

# THE BATTALION

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## The Weather

Yesterday

High .....	80	High .....	78
Low .....	51	Low .....	56
Rain .....	0.00 inches	Chance of rain .....	0%

Today

United Press International  
Republican Ronald Reagan is the narrow favorite to win the presidential election today, but Jimmy Carter pleaded for voters to return to the fold and rescue his hopes for four more years in the White House.

The Democratic president and his Republican challenger stood at the end of a long, lackluster and negative campaign a few points apart on the pollsters' charts. Reagan was the better, both nationally and in most of the big electoral votes that would do most to select the next president.

Despite pollsters' numbers and pundits' estimates indicating Carter will be the first elected president since Herbert Hoover to lose a second term bid, several big questions remained to keep the election in the toss-up category:

— Did the Iranian Parliament's offer to release the U.S. hostages help Carter even though he could not promise immediate freedom for the 52 Americans held captive for a year?

— Would Democrats who defected to independent John Anderson return in numbers enough to give Carter some of the large swing states in which Reagan held slim leads?

— And could the feverish efforts of Democrats and their allies to reverse the 16-year decline of voter turnout yield enough extra votes to eke out victory for the president?

The presidential contest tops the ballot, but voters are also choosing 435 members of the House, 33 senators and 13 governors, as well as electing thousands of other state and local officials and deciding scores of ballot questions, from tax cuts to educational policies.

There were some bitterly fought contests, especially for the Senate, across the country, but early GOP hopes of breaking the Democratic hold on Congress — now 59-41 in the Senate and

276-159 in the House — does not appear likely to pan out even if a Republican does move into the White House in January. Nor do the Republicans appear likely to make heavy inroads on the current Democratic lead of 31-19 in governorships.

Turnout is vital to both sides, with the Democrats standing to gain most from a big vote because of their advantage in both registration and voter self-identification.

But most experts are predicting no more than 88 million votes — less than 55 percent of the 160.5 million Americans of voting age and about the same percentage as in 1976.

## Student survey says Reagan gained votes after debate

By RITCHIE PRIDDY

Battalion Staff  
Ronald Reagan's personality is more persuasive than Carter's, and as a result he is away with a significant increase in his two Texas A&M University speech communications professors say.

University professors John Cook and William Strong conducted a survey on college students to try and determine the influence of the presidential debate, and concluded that the debate could have an impact on the way some people will vote.

We cannot make projections from the survey, we dealt primarily with why Reagan gained votes after the debate. The reason is because people could more readily identify with Reagan," Strong said.

The two professors studied responses of college students on questionnaires before and after the debate. The questionnaire consisted of questions ranging from "which man was best suited for the presidency?" to "What was the most important issue in the campaign?" It was randomly distributed to 250 students. Of the 250 questionnaires given out, 157 were completed, which the two professors considered a poor return.

The length of the questionnaire (eight pages) might have been part of the problem," Cook said.

The ABC News poll, after the debate, questioned about 1,000 people nationwide on one question per person.

Ours dealt with 157 people with 210 questions so it was more information from fewer people," he said.

The results indicated Reagan was the only candidate who got a significant shift upward in the number of people who said they would vote for him.

"But, of course, with 59 percent of the population tested for Reagan to start with and like only 27 percent for Carter, you are in Reagan country, so more people are going to say he won and more people are going to shift that way just from talking to others," Cook said.

The study indicated that both candidates achieved higher credibility from the debate, with Reagan scoring higher in social and physical attractiveness.

"Reagan was higher on physical attractiveness, how well he dressed and how good he looked, and more socially attractive, as well. People seem to like him better which, according to his campaign officials, fits the goal of his campaign," Cook said. "He was trying to come off inter-personally warm, talk to you one-on-one, and it must be working because he is liked more."

Another thing measured was whether the voter thought the candidates' views matched his own. Does the candidate believe the same things I do, have the same attitudes, the same values?

"Identification is persuasion," Strong said. "If someone can identify with a candidate he'll most likely vote for him."

Strong explained that Reagan's positive identification comes from his use of language that emphasizes feelings and attitudes that people already have. Reagan mirrors the attitudes of society and makes people feel they are agreeing with him,

when in fact he is agreeing with them. "Carter restrains himself to be presidential, and Reagan will go ahead and let himself relate to the individual citizen," Strong said. "He talks a lot like everybody's grandfather."

The study indicated Reagan scored higher on questions about similar beliefs, attitudes, values and background.

Cook said Reagan was perceived to be similar in his cultural and economic background, closer to the voters.

"So being from the South is no net asset in East Texas (for Carter)."

Of those surveyed, the economy was shown to be the most important issue in the campaign for most people, with foreign policy also considered important. Carter's performance as president was apparently not a major issue.

Cook said that the debate did have an impact on the number of undecided voters, since they were reduced from 19 percent to 13 percent. Some 5 percent of the undecided indicated a move in their preference to Reagan, with only a one percent increase for Carter.

Also, apparently, many voters considered themselves better informed on the issues after the debate. There was, however, no increase in the number of people who said they were going to vote.

"What we think we found in this data is the same kinds of things we expected," Cook said. "The candidates are doing the things they do best, doing what their coaches told them to do, and well enough to come off the way they are supposed to — credible and likeable."

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