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# Party Change in Greece and the Vanguard Role of PASOK

Michalis Spourdalakis & Chrisanthos Tassis

*The article focuses on the role played by the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) in modernizing the Greek party system. After a short reference to the party's history and development, the focus turns to the 1995–2005 period, when the party governed for three consecutive terms. It is argued that PASOK underwent some key changes in its values and programme as it abandoned its pro-state values, its reservations towards the market and its visionary political rhetoric. At the same time, drastic transformations occurred in party organization, whose mass structure was undermined, and the party's style of political communication, which became increasingly based on television and media experts. The analysis concludes that these developments are at the heart of the party's serious challenges following its defeat in the 2004 election.*

*Keywords:* Greece; Greek Party System; PASOK; Papandreou; Party Change

Following the end of a full-scale civil war in the 1940s, the Greek polity operated in such a way that it could only formally be called democratic, since parallel undemocratic structures cancelled out the very essence of parliamentary democracy—such as that of party change in government. The effect of this 'guided democracy' was that party competition was to a great extent founded on past cleavages and much less on current issues. It is ironic that the epitome of this 'cackectic democracy' (Nicolacopoulos 2001), the seven-year dictatorship (1967–74), put an end to the poorly functioning democratic regime and opened a new era for political parties.

Thus, with the fall of the colonels' regime and the *Metapolitefsi* (the Political Change of 1974), we witnessed a gradual but steady move away from the old structures and habits, leading to a completely new party system and a democratic regime with, by Greek standards, unprecedented qualities. The settling of the monarchy issue, the legalization of parties with communist ideological orientation (53 party formations identified themselves as communist in 1974), the clearly European orientation of the

country, the recognition of the anti-fascist movement, along with the recognition of the institutions of organized interests as legitimate expressions of society and contributing actors to the policy-making process are some of the key developments of this new era. Political parties were not only conditioned by these developments but were instrumental in them.

No political party of the pre-1967 period appeared in the new *Metapolitefsi* era with a lasting presence. All political parties that came to play an important role in the now 30-year-old Third Greek Republic were new and made an effort to distance themselves from the pre-dictatorship party system. Even in the first years of the *Metapolitefsi*, when political leaders of the past remained protagonists in the political arena, no party, with the obvious exception of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), accepted any association with the pre-junta party formations. Furthermore, political personnel from all parts of the political spectrum made a point of distancing themselves from the political practices of the past. However, old habits die hard, and, despite the sincere intentions of the individuals involved, it would have been wrong to expect that a modern party system would evolve automatically. If the Greek party system is today on a par with its European counterparts, that is to a great extent due to the role played by the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Πανελλήνιο Σοσιαλιστικό Κίνημα, PASOK) both in opposition and in government. To put it differently, PASOK has been a pivotal factor in modernizing the Greek party system. For this reason an examination of this party's development and changes is key to an understanding of the developing trends and dynamics of almost all political parties in the country. In the following pages, after a brief reference to the party's historical development and its modernizing impact upon the Greek party system, we will focus on the changes that led it to become the dominant party of the country. Thus, we will analyse the changes PASOK underwent in values and programme, in its organization and in its competitive strategy and campaign politics. Finally, we will see how these changes have become its main challenge, especially since 2004, when it found itself in opposition.

#### **Party History: A Remarkable Story (1974–94)**

PASOK is a relatively new political grouping. Andreas Papandreou and a number of activists from both liberal and left-wing backgrounds founded the party in the aftermath of the fall of the junta. In its founding document, the legendary *Declaration of September 3rd* (1974), PASOK entered the political scene of the infant Greek democracy with a clearly radical discourse. The party's political and ideological coordinates and particularly its organizational premises were at a distinct distance from those of other parties. The nationalization of key industries and sectors of the Greek economy, its anti-NATO, anti-European and even wholesale anti-Western rhetoric and the promise of a mass membership based party organization were some of the key traits that set it apart, even from the left end of the political spectrum.

**Table 1** PASOK Votes and Seats (1974–2004)

	Votes (%)	Seats (%)
17 November 1974	13.6	5.0
20 November 1977	25.3	31.0
18 October 1981	48.1	57.3
2 June 1985	45.8	53.7
18 June 1989	39.1	41.7
5 November 1989	40.7	42.7
8 April 1990	39.3*	41.7†
10 October 1993	46.8	56.7
22 September 1996	41.5	54.0
9 April 2000	43.8	52.7
7 March 2004	40.5	39.0

\*Percentages include the vote from the five single-seat constituencies where PASOK and Synaspismos run common candidates.

†The number of seats includes the four elected MP's who have been supported jointly by Synaspismos and PASOK in single-member constituencies.

Source: Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization

After the first elections, marked by the party's relatively modest performance (Table 1), along with those who were anxious to capture power, the PASOK leader, Andreas Papandreou, started systematically to change the party's political rhetoric and orientation. Wisely interpreting the changing political environment, which was steadily moving away from the *Metapolitefsi's* radicalism, the leadership of the party did away with its internal opposition, and crafted the strategy that could safely, but most importantly quickly, lead the party to power. 'PASOK's short march' to power came to an end in October 1981, just seven years after its first appearance on the Greek political scene (Spourdalakis 1988).

Although in government PASOK marked a clear contrast to its initial political profile, there is no doubt that for its first two terms, that is until 1989, the party maintained some of its radical rhetoric, although this now contained tones of nationalism and a rather simplistic view of 'changing society' (*allage*) which led many to consider it a merely populist party. The truth of the matter was that, when in government, Papandreou's party was confronted with the structural restraints and needs of state power, on the one hand, and the often high expectations and demands of society, on the other. As a consequence, the party had to conform to these and drastically compromise its original political plans.

One must recognize that PASOK was faced with challenges that no other party before or since had confronted. It was the first non-right-wing party—in fact a party with left-socialist aspirations and programme—to take power in half a century, in a country that had experienced a bloody civil war and a dictatorship. This occurred during a negative international political conjuncture—the second Cold War instigated by Ronald Reagan in the early 1980s and the economic recession were far from conducive to the implementation of PASOK's programme. At the same time, one has

also to recognize that the challenges PASOK faced from society were to a great extent a backlash against its own political opportunism, which had led it to numerous promises that it could not fulfil.

This is not to say that PASOK did not introduce some important reforms in various fields, such as in state administration, family law, education and health, but rather that it took a number of initiatives and created conditions that were in clear contrast to its original ideological coordinates. The legislation that made the right to strike almost impossible to exercise, the crude colonization of the state apparatus, the party's scandalous relations with business interests, which resulted in unprecedented instances of corruption, and, finally, its fickle and erratic foreign and especially European policy are some of the most striking examples of its programmatic and value changes (Spourdalakis 1998; Givalos 2005; Voulgaris 2001).

PASOK's reign lasted eight years. 1989 was not just the *annus mirabilis* of world history, as for many it ended the 'short twentieth century', but also for Greece. Under the weight of the exposure of a huge corruption network involving top government cabinet ministers, bankers and large media networks and the impasse of the government's financial and social policy, PASOK was defeated at the June elections. However, due to the electoral law, New Democracy (ND) could not form a majority government. This led to two, by Greek standards, unprecedented coalition cabinets: first between the ND and the Synaspismos of Left and Progress, in which the Communist Party was the main component, and later a short-lived all-party cabinet (1989–90).

Greece is a country with a traumatic experience of a civil war, policies that discriminated against the left wing and even liberal citizens, a political culture characterized by a zero-sum mentality, and political antagonisms over-determined by past cleavages. Thus, the developments around the 1989–90 elections were of historical importance. As the events of corruption and/or slander which accompanied them were engraved in the DNA of Greek politics, a widespread cynicism arose and past cleavages were demystified, which in turn contributed to a further de-ideologization of political discourse and to a political competition based on managerial proposals of state requirements merely to secure the reproduction of the social balance of power.

In fact, clear tendencies of managerial orientation had appeared by the end of the previous period of PASOK's development. The party's 1989 electoral programme ('The Programme for the Third Term') was already far removed from the visionary rhetoric of the past and it was made clear that the prime goal was now the achievement of high rates of growth, which would guarantee the country's participation in European integration (PASOK 1989). In the same vein, PASOK's opposition to the ND majority government formed on 9 April 1990 was rather technocratic, realistic and strongly influenced by the hegemony of neo-liberal ideas. In his effort to have a triumphant and somewhat vindictive comeback, given the animosity with Konstantinos Mitsotakis (from the ND), Papandreou declared that PASOK would exercise 'responsible opposition' (Papandreou 1990). Setting aside the demarcation of

governmental strategy as 'extremely neo-liberal' and the polemical rhetoric that it would lead 'the country to an economic and social impasse' (ibid.), PASOK called for a new 'National Strategy' based on three axes—'stability, development, social protection'. The government's role was to be limited and the state would be reduced to a planning headquarters that would control only the activities of 'economic importance', while the rest would be given to the private sector (PASOK 1989).

The conflicts within the Mitsotakis government, along with its thin majority in parliament and the crisis over the 'Macedonian issue', in combination with extensive social discontent caused by high rates of inflation (almost 20 per cent), frozen wages and rising unemployment, prematurely ended the ND term. The 1993 election brought PASOK triumphantly back to power (Table 1). However, it was clear that this was already a different PASOK. Even the title of its electoral programme ('For the Present and the Future of Greece. Renaissance Everywhere') was indicative of the new trend. The aftertaste of the party's old radicalism was now wrapped in nationalist overtones, for the new call was a rally to 'rejuvenate Greece and the entire Greek nation'. However, neither this nor the presence of the strong, though ageing, leader could hide the fact that the demand for 'modernization' put forward by a number of organized interests under the auspices and with the support of the media had found its way into PASOK. In fact it was around the issue of modernization that the internal party conflicts were structured, since the debates over its content were to determine the competition for the imminent leadership replacement and the future direction of the party itself.

### **From Dominant Party to Oppositional Impasse (1995–2005)**

A number of prominent members of the party (members of the executive bureau and former cabinet ministers), who objected to the style of Papandreou's leadership, rallied around the demand to renew the party's agenda and supported the overall demand for modernization. For the first time Papandreou appeared incapable of renewing the party's strategy and in addition he seemed to be trapped in a maze of personal and extra-institutional procedures and relationships. For a period the party was stagnant, searching for a new strategic orientation. Its internal critics were of two minds and, roughly speaking, divided into two groups. The first, apace with the European project, demanded a more rational, realistic direction, seeking through modernization to place the country at the forefront of European integration. The second appeared rather romantic, since its proposals derived from the party's origins, and was fanatically opposed to the modernizing tendency. As Papandreou's leadership became weaker, the friction between the two party tendencies became more intense. Finally, the pro-modernization group won the ideological battle, thanks to systematic media promotion and the mobilization of a good part of the intelligentsia. A significant split took place when Tsovolas, former minister of finance, left the party and founded the Democratic Social Movement (DIKKI) in October 1995, a move that strengthened the modernizers.

Thus, it did not come as a surprise, when following Papandreou's resignation due to illness (15 January 1996), the party's parliamentary group replaced him with Kostas Simitis, a former cabinet minister and prominent advocate of modernization. Only those who had not realized that PASOK had already entered a new phase and that its further development and strength were tied to the logic of the state and the management of governmental affairs failed to understand how the modernizers, a rather weak tendency within the party at the time, became hegemonic and dominant. The reasons for Simitis's rise to power and his strength should not be sought within the party. For the first time PASOK's internal balance of power and developments were legitimized primarily, if not exclusively, outside the party and as a result of the need to secure its capacity to govern. In fact this was put forward as the key factor in mobilizing and even expanding its popular support (Spourdalakis 1998, p. 71).

Policies that could be classified as moves towards modernization had already appeared following PASOK's return to power in 1993. However, with the rise of Simitis to the party leadership—at the fourth congress (June 1996), when he was elected party president with a commanding 54 per cent of the vote, soundly defeating his opponent Akis Tsochatzopoulos—modernization became the prime mobilizing factor and the legitimizing basis for PASOK's political initiatives and strategy.

Under the leadership of the modernizers, PASOK came closer to the economic orientation and strategy that are hegemonic worldwide and are presented as if 'there is no alternative'. Its coordination with the political hegemony of the time was enriched and further supported by the country's candidacy to participate in the Euro-zone (Greece applied officially in March 2000 and was accepted in January 2001). This, in combination with the inability of the opposition to put together a convincing alternative governmental programme, led to Simitis's impressive electoral victory in 1996.

Turning the country's membership of the Euro-zone into the sole national dogma for the country, Simitis's government created a significant social deficit. The popular discontent generated was not enough to challenge PASOK's modernizing discourse. The party insisted that the privatization programme would be realized; promising that completing all the infrastructure projects would make the country competitive in the international division of labour, which in turn would lead to economic development (Simitis 2000). Of course, to be fair it was this stubbornness that led to Greece's participation in the Euro-zone and secured the third slim victory of PASOK (Mavrogordatos 2000).

After 2002, with the country's membership in the Euro-zone, PASOK's popularity fell drastically as the social deficit created strong currents of social and political discontent. The rhetoric and practices of the government created a huge space for the representation of popular demands, which could not but be expressed in a populist fashion. ND and its new leader, Karamanlis, by promising everything to everyone, managed to fill this gap and climb to power. In the March 2004 elections PASOK was defeated, despite the mobilization around its new leader Giorgos Papandreou, who

had gained a strong mandate in an open referendum-like election, in which over one million people participated.

For PASOK the defeat was a shocking experience and, so far, the party has not displayed signs of recovery. This would require a redefinition of the party's values and programme, which have been drastically transformed, particularly in the preceding decade or so. We now turn to the presentation and analysis of this programme.

### **Party Values and Programme**

Even if one takes into account the fact that PASOK entered the 1990s having completely altered its initial radical identity and orientation, the changes that have taken place since are arguably of such magnitude that the party today no longer resembles the political Socialist Movement that entered Greek politics in 1974. Indeed, shifts in the party's values from the call for immediate transition to socialism in 1974 to its programme in the 1993 election, which aimed at 'Development and Stability', were strikingly clear. During its first 20 years PASOK had gradually moved to an orientation that was more realistic and certainly closer to state policy as it was determined both by the fading of the post-junta radicalism and the country's commitment to the EEC/EU. The latter, in combination with the tremendous side effects of the fall of the East European regimes, which in Greece, due to the strong communist left, played an important role in defining political identities, shifted the centre of the political spectrum. More concretely, these changes meant that the party had moved away from: (a) the unquestionable primacy of the state; (b) explicit reservations concerning the market; and (c) a visionary political discourse.

However, values and programmatic traits since 1996 have surpassed the shifts and changes of the first 20 years of the party's life. The new leader Kostas Simitis marked his era with a new set of values and programmatic goals which, under the banner of modernization, signified the fact that PASOK's values had changed radically. Although these changes, as we have seen, did not come out of the blue, even a brief analysis of the main coordinates of this modernization will verify that the PASOK of the Simitis era was a new one.

Under Simitis's leadership, PASOK's modernization started off with an intense critique of the 1981–85 and 1987–89 governmental economic and social policies and claimed that the entire orientation of the party's government programme should change. This revision was not far from the proposals of the Bank of Greece, the Association of Greek Industries and the International Monetary Fund (Papademitriou 1995; Paraskevopoulos 1995). This does not mean that the party's modernization did not include moral and ethical goals or certain sociological perceptions that strengthened the modernizers' project.

A clear example is the idea they promoted of society. To the modernizers of the new PASOK it was not collective social subjects that actually 'give the tone to politics' but rather 'every [individual] citizen (who composes) ... the very civil society' (Simitis 2000). This perception of society and politics led to a kind of elitism that collided with



populism, its opposite current. In fact the modernizers' elitism managed to label as populist every popular demand and need of the lower social strata, which led to a political impasse, as it further separated society from government and state management. It was not only un-socialist but also proven to be politically distorting and electorally disastrous.

A systematic evaluation of the Simitis era for both Greek politics and PASOK remains to be done.<sup>1</sup> However, without great risk we can argue that its key policies and even discourse were not far from the coordinates that dominated the labour, socialist and social democratic European parties (such as New Labour in Great Britain, the SPD in Germany, the PVDA in The Netherlands, and the SAP in Sweden). The new strategic goal of the party was the creation of a 'powerful Greece'. The latter was identified with 'a powerful economy', based upon the strengthening of the economic accumulation structures and processes, the drastic control of inflation and deficits, extensive privatization programmes and a strong currency (Simitis 1998). This economic plan was seen to be of prime importance. As a result, popular, working class and general social demands were at times condemned by the government as 'sectarian interests', 'populist' or 'regressive' and at all times were conditional upon the success of its monetarist policies.

After its unquestionable success in the 2000 elections, PASOK failed to put forward a new general, 'national' goal capable once again of mobilizing the population. It was probably the poor performance at the Gallup polls that led Simitis, who was always seen as a better person for the top job than the ND leader, to put forward the 'Convergence Charter' (10 September 2003). This was a plan that touched upon some social issues as the key axes towards convergence with the country's partners in the EU (Simitis 2003a).

However, under the circumstances, when fiscal policies were given priority and competition and entrepreneurship were elevated to 'holy' principles, very few things could be done by the Greek socialists to close the gap between Greece and the EU countries on key social issues (Simitis 2003b). The modernizers' reference to social 'sensitivities' sounded more and more opportunistic, as, quite often, their initiatives in government and their discourse made it clear where their priorities lay. Three months after the Charter, Simitis, speaking on the strategic goals of the European left, made clear that he intended to 'promote the demands of the dynamic strata of society. We recognize the value of the market economy, of private initiative and creativity. We are working for development, an increase of productivity and the competitiveness of the Greek economy' (Simitis 2003c). In addition to these, the reason PASOK did not manage to change its political and ideological image and orientation is the fact that its organizational structure, as its leadership abandoned it, was in a shambles and in a state of disintegration. It is to this issue that we now turn.

### **Party Organization**

The organizational structure of PASOK, its flexibility and adaptation to the challenges of the 1995–2005 decade and its modernizing effects on the Greek party system led

some early observers to characterize it as exceptional and even *sui generis*. More recent analyses that discuss and distinguish between party formation and party adaptation, especially with regard to new democracies (Van Biezen 2005), sound convincing with regard to other cases, especially Eastern Europe. However, they do not apply to PASOK, whose adaptation followed the patterns of its counterparts in older democracies. This is because during its 30 years of existence, PASOK managed to experience practically all the historical phases of party organizational development: from cadre (1974–75) to mass party (1975–77), catchall (1977–85) and cartel or rather state-confined party (1986–2005). After the short cadre phase that marked its founding stages of development, PASOK evolved into a fully developed mass party and in record time became not only a key positive factor in the delicate process of transition to democracy but also a model for the entire party system.

In fact, it is in this sense that PASOK, under the leadership of its founder Andreas Papandreou, played a crucial role in the modernization of the Greek party system, which until then had been *terra incognita* for modern, democratic and participatory party structures. PASOK's organization legitimized mass party structures of the traditional left and, most importantly, became the model for the right-wing ND, which after its loss of power (1981) started to modernize its organization to become a modern mass party, in striking contrast to its past practices. Needless to say, PASOK's organizational development and modernizing effect were far from ideal, since collective democratic practices did not necessarily prevail over personalized and parochial structures and procedures. However, within the context of Greek political development, PASOK's rupture with the past party system was very clear, even if one takes into consideration the dominance of Andreas Papandreou over the party and some striking irregularities, such as the fact that the party only managed to organize its first congress ten years after its entrance into politics.

The evolution of PASOK's organization can be traced by looking at its relationship to the parliamentary group. The party's entrance into the Greek political arena was followed by the perception that its MPs and parliamentary activities should be subordinated to the party's political strategy and to the will of the party apparatus. Soon after the 1974 election, however, Papandreou's party gradually but steadily crafted an electoralist strategy, complemented by clear catchall organizational characteristics. In the course of this development—the epitome of which was PASOK's triumphant entrance to power in 1981—the parliamentary group gained significant power and became, if not dominant, at least as important as the party's collective bodies, the central committee and the executive bureau. During the 1985 elections the political conjuncture imposed strict discipline on the parliamentary party, capable of guaranteeing the election of the new president of the republic, and thus one witnessed a temporary overturning of this trend as the closed candidate lists were put together by the party's central committee. By the end of the 1980s, however, the powers of the parliamentary group no longer remained on a par with the party's collective bodies. As PASOK became increasingly stuck in the mire of government, parliamentarians started to interfere with and even control almost all party local and regional organizations,

whose main activity was now to mobilize support for the government and to function as a campaign organization for certain ambitious individuals. The empowerment of the MPs reached its peak in 1995, when the party's central committee decided that in the event of the prime minister having to be changed while the party was in power, the parliamentary group should elect him/her.

Indeed it was during this period that PASOK displayed characteristics that systematically undermined previous party organization and internal functions through the adoption of mass and even catchall parties. The trends that developed, especially in the 2000–5 period, support our argument that PASOK has been transformed in such a way that, from the point of view of its organization, we will soon have a *non-party party*. An examination of a few aspects leads to this conclusion.

To begin with, the definition of membership has changed. The basic trait of mass political parties—in addition to mass membership—was that the party members were organized into local or professional sections that were not open to followers or party sympathizers. Since PASOK's first congress in 1984, when the definition of membership was rather strict, we have witnessed a *de facto* withering away of such strictness. This fuzziness of the border line between member and non-member, which became a mainstream trait of the party's organization under the leadership of K. Simitis (1996–2004), was retained and found its way into the party's 2005 Statutes. Sympathizers can now participate with voting rights in all party processes and they are enrolled in a separate registry (PASOK 2005, art. 20). Thus, essentially there is no longer a distinction between genuine members and other citizens involved in party life. Consequently, there is a free-floating membership in the party. PASOK's membership in December 2003 was 200,000. In January 2004 over one million people voted for the election of Giorgos Papandreou to the leadership. In February 2005, 400,000 people participated in the debates in preparation for the seventh congress and in June 2005, 250,000 people voted for the local/municipal and regional party bodies. In addition, there has been an effort to institute a 'cyber membership', where relationship of the members to the party is open-ended and contact is made primarily through the internet (e-referendums, chat rooms, etc.). However, given the low percentage of internet connections in the country, this will merely have a symbolic effect indicating only the new leadership's orientation towards looser and more flexible membership. Although the party has rarely given out its actual membership numbers, reliable estimates demonstrate their fluidity (Table 2).

Probably, the most significant development in the party's latest restructuring efforts is the abolition of the professional branches and the unification of all local units into only one per municipality. The latter is a rather modernizing move, since it makes the manipulation of the local base by candidates and prominent party members more difficult. The abolition of the professional units demonstrates the tendency to move away from direct links with specific social groups. This tendency also led to the exclusion of references to social classes in the party programme and the adoption of a rhetoric which gave emphasis on the vague notion of civil society. In fact, the party Statutes (PASOK 2005) have introduced a new working committee called the

**Table 2** PASOK Membership and Ratio of Party Members to Party Voters and Total Electorate, 1974–2004

Election year	PASOK membership	PASOK members as percentage of PASOK voters	PASOK members as percentage of electorate†
1974	8,000	1.2	0.1
1977	27,000	2.1	0.4
1981	110,000	4.0	1.6
1985	220,000	7.5	2.5
1989 June	90,000	3.5	1.1
1989 November	90,000	3.3	1.0
1990	82,489	3.2	1.0
1993	112,088	3.5	1.2
1996	155,642	5.5	1.7
2000	125,000	4.2	1.3
2004*	250,000	8.3	2.5

\*Includes both members and sympathizers.

†It should be mentioned that the register of those enabled to vote in Greece is not renewed very often and therefore the number of registered voters is underestimated.

Source: Own calculations and official party data (Spourdalakis 1998).

‘Everyday Citizen’ (art. 48), which aims directly at mobilizing civil society and whose purpose is to ‘broaden dialogue with active citizens, social initiatives and voluntarism as it promotes cooperation with Civil Society’. A further striking example of this trend is the abolition of the long-standing action committees, which coordinated PASOK’s presence in trade unions, in the cooperative and agriculture movement and in mass and women’s movements.

A simple comparison of the new names of the collective bodies of the party and their electoral base and functions is sufficient to illustrate the difference in the spirit according to which the party operates. More concretely one should note the striking change in the election of the party’s president. The party’s founder, Andreas Papandreou, was never elected. Kostas Simitis was first elected by the parliamentary group as prime minister, and then as the party’s president during PASOK’s fourth congress (1996). Finally, in 2004 Giorgos Papandreou rose to the leadership after a vote open to the electorate, where he was the only candidate. Furthermore, according to the 2005 statutes, the party’s central committee (composed of 176 members elected by the party congress) changed its name—to ‘national council’—and composition (287 members composed of elected members, the parliamentary group and other appointed party dignitaries), while its executive bureau became the political council. The party organization is not only radically different from the mass party we observed in the historical development of the party system in Western Europe but even from its own past. The parliamentarians of the party have been promoted even further in the party hierarchies, as in their *ex officio* participation in the national council.

Thus, the emphasis of the leadership on participation and 'participatory democracy' has had no practical effects so far. In fact we could argue, along with similar studies (Seyd 1999), that the effort to increase party membership, in combination with the promotion of participatory democracy and a plebiscite type of membership mobilization, works to strengthen the leadership itself. In other words, this organizational trend contributes to the further concentration of power in the person of the leader, who now enjoys more autonomy than ever before. The consequence of this development is that very little room is left to the periphery for recruitment initiatives. These initiatives are left to the leader, who appeals to the membership and the citizenry directly, a pattern that actually nullifies the mediating function of numerous party bodies.

This recent organizational development and dynamic of PASOK are vividly displayed by the structure of its financing. According to the published budget of the party, in 2004, membership dues represented only five per cent of revenues, down from 14 per cent just ten years before. The rest of the party's financial needs are covered by legislated state remittances, which are based on the popular vote gained by the party. The actual procedures of the party's seventh congress (2005) are also characteristic of these trends. The delegates discussed the statutes and the political principles of the party separately. With the exception of the speeches of K. Simitis and G. Papandreou, there were no common sessions and there was no opportunity for true participation and debate or collective party-wide decision making at any point. The fragmentation of the delegates into four or five parallel sessions did not allow much room for proposals that would represent the real pulse of the party, nor could these important collective processes perform the function of leadership recruitment.

To be fair, one should add that these organizational trends of the Greek socialists developed and were strengthened by the drastic changes in the political mobilization patterns of the country. Indeed since the early 1990s the lopsided power enjoyed by the mass media, especially television, has influenced party mobilization. Party membership is at best on the sidelines of this process while the media play a decisive role in all party functions, including political recruitment, political mobilization and even policy formation. Given the party's dependency on the media, PASOK in turn increasingly depends on external expert consultants, as well as on the symbolic and material resources of politicians who are recruited regardless of their political background or ideological orientation. The inclusion of two prominent neo-liberal leaders on the party's ticket (S. Manos and A. Andrianopoulos) and the overall management of the electoral campaign are the most typical examples of these trends.

### **Competitive Strategy and Campaign Politics**

Despite the organizational changes the competitive strategy of PASOK has remained essentially the same. With minor variations the party's strategy revolves around two key points. The first is that, despite its anti-right-wing political rhetoric, the Greek socialists have not attempted any kind of real cooperation with the parties of the

traditional left. This discreet but clear distance from the left is not only articulated on the central political scene but, with marginal and insignificant exceptions, also with regard to all aspects of public life, for example, local and regional government, and institutions of organized interests. While this has been a key trait of PASOK since 1974, one could point to the striking exception to this pattern, the party's participation in the 'all party government' (1989–90) that followed the crisis and the brief electoral stalemate of 1989. However, this short-lived experience did not seem to have altered either PASOK's strategy or the overall political attitudes on party and political competition. The second key characteristic of its strategy vis-à-vis its prime political rival (the ND) was to preserve this (anti-right) rivalry on the basis of the cleavages of the past. The weight of these cleavages is purely historical and their current importance is the result of political inertia.

In other words, PASOK's strategy in this field is characterized by the maintenance, on the one hand, of a solid anti-right-wing rhetoric and, on the other, by the exercise of a softer criticism of the left and, occasionally, the promoting of rhetoric for cooperation. To the extent that the old civil war cleavages work, they are updated, interpreted and enriched with new political values and a programmatic orientation. Of course, the latter would have been very difficult given the programmatic convergence of the party with the ND. However, its often tactical use of these dated cleavages, even by the newly elected liberal leader Giorgos Papandreou, constitutes a clear trend. The party's relationship with the left, however, reveals a rather opportunistic strategy. It is the incapacitating sectarianism of the left (*Synaspismos* and KKE) that has made this strategy rather beneficial for the party's influence.

If the competitive strategy of PASOK displays clear signs of inertia and continuity, its campaign politics have changed drastically. By today's standards the campaign politics of the party until the end of the 1980s were rather primitive. After the first election (1974), when the campaign was spontaneous and decentralized, the party's overall strategy was redrafted and the electoral campaigns became more centralized as they were left in the hands and to the charisma of A. Papandreou. Although on the surface the methods used were not much different from those that characterized party politics in the 1960s, we should note that PASOK introduced some important innovations in its first 20 years of political presence. These included the replacement of informal and personalized networks with a well-organized party capable of carrying out the decisions made by the party hierarchy. Local and regional electoral committees, which were appointed just before every election, were under the control of the party's central committee and especially the executive bureau.

By the beginning of the 1990s, in the context of a political and electoral stalemate and with the framework of a rapidly and radically changing world of media and mass communications in the country, technocrats and electoral marketing experts were hired to assist the party's leadership in the details of its strategy. The presence of advertising experts and the adoption of internationally applied campaign techniques would become the main trait of the organization of electoral campaigns in the next phase of the party's development (Papathanassopoulos 2000).

Indeed PASOK's recent development is vividly displayed in its campaigning politics. During the period under examination (1995–2005) the preparation of the electoral campaigns changed radically. Contrary to the first two decades of the party's life, when planning was the responsibility of the party's leadership (especially the president and the executive bureau), campaigns have gradually passed into the hands of marketing experts. Following the general trend, PASOK relies almost exclusively on a whole series of experts and technocrats in the field of marketing and communication.

The key features of PASOK's electoral campaigns include the hiring of communication consultants, often working exclusively for the party leader, the use of opinion polls, reliance on new media and emphasis on the candidates' and especially the leader's image.

This is not of course something that is exclusive to the Greek socialists. In fact, since all major Greek political parties (including those on the left) employ to a great extent the same methods and display the same characteristics in their campaign politics and since these patterns are associated with American politics, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that PASOK participates, if not pivotally, in what has been convincingly called the 'americanization of Greek politics' (Kotzaivazoglou & Ikonomidou 2005). This has transformed the parties' electoral campaigns from being labour intensive to capital intensive and undermined the role of the membership even during campaigning periods.

The means of communication the party has at its disposal are a further indication of the changes in its campaigning politics. By the mid-1990s PASOK had abandoned the publication of the party's weekly (*Exormisi*) and closed down the operation of the party's publishing house (Aichmi); these channels of communication were replaced by a monthly publication (*Emphasis*), which is closer to a life-style magazine than to a political one. A recent development in the party's communication channels, in addition to the extensive use of radio and television (interviews, debates, commentaries), has been an emphasis on the use of the internet. This is the result of G. Papandreou's own obsession with this technology rather than the outcome of a realistic plan. In sum, technicians, technocrats and image-makers are the decisive and powerful actors in PASOK campaign politics (Givalos 2005).

## Conclusion

Recently, PASOK celebrated 32 years of presence on the Greek political scene. Its contribution to the transition and consolidation of Greece's democratic regime, the numerous reforms it introduced while in power and its instrumental role in the modernizing of the party system are the major axes upon which the Greek socialists can be judged positively. However, their governmental role, which lasted over ten years, has drawn them into a government and state logic that has contributed to a crisis of identity and political orientation.

The long presence of the party in government had three main effects. First, the government party dominated all other aspects of party life: the party's relationship to its

social base as well as its internal functions and activities. This resulted in a deepening of the cleavage between the 'old' and the 'new' party. The old PASOK is still committed to some degree to social rhetoric and a more visionary political programme, which aims at the mobilization of mass membership through traditional means. The new party, on the other hand, is committed to the efficient management of governmental affairs and relies primarily on the mobilization of the population at large through modern media and, secondarily, on a party membership loosely defined. The second consequence of PASOK's long incumbency has been the strengthening of a bipolar party system, as competition with ND became PASOK's main concern, leaving little room for changes in its competitive strategy. Third, and as a result of the above effects, when PASOK lost the elections in 2004 and found itself in opposition, it faced the challenge of rebuilding its organization and redrafting its political profile and strategy.

The freshness of G. Papandreou's leadership, with its genuine political liberalism, its efforts to renew the party's political personnel and political agenda through the introduction of themes of the 'post-materialist' agenda and the promotion of liberal values, is far from convincing. To put it differently, the new leadership's novelties are more an expression of the party's uncertainty and indecision than a way out of its crisis and a road to recovery. Of course the latter will depend on the performance of the ND government and its ability to cope with affairs of state and the tasks of governance, while maintaining its lead in popular support. However, recent polls suggest this is becoming increasingly questionable.

## Note

- [1] The published works so far have focused only on narrow aspects of the PASOK government. However, it is worth making reference to: Sevastakis (2004); Pantazopoulos (2003; 2004); Loulis (2004); Pappas (2004); Bilios (2005); Verney (2004); Giannitsis (2005); Simitis (2005).

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