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Voters and Representatives: How Should Representatives Be Selected?

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Keywords political selection; electoral rules; political parties; paying politicians; incompatibility; citizen Institutions systematically affect which individuals gain positions in the different branches of democratic government. Given agents' discretion in decision-making, their characteristics matter for policy choices. This perspective of political selection replaces the representative political agent by a heterogeneous set of political decision makers with different skills and motivations. Selecting political agents becomes a means to align the interests of the elected delegates with those of the citizens. Our comparative analysis reviews demand- and supplyside conditions in the market for competent and honest politicians. On the demand side, parties and electoral rules (including reservations and quotas) play an important role in determining who is recruited, nominated and finally elected. On the supply side, we focus on the various types of compensations associated with political office. Finally, institutions affecting the attractiveness of a political mandate for people with a specific professional background are considered and related to policy outcomes.

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