

Effizienzkonsum Produktivitätssteigerung als Beschreibungsrahmen bestimmter Konsum-Entscheidungen

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Abstract: As a contribution to the debate on possible growth imperatives, this article discusses the thesis that firms and consumers both acquire numerous goods that increase their efficiency. This leads to positive feedback loops which can be interpreted as growth imperatives. For firms, increases of efficiency are accepted since long as a main motive for investments, but neither microeconomics nor consumption sociology even discuss it as a motive for consumption.

After defining some key terms, „efficiency consumption“ is introduced theoretically as a means for securing an income (consumer investment). It is voluntary only for pioneers: Via social diffusion processes innovative consumption goods are transformed from a welcome expansion of possibilities into a social imperative, whose noncompliance increasingly also has economic drawbacks. Several feedback mechanisms are the cause that efficiency consumption not only accelerates private life but in the long run favors ever more efficient industry and trade structures. Possibly, meanwhile also conspicuous consumption decisions are influenced by efficiency considerations.

Microeconomics and consumption sociology have hardly perceived yet these phenomena. This may be caused by a „disciplinary gap“ due to academic division of labor, different language usage for firms and consumers, and effects of labor and social legislation.

An alternative theoretical model of consumption could mitigate the asymmetry between firms and consumers. Referring to the „characteristics“ of the theory of consumption of Kelvin Lancaster, functions of consumption are defined here that can be found likewise for firms and consumers.

Keywords: consumption, investment, efficiency, growth imperative, sociology of consumption, theory of consumption

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