PATRONS AGAINST PARTISANS:
POLITICAL PATRONAGE IN MASS IDEOLOGICAL PARTIES

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Party patronage is often thought of as a vote-maximizing method that is more common in pre-modern, non-ideological parties (cf. Duverger 1954; Schmidt et al. 1977; Eisenstadt and Roniger 1981; Lémarchand 1981, 1988). Yet, the persistence of patronage politics is quite evident in modern mass and ideological parties, which often use it as an extremely effective strategy for winning votes (Katz and Mair 1995; Kitschelt 2000; Dalton and Wattenberg 2001; Blondel 2002; van Biezen 2000, 2004). In the void left by the lack of empirical and theoretical research in this phenomenon in contemporary parties, a number of questions are raised: Given that ideology and organization are preconditions for their development and electoral success, what explains the existence of patronage politics in modern mass organized parties? When is such a phenomenon most likely to emerge in contemporary politics? And, how compatible is patronage with ideology and mass party organization?

In this paper I examine the emergence of patronage politics in one particular case, the Greek Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK). That party, created by Andreas Papandreou shortly after the transition to democracy in Greece in July 1974, appeared as a political force that was new, socialist, and placing a high premium on developing mass organization structures (PASOK 1974a). Despite a non-auspicious beginning in the first democratic elections of the same year (in which that party received 13.6 percent of the national vote), PASOK afterwards performed phenomenally. In the contest of 1977, it doubled its electoral strength (25.3 percent), and only four years later, in 1981, it succeeded to win state power with a stunning 48.2 percent of the vote.

Most interpretations about the political ascent of PASOK revolve around its novel ideological messages and organizational effectiveness (cf., for instance, Lyrintzis 1984a, 1984b; Spourdalakis 1988; Elephantis 1991). Little or no attention at all has been paid to patronage politics in PASOK. As this study intends to show, PASOK, exactly like its main party opponents during the early phase of democratization, relied heavily on utilizing old patronage networks, let alone building new ones. Moreover, in practicing patronage politics, PASOK was far more successful than its rivals – a fact that, to a large extent, explains both its rapid solidification as a party and, subsequently, its phenomenal electoral performance. It will be suggested that party patronage in
PASOK was a conscious strategy of the party leadership aiming to expand the party base as fast as possible so as to be in a position to contest state power. To succeed, such a strategy presupposed the subordination of the party organization and the securing of the patrons’ loyalty to the leader.

Accordingly, the paper has two goals. On the one hand, it puts forward the claim that patronage was for PASOK – a mass and ideological party – a primary and conscious strategy for party-building and vote maximization. Through empirical analysis, we are going to explore the peculiar logic, microfoundations, and internal party dynamics of patronage during the formative years of PASOK’s development. On the other hand, the paper aims to provide a theoretically-grounded explanation of why PASOK was so much successful with patronage vis-à-vis its rivals. As it will be shown, unlike other parties with long patronage experience, PASOK developed a two-tiered patronage system: individual clients depended on their local and regional patrons but the latter also depended on the party leader. In what follows, I first introduce some key theoretical issues to be used as scaffolding to subsequent analysis. Self-interested office-seekers are distinguished from ideologically motivated ones and the conditions under which each category is more likely to predominate are examined. Then, discussion extends to PASOK and its early office-seekers who are accordingly categorized into “patrons” and “partisans” – each category having its own characteristics. The third section of the paper includes the bulk of empirical data and demonstrates that party patronage predominated in PASOK to the expense of party organization and ideology elaboration efforts. Finally, to explain why things turned that way, I introduce a simple theoretical model based on the strategic choices of the three intra-party actors – the party leader, the patrons, and the partisans.

Parties, office-seeking, personal motives, and office-gaining strategies

To commence with fundamentals, and following a long line of authors beginning with Anthony Downs, I understand political parties to be rationally-minded “team[s] of men seeking to control the government apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election” (Downs 1957: 25). To study political parties, therefore, one has to examine
the ambitious office-seekers who are their central and most important actors (Schlesinger 1966; Aldrich 1995). The problem that immediately arises concerns the different means such individuals may possibly use to gain office. As this matter is closely connected with the different incentives parties offer their participants, I begin analysis with that issue.

To their participants (whether active members, party workers and cadres, public office-seekers or elected office-holders) political parties offer two kinds of incentives – collective and selective ones. Collective incentives derive from the nature of parties as nonmarket-based organizations, whose major output consists of immaterial and public goods (Schlesinger 1984), such as specific policies and programs, candidates for public office, organizational identification, or group solidarity. Normally, collective incentives are specified in the parties' official ideologies, and are pursued by formal party organization structures. The problem with this type of incentives is that, since public goods are equally distributed among all participants, “rational, self-interested individuals will not act to achieve their common or group interests” (Olson 1965: 2). Selective incentives, in contrast, are more common in market-based organizations that trade their products for material and private benefits. However, because of the imbalanced market created by elections and the control of office, parties, similarly to business firms, also produce private goods such as status, power, job promises, contracts, or other material benefits. Since those benefits are distributed unequally, self-interested party participants are tempted to either supplement collective incentives with selective ones, or altogether discard the former in the latter’s favor. Which type of incentives prevails within a party is a matter of great significance since, as Panebianco (1988: 10) asserts, “[t]he fact that the party must necessarily distribute both types of incentives contemporaneously implies an organizational dilemma, for one type works against the other.”

The foregoing dilemma becomes particularly evident in the case of “office-seekers” (Schlesinger 1975) – a term hereafter meant to include both those who seek and those who hold elective office. To win elections, such political entrepreneurs must

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1 This is, in elections for state power, parties receive private goods, such as votes, in exchange for collective ones, such as public policies.
convince the voting public to support them in greater numbers than they support their opponents. To this purpose, office-seekers have two ways available: either to emphasize the public-goods side of party outputs and hope that their intra-party opponents do the same, or focus on the private-goods side of their parties and pursue individual patronage strategies. Accordingly, office-seekers are distinguished into two broad categories – the ideologically-motivated and the self-interested ones. To be sure, to say that the former category dwells in the so-called “programmatic” parties, while the latter category is more common in “electoral” parties is not particularly useful. One should more realistically expect both types of office-seekers to co-exist in most parties but, at different times, in varying mixes. The crucial point, then, is to find out when, and under which circumstances, one type prevails over the other. But before delving into this issue, let us first examine the different logics of each category of office-seekers, the strategies they respectively have at their disposal, as well as the conditions that are most favorable for attaining their goals.

Prima facie, the logic of self-interested office-seekers is the easiest to grasp. In a way recalling the widely-held idea that most, if not all office-seekers are opportunists who pursue personal ends, it is accepted that politicians “never seek office as a means of carrying particular policies; their only goal is to reap the rewards of holding office per se” (Downs 1957: 28). To this category of office-seekers, the best strategy for vote-maximization is party patronage, that is, the creation of extensive patron-client networks through which votes are exchanged for personal favors (Schmidt et al 1977; Eisenstadt and Ronigen 1984; Scott 2006). By creating their own networks of followers and voters, local political entrepreneurs retain significant autonomy vis-à-vis their parties. As individual patrons develop their own machines, they may be tempted to defy the party leadership thus undermining its authority (for instance, Zariski 1965). The patronage strategy is most common in political systems in which parties are loose associations of individual notables or where formal party organizations do exist but remain inactive.

In contrast to self-interested office-seekers, ideologically-motivated ones pursue collective and partisan interests. To this purpose, they place emphasis on party ideological matters, project the party policies with no ambiguity, and rely for electoral
support on the formal party organization (from within which they are also most likely to
draw their political origins). When are such ideologically-motivated office-seekers
more probable to prevail or, differently put, under which conditions does ideology
become the optimal means for vote-maximization?

Olson’s (1965) collective action problem notwithstanding, this seems to happen
in the following three cases (or their combinations). Firstly, ideologically-motivated
office-seekers are more common in ideological rather than pragmatic parties. Since
these parties stress ideology for appealing to specific social groups and seeking their
votes, ideologically reliable candidates able to promote the party policies in
unambiguous ways are more preferred than local notables who command large
patronage networks but have little party loyalty and no ideological sophistication.
Secondly, ideologically-minded office-holders are also likely to thrive in multiparty
systems, where the ideological differences between parties are both large and visible. In
contrast to two-party systems, where parties, in their effort to resemble their opponents,
move toward each other ideologically, in multiparty systems each party will try to
maintain its ideological differences from all other parties (Downs 1957: 126-7).
Thirdly, ideologically-motivated office-holders are expected to prevail in political
systems in a flux and plagued by uncertainty (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986: 3-5). This
is the case, for instance, in states undergoing democratic transition, in which uncertainty
is “the defining characteristic” (Przeworski 1986: 57). In such cases, because
information costs are high, even rational voters may decide to use ideologies as
“shortcuts” (Sartori 1976: 325; Downs 1957: 97) rather than paying the cost of being
informed about specific policies.

To be sure, to adopt a patronage strategy in ideological and mass organized
parties involves costs as well as risks. To begin with the former, besides the actual cost
(in both monetary assets and time) required for creating a constituency for patronage,
subsequent monitoring and maintenance are also expensive. This is particularly evident
when prospective patrons attempt to build patronage networks from the beginning or in
electoral districts where older and competing networks exist. Besides being expensive,
patronage is a perilous strategy, too. “In fact,” Warner (1997: 534) summarizes the
problem, “patronage can reduce a party’s ability to get votes, its influence on policy
choice and output, its share of patronage resources, its control over its own members and activists, its cohesion, its pool of loyal activists and its ability to change strategy.” To the extent that it enhances the autonomy of individual office-seekers, patronage undermines the party as a whole and opens the way to fierce antagonisms between patrons, organization activists and the party leadership. It can alienate principled party partisans and invite the hostility of the party leadership. Patronage networks and collective party organs are antithetical units. As at the local level patrons compete directly with the party organs, often pursuing different agendas, at the national level party patronage may become a winning strategy for individual patrons but not for the party as a whole. By its very nature, patronage politics undermine the party hierarchies and render their organization inefficient.

How is it, then, that patronage may develop in ideological and mass organized parties? The obvious answer is that self-interested office-seekers will choose a patronage strategy when their expected individual benefits surpass the costs incurred. Yet, to the extent that such benefits remain private and, therefore, antagonistic to party collective goals, it should be expected that patronage politics will be deterred by the party leader in alliance with the party organization. In such a case, the leader and the organization impose “binding commitments” of collective behavior and ideological mindedness upon the party patrons. Paradoxically, however, exceptionally strong leaders (commonly thought of as being charismatic) may decide to pursue a patronage strategy, thus favoring individual patrons over the collective party organization. PASOK provides a clear case of this phenomenon and also helps explain some of its implications for both the party itself and, more generally, the political system that has developed in Greece.

Office-seekers in early PASOK: Partisans vs. patrons

2 It may be the case, however, that office-seekers come to realize that their own individual benefits (say, from winning office) still depend on the acquisition of collective ones (say, their party’s electoral victory). In such cases, to secure collective benefits, even self-interested office-seekers may agree in advance to abstain from personal strategies – something that requires repeated interaction plays among the candidates as those studied by Hardin (1982) and Axelrod (1984).
It goes without saying, “political parties are complex institutions . . . and as such they are difficult to understand and evaluate” (Eldersveld 1982: 407). This is particularly the case in newly-formed parties which can hardly be said to form internally unified entities. To make sense of such disunity in the early PASOK, I propose distinguishing the total sum of that party’s elected office-seekers in the formative elections of 1974 and 1977 into two broad categories: those motivated primarily by ideological commitment, whom I shall term partisans, and the ones motivated primarily by self-interest, and whom I shall accordingly term patrons. Furthermore, and given that PASOK appeared in 1974 as a purely ideological party pledged to provide Greek society with a major collective good (i.e., socialism), we expect the majority of that party’s office-seekers to consist of ideologically-motivated partisans rather than self-interested politicos.

As a new and socialist party, PASOK had an interest in further elaborating its ideology and promoting mass organization structures. That interest was moreover reinforced by the fractious and polarized character of the post-dictatorship party system in Greece (Pappas 2003), as well as by the high political uncertainty in the earliest period of regime transition. Amidst the intense ideological polarization and uncertainty that prevailed during that time, socialism seemed an appealing option in broad segments of society. In the circumstances, PASOK’s membership grew by leaps and bounds. Almost spontaneously, and nationwide, the earlier party members formed local organization cells, which became particularly active in both vote fetching and policy elaboration. Most of the people involved in PASOK’s early organization efforts were of young age and with no previous involvement in active politics, represented a wide variety of professions, and were well-predisposed towards novel socialist ideas. It was not without reason, therefore, that the first Central Committee of the party – itself a formidable assembly of ideologically-committed and mass organization-minded individuals – expected those nuclei of partisans to play crucial roles “in shaping the party, as well as producing cadres at every party level through genuinely democratic procedures” (PASOK 1974b: 2-3). As of the Central Committee, its main task was the promotion of strong and internally-democratic organization structures in order to convoke, not after long, PASOK’s first party congress.
Unlike partisans, to whom party organization structure is necessary for political advancement and support in electoral campaigns, the chief feature of self-interested politicians, or patrons, is that, in seeking office, they are more likely to emphasize selective over collective incentives. Patrons do not have partisan goals per se; their primary goal is to pursue long and successful careers in public office. One can distinguish three particular sub-categories of patrons to have permeated the young socialist PASOK: old-regime insiders (or, in Greek politics parlance, *paleokommatikoi*), political family successors, and notabilities by name.

Old-regime insiders, first, drew their political origins from the pre-dictatorship Center Union (*Enosis Kentrou*, EK) a liberal democratic party headed by George Papandreou, Andreas’ father, which was hostile to both socialism and far right extremism. That party was “a cooperation of personalities or local notables, some of whom joined the Center because either they did not find a place in the Right or perhaps the place offered to them was not an appropriate one” (Meynaud 2002: 320). As it often happens in regime transitions (e.g., Kitschelt et al 1999: 52), old-regime politicians who have thrived on clientelist politics, on condition that they manage to survive in the new regime, are likely to continue exploiting their old patronage networks. A second subgroup closely related to old-regime insiders is that of political family successors, that is, family descendants of old EK office-holders who in the meantime had inherited their electoral clienteles. Although of significantly younger age than their political antecedents, and even ideologically sensitive to socialism, such beneficiaries of already established patronage networks naturally chose to rely on them rather than getting involved in the murky party organization life. Finally, in the general category of “patrons,” I also include any office-seekers who joined PASOK and sought election by utilizing their social prominence and notable names. My expectation will be that most of them were not ideologically motivated, but joined the party opportunistically.

In sum, and on the basis of what has already been said and explained so far, in the formative early post-dictatorship era PASOK office-seekers had more incentives to behave in an ideologically-motivated manner (and therefore rely on their party’s organization structures) rather than in a self-interested one (thus choosing to create their own patronage networks). PASOK, a radical socialist party, was not only
programmatically committed to providing a strong organization; it also had the cadres ready for it. On the other hand, patronage was far more than a strategy that was expensive; it also was one that appeared as threatening the party leader’s control over the elected office-holders in the party. On this account, I propose three interrelated theoretical hypotheses to be empirically tested.

First hypothesis: During candidate selection, there should be a clear preference for ideologically-motivated political newcomers rather than self-interested old-timers. In other words, partisans should outnumber patrons.

Despite the relative brevity of the Greek dictatorship, which did not obliterate the old political class, radical socialist PASOK was in the new democratic regime an unlikely party for traditional politicians, long-imbued in patronage politics, to find shelter. It seemed far more likely that ideologically-motivated political newcomers be given preference over self-interested old-timers. By “political newcomers” I mean those office-seekers who, in the new democratic environment of post-dictatorship Greece, were (i) mostly young cadres, not tainted by past political squabbles or burdened by old political ideas; (ii) ideologically reliable with regard to their commitment to their party’s socialist ideology; and (iii) representative of diverse social classes and belonging to an assortment of professional categories, especially the lowly ones.

Second hypothesis: The collective party organs should have played a predominant role in the process of recruiting and selecting candidates for public office.

To select and put forward candidates for public office is one of the parties’ most important functions (Janda 1970: 83; Gallagher and Marsh 1988). Candidate nomination is as important for internal party life as it is in itself. As Katz (2001: 278) puts is, “a party's candidates in large measure define and constitute its public face in elections. Collectively, they manifest the demographic, geographic, and ideological dimensions of the party. They articulate and interpret the party's record from the past

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3 F. W. Riggs (Administrative Reform and Political Responsiveness: A Theory of Dynamic Balancing, p. 580) even defines a party as “any organization which nominates candidates for election to an elected assembly.”
and its program and promises for the future.” Generally speaking, there are two ways available to parties for candidate selection. The first way is more common in the so-called cadre, or electoral, parties. Lacking organization and, often, a cohesive ideology, cadre parties depend for electoral success upon the personalities of their individual, locally-based notabilities who are in control of extensive local clienteles. In such parties, “appointment is made by committees behind locked doors [who] give themselves up to the delights of “electoral cooking”” (Duverger 1954: 360). An alternative way of selecting office-seekers is more evident in centralized mass, or programmatic, parties. Given that those parties are characterized by bureaucratic processes of candidate recruitment and selection, the key criterion for nomination is not personal influence or name recognition, but the candidate’s ideological reliability and his loyalty to the party. Typically, in such cases, in which PASOK also fits, candidate selection is the absolute prerogative of the central party organs; it also takes place on the basis of the party ideological principles and within formalized bureaucratic procedures.

*Third hypothesis:* Even where they persisted, patrons should be able to maintain considerable political autonomy from both the party organization and its central leadership.

While partisans depend for electoral support and political advancement on the party resources, patrons may enjoy a greater degree of autonomy. By creating their own networks of followers and voters, local political entrepreneurs retain significant autonomy vis-à-vis their parties. With an independent base, the local patron can blackmail the organization and bargain for better deals with the party leadership. In some cases, he may not even adhere to the party policies (Warner 1997: 540). As Duverger again explains, in such situations we cannot really speak of “unilateral appointment, implying a relationship of subordination, but of a bilateral agreement leading to [near] equality: this difference has a great influence on the dependence of the deputy on his party and the intervention of the party on the choice of the deputy” (Duverger 1954: 355, 356).
Patronage politics: Data and findings

Moving from theoretical to empirical analysis, in this section I explore the universe of PASOK’s office-seekers who won parliamentary seats in the elections of 1974 and, more importantly if only for sheer group size, 1977. In 1974, PASOK won twelve parliamentary seats which, after subsequent by-elections, increased to fifteen. Three years later, in 1977, the number of PASOK’s elected office-holders skyrocketed to ninety-three. The present analysis is based on the full dataset of these 118 deputies elected with PASOK in these two elections. The data have been collected through more than one hundred personal interviews (with former office-holders, central and regional organization cadres, intermediary and top party leaders) conducted over a period of five months (October 2005-February 2006). The interviews produced valuable information about the political histories of individual office-holders, as well as those of their rivals, the development of local organizations, campaigning methods, elite recruitment at the local and regional levels, ties to the central party leadership and much more.

As the first democratic elections in Greece took place in November 1974, when PASOK was only two months old, there was no much time for this (or, for the same matter, any other) party to build an organization and refine its ideology. Both problems became clear during candidate recruitment. PASOK had considerable difficulty in filling the party lists in many electoral districts including the Athens metropolitan area. In practice, the incipient local party organizations did not play a significant role in the recruitment and selection of candidates. As it emerges from interviews, that task was undertaken by Papandreou himself (also Elephantis 1981: 124), aided in that by a very small circle of political entrepreneurs devoted to him, of whom most notable was A. Livanis, a centrist. Papandreou’s aim could not be clearer: rather than relying for office-seeking on new party recruits possessing organizational experience and ideological reliability, he chose to lure into the young party old centrists who met the criteria of past political experience and name recognition in their respective electoral constituencies. In most cases, political newcomers were included in the party electoral lists only when old-timers were unavailable. It must be noted, however, that many party
activists and ideologues declined candidacy for office, preferring instead to fight for their party’s electoral victory through the party organs. That was the case, for instance, with the majority of cadres of Democratic Defense (Δημοκρατική Άμυνα, DA), a prominent resistance organization that had merged with PASOK just before the 1974 elections. Be that as it may, the fact remains that, wherever new party partisans competed at the polls, they performed dismally.

In 1974, no party partisan was elected with PASOK. Without exception, all fifteen individuals who won office drew their political origins from within the pre-dictatorship Center Union (EK) party. To an author’s bitter remark, “they were all centrists in a party professing to be Marxist” (Lakopoulos 1999: 66). But besides their remarkable political homogeneity and social cohesion, which contrasted sharply with the heterogeneity of their party’s electoral base (Mavrogordatos 1983b: 50), that first group of PASOK elected office-holders (save one single exception to be discussed below) shared another characteristic: their close personal ties with Andreas Papandreou. Both common political pre-histories in EK and personal relationship to the party leader are surprising findings given that PASOK, besides being expressly hostile to personalism, also claimed a strong political and ideological affinity to the Left. A more detailed analysis of that first group of PASOK elected office-holders is revealing.

Nine out of the fifteen PASOK office-holders in 1974 had taken part in elections under the banners of the pre-dictatorship EK. Of those, seven, including Andreas, who alone also had ministerial experience, had been former EK deputies while the remaining two, S. Rallis and Y. Floros, had been fielded as EK candidates for the never-to-be-realized elections of 1967. In the period preceding the dictatorship, all those individuals had belonged in a compact center-left party fraction built around Andreas Papandreou. After the dictatorship and PASOK’s founding, those early disciples followed Andreas and, in the years to come, many were allowed in the innermost party circle surrounding the party leader and being responsible for the key decisions concerning the party life and course of action. Furthermore, another two of PASOK’s 1974 office-holders, were family relatives of former EK parliamentarians from whom they inherited large electorate clienteles. They, too, were very close personal and family friends of Andreas
Papandreou. Of the remaining four 1974 deputies, three also came from the pre-dictatorship EK but had not served as parliamentarians nor run as candidates under its banners. Even so, all three maintained strong personal relationships with Andreas. Finally, there was only one deputy with neither previous political career in the EK nor personal ties with PASOK’s leader. G. Psarakis, a farmer and ideologue from Crete, was exceptional in that he entered PASOK in 1974 from the grass-roots and for purely ideological reasons. It is certainly no accident that, in the elections of 1977, he sank into fourth position in his electoral district and thereafter was lost in oblivion.

In the following elections of 1977, PASOK performed phenomenally: by increasing its number of elected office-holders from fifteen to ninety-three (that is, an increase of 31 percent of all seats in Parliament), it emerged as the main opposition party. Who were those men and women? At first glance, the PASOK parliamentary party looks politically youthful. Indeed, the large majority of its members (74 out of the total 93, or 79.7 percent) were newcomers to the 1977 legislative assembly (Pappas 1999: 97). This has led many to conclude that “for the most part, PASOK’s political personnel is being recruited and shaped from within its ranks: they are creatures of the party and owe their emergence into public life to the rise and progress of PASOK” (Elephantis 1981: 127). Yet, there is another angle to view the matter. Utilizing my previous scheme, I divide PASOK’s 1977 office-holders into the two general categories of patrons and partisans. I further distinguish “patrons” into the three more specific categories of old-regime insiders, or paleokommatikoi, political family successors, and notabilities by name. This breakdown leads to some remarkable findings.

Rather unexpectedly for a new and self-declared socialist party like PASOK, almost half of its office-holders in 1977 are found to belong in the category of “patrons.” Of them, no less than twenty-nine (or, roughly, one third of their total sum) were old-regime insiders, that is, individuals who had sought elective office under the banner of the pre-dictatorship EK and, more often, had won it. With a long presence in

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4 Those were Sylva Akrita, the wife of Loukis, a former deputy of the Center Union and close friend to the Papandreou family, and Nikolaos Vgenopoulos, who was a nephew of Anastassios Vgenopoulos, a former Center Union deputy and a friend to the family.

5 It is worth noting that, from the fifteen deputies that PASOK elected in 1974, thirteen renewed their tenure in 1977. The two exceptions were Psarakis, who run but fail to get re-elected, and Akrita, who did not run at all.
active politics, they had managed to build extensive patronage networks in their electoral districts. Interestingly enough, such networks were not limited in rural areas, but were also strong in urban centers (witness, for instance, the patronage networks of I. Papaspyrou in Piraeus, S. Tsaparas in Thessaloniki, D. Dimosthenopoulos in Kavala). With no exception, those old-timers had been personal friends or acquaintances of the Papandreou family and, more specifically, of Andreas. In addition, they abhorred socialism, and especially its Marxist variance publicly advocated by their leader in the earlier phase of PASOK’s life. On his part, during candidate selection, Andreas Papandreou showed a clear preference for this particular group of office-seekers over the party partisans. In several cases, he personally tried to attract centrist paleokommatikoi into PASOK and, when it occurred, it proved a successful strategy. It must be noted that, in all such cases, the advancement of old centrists in high party positions took place against the wish of the local and regional party organizations, the latter preferring those positions to be filled with party partisans.

A second group of elected office-holders which I include in the category of “patrons” is that of political successors, that is, nominal newcomers who won their seats and entered office in 1977 largely by virtue of their families’ political heritage and long-accumulated political capital. Those were of significantly younger age than the paleokommatikoi, and, therefore, had not taken an active part in the pre-dictatorship politics. Some had participated in the anti-dictatorship struggle and had been exposed to socialist ideas. Yet, their defining characteristic was that they had inherited large political clienteles which they now had to maintain.

A third and final group which I include in the category of “patrons” is the notabilities by name. Here I include candidates with significant name recognition because of past political history, family affiliation, or professional and social prominence. Some were nationally-known (like, for instance, M. Merkouri, a celebrated actress), others were prominent at the regional level. Such individuals were highly sought after during the candidate recruitment of 1977, and thereafter. This is explained

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Among several such cases, quite telling is that of D. Archos, an old-aged centrist notable from Argolid, who switched over to PASOK just before the 1977 contest, and won first place. Other such cases were the two deputies in Fthiotis, E. Staikos and Ch. Karageorgiou, A. Peponis in Athens and E. Kattrivanos in Piraeus. In Evia, Papasratis, a former EK deputy, declined Papandreou’s personal offer to be included in the PASOK ballot, but accepted it in 1981.
by the fact that, in the early post-dictatorship period, PASOK tried to attract voters across the spectrum of pre-existing party loyalties (Kopecky 1995). Yet, this kind of office-seekers is not characterized by ideological reliability (Isiyama 2000: 877). It is more likely that they will try to pursue selective incentives (or private goods, such as office-seeking and individual career advancement) rather than collective ones.

Coming now to the category of those office-seekers termed “partisans,” here are included individuals who had no active involvement in electoral politics in the pre-dictatorship period and, therefore, no personal or family political networks around the time of regime change. They entered PASOK from the grass-roots, and became actively involved in the early party organization activity. There is a catch. From these individuals, only a very small minority sought office for the first time in 1977. Their majority had also run in 1974. Having failed to win office in the first election, many of the unsuccessful candidates tried painstakingly to build their own patronage networks so as to perform better next time. Some managed wonderfully. Witness the case of A. Georgiades, a young economist from Rhodes, who had bottomed the party list of the Dodecanese electoral district in 1974. Subsequently, aided by his father, a secondary school inspector in the Dodecanese, Georgiades built an impressive personal clientele and topped the list in 1977. Or the almost twin cases of M. Gikonoglou in Imathia and V. Kedikoglou in Evia. None distinguishing himself for ideological purity or for cooperative spirit with their local party organizations, they both built extensive patronage networks to win parliamentary seats in their respective prefectures at the expense of individuals supported by the local party organizations. Essentially similar were the cases of K. Aslanis in Heraklion, Crete, and I. Pottakis in Corinth. At the open dismay of their local and regional party organizations, both invested heavily in building extensive patronage networks of a most traditional type.

There were many ways used to create such patronage networks. Many office-seekers took advantage of geographical descent. For instance, L. Veryvakis, a Cretan by origin who was candidate in Athens, in addition to an impressive record of resistance against the dictatorship, owed much of his electoral success to his mobilizing the Association of Cretans in Athens. Others simply took advantage of their profession, like, for instance, D. Kefalidis, a well-known veterinarian in the cattle-rearing
prefecture of Drama. Still others exploited their privileged relation to various interest
groups like the trade unions or the farmers’ cooperatives. Such a characteristic case was
that of V. Papadopoulos, a deeply devout office-seeker from Ilis in the Peloponnese,
who won first place in his prefecture thanks to the support he received from religious
and church-going voters.

All things considered, then, it was only a very thin group among PASOK’s 1977
candidates who won public office without being backed by their own patronage
networks. Most were of young age, believed in socialism, and possessed precious
organization experience. Above all, however, they also believed in the supremacy of
Andreas Papandreou in the party.

The politics of patronage explained

Contrary to our initial theoretical expectation, empirical analysis has demonstrated that,
shortly after its foundation, PASOK turned into a party deeply permeated by the politics
of patronage. As ideologically-motivated individuals became rarer in the party, most
office-seekers, in a typically Downsian fashion, pursued their personal aims by
emphasizing selective rather than collective incentives.

The question naturally arises: why did patronage become so pervasive in
PASOK? There are two possible explanations. One is to assert that PASOK simply
could not avoid a practice that is endemic in Greek (or, for the same matter, southern
European) politics. Indeed, most political parties in Greece have traditionally been little
more than “loose and unstable alliances of deputies around a leader, bound together
solely for the conquest of power and the distribution of patronage” (Mavrogordatos
1983a: 65). As late as the mid-1960s, for most Greek constituents, political support was
generated “through the mediation of a loyalty bond towards a traditional personal party
or a certain politician” (Meynaud 1966: 363). An author would even go as far as to
argue that “the most significant aspect of Greek society, at least in connection with the
political system, has been clientage relationships” (Legg 1973: 233). In this line of
arguing, Greece is presented as a typical case of “patronage democracy” in which no
party is exempt from practicing patronage politics. Chandra defines as patronage
democracies those in which “the state monopolizes access to jobs and services, and in which elected officials have discretion in the implementation of laws allocating the jobs and services at the disposal of the state” (Chandra 2003: 7). In such a situation, “ties to a political patron increase a voter’s chances of obtaining valued state resources and services” (ibid.).

Such an explanation suffers from four major problems. It is, first of all, deterministic and teleological in that it views patronage politics as an inherent systemic feature which almost no party can avoid. But, as already explained, at least in theory PASOK had more reasons to refrain from patronage rather than embrace it. Secondly, by viewing patronage as a primordial systemic feature, this explanation turns overtly cultural. It therefore neglects both the individual or collective actors (and their choices, strategies, and other responses) that are involved in patronage politics and the specific historical circumstances or particular existing structures that might facilitate or prevent the development of patronage. Thirdly, the foregoing explanation views patronage as a practice that is exogenous to political parties – patronage is something “out there” and always exercising a malicious influence on politics. Yet, in the same way that each political party “is the creature of politicians, the ambitious office seeker and officeholder” (Aldrich 1995: 4), every intra-party institution or practice must be seen as endogenous – an institution shaped by these political actors. Fourthly, to say that all parties in a certain political system apply patronage politics just because the system is patronage-tainted fails to explain the relative success or failure of each one of these parties when competing among themselves.

An alternative explanation could be obtained by understanding patronage as a phenomenon created endogenously, and approaching it in an analytical way. Patronage politics, like all political outcomes, “result from actors seeking to realize their goals, choosing within and possibly shaping a given set of institutional arrangements, and so choosing within a given historical context” (Aldrich 1995: 6). Beginning from the premise that PASOK could have refrained from embracing the politics of patronage but did not, we must look at the main actors inside the party and take account of their preferences, their chosen strategies, and the outcomes from such strategic choices. Hopefully, this will produce a deductive account of why PASOK preferred patronage,
as well as explain the mechanisms of such a process (Elster 1989). The advantages of this method are obvious. We not only will be able to understand the particular type of patronage that PASOK developed, but also explain why this party was so much successful in using patronage than its other party competitors.

In what follows, I introduce a simple intra-party mapping of the main actors, complete with their preferences, their chosen strategies for meeting their goals, and the other alternatives available to them. As expected, “[s]trategies are associated with costs and benefits, that is, they yield specific payoffs” (Kalyvas 1996: 26). Then, I check my original hypotheses against empirical evidence to either verify or reject them. Three actors are easily identified within PASOK: the party leader (served by a very close circle of associates), the patrons, and the partisans.

The primary goal of Andreas Papandreou in the mid- and late-1970s was to maximize PASOK’s vote so as his party to capture power as soon as possible. Heading the chief opposition party after the elections of 1977 was short from satisfying his political ambitions. To win state power, Papa ndreou faced a choice of whether to build an organization akin to a social democratic party or rely on traditional patronage practice. Each strategy involved both benefits and costs. The organization strategy was more appropriate for a programmatically socialist and mass party like PASOK and, besides, there was at the time an abundant supply of ideologue partisans ready to staff the party organs, contribute in organization-building, and participate in policy-formulation. On the negative side, the implementation of the organization strategy was time-demanding and, since it required considerable sharing of power, especially at top level, it also posed a threat to the leader’s supremacy in the party. The patronage strategy, on the other hand, although highly inconsistent with a party pledged to socialism and internal democratic procedures, seemed quite appropriate with regard to Papandreou’s goal in a political system replete with traditional patronage practices.

Political patrons are self-interested actors. In their pursuit of political careers, their goal is re-election by placing emphasis on selective rather than collective incentives. This is why, at least in theory, such office-seekers do not particularly thrive in ideological and programmatic parties, which are dominated by organization cadres and party activists. However, when and to the degree they exist in parties like PASOK,
they have a choice between two strategies: either try to maintain a certain independence from the party leadership or fully concede to it. The benefit from the first strategy, which is centered on the strength and personal loyalty of local patronage networks to their respective patrons, is that it offers patrons leverage against the party leader in crucial decisions concerning their political futures. This strategy, however, is not available when the party leader is strong enough and unwilling to compromise with the party patrons. In that case, unless they are prepared to fight, party patrons must opt for their second choice which is to fully acquiesce to the party leader in the hope of securing his favor.

Contrary to both the party leader and the patrons who have short-term (e.g., the quick capture of power) or even immediate goals (e.g., election at the forthcoming polls), the party partisans’ goals are long-term and ongoing. What they want above all is to develop internally-democratic collective party structures through which to influence the party policy output. To meet their goals, unlike the other party units, they have only one strategy available – the organizational one. Since the adoption of this strategy will be invariably opposed by the party patrons, its success depends entirely on the leader’s support. When the latter is not capable or willing to back it, the organizational strategy is doomed to fail. In this case, to use Albert Hirschman’s (1970) well-known formulation, party partisans are left with only two alternatives: exit and loyalty. In the present context, “exit” simply means abandoning the party; and “loyalty” means staying loyal to the party leader by following his preferred strategy, which is to say, switching from organization to patronage. As it will be shortly shown, this is precisely what happened in PASOK when Papandreou made clear his intention of preferring the patronage over the organization strategy.

Upon its foundation, there was broadly agreed that PASOK should follow an organizational strategy of development. This strategy was fully endorsed and promoted by the most dynamic components of the early PASOK as were the Democratic Defense faction, the sizeable party youth, and various extreme-left Trotskyite groups affiliated with the party. According to its founding declaration, “It is a fundamental principle of the [PASOK] movement to consolidate internal democratic procedures – from the base
to the top – with complete equality of all its members. Both the [party] program and the organization model will be co-determined by the way through the equal participation of all the members of the first congress which is soon to be convened’ (PASOK 1974a). The key element of that strategy was the creation of formal mass organizations which would serve to both promote internal party democracy and amplify the party’s appeal in Greek society. Predictably enough, it was the traditional patrons who had happened to make a way into the new party that were particularly hostile to the organizational strategy. To them, besides feeling uncomfortable with the collective organization effort, old patronage networks were too valuable to abandon. On the other side, in the earliest phase of PASOK development, ideologically-motivated party partisans held sway in the party, and treated the traditional patrons as political dinosaurs fast approaching extinction day.

The party partisans’ expectations were anything but unrealistic. Papandreou had several reasons to embrace the organizational strategy and shun party patronage. The intense politicization and party activism that developed in Greece in the aftermath of regime change had created the conditions for the development of modern, internally-organized parties. In that particular context, PASOK could have well turned into a social democratic direction. Besides the fact that, around the mid-seventies, in many European countries social democracy was still considered to present an attractive political alternative (Kitschelt 1994), many of the leading cadres in PASOK were animated by genuine social democratic ideals. Moreover, although a strong and solid working class had never been developed in Greece, there existed around the same time a numerous middle class that was receptive to social democracy. In contrast, party patronage seemed alien to the followers of a party that was ideologically and programmatically committed to socialism. It was therefore certain that patronage politics would create strong centrifugal forces within the party and throw away many of its supporters.

Such was the situation until the elections of November 1974 which became for Andreas Papandreou the dress rehearsal for future action. Following PASOK’s poor performance at the polls, the party leader decided to abandon the organization strategy over one based on patronage. As already said, the electoral showing of party partisans
in 1974 was dismal – all office-holders in PASOK were traditional political patrons. Of particular significance was the utter failure of Democratic Defense, the most social democratic component of the young party, to promote its own affiliates and see them elected to office. The electoral outcome and the developments that followed it made apparent to Papandreou the costs of the organizational strategy. Firstly, and most importantly in view of Papandreou’s yearning for state power, this strategy was excessively time-demanding. To create intermediary party organizations, bolster the party institutions, and formalize new rules and procedures was certain to be a protracted process. The insistence on organizational strategy implied that PASOK would give up vote maximization, engaging instead in ideological debates and intra-party disputes. It was, secondly, a costly strategy, certain to incur significant material costs which would have to be undertaken by the party as a whole. Ideally, if there is any possibility that such a high cost could be externalized (for instance, by being transferred to individual party actors), any party would be disinclined to pay it by itself. Thirdly, Robert Michels’ (1962) iron law of oligarchy notwithstanding, the organization strategy was a hazardous one. Organization-building not only produces divisions which may subvert a party’s unity; it also creates opportunities for ambitious politicians to gain autonomy vis-à-vis the party leadership by controlling crucial chunks of the organization.

Eventually, although it was the organizational strategy that seemed more compatible with the doctrine and rhetoric of PASOK, Papandreou opted for a strategy based on patronage. As expected, the adoption of this strategy was welcome by the paleokommatikoi patrons and opposed by the party partisans. Even so, its success depended upon two conditions, both related to the party leader: first, his ability to subdue the party organization and establish his hegemony over it and, second, the continuing loyalty of the party office-seekers to his person. Andreas Papandreou was successful in both tasks.

The earlier history of internal party development in PASOK is the history of the acrimonious fight between the party organization activists and ideologues, who aimed at building an internally-democratic socialist party, and the party leader, who appeared determined to establish his absolute hegemony within it. Papandreou opposed the establishment of internal party democracy because he considered it as a major obstacle
to capturing state power soon, but also because he perceived it as a threat to his own supremacy in the party. In his decision to dominate over the party organization he found willing allies among the traditional patrons. They not only were at loggerheads with the party partisans, and afraid of democratic procedures; they also sensed that charismatic Papandreou was PASOK’s foremost asset for expanding the party appeal in society.

The period beginning almost immediately after the 1974 elections and ending in mid-1976 was the most troubled in the entire history of PASOK. During that saga of strategic calculations, intra-party intrigues, and tactical maneuverings, the most activist and ideologically-committed of its early members were purged from the party. By pitting each group against the other, Papandreou succeeded to eliminate first the Democratic Defense cadres who were pushing the party towards a social democratic direction, then the best part of its vociferous party youth and, finally, several leftist elements within PASOK (a detailed review of these developments is in Spourdalakis 1988). As an author asserts, “what really was at stake during the crises [of 1974-6] was whether an organized socialist party would emerge in Greece, which could outlive Andreas Papandreou, or a party ready to capture power fast with the charismatic leader being its only advantage” (Eleftheriou 1983: 29). After the successive purges, and as Andreas Papandreou became the sole-decision-maker in the party, the organization was reduced to incessant party activism and leader-legitimizing purposes. Its main functions became “to recruit new members and integrate them into the party so as to neutralize discordant elements and maximize practical results, to execute orders from on high, and to legitimize the supreme leader’s decisions” (Elephantis 1981: 110).

By controlling the party organization, Papandreou also came to fully control the nomination of candidates for public office. To be sure, in terms of formal organization structure, this prerogative belonged to the collective party organs and, more particularly, to its Central Committee and the Executive Bureau. Yet, by purging all intra-party opposition, Papandreou had at the same time succeeded to cleanse the party organs from his rivals and replace them with individuals who were completely loyal to his person. That was particularly evident in the Central Committee, the highest party

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7 Characteristically, PASOK convened its first party Congress only as late as May 1984, that is to say almost ten years after its foundation and no less than three years after it came to power.
organ. It suffices to mention that forty of the seventy-five members of the party’s first Central Committee had been purged by 1977; their replacements were Papandreou’s personal choices (Spourdalakis 1998: 39). On paper, the Central Committee was responsible for electing the Executive Bureau, the party’s chief executive organ, which was composed of nine members including the party leader. Yet, in reality, the members of the first Executive Bureau were appointed in April 1975 by Papandreou himself. He also appointed “on the basis of the general needs of the movement” the members of other committees and bureaus responsible for a host of matters ranging from trade unions and party propaganda to tax reforms and the promotion of culture. As all party organs were tightly controlled by Papandreou, the entire process of candidate nomination also remained in his hands. After the elections of 1977, when the number of elected patrons increased, Papandreou placed several of them in the highest party organs at the expense of the party partisans. Thus integrating the parliamentary party in the party apparatus, Papandreou reinforced his control on both bodies even further.

The success of Papandreou’s tactics becomes evident when examining the political career paths of the early office-holders in the party. To begin with, the loyalty of those individuals we have termed ‘patrons’ to the party and Papandreou himself is quite remarkable. We had initially hypothesized that the more extensive their patronage networks the greater the degree of autonomy of individual party patrons from the central leadership. In reality, however, Papandreou has been questioned, let alone publicly disputed, by his party’s strongmen very seldom. As explained earlier, in view of the weakened party organization, party patrons were expected to gain significant autonomy from the party and independence from its leader. As it emerges from empirical research, the vast majority of patrons remained loyal to the party leader and abided by his wishes. More specifically, of the categories of ‘old-regime insiders’ and ‘political-family successors,’ none sought autonomy from the central party leadership, openly questioned Papandreou’s authority, or deflected from PASOK. Rather, it was among those groups that Papandreou drew his most dedicated accomplices who, in due course, would staff successive PASOK governments. Indeed, when PASOK came to power, “Papandreou distributed cabinet portfolios . . . [mostly] to paleokommatikoi and satisfied the leftists [i.e., the partisans] with minor posts” (Sotiropoulos 1996: 58). In
sharp contrast, there have been several defections from members of the group I have
termed ‘notabilities by name.’ It bears recalling that those individuals were recruited
into PASOK by Andreas Papandreou himself in order to enhance the party’s image in
society. While PASOK was in opposition, most remained semi-loyal to Papandreou and
his policies, awaiting political returns. And when Papandreou refused to deliver them
after PASOK came to power, many from this group were either expelled from the party
or voluntarily abandoned it. Interestingly enough, after leaving PASOK, those office-
holders dispersed to the wide spectrum of Greek politics, some deciding to join parties
on the conservative Right (such as D. Bouloukos and D. Hondrokoukis) and others on
the communist Left (such as S. Panagoulis and M. Drettakis).

Tentative conclusions and further research directions

In an often-cited article about the relationships between politicians and citizens in
democracy, Herbert Kitschelt (2000) identifies three possible ways of linkage:
programmatic (i.e., policy and ideological) appeals, party patronage, and charismatic
leadership. In the 1970s, PASOK developed and grew stronger in society by
interweaving a nebulous and programmatically unreliable ideological discourse
(promising an idiosyncratic socialism and general “change”), patronage politics, and
charismatic leadership. Of these three facets, patronage, partly because it remains
understudied, is the most surprising. For not only is patronage considered to be
antithetical to modern mass and ideological parties like the early PASOK; it is also
thought of as being inimical to charismatic leadership.

In practice, far from being “hostile to the exalted personalism of charismatic
authority” (Kitschelt 2000: 852), patronage may combine well with it. As the foregoing
analysis has made clear, and despite our initially proposed hypotheses, PASOK relied
on patronage politics as much as it did on charisma. According to all empirical
evidence, candidate selection was controlled by the party leader who, however, had a
clear preference for self-interested patrons rather than purely ideological partisans. Still,
because of charismatic predominance, the party patrons did not enjoy political
autonomy but remained dependent upon the party leader for support and further political advancement.

Effectively, then, patronage politics in PASOK developed as a two-tiered system in which the individual patrons also acted as the party leader’s own clients. At first tier, which includes the individual patrons and their anonymous mass of voters at regional level, patronage was used to exert loyalty and discipline from the voting public in a highly uncertain electoral marketplace (Scott 2006; for the classics see Wilson 1961 and Banfield 1965). At second tier, which includes the individual patrons and the charismatic party leader, patronage took the characteristics of traditional clientelism. Here, patronage involved personal, dyadic, and asymmetric relationships based on reciprocity but also exploitation and domination (Roniger 1994). By controlling the candidate selection process, the party leader also maintained control over the entire party patronage network. In this sense, patronage, rather that causing party decentralization and intra-party factionalism, appears to be an extremely centralized and electorally effective process.

Let me conclude with two remarks, each inviting further research. First, in the ever-expanding literature on party patronage, the main units of analysis are still the party on one hand and society on the other. In this view, party patronage is about the distribution of jobs, public contracts, favors, material rewards and other—usually state-related—resources. Patronage politics, however, may also develop inside political parties themselves. Considering that each party is “a miniature political system” (Eldersveld 1964: 1), patronage may well develop between the various party sub-units over the distribution of intra-party power. Second, such endogenously generated patronage is more likely to emerge in parties with strong leadership and, more particularly, in the so-called “charismatic” (Panebianco 1988: 143-162) or “non-charismatic personalist” (Ansell and Fish 1999) political parties. In such cases, the politics of patronage may be used by the party leader as a most profitable strategy for both vote-maximizing and intra-party control maintaining purposes.
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