

Constitutional Economics

Constitutional political economy has emerged as an indispensable part of political economy. This book offers a concise survey of the questions, methods, and empirical findings central to this topic. What effects – if any – do constitutions have within autocracies? Can small electoral districts help reduce corruption? Does a country's leadership affect the size of its government? Can direct democratic institutions increase politicians' accountability to citizens? Stefan Voigt, a pioneer in the field, explores these questions and more throughout the course of this cutting-edge primer. As the number of courses in constitutional economics continues to grow, this book fills an important gap in the literature. This highly original project maintains curiosity about the questions it generates, identifying potential new areas of research whilst successfully demonstrating the impact constitutional rules have on political economy.

Stefan Voigt is a professor at the University of Hamburg, director of its Institute of Law & Economics, and editor of *Constitutional Political Economy*.

Constitutional Economics

A Primer

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Preface

In one sense, the economic analysis of constitutions has been around for a long time. Charles Beard published his economic interpretation of the US Constitution more than a century ago (in 1913). In another sense, the economic analysis of constitutions is very young: Analyzing the effects of constitutions by drawing on modern econometric tools experienced a boost only after 2000. Over the last 20 years, constitutional economics has been very successful and contributions to this rapidly growing field can be found in the top economics as well as political science journals.

Constitutional political economy, or constitutional economics, draws on questions, insights, and tools from at least three disciplines, namely law, political science, and economics. If normative analysis occupies center stage, philosophy comes in as the fourth discipline. This book is aimed at familiarizing anybody interested in constitutional economics with its most basic concepts. In addition – and employing the core of this primer – it contains a survey of the most interesting results brought about within the field to date. Since the idea was to write a primer, no attempt was made to cover all the studies belonging to this field but to concentrate on the more relevant ones. This is, obviously, a very subjective enterprise and others might have come up with different choices.

I have been lucky to write this primer at the Institute of Law and Economics at the University of Hamburg. Here, a culture of open and critical discussion has developed over the years. In writing this primer, I profited from critical comments as well as constructive suggestions from my colleagues. Thanks to Marek Endrich, Dr. Jerg Gutmann, Dr. Stephan Michel, and Konstantinos Pilpilidis for reading and discussing every single page of this primer.