



Political Election Debates: Informing Voters about Policy and Character

By William L. Benoit

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Political debates are an important facet of modern election campaigns. How politicians frame an argument, how the audience perceives it, and how the media decides to display it are key components in analyzing the outcome of a political debate, and ultimately, an election. Drawing mainly on the functional theory of political campaign discourse, William L. Benoit examines a wide variety of debates not only in the United States but across the globe. Because each phase of election offers new challenges, specific attention is paid to how primary versus general and incumbency influence the content of political leaders' debate practices. Specifically, the book delves into the history and nature of debates in various United States elections, including presidential, vice presidential, senatorial, gubernatorial, and mayoral candidates. Also examined are debates ranging from the United Kingdom to South Korea to Australia. Benoit also employs the issues ownership theory and functional federalism theory as a deeper part of the analysis. This book offers a critical examination and comprehensive overview of election debate theory.

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Editorial Review

Review

This book is a must read for political communication scholars. It is rare to be offered a systematic, multi-faceted, and theoretically-driven analysis of a single election component. Benoit's content analysis of United States debates (presidential and non-presidential), as well as political debates conducted across the globe, is unrivaled. (Lance Holbert, University of South Carolina)

Political Election Debates: Informing Voters about Policy and Character presents theory and research on political leaders debates. Election debates in the U.S. (presidential primary, presidential general, vice presidential, senate, gubernatorial, and mayoral debates) and around the world (e.g., Germany, Israel, UK, South Korea, Taiwan, France) are explored. News coverage of debates is also examined.

About the Author

William L. Benoit is a professor of communication studies at Ohio University.

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