



Prime Ministers in Greece: The Paradox of Power

Kevin Featherstone, Dimitris Papadimitriou

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This book is concerned with a large question in one small, but highly problematic case: how can a prime minister establish control and coordination across his or her government?

The Greek system of government sustains a 'paradox of power' at its very core. The Constitution provides the prime minister with extensive and often unchecked powers. Yet, the operational structures, processes and resources around the prime minister undermine their power to manage the government. Through a study of all main premierships between 1974 and 2009, *Prime Ministers in Greece* argues that the Greek prime minister has been 'an emperor without clothes'. The costs of this paradox included the inability to achieve key policy objectives under successive governments and a fragmented system of governance that provided the backdrop to Greece's economic meltdown in 2010.

Building on an unprecedented range of interviews and archival material, Featherstone and Papadimitriou set out to explore how this paradox has been sustained. They conclude with the Greek system meeting its 'nemesis': the arrival of the close supervision of its government by the 'Troika' - the representatives of Greece's creditors. The debt crisis challenged taboos and forced a self-reflection. It remains unclear, however, whether either the external strategy or the domestic response is likely to be sufficient to make the Greek system of governance 'fit for purpose'.

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