



# The Transformation of Democracy (Social Science Classics Series)

*Vilfredo Pareto, Charles Powers*

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Combining a thorough introduction to the work of nineteenth and early twentieth-century Italian social theorist Vilfredo Pareto with a highly readable English translation of Pareto's last monograph, "Generalizations," originally published in 1920, this work illustrates precisely how and why democratic forms of government undergo decay and are eventually re-invigorated. More than any other social scientist of his generation, Pareto offers a well-developed, articulate, and compelling theory of change based on a Newtonian vision of science and an engineering model of social equilibrium.

In his introduction, Powers focusses on Pareto's intellectual maturation and on his overall theory of society. Powers describes the various stages of Pareto's development as engineer, economist, political scientist, and finally as sociologist. He explains how Pareto considered himself the Einstein of social science and how he introduced the concept of relativity into the social sciences. Even if such self-claims were rarely widely shared, the sense of Pareto's originality is doubted by few, if any, contemporary scholars. This last, and in many ways most penetrating, of Pareto's briefer works, warns of the dangers which can befall democratic order. It is important because, as his final attempt to clarify his ideas, it places his earlier works in perspective. Pareto generates a comprehensive theory of complex social phenomena.

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