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Julian Stander, Katerina Tzioli and Mario Cortina Borja: 200 years of Greek independence and PMs

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Two Hundred Years of Greek Independence: an exercise in political statistics...and PMs

Written by Julian Stander, Katerina Tzioli and Mario Cortina Borja

Thursday, 25 March 2021 saw Bicentenary Independence Day celebrations in Greece. To mark the occasion, we perform an analysis of the life span of the country's prime ministers (PMs) that is similar to our previous work <https://www.significancemagazine.com/politics/581-visualising-ages-and-life-trajectories-of-prime-ministers-of-the-united-kingdom> based on British PMs.

We divided our analysis into seven distinct political periods that followed Greece's independence (see Figure 1 for details). The first PM (or equivalent) in our dataset is Alexandros Mavrokordatos (1822–23, 1833–34, 1841, 1844 and 1854–55), while the current incumbent is Kyriakos Mitsotakis (2019–). PMs holding office more than once are recorded in the data each time they take power, meaning that there are 192 entries coming from 106 people (all but one male), nine of whom are presently alive.

The youngest PM of Greece was Georgios Mavromichalis (PM 1827–28) who was around 27 years old when he took office. The oldest was Xenophon Zolotas (1989–90) at 85.6 years. The longest unbroken Premiership was that of Costas Simitis (1996–2004) of 8.13 years, followed by Andreas Papandreou (1981–1989) of 7.7 years.

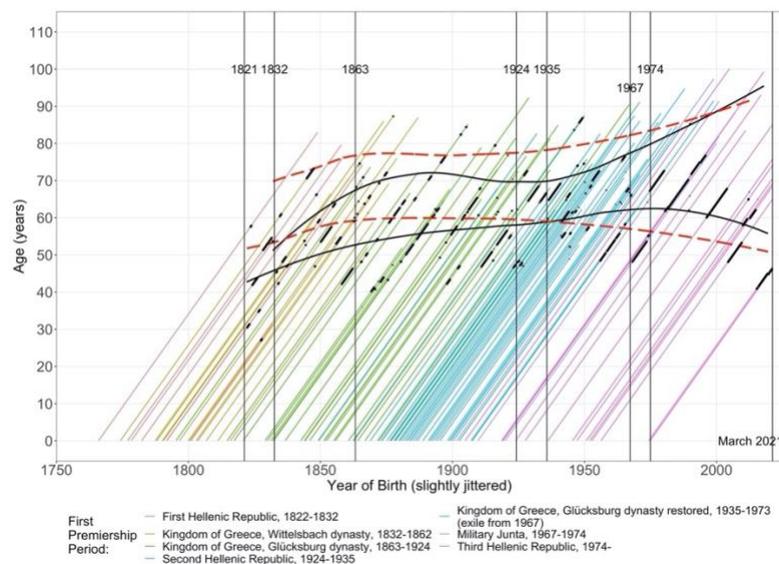


Figure 1: Life trajectories of PMs of Greece with premierships periods in black. The colours indicate the political period in which the first premiership took place. Loess-based smoothers for age at death (upper) and for age at start of first premiership (lower) are shown using black curves. The corresponding curves for UK PMs are shown using red dashed lines.

From the upper black curve in Figure 1 we see that life spans of Greek PMs tended to increase strongly from about 1832 to somewhat before 1900, and then again after 1935. This is similar to the pattern for British PMs (the upper red dashed curve) – though the Brits generally lived longer than Greek PMs, with smaller differences across time.