

## ARE "SUPERDELEGATES" SUPER?

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Post-1968 changes in the Democratic party's nomination process resulted, by some accounts, in the selection of delegates who knew little about politics, cared little about winning, and were removed from the party following. One remedy for this situation was the reintroduction of party professionals into the process in the form of "superdelegates." Did this cure work? By examining the accuracy of superdelegates' perceptions of the party following's positions on issues compared with those of ordinary delegates, this paper addresses part of this question.

Using data about the views of delegates to the 1988 national party conventions and the 1988 American National Election Study, I show that the fears about postreform delegates being more out of touch with the party following than "professionals" (i.e., superdelegates) are largely overstated.

"Our decisions will make the convention more representative of the mainstream of the party" argued James B. Hunt, commenting on proposed changes to the Democratic party's nominating process (Cook 1982: 127). These reforms were designed to repair the problems that had been created over a decade earlier by the McGovern-Fraser Commission. Among these problems was the belief that delegates to the national conventions were "not typical of the broad Democratic electorate in the education, occupations and income levels *and in many of their views and attitudes*" (Cook 1981: 2567, emphasis added).<sup>1</sup> To bring delegates in line with the "broad Democratic electorate," the Hunt Commission decided to increase the number of party professionals attending the convention. By creating the so-called "superdelegate," the party was hoping to restore balance to the nominating process that would allow for a convention more representative of the rank and file.

That decision is based on a rather simple assumption. For delegates to represent faithfully the views and attitudes of the rank and file partisans, they must be able to discern accurately what those preferences are (Clausen 1977: 362-363). Otherwise, any congruence of opinions may be due simply to chance, or, more likely, would result in an unrepresentative convention. The Hunt Commission assumed that superdelegates, because

of their experience and pragmatism, would be better able to discern and hence represent the views of Democratic voters than delegates selected via primaries or caucuses. But is this assumption warranted? Or, as the title suggests, are “superdelegates” super?

I will examine two areas in which, if that assumption is correct, the superior abilities of superdelegates vis-à-vis delegates chosen via primaries or caucuses should be manifest. Specifically, I will address the questions of (1) whether superdelegates are better judges of the preferences of the rank and file than other delegates, and (2) whether they are actually better at representing the views of regular partisans. By so doing, we can see whether the fears of the Hunt Commission and other political observers were well founded and whether the prescription worked. These answers, in turn, have implications for our ongoing assessment of the presidential nominating process.

## ASSESSING THE PERCEPTUAL ACUITY OF DELEGATES

The ability of party delegates to represent the views of ordinary partisans requires the ability to “read” the national party following. Because general election campaigns demand a knowledge of what issues will play to the party’s following, the perceptual skills of delegates are crucial. Presidential campaign politics do not culminate with the party conventions. The campaign that follows the convention is in no small part dependent on the efforts of the delegates in supporting the drive for the presidency (Kessel 1992: 102–103). Therefore, the abilities of activists, such as convention delegates, to discern the views not only of their home community but of their party’s voters across the country may prove critical to the success of the party’s campaign efforts.<sup>2</sup>

To assess delegates’ abilities to represent the views of the regular partisan, I will examine an intermediate step in the process: the delegates’ perceptual accuracy of the preferences of the rank and file (Hedlund and Friesema 1972: 736). Given the objectives of this paper, I have partitioned the delegates into primary, caucus/convention, or superdelegates.<sup>3</sup>

To examine the differences between superdelegates and ordinary delegates, we need data (1) that allow delegates to be sorted according to the relevant categories, (2) that describe delegates’ perceptions of the positions on issues held by their partisan voters, (3) that indicate delegates’ own positions on those issues, (4) and that portray actual positions held by partisan voters on those issues.<sup>4</sup> Fortunately, such data are now available by combining the Miller/Jennings 1988 Convention Delegate Studies with the 1988 American National Election Studies.<sup>5</sup>

The 1988 delegate survey included five items that tap the delegates’ positions on a variety of issues and their perceptions of where their party’s

voters stand on those issues. The questions include ideological self-placement, defense spending, cooperation with Russia, government aid to blacks, and the role of women in society.<sup>6</sup> These items are the same as those asked of the mass public in the 1988 ANES and therefore afford the opportunity to check the accuracy of activists' perceptions of the views of their party's voters as well as those of the opposition party without worrying about potential question-wording problems.

While these items do not exhaust the many issues confronting voters and activists, they nonetheless cover a variety of issues about politics including social, domestic, and foreign policy-related matters and those that figured prominently in both parties' platforms.<sup>7</sup> Also, the ideological self-designation is a sort of omnibus item that can be considered a summary measure of many issues. The meanings citizens associate with the ideological labels have elsewhere been shown to include a variety of specific social, domestic, and foreign policy matters as well as more general attitudes (Herrera 1991).

**TABLE 1. Difference in Means for Delegates' Perceptions of Voters' Positions and Actual Voters' Positions for Ideological Self-Placement and Issues by Type of Delegate**

	All Democratic Delegates	Primary	Caucus <sup>a</sup>	Primary/ Caucus <sup>b</sup>	Super
Ideology	.33** (.06)	.40** (.08)	.29** (.07)	.32** (.09)	.27** (.09)
Defense Spending	.22** (.06)	.24** (.08)	.07 (.07)	.12 (.09)	.28** (.10)
Russia	-.27** (.06)	-.22* (.09)	-.29** (.07)	-.27* (.09)	-.46** (.09)
Govt. Help Blacks	1.44** (.07)	1.56** (.10)	1.33** (.08)	1.39** (.11)	1.31** (.10)
Role of Women	.07 (.06)	.12 (.09)	-.08 (.07)	-.03 (.09)	.07 (.11)

Sources: 1988 American National Election Study; 1988 CPS Convention Delegate Study.

Entries are difference in means test results.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Negative scores indicate that the delegates perceive Democratic voters as more liberal than the voters' actual position.

Positive scores indicate that the delegates perceive Democratic voters as more conservative than the voters' actual position.

<sup>a</sup>The category "Caucus" also includes delegates chosen via conventions.

<sup>b</sup>The category "Primary/Caucus" also includes delegates chosen via conventions.

\*Difference is significant at  $p < .05$ .

\*\*Difference is significant at  $p < .01$ .

## RESULTS

The first column in Table 1 shows the difference in means between Democratic delegates' perceptions of the positions held by their voters and where the voters place themselves. The Democratic delegates almost always perceive voters as more conservative than is actually the case. This discovery of a general inaccuracy of elite perceptions of mass positions is not surprising and is similar to that found in previous studies (see, for example, Miller and Stokes 1963; Hedlund and Friesema 1972; Erikson, Luttbeg, and Holloway 1975; Clausen, Holmberg, and Dehaven-Smith 1983).

When comparing different kinds of delegates, however, there are virtually no differences in the perceptual acuity of superdelegates and their counterparts. The pattern as we move from delegates selected by a primary to the superdelegates is, at best, inconsistent. Delegates chosen via caucus, for instance, fare as well as, or better than, superdelegates on most issues and delegates chosen through primaries appear better informed on two of the five issues.

The story does not end here, however. An activist must also be able to assess accurately the views of the opposition's supporters. Table 2 provides this comparison. Unlike the mixed pattern revealed in the initial analysis, superdelegates' estimates of Republican voters' positions are slightly more accurate than those delegates chosen either via primaries or caucuses/conventions on all five issues. Note, however, that in some instances "primary" delegates are more accurate (though very slightly) than "caucus" delegates. One might think of delegates selected via primaries as least able to judge the views of the electorate. These results suggest otherwise. In addition, the differences between the perceptions of the three types of delegates are extremely small, failing to reach statistical significance.

All in all, there are few differences between delegates chosen by the three different procedures. For the most part, delegates have similar, albeit inaccurate, perceptions of voters' positions. And, where there are differences between delegates, those differences are either not what one would expect or they are substantively trivial. There is essentially no evidence here that the mode of delegate selection makes much difference in the familiarity of delegates with voters' views.

Some may claim, however, that the inability to judge correctly voters' positions is not as important as how the delegates' views on issues compared to those of voters. Table 3 displays the mean differences between the positions held by various types of delegates and the positions held by partisan voters.

The overall pattern that emerged when delegates' perceptions were examined is duplicated when we turn to the actual positions delegates take as

**TABLE 2. Difference in Means for Democratic Delegates' Perceptions of Republican Voters' Positions and Actual Republican Voters' Positions for Ideological Self-Placement and Issues by Type of Delegate**

	All Democratic Delegates	Primary	Caucus <sup>a</sup>	Primary/ Caucus <sup>b</sup>	Super
Ideology	1.28** (.08)	1.30** (.08)	1.29** (.07)	1.29** (.09)	1.17** (.09)
Defense Spending	1.14** (.07)	1.02** (.09)	1.29** (.07)	1.22** (.08)	.99** (.11)
Russia	1.15** (.08)	1.09** (.09)	1.17** (.07)	1.15** (.09)	1.03** (.11)
Govt. Help Blacks	3.38** (.08)	3.56** (.10)	3.40** (.08)	3.44** (.12)	3.21** (.11)
Role of Women	2.32** (.08)	2.36** (.09)	2.36** (.07)	2.36** (.09)	2.14** (.11)

Sources: 1988 American National Election Study; 1988 CPS Convention Delegate Study.

Entries are difference in means test results.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Negative scores indicate that the delegates' perceive Republican voters as more liberal than those voters' actual position.

Positive scores indicate that the delegates' perceive Republican voters as more conservative than those voters' actual position.

<sup>a</sup>The category "Caucus" also includes delegates chosen via conventions.

<sup>b</sup>The category "Primary/Caucus" also includes delegates chosen via conventions.

\*\*Difference is significant at  $p < .01$ .

compared with those held by Democratic voters. With the exception of ideological self-placement, the gap between delegates and voters is wide, and there is no consistent pattern of narrowing that gap as we move from primary delegates to superdelegates.<sup>8</sup> Using the comparisons of delegates' actual positions on issues vis-à-vis those of voters does not, therefore, alter the original inference that the delegate selection process does not affect the abilities of delegates to reflect the views of the party's mainstream voters.<sup>9</sup>

One of the antecedents of the ability to "read" the electorate is presumably the political sophistication of the "reader." Perhaps the lack of differences found among delegates' perceptual acuity is due to the equality of delegates' general sophistication in thinking about politics. Maybe any person who rises to the rank of delegate is informed enough about politics to minimize any differences observed between the different types of delegates. This reasoning might explain the lack of differences among delegates reported in Tables 1 through 3. As a rough test of this proposition, I used a series of open-ended questions to measure the understanding delegates

**TABLE 3. Difference in Means for Delegates' Positions and Voters' Positions for Ideological Self-Placement and Issues by Type of Delegate**

	All Democratic Delegates	Primary	Caucus <sup>a</sup>	Primary/ Caucus <sup>b</sup>	Super
Ideology	-.13* (.07)	-.11 (.09)	-.16* (.07)	-.15 (.10)	-.06 (.12)
Defense	-.78** (.06)	-.73** (.09)	-.81** (.07)	-.79** (.09)	-.55** (.11)
Spending	-.99** (.06)	-.82** (.09)	-.96** (.07)	-.92** (.10)	-1.09** (.12)
Russia	.94** (.07)	.89** (.08)	.92** (.08)	.91** (.11)	.71** (.14)
Govt. Help	-1.00** (.06)	-1.09** (.07)	-1.01** (.07)	-1.03** (.09)	-1.14** (.11)
Blacks					
Role of					
Women					

Sources: 1988 American National Election Study; 1988 CPS Convention Delegate Study.

Entries are difference in means test results.

Standard errors are in parentheses.

Negative scores indicate that the delegates are more liberal than Democratic voters.

Positive scores indicate that the delegates are more conservative than Democratic voters.

<sup>a</sup>The category "Caucus" also includes delegates chosen via conventions.

<sup>b</sup>The category "Primary/Caucus" also includes delegates chosen via conventions.

\*Difference is significant at  $p < .05$ .

\*\*Difference is significant at  $p < .01$ .

have about the terms *liberal* and *conservative*.<sup>10</sup> These data will provide some clues about the respective abilities of delegates to understand central concepts of our political world.

The results clearly indicate that there are few differences among the delegates' familiarity with ideological language (see Tables 4 and 5). Superdelegates are no more likely to use general philosophy, the highest tier of response, to describe the terms *liberal* or *conservative* than are those delegates chosen through primaries or caucuses. In addition, there are few variations beyond that first level of response indicating that the delegates think about ideological terms in mostly similar ways. It is little surprise, given delegates equally furnished with the understanding of politics, that there is no disparity found in their perceptual acuity.

## CONCLUSION

Are there differences between superdelegates and those chosen via primaries and caucuses? Yes. Superdelegates, for example, tend to be elected officials with firsthand campaign experience.<sup>11</sup> Superdelegates also tend to

**TABLE 4. Aggregate Salience of Meaning of "Liberal," by Type of Delegate**

Category of Response	Primary %	Caucus %	Primary/Caucus %	Super %
Gen'l Philosophy	84.9	84.8	84.8	85.6
Group References	33.9	30.9	31.6	28.8
Economic Policy	13.4	19.9	18.3	16.3
Domestic Policy	44.6	46.3	45.9	42.3
Foreign Policy	16.7	19.7	18.9	17.3
Cand/Party Figure	3.8	7.4	6.5	7.7
N =	186	564	750	104

*Source:* 1988 CPS Convention Delegate Study.

Entries are the percentage of respondents whose responses fell into that category. The figures total more than 100 percent because some respondents gave more than one answer to the questions.

**TABLE 5. Aggregate Salience of Meaning of "Conservative," by Type of Delegate**

Category of Response	Primary %	Caucus %	Primary/Caucus %	Super %
Gen'l Philosophy	78.5	85.1	83.5	80.8
Group References	38.7	33.2	34.5	28.8
Economic Policy	15.6	20.6	19.3	17.3
Domestic Policy	32.3	30.7	31.1	31.7
Foreign Policy	24.7	27.3	26.7	26.9
Cand/Party Figure	3.2	6.2	5.5	3.8
N =	186	564	750	104

*Source:* 1988 CPS Convention Delegate Study.

Entries are the percentage of respondents whose responses fell into that category. The figures total more than 100 percent because some respondents gave more than one answer to the questions.

have slightly more experience in party and convention politics.<sup>12</sup> Finally, superdelegates are more likely than are other delegates to prefer candidates from inside the Washington Beltway than extreme or outsider candidates.<sup>13</sup>

However, there is scant evidence that those differences affect the abilities of delegates to ascertain the positions held by voters on issues.<sup>14</sup> Delegates of all types, then, ought to be able to convey messages to the party organization via the convention process as accurately as any other delegate.

Likewise, primary and caucus delegates ought to be able to carry the banner for the party back to their hometowns and not damage the party's chances by accentuating issues that would be troublesome in their communities.

The preceding analysis, therefore, suggests that some of the fears of scholars and pundits about the problems with primary and caucus delegates are overstated. The post-1972 nomination practices do not seem to have created a set of delegates that are less able to gauge the pulse of the electorate. Perhaps delegates chosen in primaries use their proximity to voters as their cues, while superdelegates rely on their experience and professionalism to ascertain the sentiments of the party's voters (Clausen 1977: 377). For different reasons, then, superdelegates and popularly chosen delegates are relatively equal when it comes to gauging the opinions of the mass citizenry.

The absence of a noticeable difference between superdelegates and other delegates may also occur, as suggested above, because once activists reach the level of "convention delegate," they have already been "seasoned" in party politics. Even the most unpolished of delegates may be experienced enough to be as accurate at placing voters as the most senior of party officials.<sup>15</sup> Given the hurdles that must be jumped in order to become a delegate in the late 1980s, it is no surprise that most delegates are relative equals when it comes to judging the positions of voters. This conclusion is supported further by the results provided in Tables 4 and 5 that delegates of all types think about politics with the same degree of sophistication.

These findings are similar to recent studies about the influences of "purists" and "pragmatists" in political parties. Just as those works show many of the early negative reactions to changes in nomination system to be unfounded (Stone and Abramowitz 1983; Geer 1989), so too are the fears regarding democratically chosen delegates. The antidote prescribed by the Democratic party in 1982 seems not to have eased all of the symptoms resulting from the post-McGovern reforms. Indeed, the results presented here suggest that the Democratic party may have misdiagnosed the problems to begin with, thus making the cure irrelevant. At this point, we can be fairly confident that overall, just as amateurs tend to be as interested in electability as in ideology (Stone and Abramowitz 1983) and just as purists may not be as ideologically extreme as might have been thought (Haus and Maisel 1986), delegates chosen via democratic means are just as adept at knowing where the party's voters stand on issues as are the party's professionals.

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### Appendix

#### Survey items

The phrase in brackets is the additional quasi-filter asked of voters. The ANES did not include items dealing with placing Republican and Democratic voters across the nation.

**Ideology**—We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale? [or haven't you thought much about this?]

Using the same scale, where would you place each of the following?  
 Republican voters across the nation.  
 Democratic voters across the nation.

**Defense Spending**—Some people believe that we should spend much more money for defense. Others feel that defense spending should be greatly decreased. And, of course, some other people have opinions somewhere in between. Where would you place yourself on this scale? [or haven't you thought much about this?]

Using the same scale, where would you place each of the following?  
 Republican voters across the nation.  
 Democratic voters across the nation.

**Russia**—Some people feel it is important for us to try very hard to get along with Russia. Others feel it is a big mistake to try too hard to get along with Russia. Where would you place yourself on this seven-point scale? [or haven't you thought much about this?]

Using the same scale, where would you place each of the following?  
 Republican voters across the nation.  
 Democratic voters across the nation.

**Govt. Help Blacks**—Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help blacks because they should help themselves. Where would you place yourself on the following scale? [or haven't you thought much about this?]

Using the same scale, where would you place each of the following?  
 Republican voters across the nation.  
 Democratic voters across the nation.

**Role of Women**—Recently there has been a lot of talk about women's rights. Some people feel that women should have an equal role with men in running business, industry, and government. Others feel that women's place is in the home. Where would you place yourself on the following scale? [or haven't you thought much about this?]

Using the same scale, where would you place each of the following?

Republican voters across the nation.

Democratic voters across the nation.

**Understandings of "Liberal" and "Conservative"**—People have different things in mind when they say that someone's political views are liberal or conservative. We'd like to know more about this. Let's start with liberal. What sorts of things do you have in mind when you say someone's political views are liberal?

And, what do you have in mind when you say that someone's political views are conservative?

#### Means of Democratic Delegates' Positions & Perceptions and Party Voters' Positions

	Voters	All Democratic Delegates	Primary	Caucus <sup>a</sup>	Primary/ Caucus <sup>b</sup>	Super
Ideology	3.05 [583]	2.91 (3.38) [2608]	2.94 (3.45) [269]	2.89 (3.33) [736]	2.90 (3.36) [1005]	2.99 (3.32) [173]
Defense Spending	3.11 [583]	2.33 (3.32) [2824]	2.37 (3.45) [264]	2.29 (3.18) [743]	2.31 (3.22) [1007]	2.56 (3.39) [173]
Russia	3.23 [583]	2.24 (2.96) [2816]	2.41 (3.02) [261]	2.27 (2.94) [736]	2.31 (2.96) [997]	2.14 (2.77) [171]
Govt. Help Blacks	1.92 [583]	2.86 (3.36) [2805]	2.81 (3.48) [256]	2.84 (3.25) [741]	2.83 (3.31) [997]	2.63 (3.23) [172]
Role of Women	2.46 [583]	1.47 (2.53) [2814]	1.37 (2.58) [263]	1.45 (2.38) [741]	1.43 (2.43) [1004]	1.32 (2.53) [172]

Sources: 1988 American National Election Study; 1988 CPS Convention Delegate Study.

Entries are mean scores ranging from 1: very liberal, to 7: very conservative.

The mean perception scores for delegates are in parentheses.

The number of cases is in brackets.

<sup>a</sup>The category "Caucus" also includes delegates chosen via conventions.

<sup>b</sup>The category "Primary/Caucus" also includes delegates chosen via conventions.

## NOTES

1. See, for example, Kirkpatrick (1976), Ranney (1975), or Polsby and Wildavsky (1991) as well as previous editions of *Presidential Elections*. For evidence that even the "purists" were interested in electability and ideology when it came to the choice of the party's nominee, see Stone and Abramowitz (1983).
2. Previous studies have revealed the dissimilarity of views held by the delegates relative to the party following (see, for example, McClosky, Hoffman, and O'Hara 1960; McClosky 1964; Prothro and Grigg 1960; Kirkpatrick 1975; Miller and Jennings 1986; Miller 1988; and Granberg and Holmberg 1988).
3. While others have assessed the accuracy of leader perceptions of constituents' views (see Miller and Stokes 1963; Cnudde and McCrone 1966; Hedlund and Friesema 1972; Erikson, Luttbeg, and Holloway 1975; Clausen 1977; McCrone and Kuklinski 1979; Clausen, Holmberg, and Dehaven-Smith 1983; and Holmberg 1989), past studies have usually focused on the linkage between elected officials and their constituents. Kessel (1992) is an exception.
4. The definition of "partisan voter" is open to interpretation (see Geer 1989: 15-19). Here, partisan voters are those respondents who reported voting in the 1988 election and identified themselves as either strong, weak, or independent Democrats. I also compared delegate perceptions to self-designated partisans generally, to partisan nonvoters, and to citizens with high, medium, and low activity levels. I found no patterns different from those presented below.
5. The 1988 CPS Convention Delegate Study was conducted in the early months of 1989 in the form of a mail questionnaire. Delegates to the 1988 conventions were surveyed as well as respondents to previous Convention Delegate Study surveys. The response rate for this survey was 40 percent. While one might worry about the response rates, other surveys of delegates to the 1988 national party conventions were comparable to the 1988 Convention Delegate Study. These response rates are also comparable to other mail surveys of political elites. See, for example, Soule and Clarke (1971: 72-76) for a summary of response rates in previous elite studies, and Roback (1980).

The number of superdelegates in the sample is 177, which represents 28 percent of the number of superdelegates actually attending the 1988 Democratic convention. This lower proportion may cause some concern since elected officials, who make up a large proportion of the superdelegates, may be underrepresented. However, I have checked to make sure that there are no biases in this subsample. Fortunately, no important differences arose. I am confident, therefore, that this sample of superdelegates is a representative one.

6. All of the items have a seven-point scale format and have been coded so that 1 represents a very liberal response and 7 represents a very conservative response. See the Appendix for a list and description of the survey items used in the analysis.
7. For example, 34 percent of the Democratic platform and 38 percent of the Republican platform dealt with foreign policy and defense-related issues. Also, 24 percent of the Democratic platform and 17 percent of the Republican platform dealt with "New Deal" issues that include social welfare concerns. While absent from the list is an item that deals with the economy, the platforms gave less attention to economic issues than might have been expected (12 percent of the Democratic platform and 14 percent of the Republican platform). For a complete description of the two party platforms in 1988 see Geer (1992).
8. The same pattern emerged when Republican delegates' perceptions of Democratic and Republican voters were examined. They systematically misperceived those voters as more liberal than they actually are. They were also more conservative than Republican voters.

As with previous studies of mass and elite attitudes (McClosky, Hoffman, and O'Hara 1960; Kirkpatrick 1976; Miller and Jennings 1986; Miller 1988), the delegates tend to take more liberal positions than do the voters of their party.

9. When direct comparisons between superdelegates, primary delegates, and caucus delegates were made, the differences were not statistically significant.

One possible explanation for these findings is that the difference between primary delegates, caucus delegates, and superdelegates is one of variances rather than means. That is, primary and caucus delegates might be perceptually and ideologically variable while superdelegates are more individually accurate regarding voter positions and more consistently mainstream (Democratic) in their views. To check this hypothesis, I compared the standard deviations associated with the delegates' perceptions and positions along the same lines as presented here and found no systematic or significant differences between primary, caucus, and superdelegates. Individual-level analysis was also conducted in which delegate selection was one of the independent variables and, again, it was not a significant predictor of delegates' position or perception.

10. For an elaboration of this analysis see Herrera (1992). See also Luskin (1987) for a discussion of measures of political sophistication. The text of the open-ended questions used is found in the Appendix.
11. Indeed, the tendency for superdelegates to be elected officials may explain another pattern found in the inspection of perceptions vis-à-vis actual positions (see Appendix). The difference between where the delegates think the voters are and the positions they take tend to be smaller for superdelegates than for delegates chosen in primaries or caucuses. This is especially true on the ideological self-placement item. We should expect this pattern, since, for electoral reasons, office-holders should be more likely to mirror the opinions of where they believe the voters to be.

This difference did not, however, manifest itself in the analysis of perceptual acuity. Elected officials were no different from nonelected officials. Likewise, party officials were no different from nonparty officials when it came to perceptual accuracy.

12. Superdelegates average about five more years of political activity than do other delegates. They also are twice as likely as other delegates to be veterans of two or more conventions.
13. The following table shows the distribution of preferences for candidates by superdelegates and other delegates. I have excluded candidates whose support did not reach 6 percent by either group of delegates (Babbitt, Hart, and Simon).

	Primary/Caucus %	Superdelegates %
Dukakis	50.7	36.4
Gephart	5.1	18.6
Gore	13.6	20.2
Jackson	20.0	9.3
<i>n</i> =	740	129

No differences were found between candidate supporters in their degree of perceptual acuity. That is, Dukakis supporters were no better or worse than Gore or Jackson supporters at discerning voters' preferences.

14. I checked to see if superdelegates were more likely to compromise their views in the selection of a candidate than delegates chosen via primary or caucus. I used items in the CPS Convention Delegate Study that tap the delegates' motivations for participating in party activities and in presidential campaigns that include such questions as the proclivity

of the delegates to participate due to their commitment to a particular candidate, or commitment to an issue or issues, their willingness to play down issues in order to win, etc. In all of the analyses conducted, there were no significant differences found between the three types of delegates under investigation here. All three types of delegates were more likely to emphasize electability over ideology when choosing a nominee.

15. This type of analysis was conducted. Delegates were partitioned into those who were veteran and nonveteran delegates chosen by various methods. The result was a grouping of six types of Democratic delegates (nonveteran primary, veteran primary, nonveteran caucus, veteran caucus, nonveteran superdelegate, and veteran superdelegate). The analysis was consistent with that presented earlier. Veteran superdelegates were not more accurate in their perceptions than nonveteran primary delegates, nor was any consistent pattern observed.

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