Book Review

Economic and Financial Crime: Corruption, Shadow Economy, and Money Laundering: Book Review. Written by Monica Violeta Achim and Sorin Nicolae Borlea. Springer Nature: Cham, Switzerland, 2021. ISBN 978-3-030-51780-9

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The authors Monica Violeta Achim and Sorin Nicolae Borlea structured their book entitled "Economic and Financial Crime: Corruption, shadow economy, and money laundering" in four major parts. In the first part, they concentrate on theoretical and methodological approaches to analyze economic and financial crimes such as corruption, the shadow economy, and money laundering. Various concepts and approaches on the wide field of economic and financial crimes are presented, focusing again on corruption, tax evasion, and money laundering. The difficulties in measuring these instruments are shortly discussed. I think this part lacks a short presentation of the most important theories in this field. Additionally, I believe that the authors may mix up the term "tax avoidance" with the term "tax evasion". In Austria, tax avoidance is legal—meaning that an individual or a firm legally use all tax exemptions or loopholes to reduce their tax burden; however, tax evasion is illegal, and hence a crime, because in this case illegal measures which violate the law of a country are used, to save on paying "taxes".

In the second part, a deeper analysis of the most important economic and political causes is provided, and the authors present a detailed review of the specialized literature. They also present their own empirical studies of the major drivers (such as tax pressure) on the various types of crimes. They use the regression technique, but I think the ceteris paribus conditions may be not fulfilled because they mostly use only one independent variable.

The third part analyzes the behavioral determinants of the economic and financial crime scene. Most important behavioral determinants are well presented and empirically analyzed, such as culture, religion, tax morale, trust in the state, and happiness. To my opinion, this is one of the most original and interesting chapters of this book, because quite often these determinants are "just" listed. Here, the authors provide a fascinating empirical analysis with new and challenging results, such as the fact that the happier people are, the lower their shadow economy engagement and their corruption activities will be.

Finally, in the fourth part, the effects and consequences of crimes on economic growth, political institutions, and on society as a whole are also investigated through a well-performed analysis. Once again, the authors provide a comprehensive literature review, and they effectively show the difficulties in what could theoretically be done in order to reduce crimes (i.e., money laundering) but practically appears to be very difficult, because in many member states the judicial accounting expertise exists only in a very limited sense. The authors correctly argue that especially in the new EU member countries, better trained individuals with a high competence in juridical accounting and financial expertise should be appointed.

In summary, this book deals with the most important economic and financial crime issues such as corruption, the shadow economy, and money laundering. The book focuses on theoretical, empirical, and practical sides, and covers almost all fields of investigation,

the causes why people commit a crime, and measures to effectively fight against these crime issues. Hence, the proper audience for this book most likely comprises students and researchers in law, economics, and social sciences, but also of experts working in national and international political institutions. It is a valuable, accessible, and actual resource; therefore, I highly recommend it to all people working in this field.