



# The Primary Decision: A Functional Analysis of Debates in Presidential Primaries

*William L. Benoit*

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Benoit and his colleagues apply the functional theory of political campaign discourse to 25 presidential primary debates beginning with the 1948 American presidential primary campaign. They conclude with the 2000 presidential primaries.

They identify the functions, topics, and targets of attacks, and the results are compared with research on primary TV spots and with general debates. An important resource for scholars and students of American presidential and party elections and political communications.

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