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Countries with longer constitutions are poorer and more corrupt: evidence from the OECD

Posted on [June 6, 2016](#) by



*In a recent journal article **George Tsebelis** and **Dominic J. Nardi, Jr.** present statistical evidence that longer constitutions are associated with lower levels of GDP per capita. In this post they summarise their findings and speculate that this may be because detailed constitutions are more likely to prevent governments from adopting measures necessary to combat economic shocks.*

When the Eurozone crisis struck in 2009, it soon became apparent that southern European countries would have to drastically restructure government spending and improve their competitiveness in order to reduce excessive levels of public debt. However, some states found themselves unable to do so, and not merely because of lack of political will. In some cases, detailed socioeconomic provisions in their constitutions limited their scope of action. For example, Greece's [1975 Constitution](#) prohibits the privatization of universities (art. 16(5)). In short, such constitutional provisions risk locking governments into policies that in other countries would not even be considered questions of constitutional law.