CENTRUM FÜR ASIEN-
WISSENSCHAFTEN UND
TRANSKULTURELLE STUDIEN

UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

CATS LECTURE

What is Political Progress?

Lecture by Lea Ypi

Friday, 30. October 2026, 18:00 - 20:00
CATS (Voßstr. 2, Building 4010, Lecture Hall 010.01.05)
Entrance via the South Asia Institute (SAI)

Progress is both a necessary and a dangerous idea. It is necessary to motivate political action oriented to the future, and it is dangerous because the pursuit of progress has often given rise to episodes of paternalism, colonial domination and narratives of civilisational superiority.

In this lecture, Professor Ypi will try to defend a more critical account of progress. She will start by distinguishing between moral and political progress, then explore the relation between political progress and justice. She will suggest that we make political progress not when we approximate an ideal of justice that is always known to us, but when the political institutions we construct reflect what we learn from the trials and failures of the past. She will further explain how we should understand progress in the norms of justice as the result of cumulative processes of evolution of different views of how power ought to be exercised.

Lea Ypi is Professor of Political Theory at the London School of Economics. Her academic work encompasses political theory and philosophy, addresses global justice and migration, and explores concepts of democracy. Born in Albania she is one of the most acclaimed political thinkers and public intellectuals of her generation.

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