

“The 7th Congress of PASOK (2005): Towards an ‘open’ party (?)

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The purpose of this paper is to examine the evolutions in the structure of PASOK (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) from its founding in 1974 until 2004 and to focus on the latest developments of the party at the 7th Congress in 2005. Examining the organizational structure of PASOK one can understand the evolutions that takes place in the Greek political party system, since 1974, because PASOK within thirty years: a) has fulfilled the main characteristics of the European socialist, social democratic and labor parties since the end of 19th century. From cadre party (1974-75) to mass party (1975-77), to catchall (1977-85) and finally to cartel or rather state-allocated party (1986-2005). (Spourdalakis, 1998), b) as a mass political party, modernizes the Greek party system because on one hand it legitimizes the structures of the traditional left and on the other hand it becomes the model for the right-wing New Democracy to become a modern mass party, after the 1981 defeat. (Spourdalakis, Tassis, 2006).

With the *Declaration of September the 3rd* in 1974, PASOK enters the Greek political scene with a radical discourse. Its promise for an organization structure based on mass membership lies far from the other political parties in the Greek party system even from the left ones. At the early stages of its development, PASOK seems to have characteristics of a cadre political party, because a) it does not appear with a mass

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organization, b) of the dominant role of A. Papandreou and c) of the status of the members who constitute the leadership. However, this face does not last much and it is a result of the necessities for the first elections on 17th November 1974, only two months after its founding. (Spourdalakis, 1998)

After the first elections and the relatively moderate performance of the party (13,6%), PASOK starts systematically to change its political rhetoric and orientation, but at the same time emphasizes on the formation of a party with mass character. Thus, the party's organization structure is based on local branches which created all over Greece. The party starts to increase its membership as it gives the promise that the members could participate in shaping the political program of the party and the leadership would be constituted by democratic procedures and give an account to the membership. However, this period (1975-77) is characterized by serious intra party crises. The reason lies on the leadership's abandoning the promise of the democratic procedures. (Spourdalakis, 1998)

After the 1977 elections, in which PASOK almost doubles its performance (25.3%), it adopts a catchall strategy,² with no serious intraparty disagreements, because the main goal is to win the next elections. A. Papandreou becomes more autonomous in shaping the

² The meaning of the catch-all party does not mean a party without any social reference, but it refers to the structural and ideological transformations of the party which now focuses mainly to the electoral performance, Kirchheimer, O., "The Transformation of the Western European Party Systems", in LaPalombara J., & Weiner, M., (eds.) *Political Parties and Political Development*", Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1966, pp.184-200, Wolinetz, S., "Party System Change: the Catch-all thesis revisited", *West European Politics*, Vol.14, No.1, January, 1991, pp.113-128, Dittrich, K., "Testing the Catch-all Thesis: Some Difficulties and Possibilities", in Daaler, H., & Mair, P., (eds.) *West European Party Systems*, Sage, Beverly Hills, 1983, pp.257-266.

political program of the party and in formatting the leadership of the party and the membership is used mainly to support his choices. The emphasis is given on the “opening” of the party to the Greek society, by increasing the members of the party but without the strict structure of the previous period. This catch-all strategy leads PASOK to win the 1981 elections, and to form the first socialist government only seven years after its establishment. (Spourdalakis 1998). Since then, and until 2004, it is always in power with an exception of the period 1990-1993, thus becoming the hegemonic party of the Greek party system.³ (Tassis, 2003)

In the first governmental period (1981-1985) PASOK has to deal with three controversial problems: a) the necessities of the Greek capitalism and b) the great expectations of the Greek society and c) the priorities to the restrictive policies of the economic neo-liberalism which influences the international political environment. However, PASOK introduces some important reforms, concerning the increase of the lower wages, the state administration, and the welfare state, which all constitute the key elements for the victory on the 1985 elections. On the contrary, at the same time the law that makes the right to strike almost impossible to exercise and PASOK’s controversial approach towards the European Economic Community, indicate its will to change its politics and program. (Spourdalakis 1998, Givalos 2005).

The 1st Congress in 1984, almost ten years after its founding, a very unusual fact for socialist – social democratic and labor parties, indicates

³ By the term hegemonic I mean a political party which a) sets the agenda of the political issues b) frames the political dialogue c) creates a structural model which seems to be imitated by the other political parties, d) appears to have the most capable personnel, and e) even an absence from government does not influence its dominant position, Tassis, C., (2003) *PASOK 1974-1996: From Protest to Hegemony*, paper presented at the 1st Symposium on Modern Greece, LSE, UK.

that the leadership of the party uses the active participation of the members only to nominate its choices. The restrictive economic policy of 1985-1987, indicates that the socialist party adapts the international trends. During this period, the emphasis on governmental and state affairs undermines the role of the party itself in shaping the political and the governmental program.

With the 1989 elections, PASOK comes to opposition under accusations for huge corruption. The main characteristic of this period is the formation of a coalition government between the Conservative Party (New Democracy-ND) and Synaspismos of Left and Progress in which the Greek Communist Party is the main component until November 1989 and the formation of the 'universal' government including PASOK until April 1990, when ND finally manages to form a majority government. This evolution has as a result the adoption by the Greek party system of a rather cynical political agenda, because the old cleavages which were based on the civil war (1945-49) and the dictatorship (1967-1974) are now replaced by managerial and technocratic proposals in order to secure the economic and social reproduction. (Spourdalakis, Tassis 2006) PASOK sets its priorities: a) the elimination of the inflation, b) the high rates of growth, c) the participation of Greece in the European Community. Moreover, its opposition to the ND government has a technocratic and realistic character. (Papandreou 1990).

In the early 1990's, there are important transformations in the political mobilization and in the Greek party system itself. The reason lies on the increasing role of the mass media, especially television, which plays a dominant role to the political party system, shaping the political agenda and formulating the political personnel. The role of the party

membership is substituted by the role of television professional experts whose relation to the party is strictly professional, no matter of their political background or ideological orientation, taking control of the overall management of the electoral campaign. (Papathanassopoulos 2000). By the mid-1990s, PASOK abandons the publication of the party's weekly newspaper (*Exormisi*) and closes down the party's publishing house (Aichmi). Instead, there is a publication of a monthly magazine called *Emphasis*, which lies closer to a life-style magazine than to a political one (Givalos 2005). PASOK seems to have a dominant role in this evolution which influences the whole political system and which has been called the 'americanization of Greek politics', in which the political parties become capital intensive concerning their electoral campaigns, undermining the role of the party membership even during the campaigning periods. (Kotzaivazoglou & Ikonou 2005)

With 1993 elections PASOK comes back to power, but the old radicalism belongs to the past. (PASOK 1993) The demand for modernization begins to appear as dominant trend in Greek society, and around it, it gathers the support of mass media, businessmen and organized interests, as an "informal alliance". Thus, a number of members of the executive bureau with K. Simitis in charge, object to the leadership of A. Papandreou and put the issue of modernization at the top of the party's political agenda (Lyrintzis, 1998, 2005). With the strong support of this 'informal alliance', along with the organic intelligentsia, K. Simitis becomes prime minister in 15 January 1996, through the party's parliamentary group and at the 4th Congress in June 1996, becomes President of the party. The reasons for Simitis' rise to power do not lie within the party but PASOK's internal balance of power is now legitimized almost exclusively outside the party, as a result of the need to

secure its capability to govern. (Spourdalakis 1998, Tassis, 2004). This evolution leads PASOK to win both 1996 and 2000 elections.

Under K. Simitis' leadership, there is a strong critique to the economic and social choices of PASOK's governmental periods 1981-1985, 1987-1989 and priority is given to the membership of Greece to the Euro-Zone. Therefore, PASOK adopts a neo-liberal program based on the privatization process with the promise that Greece could become competitive in the international division of labor. (Simitis 2000). This agenda is very close to the proposals of the Bank of Greece, the Association of Greek Industries and the International Monetary Fund (Papadimitriou 1995; Paraskevopoulos 1995) and indicates the coordination of PASOK with the hegemonic trend that dominates among the labour, socialist and social democratic European parties (the New Labour in Great Britain, the SPD in Germany, the PVDA in Holland).⁴ At the end, Greece manages to participate in the Euro Zone, notwithstanding that it creates a huge social deficit, since the modernizers consider as populist every demand coming from the unemployed and the trade unions. (Simitis, 1998). As a result, K. Simitis resigns only few months before the 2004 elections, because PASOK appears to face a huge electoral defeat. Under the leadership of the modernizers⁵ PASOK has fulfilled its transformation to a cartel⁶ or rather a state-allocated party:

⁴ This trend has been expressed as the 'Third Way' and for its context see Giddens, A., *The Third Way*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1998, A. Giddens 'After the Left's Paralysis: The Third Way Can Provide a Framework for Political and Economic Thought that Cuts Across the Old Divides of Social Democracy and Neoliberalism', *New Statesman*, No.127, 1 May 1998, A. Giddens, *The Third Way and its Critics*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2000, A. Giddens, *The Global Third Way Debate*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2001, G. Albo & A. Zuege, 'European Capitalism Today: Between the Euro and the Third Way', *Monthly Review*, Vol.51, No.3, July 1999, J. Petras, 'The Third Way: Myth and Reality', *Monthly Review*, Vol.51, No.10, March 2000.

⁵ For an evaluation about the modernization process in Greece, see Featherstone, K., (edit.) "The Challenge of Modernization: Politics and Policy in Greece", (special issue), *West European Politics*, Routledge, Vol.28, No.2, March 2005, Bilios, N. (2005) *Renewing*

- The financing of the party lies almost exclusively (95%) on state revenues based on the electoral performance of the party and only five 5% comes from members' contribution.
- The party members do not participate at all in the formation of the political agenda nor does the party seem to take account of their views, even during the election period, despite the fact that PASOK has 200.000 members.
- The role of intraparty life has fully been substituted by the mass media which shape both the political agenda and the political personnel.
- The members of the parliament increase their power in comparison to the party, as K. Simitis is elected Prime Minister through the parliamentary group and not through a special Congress.
- During the period 1996-2004 there is not a clear distinction between members and non-members, because of the establishment of the thematic branches in which every friend of PASOK could participate with almost the same rights as the local ones (Spourdalakis 1998).

The freshness of G. Papandreou and his promises a) for a participatory democracy and b) to renew the party's political personnel and political agenda, leads over one million people to participate in an 'open' election process in January 2004. Despite this dynamic, PASOK comes to

socialism in Greece: Analysing PASOK's modernization paradigm, paper presented at the 55th Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association, Leeds, UK.

⁶ For the context of the cartel party see Mair, P., "Political Parties, popular legitimacy and public privilege", *West European Politics*, Vol.18, No.3, July 1995, pp.40-57 and Katz, S. R., & Mair, P., "Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: The Emergence of the Cartel Party", *Party Politics*, Vol.1, No.1 January 1995, pp.5-28.

opposition with the March 2004 elections, but the promises for a new role of the membership leads 400,000 people to participate in the processes of the preparation for the 7th Congress and in June 2005, 250,000 people vote for the local/municipal and regional party bodies. (Spourdalakis, Tassis 2006) The new leadership tries to emphasize the ‘opening’ of the party to the Greek society. As a result, during the pre-Congress period:

- There is an attempt to institute a membership through internet. These members participate through PASOK’s web page, voting to e-referendums, filling questionnaires and expressing through chat rooms.
- 1.600 dialogue committees are taken place with 20-30 members in which every member can express its views on the organization structure of the party. The results of this process have been announced at the 7th Congress.
- ‘Days for National Dialogue’ are taken place on issues concerning Migration, Environment and Old Age
- Everybody can participate in every committee of the party during the pre-Congress period no matter if they are members or not, without the intermediation of a member of the Central Committee, as happened in previous periods.
- A new institution is founded the ‘Institute for Training’, with the aim to give emphasis on the training of the members and friends of the party

The 7th Congress takes place from 3-6 March 2005 in Athens. During the Congress:

- Only G. Papandreou and K. Simitis have the privilege to make a speech in the main conference, since there are four or five parallel sessions and there is no space for collective wide decision process.

- The definition of the membership has changed. According to the party's 2005 Statutes, there is no longer a distinction between the members and other citizens who are involved in party life, because friends can now participate with voting rights in all party processes (PASOK 2005, art. 20).
- The Statute and the political principles of the party are discussed at the same time in different places. Therefore, delegates can not participate in both sessions.
- The professional branches are abolished and their members embodied in local branches. Moreover, the unification of all local units into one, in every municipality, makes the political control of the local branches more difficult by the MPs.
- The party gives emphasis to the civil society and seems to undermine the role of the trade unions, because of the abolition of the professional branches. With the art.48 of the 2005 Statute, a new working committee is founded, the 'Everyday Citizen', whose target is to 'broaden dialogue with active citizens, social initiatives and voluntarism as it promotes cooperation with Civil Society'.
- With the new Statute, the election of the President takes place through an open process in which everybody (member or friend) can participate
- The Congress does not elect the President. It only elects half of the National Council, because the members of the parliamentary group participate ex officio.

CONCLUSION

Since its establishment in 1974, PASOK, in its unique route in Greek politics manages to become the hegemonic political party which modernizes the Greek party system. During this period of thirty years, it has also covered the route that the socialist, social-democrat and labour parties have covered since 19th century. Therefore, the mass political party of the 1970's which, through its organization structure, claimed to transform the Greek society into a socialistic one, at the end of the day, it has been transformed to a cartel party, fully dedicated to the governmental logic and to the priorities of the state, appearing a crisis of identity and political orientation. The novelties of the new leadership seem to be more an expression of the party's uncertainty and indecision than a way out of its crisis and a road to recovery. Therefore, the new organization process which is presented in the 7th Congress seems to lead to the 'open party' which seems to be a 'non-party party'.

- The needs of the state seem to dominate every aspect of the party life, because the party focuses mainly on civil society, the NGOs, the consumer the individual and the private capital, and not on social classes, working people, or the welfare state.
- The emphasis of the new leadership on participation and the effort to increase party membership seems to strengthen the leadership itself, because that leads to a further concentration of power to the leader, who now enjoys more autonomy than ever before (Spourdalakis, Tassis 2006).
- The party focuses mainly on mass media and the role of technicians, technocrats and image-makers has been increased

under the new leadership in the party's campaign politics (Givalos 2005).

- The low percentage of the internet connections in Greece (13,5%) shows the symbolic character of the opening of the party through internet this action and indicates the will of the new leadership for a more flexible membership.
- The role of the membership is undermined because non members can vote for the President.
- The role of the party is also undermined because the Congress does not elect the President.
- The influence of the parliamentary group has been increased in comparison to the party, because the MPs participate in the National Council *ex officio*.
- The local branches exist only theoretically, because PASOK has 911 Local Branches, but only 308 of them have offices (33,8%). Therefore, the members or the friends of the party can participate in the local branches, only through the Central Offices. Moreover only 188 of them have a telephone line (20,6%), 90 have a fax line (9,9%) and 171 of them have an e-mail address (18,8%) (Advocate of Member and Friend, 2006).

Table 1

7th Congress

1st day program (Thursday 3-3-05)

14:00 - 18:00: Entrance and certification of the delegates, files and cards receipt

18:00 : Opening

The secretary general welcomes the delegates and the guests. After, he calls the President to say the central speech

18:30: The speech of the President

19:30: Election of the Congress presiding board

19:30 : Greetings of the President of the Socialist International, of the President of PES and of the representatives of Greek and Cypriot Political Parties

21:00 : End of the works

Table 2

7th CONGRESS ROUND TABLES

Dialogue Room A (5) N.G.O.

Friday March 4th

10.00-12.00 Humanitarian Action: Effectiveness - Transparency

12.00-14.00 Rights

16.00-18.00 Obstacles to Clean Energy Policies

Dialogue Room B (6)

Friday March 4th

10.00-12.00 AIDS

17.00-19.00 Youth employment in a changing society

Dialogue Room C (14)

Friday March 4th

12.00-14.00 Socialists, Liberals, Greens - Channels of Communication in Europe

17.00-19.00 Migrants and European Reality

Dialogue Room D (15)

Friday March 4th

10.00-12.00 European Socialist Parties in the 21st Century

12.00-14.30 European Constitution, A Framework of Principles for the Europe we Want

15.00-17.00 A School Open to Society

17.00-19.00 Israelis and Palestinians

Table 3
7TH CONGRESS ROUND TABLES

Dialogue Room A (5) N.G.O.

Saturday March 5th

12.00-14.00 Participatory Democracy and Transparency

14.00-16.00 Natural Disasters and Humanitarian Aid, For a Global Society of Solidarity

Dialogue Room B (6)

Saturday March 5th

12.30-14.30 Common Agricultural Policy Reform: Dangers and Opportunities

Dialogue Room C (14)

Saturday March 5th

10.00-12.00 Church - State, Relations with Defined Roles

12.30-14.30 Globalization, industrial production and commerce: effects and prospects

17.00-19.00 Migration: Threat or Opportunity

Dialogue Room D (15)

Saturday March 5th

10.00-12.00 Greek-Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots

12.00-14.00 Multiculturalism and National Identity

15.00-17.00 Web-Based Organizational Models for Voluntarism

17.00-19.00 Political Education and Proactive Citizenship

Table 4

PASOK's Party Structure

2001 Congress (6th)	2005 Congress (7th)
President elected by the Congress	President elected, for a maximum of three terms, in a plebiscite procedure where member and “friends” vote.
Executive Bureau. Its twenty members are elected by the Central Committee.	Political Council. Its twenty members are elected by the National Council.
Secretary of the Central Committee. Elected by the Central Committee in which s/he participates as a member.	Secretary of the National Council. Elected by the Political Council in which s/he participates as a member.
Central Committee. It constitutes by 176 members are elected by the party congress.	National Council. It constitutes by 287 members. Only half of them are elected by the Congress because the members of the parliamentary group participates ex officio, 13 members of it are the Regional Coordinators who are elected in other internal party elections.
Ethics Committee. Composed by members of the Central Committee, which are elected by it.	Committee for Observing the Constitution and Credentials Committee. Its 9 members belong to the C.C. and are elected by it.
	Advocate for the members and friends. Members of the National Council.
	Committee of Electoral Procedures
Policy Sections: Economy and development, Social policy and quality of life, Education and Sports, State institutions and Culture and Hellenic Diaspora.	Policy Sections: Development, competitiveness and consumers’ policy; Employment, social issues and health; Local government, public administration and justice; Foreign policy, security and defense; Secretariat of foreign relations; Economy; Education and Culture; Environment, city planning and quality of life; Agriculture development; Participatory democratic governance; Human rights, social inclusion and policy; Youth policy; Solidarity and volunteering; Deliberation and cooperation with the institutional and social partners and mass movements; Communication.
Action Sections: Organizational policy;	No longer exist.

Trade unionism and mass movements; International relations; Communication; Financing; Local government; Cooperative and agriculture movement; Women	
Director General. Introduced in the 2001 Congress.	Director General. Remain in place.
Prefect Committees. Every prefect has a party committee, which is elected by the member of the regions' locals. The Secretary of the Committee is elected by the members of the Committee.	Prefect Committees. Every prefect has a party committee, whose Coordinator is elected by members and friends.
Locals. Usually more than one local in every municipality.	Locals. Only one local in every municipality, in which now participate the members of the youth organization and the former members of the professional locals.
Professional locals. Local function in every professional section.	Professional locals are abolished.
Other party institutions. Institute of Developmental and Strategic Studies- A. Papandreou (ISTAME, the official think-tank of the party; PASOK's Youth; PASP (students front organization); PASKE (trade unionist front organization).	Other party institutions. To the existing institutions have been introduced the 'Institute for Training' and the 'Everyday Citizen'

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