



# Unconventional Wisdom: Facts and Myths About American Voters

*Karen M. Kaufmann, John R. Petrocik, Daron R. Shaw*

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Late deciders go for the challenger; turnout helps the Democrats; the gender gap results from a surge in Democratic preference among women--these and many other myths are standard fare among average citizens, political pundits, and even some academics. But are these conventional wisdoms--familiar to anyone who watches Sunday morning talk shows--really valid?

*Unconventional Wisdom* offers a novel yet highly accessible synthesis of what we know about American voters and elections. It not only provides an integrated overview of the central themes in American politics--parties, polarization, turnout, partisan bias, campaign effects, swing voters, the gender gap, and the youth vote--it upends many of our fundamental preconceptions. Most importantly, it shows that the American electorate is much more stable than we have been led to believe, and that the voting patterns we see today have deep roots in our history. Throughout, the book provides comprehensive information on voting patterns; illuminates (and corrects) popular myths about voters and elections; and details the empirical foundations of conventional wisdoms that many understand poorly or not at all.

Written by three experts on American politics, *Unconventional Wisdom* serves as both a standard reference and a concise overview of the subject. Both informative and witty, the book is likely to become a standard work in the field, essential reading for anyone interested in American politics.

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