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MORAL ECONOMIES ACROSS EUROPE: RESULTS FROM THE ESS

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Large scale corruption and white collar crime have been and still are a defining feature of the transformation. Whilst such elite crimes have attracted a fair amount of media and scholarly attention, the crimes of everyday life and shady practices in the market place, committed by respectable people are much less visible. Small-scale tax evasion, insurance fraud, bribery, claiming benefits for which one is not entitled, amount to quite high levels of crime and shady practices. According to recent estimates the damage done by these types of small scale crimes and shady practices dwarf the damage done by the more typical crimes like burglary and street violence.

However, we assume that they are as telling of changes to the moral economy (E.P. Thompson) during the transformation as corruption and street violence normally taken as indicators. We use data from Round 2 of the ESS (including 25 countries) and analyse such practices in different “change regions” across Europe. We include both the victim and the offender perspective, and relate experiences of offending and victimization to perception of changes of the moral economy.