

Call for Papers

Trajectories of Political Thought: Philosophical Theories Between Decline and Progress

Deadline for Abstract Submission: **June 1, 2025**

Edited by Dr. Milan Wenner, Dr. David Manolo Sailer, and PD Dr. Jan Kerkmann.
Series: *Political Thought in Europe* | Nomos Publishers

Objectives and Focus of the Volume

The fourth volume in the *Political Thought in Europe* series (Nomos-Publishers) will explore the tensions between decline and progress as dynamic poles of philosophical reflection. Central to this exploration is the question of how these two opposing forces not only contrast but also interact as dialectical drivers shaping intellectual and political developments over time. Particular attention will be given to the demarcation and interplay between narratives of decline – such as moral alienation, cultural decadence, or societal entropy – and ideas of progress and modernization, be it as a teleological vision, utopia, or transformative force. This volume seeks to critically examine the contrast between cyclic and linear models of political-historical and philosophical development, especially in relation to themes like upheaval, reversal, renewal, and decay. The volume will be divided into three overarching sections:

- 1. Decline**
- 2. Progress**
- 3. Dialectical Movements Between Progress and Decline**

Specifically, the following guiding questions, focal points and/or authors may be addressed in individual contributions:

- Alienation from nature: Not in the ecological sense, but – following the examples of Hesiod, Plato, or Augustine – alienation from the original “divinity” or estrangement from an inherent “naturalness” of man (e.g., Rousseau, Heidegger,...)
- Moral and volitional decay in politics, culminating in the nihilistic loss of foundational values (e.g., Schopenhauer, Nietzsche,...)
- Civilizational decadence and cyclical narratives of decline: The rise and fall of cultures, life cycles/decay, desoulment, and rationalization (e.g., Spengler, Max Weber, Adorno/Horkheimer,...)
- Trajectories of/within the process of civilization – whether linear, teleological, or eschatological (e.g., Condorcet, Herder, Hegel, Marx, Elias,...)

- Structures of repetition in political history (e.g., Polybios, Goethe, Jakob Burckhardt, Koselleck,...)
- Critiques of progress and modernization within historicism (e.g., Benedetto Croce, Wilhelm Dilthey,...)
- Technological and/or social utopias/dystopias: Critiques of progress ranging between optimism and hubris, as well as failure and ambiguity in modernity (e.g., Benjamin, Bloch, Habermas,...).
- Societal entropy and the loss of communal values: Hyper-individualization and the dissolution of traditional social bonds, hierarchies, and structures (e.g., Vico, Houellebecq,...).
- Present and future in the 21st century: What role does this tension play in analyzing current challenges (e.g., AI, climate change, globalization)

Additionally, contributions addressing the conflict between cyclicity and linearity can be seen as a central aspect of numerous historical-philosophical and political discourses on decline and decay and are very much welcomed. Lastly, contributions with a strong contemporary focus, especially those adopting an interdisciplinary approach at the intersection of philosophy, political science, and/or history, are highly encouraged.

Submission Guidelines

We invite all interested scholars to submit an abstract (max. 500 words) along with a short bibliography by **June 1, 2025**. Please send submissions to:

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Feedback on submissions will be provided by **June 15, 2025** (including a style guide). Final articles (max. 60,000 characters, Times New Roman 12, 1.5 line spacing) are due by **October 1, 2025**. The volume is scheduled for publication in **December 2025** by Nomos as the fourth installment in the *Political Thought in Europe*-series.