

## Why Democracies Develop and Decline

The Varieties of Democracy project (V-Dem) pioneered new ways to conceptualize and measure democracy, producing a multidimensional and disaggregated data set on democracy around the world that is now widely used by researchers, activists, and governments. *Why Democracies Develop and Decline* draws on this data to present a comprehensive overview and rigorous empirical tests of the factors that contribute to democratization and democratic decline, looking at economic, social, institutional, geographic, and international factors. It is the most authoritative and encompassing empirical analysis of the causes of democratization and reversals. The volume also proposes a comprehensive theoretical framework and presents an up-to-date description of global democratic developments from the French Revolution to the present. Each chapter leverages the specialized expertise of its authors, yet their sustained collaboration lends the book an unusually unified approach and a coherent theory and narrative.

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# Why Democracies Develop and Decline

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*“Bernard of Chartres used to compare us to dwarfs perched on the shoulders of giants. He pointed out that we see more and farther than our predecessors, not because we have keener vision or greater height, but because we are lifted up and borne aloft on their gigantic stature”<sup>1</sup>*

From the very inception of the Varieties of Democracy-project (V-Dem) through now over decade, Bernard of Chartres’ point has been true for everything we managed to accomplish. This volume is no exception. While the volume has editors and each chapter has named authors, the intellectual content contained therewithin is not only ours. We are the fortunate ones in the development of the social sciences, bestowed with so many insights and advancements made by those who came before us, and, more specifically, by the many who worked with us in V-Dem. We are grateful if readers appreciate how preciously little we as individual scholars contribute and recognize that the advancements of knowledge found in this volume really are realizations of being “perched on the shoulders of giants”.

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<sup>1</sup> This is believed to be the first formulation of “standing on the shoulders of giants” and is found in John of Salisbury. 1159. *Metalogicon*. folio 217 recto (f 217r), Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 046, Book III, Chapter 4, original translated to English by MacGarry, Daniel Doyle, ed. (1955). *The Metalogicon of John Salisbury: A Twelfth-century Defense of the Verbal and Logical Arts of the Trivium*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p. 167. Bernard of Chartres was a twelfth century philosopher, scholar, and administrator.

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*The Editors*