The Prime Ministerialisation of the British Prime Minister.

Tuesday 19 February 2013 11.00am – 12.30pm

Professor Keith Dowding, School of Politics and International Relations, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University.

ANU Centre for European Studies, 1 Liversidge St Canberra

This presentation is based on Professor Dowding’s recent publication in the journal, Public Affairs (2012).

The presidentialisation of the prime minister thesis should be expunged from political science vocabulary, and this paper argues that prime ministers are more powerful within their systems than presidents; strengthening their powers makes them less, not more, like presidents. To the extent that the forces identified by those who pursue the thesis exist, they do not make the British prime minister more like the US president. Quite the reverse: they enhance the different and already stronger powers of the prime minister. The institutions of presidential and parliamentary systems are so different that any global force acting upon them are as likely to drive them further apart as lead them to converge.

Professor Keith Dowding is Professor at the School of Politics and International Relations, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University. His expert areas are public administration, especially politician-agency relations and public sector reform, Australian Politics, Comparative Politics and British Politics. He has a DPhil from Oxford University (Nuffield College), and worked at a number of European universities and research institutions. He was a British Academy Research Readership 2005-07, and was elected Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences Australia in 2008. He is currently the Chair of a network of scholars ‘Selection and De-selection of Political Elites’ (SEDEPE) who are interested in the career paths of political elites. He has also been one of the editors of the Journal of Theoretical Politics since 1996.

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