

THE 1984 ELECTION AS ANTHONY DOWNS AND STANLEY KELLEY MIGHT INTERPRET IT

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This paper is an analysis of two rational choice theories of elections. Anthony Downs and Stanley Kelley's theories yield complementary interpretations of the 1984 U. S. election. Reagan's victory was based on both prospective and retrospective judgments as well as on candidate and policy considerations. Reagan won that element of an incumbent's reelection that is a referendum on his performance as president. However, people also voted on the basis of domestic and foreign policy preferences for the second term. On these issues voters preferred Mondale as much as Reagan. Reagan's victory owed remarkably little to his conservative agenda and to a warm regard for his personal qualities as a leader. His landslide was deceptive. The two Reagan victories were among the weakest of the six landslides of the postwar period by Kelley's test of decisiveness. The Reagan elections have not set the United States on the course of a long-term conservative agenda in either domestic or foreign affairs.

Many interpretations of the 1984 election overestimate the degree to which it was a retrospective referendum on the Reagan presidency. It is true that American voters have rarely defeated incumbents in times of peace and prosperity. And there is no denying that voters found Reagan's personal qualities appealing. These facts should not obscure others, however. We present evidence that voters compared the positions of the candidates on a wide range of domestic and foreign policy issues and that these prospective judgments also influenced their votes. On balance these issues favored Mondale. Reagan won the element of elections that turns on judgments about capacity to govern; yet, he failed to articulate a policy program in a way that will link popular policies to the Republican party in the post-Reagan era.

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RATIONALITY MODELS OF ELECTORAL CHOICE

The organizing focus of this analysis is the rational choice perspectives of Anthony Downs (1957) and Stanley Kelley (1983). As Jeffrey Smith (1980) explains, Downs's theory of party competition is isomorphic with welfare economist models of the competitive market. Parties are to voters as producers are to consumers. The sovereignty of consumers is found in their capacity to select rationally from the market those goods that maximize their utility. Consumer preferences drive the market, not the consumption preferences of the producers. Similarly, in the Downsian theory of party competition, voters have policy preferences that are not directly manipulable by party leaders. Citizens are politically sovereign because rational (if partly ignorant and uncertain) voters induce the parties to offer policies that voters most prefer.

Similarly, Kelley's "voter decision rule" is a rationalistic theory in which choices are directly related to preferences, and the preferences are exogenous. That is, policy preferences, like consumer preferences, are taken as a given, and the theory focuses on the way in which voter preferences translate into candidate choices. In Kelley's words (1983, p. 10), "One may conceive of any choice as involving a set of *considerations* (or *prima facie* reasons for choosing in one way or another) and a rule for combining (or weighing) them. To know both the considerations and the rule is to explain the choice." Given a set of considerations, "The voter canvasses his likes and dislikes of the leading candidates and major parties involved in the election. Weighing each like and dislike equally, he votes for the candidate toward whom he has the greatest net number of favorable attitudes. . . . If no candidate has such an advantage, the voter votes consistently with his party affiliation . . ." (p. 11).

In both Downs and Kelley's theories of candidate choice, attitudes directly determine behavior. Attitudes are conscious cognitions. Voters are conscious of the considerations that influence their decisions, and they can articulate these considerations to other persons. Both theories also incorporate the concept of salience. In Downsian spatial models each voter weighs his or her proximity to the competing candidates on each issue by the importance the voter places on that issue. Kelley's rule is simpler but comparable. Salient issues are those that become considerations in choice. These considerations differ widely across voters, even though each voter weighs each consideration equally with the others.

A DOWNSIAN MODEL OF CANDIDATE CHOICE

Table 1 presents a test of the Downs's theory of vote choice. The data base is the 1984 CPS election study. In this and all subsequent tables

TABLE 1. Test of a Downsian Model

	<i>Socioeconomic Model</i>		<i>Downs Spatial Model</i>	
	Coeff	T Value	Coeff	T Value
Family income	.026	(6.534)	.005	(2.613)
Education	-.053	(-2.879)	-.003	(-0.333)
Union	-.267	(-7.196)	-.050	(-4.118)
Catholic	-.109	(-2.551)	-.024	(-1.400)
Jew	-.325	(-3.992)	-.057	(-2.187)
Nonwhite	-.295	(-4.613)	-.038	(-1.575)
Hispanic	-.065	(-0.637)	-.034	(-0.940)
Female	-.054	(-1.375)	.009	(0.428)
Liberal/Conservative			.033	(3.417)
Democrat			-.057	(-4.654)
Republican			.232	(3.545)
Foreign issues			-.013	(-4.262)
Domestic issues			-.009	(-3.231)
Log like R^2	.19		.65	
Cases correctly predicted	69%		88%	
Log-likelihood	-375.716		-172.780	

Data Source: 1984 CPS Study.

The entries are transformed probit coefficients, which estimate the effect of a one-unit change in the independent variable on the probability of voting for Reagan rather than Mondale. The dependent variable is reported candidate choice among validated voters. Reagan voters coded +1; Mondale voters, 0. $N=656$. Education: 6 ordinal categories. Grades 0-8; 9-11; high school diploma; some college; B.A. level degree; advanced degree. Union Member in Family, Catholic, Jew, Nonwhite, Hispanic, Female, Unemployed are all dummy variables. Liberal/conservative identification is a seven-point scale. Republican and Democratic identifiers include leaning partisans and are dummy variables. See text for definitions of issue variables.

Any T value greater than +1.96 or less than -1.96 is statistically significant at the .05 level, two-tailed.

self-reports of voting turnout were validated by interviews with local election officials. The test begins with a socioeconomic model, which serves as a baseline model. All of these status variables are statistically significant except Hispanic ethnicity and sex. Higher income predisposes voters to Reagan. All of the other variables are associated with an increased likelihood of a Mondale vote, including higher education. Evidence of the significant class character of the 1984 election is seen in the importance of income and union membership. Wattenberg (1987) has noted that since 1952 the association of income with Republican vote peaked in 1984. The class component of the New Deal coalition (if not its regional and ethnic character) remains intact.

As Smith observes (1980, p. 58) Downs's "party differential is composed of issue-specific and generalized components." We have measured the

issue-specific components using all seven foreign and domestic spatial measures available in the 1984 CPS study. All seven correlate with each other and with the liberalism measure in the expected direction. This issue consistency is itself an important change from the early 1960s when conservatives on domestic issues tended to be liberal on foreign policy issues (Key, 1964). The seven domestic and foreign policy issues together form a reliable scale (Cronbach's alpha of .72). However, because of our substantive interests in separately estimating the effects of domestic and foreign policy issues, we have divided the seven into two sets of four domestic and three foreign policy issues. (With a smaller number of items, the subdivided sets fall slightly below the desired alpha threshold of .7.) Downsian proximity measures were created by comparing each voter's issue beliefs to the mean perceived candidate positions on the issue in the manner of Markus and Converse (1979).

To these issue-specific components we added the generalized attitudes of liberalism/conservatism and partisan self-identification, which serve as information shortcuts for the rational Downsian voter. These issue-specific and generalized attitudes, together with the baseline socioeconomic variables, form the fuller spatial model in Table 1. (See also Enelow, Hinich, and Mendell, 1986.)

All of the attitudinal variables in Table 1 are statistically significant and substantively important. Especially significant for our purposes are the foreign and domestic issue beliefs. The model suggests three major findings.

1. These prospective issue preferences imply that the 1984 election was more than simply a retrospective referendum, a plebiscite, on the Reagan presidency. The comparative preferences of voters for Mondale's and Reagan's policies are evidence that voters based their choices in part on the policy directions they anticipated the contending candidates would take in the next term. From the probit equation we can estimate the differences in Reagan support between moderate policy liberals and moderate policy conservatives, all other determinants of candidate choice held constant. We define a moderate policy liberal as a person one standard deviation above the mean issue proximity score and a moderate policy conservative as a person one standard deviation below the mean. So defined, a moderate policy conservative on domestic issues was 10% more likely to vote for Reagan than a moderate policy liberal. Similarly a moderate policy conservative on foreign issues was 13% more likely to vote for Reagan than a moderate policy liberal. This evidence of issue voting in the 1984 election is supported by Shank's and Miller's (1985) analysis of the 1984 CPS election study as well as Boyd's (1986) analysis of the 1984 CBS/*New York Times* exit polls.

2. Foreign policy preferences were an important determinant of the vote. These items included whether "defense spending should be greatly

increased,” whether “we should be much tougher in our dealings with Russia,” and whether the U. S. “should become much more involved in the internal affairs of Central American countries.”

3. On domestic issues voters were slightly closer to Reagan than to Mondale. On foreign policies, however, voters were substantially closer to Mondale.

Thus, the spatial analysis seems anomalous. If issues were important and if Mondale was favored on the issues at least as much as Reagan, how did Reagan win in a landslide? Indeed, how decisive was the landslide? Answers to these questions may be found in Kelley’s method of analyzing elections.

STANLEY KELLEY’S TESTS OF DECISIVENESS

Kelley’s data are the open-ended items that the CPS has included in its preelection surveys since 1952. The respondents are invited to give as many as five responses to each of four questions: What do you like, what do you dislike, about each of the parties and each of the candidates. Kelley calls the summated index of all of the responses Netscore. Netscore can range from -20 to $+20$, with zero as indifferent. A measure of its validity as an indicator of candidate support is that across many elections over 90% of the respondents report voting for the candidate predicted by Netscore, even though the preelection interviews begin as early as late September.

Kelley’s first test of the decisiveness of a landslide is the “loser’s mobilization ratio.” The ratio is simply the “percentage of the losing candidate’s adherents (both those who voted and those who did not vote) that would have had to cast ballots for his vote to have equaled that of the winning candidate” (1983, p. 30). By this first test of decisiveness, the two Reagan victories were the weakest of the postwar landslides. In 1984, if only 71% of the Mondale supporters (defined by a pro-Mondale Netscore) had cast ballots, Mondale’s vote would have equaled that of Reagan. (See Table 2.)

A second test of decisiveness is the percentage of the winner’s vote received from weakly committed voters. Table 3 presents these figures for five previous landslides. (Five, because Kelley does not present the comparable figure for the 1980 Reagan landslide for this table and subsequent ones.) Whether one defines weakly committed voters as those with net scores less than or equal to 1, 2, or 3, the inference remains the same: Reagan’s 1984 landslide is the weakest of the postwar set, with the single exception of 1972.

The thinness of support for Reagan is illustrated by the percentage of Reagan supporters who viewed the choice between Reagan and Mondale as the *lesser of evils*. Such voters are not positively attracted to either

TABLE 2. Losers' Mobilization Ratios for Six Postwar Landslides

Election	Mobilization Ratio
1952	73.9%
1956	84.5
1964	111.9
1972	88.7
1980	65.6
1984	71.3

Source: For 1952–1980, Kelley (1983, p. 170). 1984 figure computed by authors. The calculation assumes that nonvoters with zero Netscores would have voted for Reagan in the same proportion that voters did.

candidate. This baleful statistic reached its peak in postwar elections in 1972, when 21.2% of all voters did not feel positively about Nixon or McGovern. The next worst case is 1984, when over 18% of the voters regarded Reagan and the Republican party as the lesser of evils (Table 4). In contrast, only about 6% viewed both candidacies positively, that is, as the *better of goods*.

Table 5 punctuates this analysis by presenting comparisons of the credit ratings for the winning candidacies in five landslides. A credit rating is one-half of Netscore. It is the net sum of likes versus dislikes about the winning candidate and his party. Credit ratings range from -10 to $+10$, with zero as indifferent. A comparison of the percentage of positive credit ratings shows how negative the evaluations were of Reagan and the Republicans in 1984 relative to previous landslide victors. For example, in 1964, over 64% of all participating voters felt positively toward Johnson and the Democrats, and in 1956, just short of 60% of all voters felt positively toward Eisenhower and the Republicans. In contrast, only 42% of 1984

TABLE 3. Percentage of Winner's Vote Received from Weakly Committed Voters in Five Postwar Landslides

Election	<i>Weakly Committed Voters Defined as Those with Netscores of:</i>		
	$\leq \pm 1$	$\leq \pm 2$	$\leq \pm 3$
1952	21.7	28.7	36.1
1956	26.2	33.4	40.7
1964	14.1	21.2	29.6
1972	27.1	37.7	45.0
1984	26.5	35.1	44.5

Source: For 1952–1972, Kelley (1983, p. 35). 1984 figure computed by authors. 1984 $N=712$ Reagan voters whose turnout is validated.

TABLE 4. Lesser of Evils and Better of Goods Choices in Five Postwar Landslides

Election	<i>Respondents Choosing the</i>	
	Lesser of Evils	Better of Goods
1952	7.3%	12.6%
1956	9.3	15.4
1964	12.3	5.5
1972	21.2	7.0
1984	18.6	6.3

Source: For 1952–1972, Kelley (1983, p. 38). 1984 figure computed by authors. 1984 $N=1,373$ validated voters. A voter's choice is the *lesser of evils* when neither of the credit ratings for the Republicans or the Democrats is greater than zero. If both of the credit ratings are greater than 0, the choice is the *better of goods*.

voters felt positively about Reagan and the Republicans. The mean and the median credit ratings for the Republican candidacy were zero, or indifferent, the only time this has been true of any winning landslide victory in this data series.

In sum, the methods of Downs and Kelley yield consistent inferences. Reagan's victory owed remarkably little either to a positive attraction to his policies or to a warm regard for himself or the Republican party. In two recent articles Martin Wattenberg has documented this "continuing downward slide in presidential candidate popularity" (1986). There undoubtedly has been a realignment of partisan strength, but it is in his terms a "hollow" one (1987). It owes as much to the loss of faith in the Democrats as a governing party in economic and foreign affairs as it does to a revitalization of confidence in the Republicans. But, the puzzle remains: If the affection of voters for the Republicans in 1984 was as tepid as we have argued, why was Reagan's victory margin so great? Here again, Kelley's method of examining the impact of electoral considerations serves us well.

TABLE 5. Credit Ratings for Winning Candidates in Five Postwar Landslides

Election	% Net Positive Credit Rating	Mean Credit Rating	Median Credit Rating	Quartile Ratings
1952	56.9	1.42	+1	-1, +4
1956	59.1	1.37	+1	-1, +4
1964	64.3	1.45	+2	-1, +4
1972	53.4	.53	+1	-1, +3
1984	41.8	.08	0	-3, +3

Source: For 1952–1976, Kelley (1983, p. 38). 1984 figure computed by authors. 1984 $N=1,373$ validated voters. Credit ratings range from -10 to +10. Net positive ratings are +1 or greater.

CANDIDATES AND ISSUES IN 1984

The great virtue of Kelley's approach is that he offers an elegant and simple way to estimate the impact of electoral considerations (1983, p. 61). Table 6 presents the following measures for candidate, policy, and party considerations.

Saliency. The percentage of voters who cite a given issue as a reason to like or dislike a candidate or party. For example, 76% of all voters cited a domestic issue as such a reason.

Republican bias. The percentage of those voters who cite a given issue who see it as favoring the Republican candidate or party. A bias score of 50 advantages both candidates equally.

Republican pull. $(\text{saliency} \times \text{Republican bias})/100$. Pull is the percentage of voters who are pulled to the Republican candidacy, given the saliency and bias of the issue. *Democratic pull* is the complement of $(\text{saliency} \times [100 - \text{Republican bias}])/100$. From these measures come the following most important measures in the table:

Difference in pull. $(\text{Republican pull} - \text{Democratic Pull})$. This is simply the net advantage of an issue for the Republicans, expressed as a percentage of all voters. Considerations with positive scores advantaged Reagan; considerations with negative scores advantaged Mondale.

Marginal impact. The amount by which a given issue increases the percentage of voters committed to a candidate, as a percentage of all voters. That is, it is the net difference in predicted candidate support, if all references to a given issue are eliminated from Netscore. These marginal effects are necessarily small, since only the vote choice of a weakly committed voter is likely to be changed or moved to indecision by any single consideration. Any single issue, which taken by itself could alter the predicted election outcome by as much as .5 or one-half of 1%, is an important issue.

From Table 6 we make the following inferences about the sources of the Reagan victory.

Candidate Characteristics

Miller, Wattenberg, and Malanchuk (1986) have recently shown that schematic assessments of candidates fall into five categories of perceived presidential personality: integrity, reliability, competence, charisma, and personal qualities. We have replicated this coding scheme in Table 6, including their restriction that only comments made in response to the questions probing likes and dislikes about the candidates are coded. (The Appendix gives the CPS master codes for all considerations in Table 6.)

TABLE 6. The Relative Importance of Electoral Considerations

Considerations	Saliency	Repub Bias	Repub Pull	Demo Pull	Difference in Pull*	Marginal Impact*
CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS						
Candidate total	65	54	35	29	5.7	.2
Integrity	22	54	12	10	1.6	.0
Reliability	13	59	8	5	2.4	-.2
Competence	39	53	21	18	2.6	.0
Charisma	15	81	12	3	8.9	.2
Personal	22	34	8	15	-7.3	-.8
DOMESTIC ISSUES						
All domestic issues	78	47	36	42	-5.3	-1.4
Economy total	53	61	32	21	11.4	2.1
Economy, general	22	75	16	6	10.6	.7
Taxes	30	55	16	13	2.8	.2
Inflation/Unemployment	23	70	16	7	8.9	1.0
Farm	2	33	1	2	-.8	-.2
Welfare issues total	46	30	14	32	-18.2	-2.8
Welfare, means-tested	33	37	12	21	-8.6	-.9
Social Security	22	13	3	19	-16.4	-1.9
Education, housing	10	17	2	9	-6.8	-.3
Veterans	1	17	0	0	-.3	.0
Social issues total	28	47	13	15	-1.6	-.4
Civil rights, liberties	11	38	4	7	-2.7	-.1
Public authority	9	66	6	3	2.8	.2
Women's issues, abortion	18	44	8	10	-2.2	-.7
Postindustrial	5	8	0	5	-4.4	-.3
FOREIGN ISSUES						
All foreign issues	57	50	28	29	-.6	-.4
Foreign policy, general	15	48	7	8	-.7	-.2
Internationalism	8	23	2	6	-4.1	-.5
Military preparedness	38	59	22	15	6.8	.6
International prestige	1	100	1	0	1.4	.0
Arms control	10	22	2	8	-5.5	-.5
Total trouble spots	20	40	8	12	-4.0	-.7
Trouble spots, general	3	31	1	2	-1.1	-.2
Mideast	2	19	0	2	-1.4	-.1
Russia, East Europe	13	43	6	8	-1.8	-.4
Latin America, Nicaragua	7	35	2	4	-2.0	-.2
PARTY AND GROUP ISSUES						
All party, campaign ref.	45	53	24	21	2.6	1.3
Party, general	25	50	12	12	-.2	.2
Unity	5	88	4	1	3.5	.5
Vice-presidential cand.	23	52	12	11	1.1	.8
Debates	3	21	1	2	-1.6	-.1
All group issues	41	18	7	34	-26.4	-3.2
Special int./Big bus.	28	19	5	23	-17.6	-.8
Labor/Common man	26	19	5	21	-16.3	-1.4
Middle class/ Small bus.	10	11	1	9	-7.5	-.6

Source: 1984 CPS Study. *N* = 1,214 validated voters. See Appendix for codes.

* Positive figures are pro-Reagan considerations; negative ones, pro-Mondale.

At least one of these characteristics was salient to 65% of the voters, and Reagan enjoyed a net pull of 5.7% from these assessments of presidential personality. Reagan's positive advantage was relatively small on the considerations of integrity, reliability, and competence. His great margin came on comments coded under *charisma*: references to being dignified, strong, inspiring, confident, good at handling people, patriotic, humorous, kind, likable, and able to save or unite America.

In contrast, Mondale enjoyed a large net advantage on comments coded as *personal*, a category that was even more salient than charisma. The comments included such references as being religious, self-made, well known, and well spoken, and references to health, appearance, age, and maturity. These latter comments, of course, included negative statements about Reagan as well as positive comments about Mondale. Even so, it is clear that Mondale was regarded as a person of decency and that this helped him in the campaign.

Table 6 demonstrates, on balance, Reagan's large net advantage in the qualities people desire in a president. As William Schneider observes (1985, p. 221), Reagan's four years in office had reassured voters on a principal concern raised in the 1980 campaign—his judgment and experience. His cautious responses to foreign crises up to that point—the Soviet downing of the Korean airliner, for example—had reassured the public about his capacity to govern.

Domestic Issues

The economy. Most analysts have viewed Reagan's landslide as the public's reward for the economic recovery of 1983–1984. [See particularly Keeter's graph of Reagan's popularity correlated with changes in the unemployment rate (1985, p. 94)]. We concur. In Table 6, the economy is Reagan's best issue. Apparently the deficit issue did not hurt Reagan much, and Mondale's commitment to raise taxes to reduce the deficit significantly advantaged Reagan. Reagan's pollster, Richard Wirthlin, included the Mondale tax pledge as one of the several campaign gambles that "turned what could have been a 5- or 6-point win into our 20-point landslide" (Moore, 1986, p. 234).

The welfare state. The construction of the American welfare state remains one of the Democrat's enduring advantages. Voters who commented on what we term means-tested welfare—welfare, AFDC, poverty, jobs programs, and poor people—were pulled significantly to Mondale. The social programs that are more universal in their benefits, that is, those that most middle-class Americans do not regard as welfare state programs—social security, education, housing, and veteran's benefits—also created a

large surplus of Mondale votes. Social security was Mondale's best policy issue. He used the issue particularly effectively in the first debate. After Reagan repeated his famous riposte from the 1980 debate, "There you go again," implying yet another distortion of his record, Mondale replied that Reagan had made that 1980 comment in the context of a commitment not to cut the Medicare program. Mondale then charged that Reagan had indeed attempted to cut \$20 billion from the program after the election. The Mondale campaign used this excerpt from the 1984 debate frequently in their media ads (Hunt, 1985, p. 151).

The *social issues* category includes those electoral considerations popularized by Scammon and Wattenberg (1970). Contrary to their predictions, however, these issues do not continue to benefit the Republicans to any notable degree. The civil rights category includes references to civil rights, civil liberties, busing, political and economic refugees, and minority-ethnic groups. These considerations pulled votes to Mondale to a small degree. The category "public authority" is designed to capture the social control dimension of "law and order." It includes specific references to law and order, public morality, drugs, young people, and gun control. As expected these considerations pulled voters to Reagan.

Women's issues—abortion, birth control, ERA, and references to women and feminists—were the most salient of the social issues. Women's issues and civil rights issues together gave Mondale a net positive margin in the combined category of social issues.

Postindustrial issues (Inglehart, 1977) include energy, space, environment, air and water pollution, and nuclear power. Although these issues were salient to only 5% of the voters, 92% of this group mentioned them as a reason to support Mondale or the Democrats. Over 4% of the voters were pulled to Mondale by these environmental and technological issues.

In sum, domestic issues did not uniformly benefit Reagan. Reagan profited hugely from issues of economic performance. However, this advantage was offset by Mondale leads on welfare, social, and environmental issues.

Foreign Issues

Mondale's managers hoped to make foreign policy issues a major focus of the campaign. He needed to attack Reagan where the president appeared most vulnerable: strained relations with the Soviet Union, a lack of visible progress on arms control, embroilment without progress in Lebanon, and the size of the defense buildup. This was a daunting task in the face of a popular incumbent running on a record of peace and prosperity. Mondale

held his own on these issues, but he failed to exploit them in the way he needed to cut into Reagan's huge lead on economic issues.

Internationalism incorporates references to isolationism, foreign aid, tariffs, and trade with Russia. Although such issues were salient only to 8% of the voters, over three-quarters of these comments were favorable to the Democrats, creating a net pull of over 4 percentage points for Mondale.

Military preparedness, the restoration of pride in American capability to defend its interests, represented Reagan's counterthrust. These considerations included references to a strong military position, military aid to allies, maintaining the peace, and defense spending. Thirty-eight percent of the voters mentioned military preparedness as a basis for evaluating the candidates and almost 60% of these references favored the Republicans. With a net pull of nearly 7%, military preparedness almost completely offset all of the other foreign issues favoring Mondale.

This evidence that Reagan gained votes on the issue of military preparedness is not necessarily inconsistent with our inferences from the spatial analysis, which showed voters to be closer to Mondale's position on the appropriate level of defense spending. Reagan's defense buildup had satisfied a public that supported his 1980 campaign commitment to increase defense spending. By 1984, voters felt that the defense budget was large enough. The spatial item measures preferences for the second term. The military preparedness measure, in contrast, taps retrospective approval of Reagan's defense budget priorities in the first term as well as preferences for his second term. This interpretation of the defense spending issue is consistent with Schneider's (1985). It exemplifies what Weissberg (1976) terms a "satisfying" model in which the consistency between opinion and policy is manifested in an *inverse* relationship between shifts in policy and shifts in public opinion.

International prestige was another theme emphasized in the Reagan campaign. This theme is represented by only two codes in the CPS master code. Every such reference was favorable to Reagan, but a salience of only 1% minimized the contribution from this issue to the Reagan margin. The importance of this issue may be underestimated if comments related to prestige were coded into other more general categories for lack of sufficiently detailed codes pertaining to internationalism.

Arms control and the movement for a nuclear freeze were issues that helped Mondale. The first presidential debate on domestic policy had revealed Reagan's inability to defend crisply his administration's policies. Mondale's campaign manager believed that the week before the second presidential debate on foreign policy represented the high point of Mondale's campaign and his critical opportunity to close the gap. The

campaign advertised heavily during the week preceding the debate, primarily on the nuclear issue (Moore, 1986, p. 215).

Mondale had attempted throughout the campaign to exploit the fact that Reagan had not met with any top official of the Soviet Union during his term. Thus, there existed the opportunity to attack Reagan over a lack of progress on arms control. Reagan's campaign had helped neutralize the issue when Secretary of State Shultz met with Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko in Geneva and when Reagan met with Gromyko in Washington on September 28, 1984, just before the first debate.

Mondale did gain votes from the arms control issue on balance. Nearly 80% of those mentioning the issue raised it as a reason to prefer Mondale. While it was his best foreign policy issue, it was not enough to make any serious inroads on the Reagan margin. Reagan deftly diffused the age issue in the second debate, and Mondale failed to increase the salience of arms control and other foreign policy issues.

Trouble spots are points of opportunity for any challenger to an incumbent. Given the intractability of most diplomatic problems, references to foreign areas contain more blame than praise. All of the trouble spots benefited Mondale, including the Middle East, the Soviet Union, and Latin America. The two bombings of the U. S. embassies in Beirut in 1983 and 1984 (which together killed 19 American diplomatic personnel) and the bombing of the U. S. Marine headquarters at the Beirut airport (which killed 241 American armed forces personnel) underlined the lack of progress on combating terrorism and securing a Middle East settlement.

The CPS master code did not include a separate entry for Nicaragua, but all of the references to Latin America taken together favored Mondale. A more forceful stance on Contra aid by Mondale might have increased the pull of this issue, especially in view of the furor over the mining of the Nicaraguan harbor in April 1984.

In sum, foreign policies were important in the campaign, and they appear to have offered a target of opportunity for Mondale. The major question is whether the relative lack of salience of arms control and trouble spots was due more to public indifference or to Mondale's cautious approach to these issues. The role of foreign issues in the 1984 campaign seems consistent with the thesis of Hess and Nelson (1985) that while foreign issues are a "dominant" (important) element in most elections, they are rarely decisive in determining the outcome.

Party and Group Issues

References to parties and the conduct of the campaign were frequent and on balance to the benefit of Reagan. The debates never loomed large in the

eyes of the public, perhaps because neither the presidential nor the vice-presidential debates changed the perceptions of the candidates in major ways and because they had no clear winner. The initial enthusiasm over Mondale's choice of Ferraro for vice-president dissipated when the press publicized the tax problems of her husband. Twenty-three percent of the voters mentioned the running mates in their comments, and net preferences for Bush appeared to add approximately 1% to the Reagan total. This estimate is similar to the 1.5% estimate of the Reagan pollsters (Moore, 1986, p. 214).

Group benefits. A major strength of the Democratic party continues to be that people define it in terms of its sympathy to working Americans. Forty-one percent of the voters discussed the candidates in terms of support for labor, the common man, the middle class, small business, or in terms of opposition to big business and special interests. Over 80% of all such references favored the Democrats, creating a net pull of 26% to them. Even those who made references to the needs of small business and the middle class supported Mondale. Without this legacy built on the New Deal realignment, the Democrats would clearly be a minority party.

In sum, Stanley Kelley's approach to analyzing elections is especially important. The inferences it generates reinforce the interpretations converging from a variety of other methods: that Reagan won the election on the basis of his qualities of personality and his stewardship of the economy. Other domestic and foreign issues helped Mondale, but not enough for him to mount an effective challenge to a popular incumbent president. Kelley's use of the open-ended items offer a fine-grained picture of the many issues that together comprise a full account of the election and support inferences that are quite consistent with the close-ended, spatial policy measures of the Downsian models.

CONCLUSIONS

The rational choice perspectives of Downs and Kelley produce a consistent and coherent analysis of the 1984 election. Prospective as well as retrospective considerations mattered to voters. Reagan won that element of an incumbent's reelection campaign that is a referendum on his performance as president. He owed his victory to the qualities of governance that people perceived in him and in their gratitude for the economic recovery of 1983-1984.

Other domestic and foreign policy issues mattered to voters as well, however. Mondale's vote advantages on both welfare state and social issues indicate that social issues are not necessarily the undoing of the New Deal

realignment. Had the election not centered on the reelection of the first popular incumbent candidate since Eisenhower, a Democratic candidate would have been competitive with a Republican candidate on issue grounds.

The Republican resurgence in presidential elections is closely connected to valence rather than position issues (Stokes, 1966). The Republicans have finally ridded themselves of the Depression legacy that they cannot manage economic growth. And, the public views the GOP favorably as the party of military preparedness. On a long list of position issues, however, Democrats still enjoy an electoral advantage. This is true in domestic issues such as welfare, Social Security, education, housing, civil rights, and women's rights, and in foreign issues such as internationalism and arms control. The Reagan victories mean remarkably little as barometers of public support for a broad range of these salient issues. They have not set the U. S. on the course of a long-term conservative agenda in either domestic or foreign affairs.

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APPENDIX: CODING SCHEME FOR THE KELLEY ISSUE DOMAINS**CANDIDATE CHARACTERISTICS**

Candidate Total	
Integrity	(313, 314, 401-404, 603, 604)
Reliability	(213, 214, 319, 320, 407, 408, 431, 432, 709, 710)
Competence	(201, 211, 212, 217-221, 315, 316, 413-422, 601, 602, 609, 707, 708)
Charisma	(301, 302, 305-312, 317, 318, 411, 412, 433-442, 703-706)
Personal	(215, 216, 423-426, 443-454)

DOMESTIC ISSUES

All Domestic Issues	
Economy Total	
Economy, General	(901-904, 926-928, 934, 935)
Taxes	(929-933)
Inflation/Unemployment	(936-939, 956-958)
Farm	(943-945, 1215, 1216)
Welfare Issues Total	
Welfare, Means-tested	(905-907, 1007-1009, 1219, 1220, 1233, 1234)
Social Security	(908-913, 923-925, 1001-1003, 1025-1027, 1221, 1222)
Education, Housing	(914-922, 994-996, 1025-1027)
Veterans	(965-967, 1227, 1228)
Social Issues Total	
Civil Rights, Liberties	(946-951, 991-993, 1016-1018, 1217-1218, 1229, 1230, 1022-1024)
Public Authority	(968-984, 1223, 1224, 988-990, 1019, 1020)
Women's Issues, Abortion	(985-987, 1013-1015, 1225, 1226)
Postindustrial	(1004-1006, 1028-1030, 959-964)

FOREIGN ISSUES

All Foreign Issues	
Foreign Policy, General	(1101-1103)
Internationalism	(1104, 1105, 1113-1115, 1164-1169)
Military Preparedness	(1106, 1107, 1110-1112, 1155, 1156, 1170-1177, 1184-1186)
International Prestige	(1153, 1154)
Arms Control	(1190-1192)
Total Trouble Spots	
Trouble Spots, General	(1116, 1117, 1123-1127, 1143-1152, 1157-1163, 1187-1189)
Middle East	(1118-1122)
Russia, East Europe	(1108, 1109, 1128-1137)
Latin America, Nicaragua	(1138-1142)

PARTY AND GROUP ISSUES

All Party, Campaign Ref.	
Party, General	(0101, 0102, 0111, 0112, 0151, 0161, 0500-0503, 0506-0520)
Unity	(0131, 0132)
Vice-Presidential Candidate	(0055, 0542, 0543, 0729)
Debates	(0730)
All Group Issues	
Special Interest/Big Business	(1201, 1202, 1209, 1210)
Labor/Common Man	(1205-1208)
Middle Class/Small Business	(1211-1214)
