获得发展,实验室实验所面临的人工性、外部有效性方面的质疑,实验室实验、田野实验以及自然实验之间的关系,行为经济学和实验经济学之间的关系等核心问题,两位教授还对未来实验经济学在中国的发展提出了建设性意见。

关键词: 实验经济学 行为经济学 实验室实验 田野实验 方法论

The Rising and Challenge of Experimental Economics

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Abstract:

Experimentation has been extended to almost every subfield of economics,including microeconomics and macroeconomics.Since the 1980s,economists have come to increasingly rely on experiments to explain and predict economic phenomenon.However,it takes mainstream economists dozens of years to turn their attitude from questioning and rejecting to accepting and supporting.This was partly due to the great efforts exerted by experimental pioneers,but more important was a result of the paradigm shift that occurred in economics in 1980s when the dominant position of General Equilibrium Theory was challenged by alternative theories such as Game Theory,Industrial Organization,and Public Choices,etc.

Nevertheless,many critics are calling into question the artefact,reality,validity,especially external validity of laboratory experiments.Lab experiments,indeed,are not the solution to every question,especially those questions that involve interactions among hundreds of thousands of people or involve context-dependent variables that could not be randomized.But there are many types of questions and theories that are not specific to a group of people or a place or a context.Lab experiments are an excellent tool for these questions.It's noteworthy that the uprising of field experiments in the last decades has offset the weakness of lab experiments to a large extent.When feasible,the natural field experiment is an ideal kind of experiment that combines the advantages of both lab experiments and natural experiments because the subjects do not know that they are participating in an experiment. Experimental economics is developing quickly.However,it is not driven by criticisms and pressure from outside,but largely by the interaction of experiment and theory from inside,especially from the interdisciplinary interaction between the sister subfields of experimental economics and behavioral economics.Although they have different emphases,the divide between them is increasingly narrowed.Experimental economists and behavioral economics(and psychologists) are recently increasingly interested in thinking about the same kind of questions.Indeed,some researchers would find it difficult to classify themselves into one group or the other.They start to learn from each other and employ the cumulative knowledge of both subfields in their research.The emergence of Neuro-economics is a typical example.Neuro-economics is an area that bridges the fields of psychology,economics and neuro-science.It is question and interest,not method,that direct the development of this subject. Experimental Economics could certainly play an important role in the development of China,both in theory and practice.This is not only reflected in the commonplaces of experimental economics,namely,testing theory,searching for rule,and whistling besides the ears of princes,but also in the sense that it provides a good opportunity for us to develop theories and to design mechanisms that are context-dependent by solid empirical study.

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