

The Discursive Prince ©

A book proposal

Introduction (proposed line of argument)

1. Fundamental change can result from different kinds of historic events, including*:

- Economic/financial crisis
- Scientific and technological innovation
- Environmental catastrophe (incl. climate change)
- Inter-state and civil wars, and armed struggle
- Political struggle (incl. civil disobedience)

*This list is not meant to be exhaustive. It is meant for illustration purposes only.

2. My interest lies in exploring, and ultimately understanding, how through *political struggle* fundamental hegemonic change can be achieved, focusing on the role *political leadership* plays in achieving such hegemonic change.

3. One of my key assumptions is that hegemonic change does not happen by itself.

It is always the result of:

- Innovation
- External shocks
- Acts of violence and/or
- Political struggle.

My focus is on achieving hegemonic change through *political struggle*.

4. The question *The Discursive Prince* attempts to answer reads as follows:

“How can someone bring about fundamental hegemonic change, through the pursuit of political goals, and the praxis of political leadership, in a democratically governed country, such as Greece, Spain or the UK, today?”

5. I am planning to approach this question from two perspectives, a theoretical and an empirical/historical one. The first part of the monograph/book will contain my theoretical work and carries the title *Political leadership in a post-political world*. The second Part, which is dedicated to my empirical work, is currently entitled *Towards a generative political praxis*. Each part consists of three chapters. These principle six chapters will be framed by an introductory and a concluding chapter.

Part 1: Political leadership in a post-political world

Question: How can one overcome the cultural hegemony of...

- neo-liberalism, and
- post-politics

Key words (research focus): *Cultural hegemony, neo-liberalism und post politics*

Preliminary hypothesis: Through antagonistic/agonistic politics in the form of...

- antagonistic populism, nationalism or fascism, or
- agonistic civic republicanism (radical democracy)

Key words (research focus): *Populism, civic republicanism and radical democracy*

I intend to tackle these issues in three chapters:

- Chapter 1: Reinserting the political into public discourse
- Chapter 2: Antagonistic versus agonistic (political) leadership
- Chapter 3: Building an agonistic leadership platform

Part 2: Towards a generative political praxis

Substantively, the structure of Part 2 mirrors the structure of Part 1, but in reverse order. So it starts with a qualitative survey of the body politic, asking:

- What would a 'democratic prince' in today's neo-liberal Europe look like?
 - Would she be standing on a populist, a technocrat or an activist platform?
- What route to power (public office) would she take?
 - Would she come through an Oxbridge-type system like Cameron, ride the wave of populism like Le Pen, or be parachuted in like Monti?
- What means for exercising power would she have at her disposal?
 - As an antagonistic leader, and as an agonistic one?

Exactly which political leaders in which countries I will be looking at will depend on how my theoretical work develops, as it will in part be an illustration of that work. One option would be Tsipras, Iglesias and Corbyn, because of the three very different political formations (coalition, movement and single party) they utilise.

One way or another I will be ending up with a collection of political biographies, or historical/biographical fragments, which I will be able to use to conduct a qualitative analysis around the distinction between agonistic and antagonistic leadership.

Given the empirical nature of this part, the two substantive chapters of Part 2 will be preceded by a methodology chapter. The three chapters I currently envisage are:

- Chapter 4: Machiavelli's Prince today (methodology chapter)
- Chapter 5: The emperor's new clothes (qualitative survey)
- Chapter 6: All political lives end in failure? (analysis)

For further information, or to discuss this proposal, please contact the author. His contact details are provided below.

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