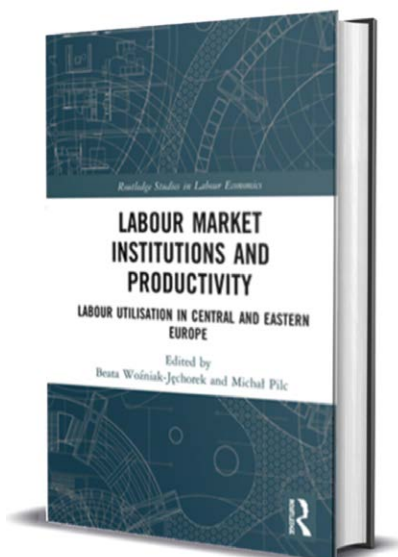


Labour Market Institutions and Productivity. Labour Utilisation in Central and Eastern Europe

Beata Woźniak-Jęchorek, Michał Pilc (eds.) – London, New York, Routledge, 2020, pp.338

The economic importance of labour market institutions is not only limited to determining the level of unemployment and underemployment over the business cycle, but more broadly can be defined as shaping the relationship between human labour and wealth. The book uses this broad perspective to analyse the labour market institutions in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). It asks whether these institutions can facilitate the labour utilisation in CEE countries above the level characteristic for Western European states and, in consequence, provide support in these countries to overcome the risk of falling into a middle-income trap. What is worth highlighting, the labour utilisation is defined more broadly in the book than in many other publications and by the OECD. The employed definition encompasses both quantitative and qualitative aspects and states that labour utilisation is a contribution of human labour to GDP. As a result, the book, apart from focusing on the number of hours worked per capita as the main variable, analyses also the utilisation of the population's skills in the economy. The book consists of 12 chapters written by 21 authors from various countries. It is divided into two parts according to the geographical scope and the applied methods: cross-country analyses and case studies. The first part compares the labour market regulations and quantitative aspects of labour utilisation between CEE and EU-15 countries (1st chapter), verifies which institutional factors explain a cross-country variation in firm-sponsored training among young workers in Europe (2nd chapter), and illustrates the differences in skills utilisation in Western European and post-socialist countries using the individual data on wages (3rd chapter). It also employs the survey data on societal preferences to explain the differences in unemployment benefits systems in CEE and EU-15 states and examines the pattern between the part-time employment and labour utilisation in CEE region (4th and 5th chapter respectively). The second part identifies the drivers of the expansion of precarious employment in Poland (6th chapter), analyses the gender disproportions in skills utilisation in Estonia (7th chapter), and assesses the situation of the returning migrants in the Lithuanian labour market (8th chapter). Furthermore, it discusses the developments of minimum wage policy in Slovenia and assesses whether old-age pension systems facilitate keeping labour utilisation of older people at the high level in the Czech Republic and Poland (9th and 10th chapter respectively). Finally, it evaluates how the public employment services are successful in integrating unemployed in the Czech Republic and investigates the impact of wage bargaining decentralisation on labour utilisation in Bulgaria and Poland (11th and 12th chapter). Thus, the book covers a wide spectrum of labour market institutions in countries that still differ in many aspects from the Western European economies. As such, it may appeal not only to labour economics, but also to readers interested in comparative economics and policymakers.



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