

Lange and Hayek Revisited:

Lessons from Czech Voucher Privatization

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Abstract:

A fundamental question in economics since the 1930s has been whether an administrative price system could simulate the results of perfect competition even without a true market for the means of production. The theoretical possibility of such a system has been known since the introduction of market socialism by Oskar Lange. We have used the artificial bidding market involved in the Czech voucher privatization process to test whether a sequential process of trial-and-error can set administrative prices close to equilibrium. It would appear from this natural experiment that Robbins and Hayek were correct in doubting the real-world feasibility of market socialism.

Abstrakt:

Jedna ze základních ekonomických otázek, která je diskutována již od roku 1930 je, zdali umělý (administrativně řízený) systém cen může simulovat tržní ceny v konkurenčním prostředí. Teoretická možnost takového systému - tržní socialismus - byla navržena Oskarem Langem. V tomto článku používáme administrativně řízený mechanismus aukce v kupónové privatizaci k testu hypotézy, zdali proces postupné úpravy cen (pomocí pokusů a omylů) může vyústit v ceny, jež jsou blízké rovnovážným cenám. Dokonce i v této zjednodušené uzavřené ekonomice se to nepodařilo, což potvrzuje, že Robbins a Hayek měli důvod zpochybňovat proveditelnost tržního socialismu v praxi.

Keywords: bidding scheme, Oskar Lange's model, privatization, price setting, voucher scheme

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