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PATRONS AGAINST PARTISANS

The Politics of Patronage in Mass Ideological Parties

Takis S. Pappas

ABSTRACT

Patronage is an enduring feature of contemporary politics and may well develop in modern, mass organized and ideological political parties. This article approaches patronage in an analytical way, and seeks to explore its micro-foundations and logic of development. As the case of Greece’s socialist party suggests, patronage is the deliberate outcome of choices made by political actors at the sub-party level in their pursuit of power. Three particular actors are identified and their relations analysed: the party leader, the party organization and the party office-seekers, who are further distinguished into ‘patrons’ and ‘partisans’. Patronage is likely to develop when a party leader is able to exercise control of both the party organization and the appointments for public office; in this case, even ideologically motivated partisans are expected to turn into self-interested patrons. Finally, some interesting implications for further research are pointed out.

KEY WORDS ■ charismatic leadership ■ partisans ■ PASOK ■ patrons ■ political patronage

Introduction

Contrary to older perceptions presuming political patronage to be inimical to modern democracy and, for this reason, ultimately doomed to disappear (for a review, see Roniger, 2004), recent research has accepted that patronage is a ubiquitous and enduring feature of contemporary politics (Blondel, 2002; Dalton and Wattenberg, 2001; Katz and Mair, 1995; Kitschelt, 2000; Piattoni, 2001; van Biezen, 2000, 2004; van Biezen and Kopecký, 2007). Even so, most researchers still associate patronage politics with long-established parties that have built close relationships with their respective states and lack ideological definition. To such traditional parties, patronage is a convenient strategy
for winning elections through the selective distribution of public goods. In contrast, new ‘parties [that are] founded by outsiders – by leaders who do not occupy positions within the pre-existing regime – are compelled to rely upon ideological and solidary incentives’ in order to contest power (Shefter, 1994: 27; emphasis added). This view is well illustrated by the experience of the nineteenth-century European socialist parties, which relied for electoral success on ideological and programmatic appeals rather than patronage-based promises. Yet, in reality, not every new, mass-based and ideological party is patronage-free. When, and under what conditions, is patronage politics most likely to emerge in modern parties?

Most accounts on patronage politics typically stress factors that are exogenous to the cases examined. For instance, patronage is attributed to deficient socio-economic modernization; certain democratic institutions such as a powerful presidential executive or electoral laws promoting the individualization of candidate competition; a strong public sector economy, which creates a large area for patronage; the predominance of some political ideology emphasizing selective rather than collective incentives, and so on (for a review of such factors, see Kitschelt, 2000: 855–66). The present analysis differs from previous ones in that it offers an analytical explanation of the emergence of patronage politics based mostly on endogenous factors. Its central thesis is that party patronage may be the deliberate outcome of choices made by political actors at the sub-party level. Patronage, like any other political outcome, ‘result[s] from actors’ seeking to realize their goals, choosing within and possibly shaping a given set of [party] institutional arrangements, and so choosing within a given historical context’ (Aldrich, 1995: 6). More specifically, it will be argued that patronage may still be the optimal vote maximization strategy in young, mass and ideological parties. This article seeks to explore and analyse the peculiar logic, micro-foundations and internal party dynamics of patronage in such parties.

I illustrate the theoretical points made by using the case of the Greek Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) during its formative period of development. Founded by Andreas Papandreou shortly after the transition to democracy in Greece in July 1974, that party appeared as a new, socialist, political force placing a high premium on developing mass organizational structures (PASOK, 1974a). Despite an inauspicious beginning in the first democratic elections of the same year (at which the party received 13.6 percent of the national vote), PASOK afterwards performed phenomenally. It doubled its electoral strength (25.3 percent) in the 1977 elections and, in 1981, won state power with 48.2 percent of the vote. Most interpretations of the political rise of PASOK revolve around its novel ideological messages, its organizational effectiveness or its populist character (Elephantis, 1991; Lyrintzis, 1984a, 1984b; Sotiropoulos, 1996; Spourdalakis, 1988). Little or no attention has been paid to patronage politics in the earliest phase of the party’s development. This article will show that PASOK, exactly like its main party opponents during the early years of democratization, not only relied
heavily on old patronage networks, but also built new ones. Even more surprisingly, PASOK was far more successful in practising patronage politics than its rivals – a success that, to a large extent, explains both its rapid consolidation as a party and its phenomenal electoral performance. It is argued that party patronage in PASOK was a conscious strategy of the party leadership to increase the party base as quickly as possible in order to win state power. To succeed, this strategy required that the leader be able to both subordinate the party organization and secure the party patrons’ loyalty to his person.

In what follows, I first introduce a simple intra-party mapping of the main party actors, complete with their preferences, their chosen strategies and the other alternatives available to them. Self-interested office-seekers are distinguished from ideologically motivated ones, and the conditions under which each category is more likely to predominate are examined. The discussion then moves to PASOK and its early office-seekers, who are categorized into ‘patrons’ and ‘partisans’ – each category having its own characteristics. The third section of the article includes the bulk of empirical data and demonstrates that party patronage predominated in PASOK at the expense of party organization and efforts to develop ideology. Finally, to explain why things turned out that way, I introduce a simple theoretical model based on the strategic choices of the three intra-party actors: party leader, party organization and party office-seekers.

Party Sub-Units, Political Incentives and Power-Gaining Strategies

Political parties are rationally minded ‘team[s] of men seeking to control the government apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election’ (Downs, 1957: 25). Parties, to be sure, are not unitary actors; they consist of sub-units, which help articulate, or disarticulate, the entire party. When looking inside parties, three party sub-units, each with its own specific primary goals, become immediately visible: the party leader, the party organization and the office-seekers. Political parties, furthermore, offer their sub-units two kinds of incentives, collective and selective ones. **Collective incentives** derive from the nature of parties as non-market-based organizations whose major output consists of non-material and public goods, such as specific policies, organizational identification or group solidarity (Schlesinger, 1984). **Selective incentives**, on the other hand, mostly characterize market-based organizations seeking material and private benefits. Yet, because of the imbalanced market created by elections and the control of office, parties, similarly to business firms, also produce private goods or other material benefits (e.g. status, power, jobs, contracts). Eventually, ‘[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’ (Panebianco, 1988: 10; emphasis added). Which type of incentives prevails
within parties is, therefore, a matter of great significance that depends on the configuration of intra-party dynamics. This, in turn, depends on the strategies each party sub-unit will use for achieving its own primary goals.

Party leaders have two chief goals: the preservation of their position and vote maximization so as to win (or, for incumbent parties, remain in) power. To achieve these goals, party leaders have two options: they can either pursue an organizational and programmatic strategy or, alternatively, they can rely on traditional patronage politics. As the two strategies are inimical to each other, no party leader can pursue them consistently at the same time. Party leaders make their choices by calculating the specific payoffs each strategy is expected to yield. The organizational strategy is particularly associated with mass and ideological parties. The patronage strategy, on the other hand, is mostly associated with traditional parties in which local patrons enjoy considerable autonomy from the party centre. We should not, however, underestimate the fact that the organizational strategy is an extremely costly and time-consuming one, which, moreover, requires considerable power-sharing between the leader and the collective party organs; it may thus create intra-party conflicts and, eventually, impair the party’s efforts to gain state power.

Party organizations are the least unruly of the party sub-units. They consist mostly of believer activists who are ‘devoted to the official [party] goals’ (Panebianco, 1988: 26), support its proposed policies and uphold its ideology. Since they are motivated primarily by collective incentives, organization cadres and party activists are expected to support the bureaucratization of the party and the institution of parallel hierarchies, collective decision-making and the maintenance of ideological purity; where they are strong in number and have a voice, as in the mass ideological parties, they are expected to oppose leaders trying to apply a patronage strategy.

Party office-seekers – a term meant to include both those who hold and those who seek elective office (Aldrich, 1995; Schlesinger, 1966, 1975) – are political entrepreneurs who, above all, seek (re-)election. To succeed, they must convince greater numbers of the voting public to support them than their opponents. In this effort, office-seekers have a choice between two strategies: to emphasize the public-goods side of party outputs and hope that their intra-party opponents do the same (the partisanship strategy), or to focus on the private-goods side of their parties and pursue individual patronage strategies. Accordingly (reminiscent of Hume’s distinction between fractions from principle and fractions from interest), office-seekers may be distinguished into two categories – those motivated by ideology (hereafter referred to as partisans) and those motivated by self-interest (henceforward referred to as patrons). Of course, to say that partisans dwell in so-called ‘programmatic’ or ‘ideological’ parties, while patrons are more common in ‘electoral’ parties may prove entirely misleading. In reality, both types of office-seekers coexist in both party types, but in varying mixes (Geddes, 1994). 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 consider the
different logics applied by each type of office-seeker, their available strat-
egies and the conditions most favourable for goal attainment.

The logic followed by party patrons is quite straightforward: they ‘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). For this category
of office-seeker, the best strategy for collecting votes is party patronage, that
is, the creation of extensive patron–client networks through which votes are
exchanged for personal favours (Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1984; Schmidt et
al., 1977; Scott, 2006). A second benefit follows the first. Depending on the
size and strength of their own electoral machines, individual patrons may
become able to claim significant autonomy vis-à-vis their parties and, some-
times, even defy the party leadership (e.g. Zariski, 1965). Although such
self-interested patrons are more common in traditional political formations,
they may also thrive in modern mass parties with weak leadership and loose
organizational structures.

Partisans, on the other hand, tend to emphasize ideological matters, up-
hold party policies and rely for support on the formal party organization
(from which they often draw their political origins). In theory, partisans are
more likely to prevail over patrons under three conditions: (i) in parties
appealing to specific social and economic constituencies, in which ideolog-
ically reliable candidates able to promote the party policies are preferable
to pragmatic notables who may be in command of large patronage networks
but lack political sophistication and party loyalty; (ii) in multiparty systems,
where each party seeks to maintain its ideological distinctiveness (Downs,
1957: 126–7); (iii) in political systems in flux, plagued by uncertainty
(O’Donnell and Schmitter, 1986: 3–5), where the cost of information is
high, so that even rational voters may use ideologies as ‘short cuts’ (Downs,
1957: 97; Sartori, 1976: 325) instead of incurring the high cost of becoming
informed about specific policies.

When partisans prevail over patrons, the party leader is expected to pursue
an organizational rather than a patronage strategy. The latter, besides being
expensive (in terms of both money and time required to build, monitor and
maintain a constituency), may also become hazardous for the entire party.
‘In fact’, as 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.

On this account, the party leader, in alliance with the party organization, is
expected to support partisan office-seekers, while at the same time impose
‘binding commitments’ of collective behaviour upon self-interested patrons.

Paradoxically, however, in political systems with a tradition of patronage,
strong party leaders may decide to shun the organizational strategy in favour
of one based on patronage. To examine how this possibility may work in practice, let us first consider PASOK’s formative phase of development.

Patronage Politics in Early PASOK

PASOK, founded in 1974, pledged to provide Greek society with a major collective good – socialism. As a new and ideological party competing in a multiparty political system, PASOK appealed to voters dissatisfied with traditional politics and keen to dissociate from such long-standing but morally objectionable practices as party patronage. At the same time, PASOK made an effort to build a solid mass organization structure. In a very short time, and to a spectacular extent, party activists and believers formed local organization cells even in the country’s most remote areas (Spourdalakis, 1988). It was not without reason, then, that the party’s first Central Committee – itself a formidable assembly of ideologically committed and organization-minded party activists – had 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).

According to the preceding analysis, and given the ideological character of the new party, as well as the fact that it developed in a fluid multiparty system (Pappas, 2003), one should have expected the following: first, the central party organs would play a dominant role within the party and be responsible for recruiting and selecting candidates for public office; second, during candidate selection, preference would be given to ideologically motivated partisans rather than to self-interested patrons; and, third, wherever they persisted, patrons would be able to maintain considerable political autonomy from both the central party organs and the party leadership. Of these expectations, none was realized. The central party organs soon became subservient to the party leader, who was able to fully control the appointment of candidates for public office; the party leader relied overwhelmingly on patrons rather than on partisans both for their electoral effectiveness and their loyalty to his person; and no patron was ever able to establish any degree of political autonomy, let alone go against the leader’s decisions. Why?

To provide an appropriate answer, I focus on PASOK’s formative years – a period including the critical elections of 1974 and 1977 – and explore the universe of that party’s office-seekers who won parliamentary seats in those two contests. In 1974, PASOK gained 12 seats, which, after subsequent by-elections, increased to 15. Three years later, in 1977, the number of parliamentary seats won by PASOK skyrocketed to 93. The present analysis is based on data about the 108 deputies elected with PASOK in those two elections (15 + 93 = 108). The data have been collected through more than 100 personal interviews (with former office-holders, central and regional organization cadres, intermediary and top party leaders) conducted in person or by telephone over a period of several months throughout 2005 and 2006.
The interviews produced valuable information about the political histories of individual office-holders, as well as those of their intra-party rivals, the development of local organizations, campaigning methods, elite recruitment at local and regional levels, ties to the central party leadership, and much more.

Matching theoretical insights with empirical findings, PASOK’s office-seekers can be effectively divided into partisans and patrons. Partisan office-seekers were usually young cadres, not tainted by past political squabbles or burdened by traditional political ideas; they were ideologically reliable and fully committed to their party’s socialist ideology. Sociologically speaking, they represented diverse social classes and belonged to various, especially lower-paid, professions. Patrons, on the other hand, may be further distinguished into three more specific categories: old regime insiders (better known in Greek political parlance as paleokommatikoi), political family successors and socially prominent individuals. The political beginnings for the old-regime insiders were with the pre-dictatorship Center Union (EK) – a traditional liberal party headed by George Papandreou, Andreas’s father, which was hostile to both right-wing extremism and socialism; most were in control of significant patronage networks and unwilling to give them up. Political family successors were family descendants of old Center Union office-holders from whom they had inherited electorally significant clienteles. Although younger than their political antecedents, and even ideologically sensitive to socialism, such beneficiaries of established patronage networks found it easier to rely on them than get involved in the murky workings of party organization. Prominent individuals, finally, were people who sought elective office on the basis of their social prominence and name recognition. Even when they joined PASOK for ideological reasons, they depended for electoral success on their names instead of their loyalty to the party. The foregoing breakdown leads to some remarkable findings.

As the first democratic elections in Greece took place in November 1974, when PASOK was only two months old, there was no time for this (or 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. The incipient local party organizations played no significant role in recruiting and selecting candidates. The interviews reveal (see also Elephantis, 1981: 124) that this was undertaken by Andreas Papandreou himself, with the help of a very small circle of political entrepreneurs devoted to the leader, most notably A. Livanis, a centrist. Instead of selecting young partisan ideologues, Papandreou clearly preferred old centrists with past political experience and name recognition in their respective constituencies. Party partisans were included in the party lists only when patrons were unavailable; in the elections they performed dismally.

In 1974, no party partisan was elected with PASOK. Every single deputy of the new party drew his or her political origins from the pre-dictatorship.
moderate liberal Center Union. To a journalist’s accurate description, ‘they were all centrists in a party professing to be Marxist’ (Lakopoulos, 1999: 66). In sharp contrast with the heterogeneity of PASOK’s electoral base, that party’s office-holders formed a remarkably politically cohesive and socially homogeneous group (Mavrogordatos, 1983b: 50). A closer look at this group is revealing.

Nine of the 15 PASOK parliamentarians in 1974 had sought election under the banner of the pre-dictatorship EK. Seven of those, including Andreas Papandreou himself, had been elected to parliament in 1964. The remaining two, S. Rallis and Y. Floros, had been selected as EK candidates for the elections planned for 1967 (but prevented by the military coup). In the mid-1960s, all nine had belonged to a small centre–left party faction within the Center Union constructed around Andreas Papandreou. After the dictatorship, these early disciples eagerly followed Andreas and, in the years to come, many became members of the innermost party circle surrounding the leader and were given responsibility for key decisions. 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 close personal and family friends of Andreas Papandreou. The remaining four of the 1974 deputies had also been members of the pre-dictatorship EK, but had not run as party candidates in elections. Even so, all four enjoyed a strong personal relationship with Andreas.

In the 1977 elections, PASOK performed phenomenally; by increasing the number of its seats in parliament from 15 to 93, it emerged as the main opposition party. Who were those men and women? At first glance, the PASOK parliamentary party looks politically youthful. Most of its members (74 out of the total 93, or 79.7 percent) were newcomers to the 1977 parliament (Pappas, 1999: 97). This has led to the conclusion 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). This, however, is not the only angle from which to view the matter.

Unexpectedly for a new, mass-based and socialist party, almost half of its parliamentarians in 1977 were patrons (Table 1). Of them, no fewer than 29, roughly one-third, were old regime insiders, or paleokommatikoi, who had sought elective office with the pre-dictatorship EK and, in most cases, been elected. They (such as I. Papaspyrou in Piraeus, S. Tsaparas in Thessaloniki and D. Dimosthenopoulos in Kavala) had built extensive patronage networks in their electoral districts and abhorred socialism, especially its Marxist variant publicly advocated by party partisans during the earlier phase of PASOK’s development. Without exception, all had been personal friends of the Papandreou family, and especially Andreas. In selecting candidates, Andreas had clearly preferred this group of office-seekers over party partisans. In several cases, he personally tried to attract centrist patrons into PASOK and, whenever he succeeded, it yielded significant electoral results.6
In addition to the clear case of the old regime insiders, PASOK members of parliament included a small group of political family successors and a large group of prominent individuals. The political family successors consisted of nominal newcomers into politics who, however, had won their seats largely because of their families’ political heritage and long-accumulated political capital. They were young, and some who had participated in the anti-dictatorship struggle had been exposed to socialist ideas. Their most defining characteristic was that they had inherited large political clienteles they now had to maintain. The group of prominent individuals contains candidates with significant name recognition because of past political history or professional and social prominence. Some were nationally known (such as M. Merkouri, a celebrated actress, or A. Fleming, a symbol of resistance to the dictatorship), others were more prominent at the local level (such as D. Botsaris, formerly a vocal mayor of Spata, or N. Athanassopoulos, a jurist in the renowned Lambrakis case). Such individuals were highly sought after for the PASOK lists, but they were not ideologically reliable (Isiyama, 2000: 877). Eventually, several of them would choose selective rather than collective incentives (of which more below).

Turning now to PASOK’s partisan members in the 1977 parliament, their group included individuals who had not been actively involved in electoral politics before the dictatorship and had no personal or family political networks; they had mostly entered PASOK from the grassroots, and had become actively involved in the early party organization life. But there is a catch. Only a few of these parliamentarians sought office for the first time in 1977; most had also run in 1974. After failing to win office at the first election, many of the unsuccessful candidates had painstakingly worked to build their own patronage networks so as to perform better next time. Take, for example, A. Georgiades, a young economist from Rhodes, who came in last on the party list for the Dodecanese in 1974. Subsequently, aided by his father, a secondary school inspector in the Dodecanese, Georgiades built an impressive personal clientele that, in 1977, enabled him to top the list. In a similar fashion, M. Gikonoglou in Imathia and V. Kedikoglou in Evia, neither distinguishing themselves for socialist beliefs or willingness to cooperate with their electoral districts’ party organizations, were both able to build...
extensive patronage networks and win parliamentary seats at the expense of party partisans who were sponsored by the party organization. K. Aslanis in Heraklion, Crete, and I. Pottakis in Corinth did much the same. To the open dismay of their local and regional PASOK party organizations, both invested heavily in building extensive patronage networks of the most traditional type.

There were many ways in which patronage networks were created. Many office-seekers took advantage of regional heritage. For instance, L. Veryvakis, a Cretan by origin who was a candidate in Athens, owed his election to both his record of resistance to the dictatorship and 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 who campaigned on the promise of state subsidies to the region’s stock-farmers. Still others exploited their close associations with various interest groups like trade unions or farmers’ cooperatives. Such a characteristic example was V. Papadopoulos, a deeply devout candidate from Ilis in the Peloponnese, who won first place in his prefecture thanks to the mass support he received from religious and church-going (and socialism-averse) voters.

All things considered, then, only a very small group of PASOK’s 1977 parliamentarians were elected without relying on patronage politics. Most were young, believed in socialism and possessed precious organizational experience. Like everyone else in the party, however, they also believed in Andreas Papandreou and his undisputed supremacy within PASOK.

The Politics of Patronage Unravelled

Contrary to our initial theoretical expectations, empirical analysis shows that, shortly after its foundation, PASOK turned into a party deeply permeated by the politics of patronage. Why did patronage become so pervasive in such a young party, complete with formal organization structures and socialist ideology, as PASOK?

There are two possible explanations. One is to simply assert that PASOK could not avoid a practice that is endemic in Greek (or, for that matter, southern European) politics. Political parties in Greece have commonly been considered as 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 Legg would argue, ‘the most significant aspect of Greek society, at least in connection with the political system, has been clientelistic relationships’ (Legg, 1973: 233). In this line of thought, Greece presents a typical case of ‘patronage democracy’ in which no party is exempt from practising patronage politics. Chandra (2003: 7) defines patronage democracies as 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’. In such conditions, voters obtain valued state resources, goods and services in proportion to their ties to some political patron.

Notwithstanding some initial mileage it affords in explaining the persistence of patronage in Greece, the foregoing explanation eventually suffers from four major problems. First, it is deterministic and teleological in that it views patronage politics as an inherent systemic feature that almost no party can avoid. But, as already explained, PASOK was in a good position to refrain from patronage rather than embrace it. Second, by viewing patronage as a primordial systemic feature, this explanation turns overtly cultural. It neglects the individual or collective actors (and their choices, strategies and other responses) involved in patronage politics, as well as the specific historical circumstances that might either facilitate or prevent the development of patronage. Third, this 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, if each political party ‘is the creature of politicians, the ambitious office seeker and office-holder’ (Aldrich, 1995: 4), intra-party institutions or practices must be seen as intrinsic, shaped by those political actors. Fourth, 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. Beginning from the premise that PASOK could have but did not refrain from the politics of patronage, we must look at the main actors inside the party and take account of their preferences, their chosen strategies and the outcomes of their strategic choices. Hopefully, this will produce a complete 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. It will not only enable us to understand the particular type of patronage that PASOK developed, but also explain why this party was so more successful in using patronage than its other party competitors.

When PASOK was founded, it was widely accepted that the new party should abstain from traditional patronage practices and follow instead a strategy based on mass and democratic organization-building. This idea was fully endorsed and promoted by the most dynamic components of the party, such as the Democratic Defence (DA) faction, the sizable party youth and various affiliate groups from the Left. According to PASOK’s founding declaration:

[It was] a fundamental principle of the 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 gradually through the equal participation of all the members of the first congress, which will soon be convened. (PASOK, 1974a)
The key element of that strategy was the creation of an active mass organization structure that would serve to both promote internal party democracy and amplify the party’s appeal in Greek society.

In the earliest phase of party development, the ideologically motivated partisans held sway over patrons. In fact, amidst the intense politicization and party activism that developed in Greece after the fall of the junta, the moment seemed opportune for PASOK to turn in a social democratic direction. In many European countries, social democracy was still considered an attractive political alternative (Kitschelt, 1994) and many of the leading members of PASOK were animated by genuine social democratic ideals. True, a strong and solid working class had never been developed in the country, but a good part of the Greek middle class was at that time quite receptive to social democracy. And yet, Papandreou decided to reject social democracy and pursue a patronage strategy.

In the mid-1970s, the primary goal of Andreas Papandreou was to maximize his party’s vote so as to win state power as soon as possible. To this end, Papandreou faced a choice of whether to build an organization akin to a social democratic party or rely on time-honoured party patronage. The organizational strategy was more appropriate for a programmatically socialist and mass party like PASOK; besides, there was at the time an abundant supply of ideological partisans ready to staff the party organs, contribute in organization-building or participate in policy formulation. On the negative side, however, the implementation of the organizational strategy was excessively time-demanding; to create intermediary party organizations, bolster the party institutions and formalize new rules and procedures meant a protracted effort full of ideological debates, intra-party disputes and factional divisions. In addition, it was feared that ambitious politicians in control of crucial sections of the organization would attempt to gain autonomy vis-à-vis the party leader. Last, but not least, the organizational strategy was expensive, imposing a financial burden upon the party as a whole. Why then not externalize those expenses by transferring them to the party patrons?

Party patrons are self-interested actors. In their pursuit of political careers, they seek (re-)election by placing emphasis on selective rather than collective incentives. They have a choice between two strategies: either try to maintain a certain independence from the party leader or fully concede to him. The advantage of the first strategy is that it offers patrons leverage against the party leader in crucial decisions concerning their future. This strategy, however, is not available when the party leader is strong enough and in full control of the party. In that case, unless they are prepared to fight (and most likely lose), party patrons opt for their second choice, which is to give the leader their consent in the hope of securing his favour.

Party partisans, on the other hand, like the party organization cadres and activists, have a preference for the development of internally democratic collective party structures through which to influence the party policy output. They have only one strategy available – the organizational one.
Since the adoption of this strategy invariably will be opposed by the patrons, its success depends entirely on the party leader’s support. When the leader is neither able nor eager to back the organizational strategy, party partisans are faced with three choices (Hirschman, 1970): they can join forces with the party organization in its inevitable conflict with the leader; abandon the party altogether; or abide by the party leader, thus being transformed from partisans into patrons.

Papandreou’s decision in the aftermath of the 1974 elections to pursue a patronage strategy was well received by the paleokommatikoi and other party patrons but resisted by PASOK’s organization and the majority of the early party partisans. Ultimately, the success of that strategy (depicted in model form in Figure 1) depended upon two conditions, both related to the party leader – his ability to subdue the party organization and keep the party office-seekers loyal to him personally. Andreas Papandreou was successful on both counts.

The early history of internal party development in PASOK is the history of the acrimonious internal fight between party organization activists and ideologues, who sought to build an internally democratic socialist party, and the party leader, who was determined to establish his absolute hegemony over PASOK. In his effort to control the party organization, Papandreou found willing allies among the party patrons who, besides their natural dislike of democratic procedures, also sensed that the charismatic Papandreou was PASOK’s foremost asset for expanding its appeal in society and winning power.

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**Figure 1.** Patronage politics in parties with strong leadership: alternative responses and outcomes
The period beginning almost immediately after the 1974 elections and ending in mid-1976 was the most troubled in PASOK’s history. During a saga of strategic calculations, intra-party intrigues and tactical manoeuvrings, the most activist and ideologically committed of its early cadres were either purged from the party or otherwise forced to leave it. By pitting each intra-party faction against the other, Papandreou succeeded in eliminating, first, the DA faction, who were pushing the party in a social democratic direction; then the best part of the ideological party youth; and, finally, several leftist groups (Spourdalakis, 1988). As one author asserts:

[W]hat really was at stake during the crisis [of 1974–6] was whether there would emerge in Greece an organized socialist party that could outlive Andreas Papandreou or a party ready to capture power fast with the charismatic leader being its only advantage. (Eleftheriou, 1983: 29)

After 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. After that, 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 control the nomination of candidates for public office. In terms of formal organizational structure, this prerogative belonged to the collective party organs and, in particular, to its Central Committee and the Executive Bureau. By purging all intra-party opposition, however, Papandreou cleansed the party organs of his rivals and replaced them with people who were completely loyal to his person. This was particularly evident in the Central Committee, the highest party organ. Theoretically, 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, but, in reality, the members of the first Executive Bureau were appointed in April 1975 by Papandreou himself. He also appointed ‘on the grounds of the movement’s general needs’ the members of other committees and offices responsible for a host of matters ranging from trade unions and party propaganda to tax reforms and promoting culture. The entire process of selecting candidates was tightly controlled by Papandreou. After the 1977 elections, when the number of elected patrons increased, Papandreou placed several of them in the highest party organs at the expense of party partisans. By that time, PASOK resembled the type of party which Panebianco (1988: 145) terms ‘charismatic’ and in which ‘[t]he founding leader . . . monopolizes control over the zones of organizational uncertainty and the distribution of incentives’.

The success of Papandreou’s tactics becomes even clearer when examining the political career paths of the early party office-seekers. Perhaps the most important development was that the majority of the 1974 partisans decided to turn into patrons and contest the 1977 elections by traditional patronage
methods. Even so, they remained dependent on the party leader. Contrary to our initial expectation that the more extensive the patronage the more autonomous individual patrons would be from the central party leadership, this was not the case in PASOK. Not one of the old regime insiders or political family successors sought autonomy from the central party leadership, openly questioned Papandreou’s authority or defected from PASOK. In reality, the party patrons constituted the pool from which Papandreou drew his most dedicated accomplices and, later, staffed successive PASOK governments. 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). The only individuals who defected from PASOK belonged in the group I have termed ‘prominent individuals’. It bears recalling that those people 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 loyal to Papandreou and his policies in the expectation of future political returns. But once PASOK was in power, and Papandreou failed to meet their expectations, several of this group became exceedingly critical, leading either to their expulsion or their voluntarily abandoning the party. Interestingly enough, after leaving PASOK, those individuals dispersed throughout Greek politics, some (such as D. Bouloukos and D. Hondrokoukis) joining parties on the conservative Right and others (such as S. Panagoulis and M. Drettakis) joining parties on the communist Left.

Conclusions

At a very concrete level of analysis, the study of PASOK demonstrates that, in mass organized and ideological parties, patronage is likely to develop when a strong leader chooses it as the best strategy for maximizing his party’s votes. Interestingly, far from being ‘hostile to the exalted personalism of charismatic authority’ (Kitschelt, 2000: 852), patronage may combine well with it. Indeed, PASOK relied for electoral success on patronage politics as much as it did on the personality of its leader. Andreas Papandreou, being in full control of the candidate selection process, showed a well-calculated preference for self-interested patrons over ideologically motivated partisans. Patronage politics in PASOK thus developed as a two-level system in which the individual patrons also acted as the party leader’s own clients. On the first level, involving the individual patrons and their anonymous mass of voters at the regional scale, patronage was used to exert loyalty from and impose discipline upon the voting public in a highly uncertain electoral marketplace (Scott, 2006; for the classics, see Wilson, 1961 and Banfield, 1965). On the second level, involving the individual patrons and the charismatic party leader, patronage assumed 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 controlled the entire party patronage network. In this sense, patronage, rather than causing party decentralization and intra-party factionalism, appears to have been an extremely centralized and electorally effective process.

More generally, the preceding analysis contains valuable lessons for the ever-expanding literature on patronage politics. It first of all points to the compatibility of patronage with modern, mass-based and ideological parties; in such parties, patronage politics may not be antagonistic, but develop in parallel with programmatic appeals. Secondly, this analysis suggests instrumentalizing patronage and approaching it as an intended outcome of intrinsic party processes. Given that each party is ‘a miniature political system’ (Eldersveld, 1964: 1), patronage develops between the various party sub-units over the distribution of intra-party power. In this sense, patronage is not only more modern but also more widespread than is commonly assumed. Finally, this article proposes an explanation of the development and further dynamics of patronage by looking precisely at the intra-party power configurations of the unit under consideration. This last point should not be missed by researchers involved in the comparative study of patronage in contemporary politics.

Notes

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1 Which is to say that, in elections, parties receive private goods, such as votes, in exchange for collective ones, such as public policies.

2 An alternative situation in which partisanship may prevail is when office-seekers agree in advance to abstain from personal strategies and instead pursue collective goals – something that requires repeated interaction plays among the candidates, as those studied by Hardin (1982) and Axelrod (1984).

3 Strong leaders are taken to be those who (a) establish a party and set up the rules of intra-party life; (b) control the appointments for public office; (c) exercise intra-party power individually, not collectively; and (d) are widely considered by the party grassroots and party voters to be indispensable. In the case of weak leaders, there are two scenarios, both depending on the relative strength of the party organization. When the latter is strong, it will either impose controls over the leader or attempt to overthrow him; when the organization is also weak, the leader will be forced into an alliance with the parliamentary party, which leaves the door wide open to patronage politics.

4 Jean Meynaud (2002: 320) has aptly described EK as ‘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’.
5 Those were Sylva Akrita, the wife of Loukis, a former EK deputy and close friend of the Papandreou family, and Nikolaos Vgenopoulos, a nephew of Anastassios Vgenopoulos, who, similarly, was both a former EK deputy and a friend of George Papandreou.

6 Among several such cases, perhaps most telling is that of D. Archos, an old-aged EK notable from Argolid, who switched over to PASOK shortly before the 1977 contest and won first place. Other similar cases were those of the two Fthiotis deputies, E. Staikos and Ch. Karageorgiou, of A. Peponis in Athens and E. Kattrivanos in Piraeus. In Evia, O. Papasratis, a former EK deputy, declined Papandreou’s personal offer to be included in the PASOK ballot in 1977 (but accepted a similar offer in the following elections of 1981).

7 Here belong the cases of G. Petsos, A. Skoulas and S. Valyrakis, all political descendants of old and powerful political families.

8 Forty of the 75 members of the party’s first Central Committee had been purged by 1977. All their replacements were personally chosen by Papandreou (Spourdalakis, 1998: 39).

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ERRATUM


In this article, Figure 1 has an inaccuracy. The correct version is shown below.

In addition, on page 334 of this article, there is an error in the title of the book The Charismatic Park: PASOK, Papandreou, Power. This should read: The Charismatic Party: PASOK, Papandreou, Power.

Figure 1. Patronage politics in parties with strong leadership: alternative responses and outcomes