

# **Electoral Defeat as stimulus for party change: The consolidation of PASOK's internal change process from the extraordinary to the 7<sup>th</sup> congress**

Lamprini RORI,

labroularori@yahoo.com

Phd Candidate in Political Science,

University Paris I, Sorbonne

## **Abstract**

The end of the 2000-2004 Greek socialist government and the party's electoral defeat in March 2004 elections introduces a new long lasting period of change in PASOK's life. The February 2004 extraordinary congress symbolizes the beginning of a new political culture, marked by the principle of associative democracy that will only be consolidated formally one year later by the party's 7<sup>th</sup> congress. The aim of this paper is to examine the degree of the party change process, beginning in the electoral campaign period, the impact of the campaign and of the electoral defeat, the role of the new leader in the operation and the dynamics produced by the public opinion.

Based on party change theoretical frames provided by Panebianco, Wilson, Harmel and Janda, we proceed in this presentation with the hypothesis that the electoral campaign being used as a stimulus for party change, it has provoked serious engagements to the new leadership, accentuated by the electoral defeat. The performance of the new leader is highly related with the persistence to the process of change.

We will examine the party's change during the campaign, against a backdrop of the following issues: the party's new vocabulary, the political alliances, the internal organization, the policy making, the means of communication, the role of other parties' strategies. As for the evolution of the process of change we will combine the leader's propositions by his arrival with the changes voted during the 7<sup>th</sup> congress. As the party during this period is in opposition we will mainly examine changes in the internal organization field, opting to configure the degree and the nature of the party's evolution.

## **The research object**

The subject proposed seeks to explore the procedure of internal change of a political party based on the means and the techniques that can offer an electoral campaign, as well as the dynamics of change provided by an electoral defeat. Research of political science on party change object figures quite recently, the first bibliography appearing in the late 1980's. It examines a series of factors and independent variables the one to the other in order to show how changes take place inside a political party. According to Harmel and Janda(1994)., "party change is any variation, alteration or modification in how parties are organized, what human and material resources they can draw upon, what they stand for and what they do".

## **The theoretical field**

Research on the object of party change is converging on the fact that there can be no single reason explaining a party's transformation; however, no unanimity is observed concerning the specific impact of each factor inducing the process of party change. Among scientists exploring party change trends, we can distinguish two different theoretical groups.

The first tendency perceives mutation in a party's organization as the result of external factors. Such causes can have socioeconomic origins, as Lipset and Rokkan (1967) outline or derive from across-party competition. This point of view implies that a party watching its force diminishing would proceed to all necessary changes that could modify its image and improve its position. This hypothesis finds its origins in Down's (1957) model, who considers parties to act as vote maximizers. Change can also result from mutations in the political culture, in constitutional and institutional factors (Wilson 1994). Finally, party change could turn out after transformations in the party system (Sartori 1976).

The second approach in party change research explores the impact of internal factors in the function of political parties. It observes how parameters such as party's organization, physiognomy, leadership's role, relationship between leaders and members of the party, as well as its general style function in the procedure under question. One of the basic hypotheses forwarded is that leaders make a continuous effort in relating their performance with the party's electoral success, taking into consideration the internal coherence, according to the willing of cadres, militants and members (Rose and Mackie 1988). Actually leaders face on permanent basis obstacles

inside the party, which they have to get beyond in order to realize the changes they support (Harmel and Janda 1994). Changes in the leadership or changes in the dominant coalition are likely to produce party change (Harmel and Janda 1994). Hirschman (1970) presents another hypothesis concerning internal changes. According to his model, users generally seem to choose the less costly solution between exit, voice or loyalty, if their attachment to the organization providing the service is not quite strong. “In communist parties, for instance, the exit solution presents advantages for the party’s direction, supposing that those who stay express satisfaction or loyalty...Communist parties that have experienced most of the loss in terms of membership are those who have proceeded to the minimum changes” (Marantzidis 2003).

However, a third approach analyzing simultaneously internal and external factors in the study of party change process is offered by Harmel & Janda’s (1994) research, considering the parties’ objectives as the decisive parameter to explain their mutations. In agreement with Panebianco (1988), they accept the premise that parties are basically conservative organizations, which will not change simply for the sake of change. Following Panebianco’s (1988) work, three main questions are shaping the basic theoretical issues on the research field of party change theory. On the first place, whether the procedure of party change is ‘evolutionary’ or ‘developmental’; on the second one, whether it is intentional or non intentional; and thirdly, if the origins of the transformation are exogenous or endogenous. As far as the two first issues are concerned, the thesis of Panebianco (1988) seems to converge with Harmel & Janda’s (1994) approach: they both defend the ‘developmental view’, claiming that there is no obligatory path to organizational change, but itself is reflecting “the effect of changes in alliances among organizational actors, not as stemming from an organization’s necessary development” (Panebianco 1988). As for the second issue, they agree that there is no single reason- intentional or non-intentional- explaining the organizational change, itself being “the fruit of both choices and, because of the actor’s bounded rationality and the multiplicity of organizational pressures, unforeseeable effects” (Panebianco 1988). Little agreement however seems to exist on whether organizational change is primarily the result of environmental change, internal change or a combination of both forces. While Panebianco (1988) asserts that “in most cases, it results from the effect of an external stimulus (environmental and/or technological) which joins forces with internal factors which were themselves undermining the

power structure”, his two fellows argue that some party change can be explained only by internal factors (Harmel and Janda 1994). Their model develops explicitly and fully the concept and the role of the ‘external stimulus’, founded in three preliminary suppositions:

1. Each party has a primary goal, and the primary goal varies among parties- and perhaps within parties among time. Such goals can be vote maximizing, office maximizing, representation/participation of members and policy/ideology advocacy.
2. The most dramatic and broadest changes will occur only when the party has experienced an external ‘shock’.
3. External shocks are external stimuli that impact on the party’s primary goal. Such a shock could be the electoral defeat of a party that is a vote maximizing organization.

Finally, in order to understand when, why and how changes in the party are produced, we will follow Wilson’s (1980) model. The model shows clearly that there is no single reason bringing the party’s transformation; on the contrary, change is on the grounds of multiple incentives: the socioeconomic environment, the political culture, the political institutions and the competitive situation across parties. The longer the distance each factor has from leaders and reformers the less impact it can have on the party’s transformation. However, all factors could produce indirectly an important effect on party change, through the alterations of the competitive situation between the parties, this last parameter producing the stronger impact on parties, motivating or obliging the transformation, introducing new rivals, disappearing old ones, inventing new tactics and approaches between parties etc.

The model also indicates that parties are not passive receivers of the impact produced by these factors; on the contrary, what seems to be fundamental in political parties’ transformation is the role of leaders and reformers, from who depends the decision of forwarding a change, as well as the choice of a change in stead of another. According to Wilson (1994), leadership plays the key role of responding to the external changes mentioned previously; they are the ones to decide whether a change is possible or desired. Thus, Wilson perceives change as an internal affair in a party’s life; the initiative, the method, the degree and the orientation of the change depending from the leaders’ skills and behavior.

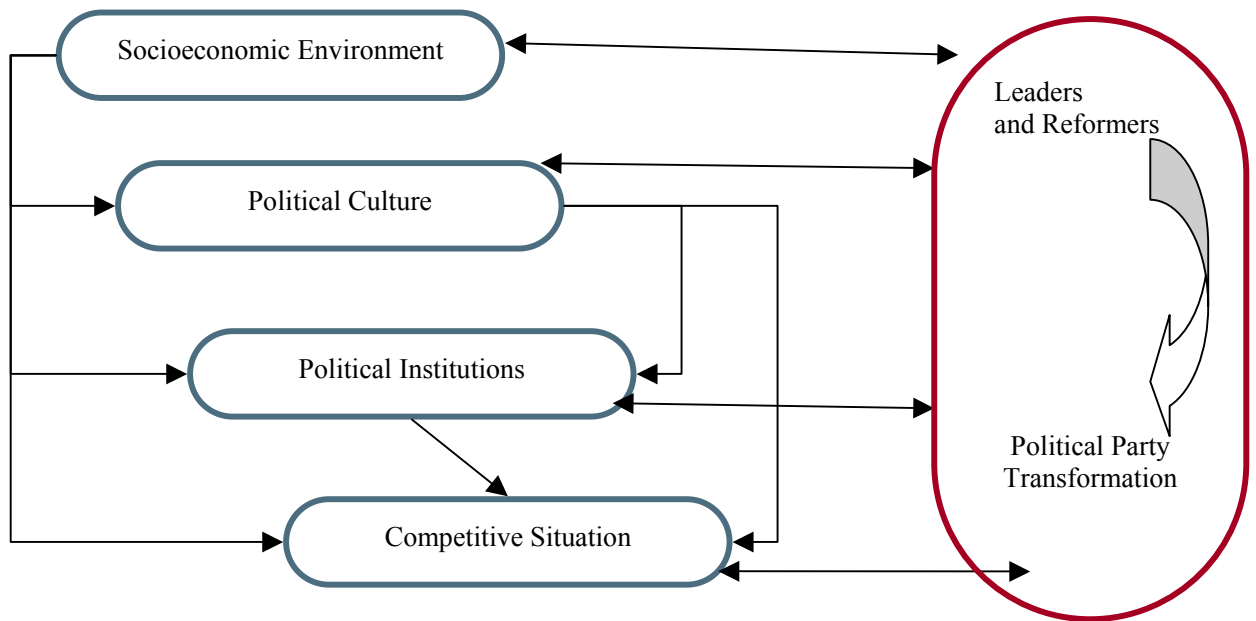


Fig. 1 *F. Wilson's model on the transformation of a political party*

The hypothesis being that PASOK's new leader has opted for two goals during the campaign, the electoral success and the party transformation, the challenge of the subject is to understand how the party- actually its leader- has used the campaign environment to accomplish the party's transformation and how this engagement further determined the route of the socialist party.

### **Election campaigns: an instrument of party change?**

By definition, election campaigns are "processes of interaction between strategically orientated interpretations of the political situation with a destiny of influence to the collective definition" (Gerstlé 2001). They aim to mobilisation in order to gather votes, to inform, to defend political perceptions, to persuade voters in order to define the holder of an elective function, to decide or consult by referendum (Gerstlé 2001). The act of voting is thus demonstrated as the principal or ultimate objective in the operation of an election campaign.

As far as bibliography on election campaigns is concerned, no other similar case of making a party change by the means provided by a campaign frame were found. Parties usually recognise to campaigns one and only dimension, this one being the electoral goal. Each party focuses on it in order to gain profits related to its primary goal; this one varying from the victory that allows getting a government mandate, to a good performance permitting to participate in government coalitions, or

even to elevating their electoral force in order to be able to make pressure for policy issues through the parliament.

Furthermore, the vast majority of parties enter on campaign periods having accomplished all “changing tasks”. The collective study (Norris, Curtice, Sanders, Scammell and Semetko 1999) of the Labours’ 1997 campaign is quite representative regarding this aspect: “...by the time of long and short campaign, much of it involves the repetition of familiar and well-rehearsed party positions, with few genuine surprises, rather than providing genuinely new or unexpected information. In this regard, election campaigns can be seen as largely ritualistic devices, where all the actors go through the familiar steps”.

Moreover, very few parties take the initiative to change their leader while him being the Prime Minister. An exception to the rule may be perceived the leadership change from M.Thatcher to J.Major. But even in this case, the change has taken place in the institutional frame of the Conservatives’ ordinary congress, and in any case not during the pre-elections’ period. In the Greek socialists’ case the Prime Minister’s, K.Simitis, resignation from the party’s presidency marks the beginning of the campaign. And last but not least, the party begins the change process in the beginning of the campaign period, without any knowledge or warning on behalf of its cadres, militants, members or voters, who happen to follow the changes introduced by the new leader.

### **The changes introduced by the new leader**

The exploration of the changes proposed, were structured on six different fields of mutations: the appearance of a new terminology, a new mentality of coalitions, changes on the field of internal organization, in policy making, a new use of communication means and the impact of rival parties’ strategies.

#### **A. Appearance of a new terminology**

The arrival of the new leader is directly linked with the appearance of new political terms in the socialist vocabulary. I have structured the political terminology in three essential groups.

The first category, named the “traditional socialist vocabulary” groups all characteristic notions of the greek socialist party during the period from democratic transition and consolidation and the years after 1981. The second group, named the “new terms” consists of the vocabulary introduced by G.Papandreou by his arrival on

the head of the party. It comprises terms that not only appear for the first time in the greek political context and on the moment of an election campaign, but also find their roots outside the political tradition of the socialist left. Thus, the new leader employs ideas and terms proposed by theorists as Paul Hirst, Antony Giddens or by the American Democratic Party and the “new democrats”. The third group covers the vocabulary that however belonging to the old political tradition and, in some cases, pre-existing to the greek socialists, gets during the campaign different connotations. This vocabulary, so on named the “re-dressed terms”.

In order to observe the dynamics created by the leader’s use of the new terms, we have tested the frequency of appearance of certain words in his political speeches. Context analysis was realised on a sample of Papandreou’s 74 speeches during the campaign period taking place from 7<sup>th</sup> of January to 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2004. Further word elaboration concluded to the division of 29 terms. In the following table we present the three vocabulary categories on a cumulative way. Each counted term’s frequency contains all derivatives coming from the word’s root.

Traditional socialist vocabulary		New terms		Re-dressed terms	
State	332	New Era	543	Movement	348
People	427	Citizen	882	Struggle	417
Socialist/ socialism	51	Assent /Cooperation /Collaboration	409	Democratic Camp	272
Democracy	302	Participation/ Associative Democracy	618	Change	552
Party	268	Multiculturalism	29	Progressive/ Progress	123
Right	82	Renovation	112		
Conservative/Conservatism/	58	Political Civilisation	6		
		Dialogue	109		
		Youth/New Generation	764		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1520</b>		<b>3472</b>		<b>1712</b>

Fig. 2 Table indicating the frequency of political terms in G.Papandreou’s speeches

The table clearly shows the dynamic of the new terms through the leader's speeches, not only being the terms mostly used but also employed two times more than the "re-dressed" terms; the traditional socialist vocabulary is the less brought into play in terms of total frequency.

**B. A new mentality of political coalitions**

G.Papandreou's arrival on the head of the party is marked by a new spirit in coalition making, opting to change the socialist party to a broader political family and organization, named the democratic group. This new mentality finds its roots in the values of political liberalism and aims to the reverse of the old polarized mentality "against the right" to the politics of assent, collaboration and enlargement of the representative spectrum. The strategic choice of including two ex-ministers of the conservative party and two ex-politicians of the reformatory communist party in the party's voting list seeks to bring gains to both goals determined by the socialist leader. However, it has the opposite results, as nor the party's members, neither the public opinion seem to approve such a movement, essentially for the part of cooperation with the liberal politicians.

**C. The new internal organization**

The party change process could not leave immutable the internal organization that extended centralized power, factionalism characteristics and bureaucratic structure. All initiatives taken by the new leadership intend to break up with these old-fashioned organizational characteristics and to create a new open party, which would not only facilitate the members' participation, but the citizens' involvement as well.

The first step towards this political formation is taken by the open leadership's election, inciting members and friends of the party to express their validation or disapproval relating the leader proposed. The proposition concerning the role of the leader is inspired by the American democratic party, where the leader is beyond the party, having a direct relationship with citizens. Furthermore, internal changes are constructed according to the philosophy of associative democracy, which implies that a number of decisions should be transferred to the regions and to local organizations, firstly among the party in order to be adopted eventually by the whole of the society. Open assemblies should encourage citizens' participation to decide for policy making matters and for persons by whom they will be governed. Other voting procedures adopted within the party are referendums concerning political decisions, universal

voting for party issues', the promotion of electronic democracy, the institutionalization of different factions with a spirit of reciprocal respect. Youth, women, immigrants, social movements, marginalized social groups: they all become equal and respective interlocutors as well as active reformers of the new open party. Moreover, the party institutionalises the equal participation of men and women to all voting lists. And last but not least, the leader proposes the construction of an enlarged political organisation following the model of the Italian Elia, where people from different political orientations wanting to cooperate with PASOK would participate, PASOK being the main composing part of this political family.

#### **D. New values and ideas in policy making**

The new socialist philosophy is constructed on the values of political liberalism, transferring the values' importance a. from the state to the citizen, b. from the collective dimension to the individual, c. from equality to freedom. Following the neoprogressive path, introduced by Antony Giddens, supports the creation of "a strong public sphere, coupled to a thriving market economy; a pluralist, but inclusive society; and a cosmopolitan wider world, founded upon principles of international law" (Giddens 2003).

All changes proposed follow the logic and the mentality of associative democracy, as this one is inspired and presented by Paul Hirst (1994). The most radical propositions are the creation of non-state universities; the reform of the state's administration by reduction of a number of ministries and the reinforcement of the organisation of the periphery, in order to limit bureaucratic effects and power centralisation; the equal employment of male and female sex in the superior administrative posts; the fusion of ministries of employment and education; the adoption of a new form of employment without expenses for social security in the beginning of a person's career, in order to face the problem of youth unemployment.

#### **E. Another use of communication means**

The domination of communication means and new technologies in the socialist campaign is dressed with a new philosophy for the socialist camp, no longer considering communication as a mean to bring forth politics or policy issues, but as the essence of political life. Thus, the socialist communication during the campaign seeks to respond to the three dimensions of political communication: the structural, the symbolic and the pragmatic (Gerstlé 1993). The organization of the party's congress and the leader's election by a communication company mark the era of the

dominance of political consultants in the party's life. The overall public image and communication that the leader promotes are representative of the party he wants to create. Party's renovation in communication terms is also observed through slogans, spots, contacts with the public (small group of people in houses, internet cafés etc). The new leadership also proposes the change of the party's logo and name, but this proposition is withdrawn under the pressure of public opinion's critics and member's objections.

#### **F. Party change and rival parties' strategies**

The essential part on election campaigns derives from the interaction between competitive operations; the campaigns are, thus, transformed in arena of competition following the principle of tactic interdependence (Gerstlé 2001). The one's resources become the other's duties and the campaigns can be resumed as the "battle of agendas" (Norris, Curtice, Sanders, Scammell and Semetko 1999). However, in our study rival parties' strategies are taken into consideration only in the dimension of feed-back that they produce in the party's change process, since our research object concerns the party's transformation using the means and the frame of the campaign.

G.Papandreou's arrival at the head of the party, his domination among the media and the announcement of "radical changes everywhere" automatically transform the agenda context. The dilemma produced for all parties is whether to remain on the communication strategy adopted since that moment or to adapt their campaigns on the issues proposed by the socialist leader. Despite the fact that the second choice could be perceived as an indication of flexibility and acquired political maturity independently of the frame of political juncture, it contains the risk of giving to the socialist leader the predominance of defining the collective situation.

One could affirm that rival party strategies, essentially the one operated by the conservatives since 2000, influenced the socialist party's campaign and accelerated the change project, by promoting the message of the end of socialists' utility and the need of political change. However, the coordination of the two goals at the same time provokes a supplementary interaction between them, coming from external stimuli like the rival political actors, trying to affect through media the public opinion. The following plan describes the complex situation of the socialist change, influenced by the dynamics of actors participating to the campaign.

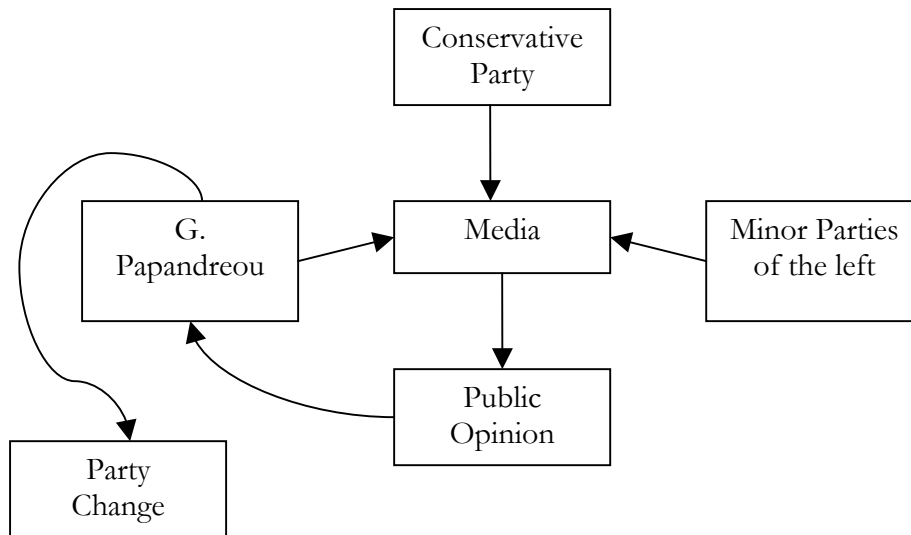


Fig.3 *The implication of actors participating to the campaign in the party change process*

In following table I regrouped the change project, making discrimination on the basis of changes that were realised, those that were not realised, and changes introduced but not finished during the short-term campaign period.

Organizational changes      Changes in policy making      Changes on politics

Fig.4 *Synthesizing table of changes and public opinion's disposition*

	<b>Realized changes</b>	<b>Not realized changes</b>	<b>Changes introduced but not finished</b>	<b>Public opinion's expression for changes through surveys</b>
<b>PASOK's change</b>	Open election for the new leader			Positive
	Special congress for the announce of GP's candidature			Positive
			Change of political personnel	Positive
			Regional organization of the party's internal mechanism	Positive
		Change of the name		Negative
		Change of the logo		Negative
	Employment without social security			Negative
	Regional state organization			Positive
	Non state universities			Positive
			Associative democracy	Positive
	Enlargement			Negative
			Communication: means and mentality	Positive

The table clearly states the important role played by the public opinion in the party's transformation. In most realised changes we observe its positive disposition, whereas in all changes withdrawn can see the negative expression of the public opinion. As for the two changes introduced that received the public's disapproval – the enlargement and the employment without paying fees of social security – we have to stress that the first one was followed by the leader's solid argumentation reassuring that such an operation doesn't signify identity mutation nor marginalization of old members and the second one was almost abandoned, after receiving strong criticism

from multiple sides. We can thus claim that there is a certain correlation between the public opinion's disposition face to a change and the evolution of this change in the process of transformation. This relation derives from the juncture of the campaign and underlines a dimension of the campaign implication in the party's change procedure.

Furthermore, one could mention that the changes proposed and being immediately realized are those that could have a direct positive impact in the election's result: the special congress announcing the leader, the open election stimulating citizen's representation and the party's enlargement with personalities coming from the left and the right.

In general terms, public opinion plays a permanent role in the leader's initiative, not only because of the elections' period but also because of the special position that it has on the leader's participative values and democratic principles. However, this permanent implication in the party's affaires provokes dynamics and incidents that were not foreseen by the leader. Thus, the change operation and the limits of the socialist leader's movements are determined by public opinion's disposition. Besides, the image of a new leader determining his strategy according to the surveys' results, while at the same time introducing changes that have left origins, others expressing liberal positions, and some deriving from the agenda of the social movements doesn't give the impression of a leader that has a determined project for his party's transform.

In addition, the public opinion's conquest constitutes the concurrence field among political parties; hence, campaigns and strategies of rival parties are implicated in PASOK's transformation. As the parties' messages affect strongly citizens during the campaign, the socialist leader had to face a delicate situation: he had to relate the change process with the strategies of rival parties. Moreover, institutional factors (leaflets distributed by the Greek Orthodox Church) and unpredictable incidents (economic scandals, bad weather, debate negotiations and leader's weak performance) affecting the campaign, the leader had to face them adapting his strategy and style to the newly promoted mentality.

In fact, the external stimuli, being by definition in interaction during the campaign period under the principle of tactic interdependence, contain an additional power regarding their role in the party's change process. Not only they compose the catalyst forces, the stimuli that promote the initialization of transformation, as the theory of Harmel and Janda indicates, but additionally they constitute sources of

influence during all the campaign period; this means during all the party's mutation phase. Therefore, since these external forces are competitive in the frame of electoral antagonism, they seek to hamper rival parties' strategies, especially those of the major parties; and so they impede the socialists' transformation.

Following Wilson's model, we placed on a chart all forces influencing the party's change.

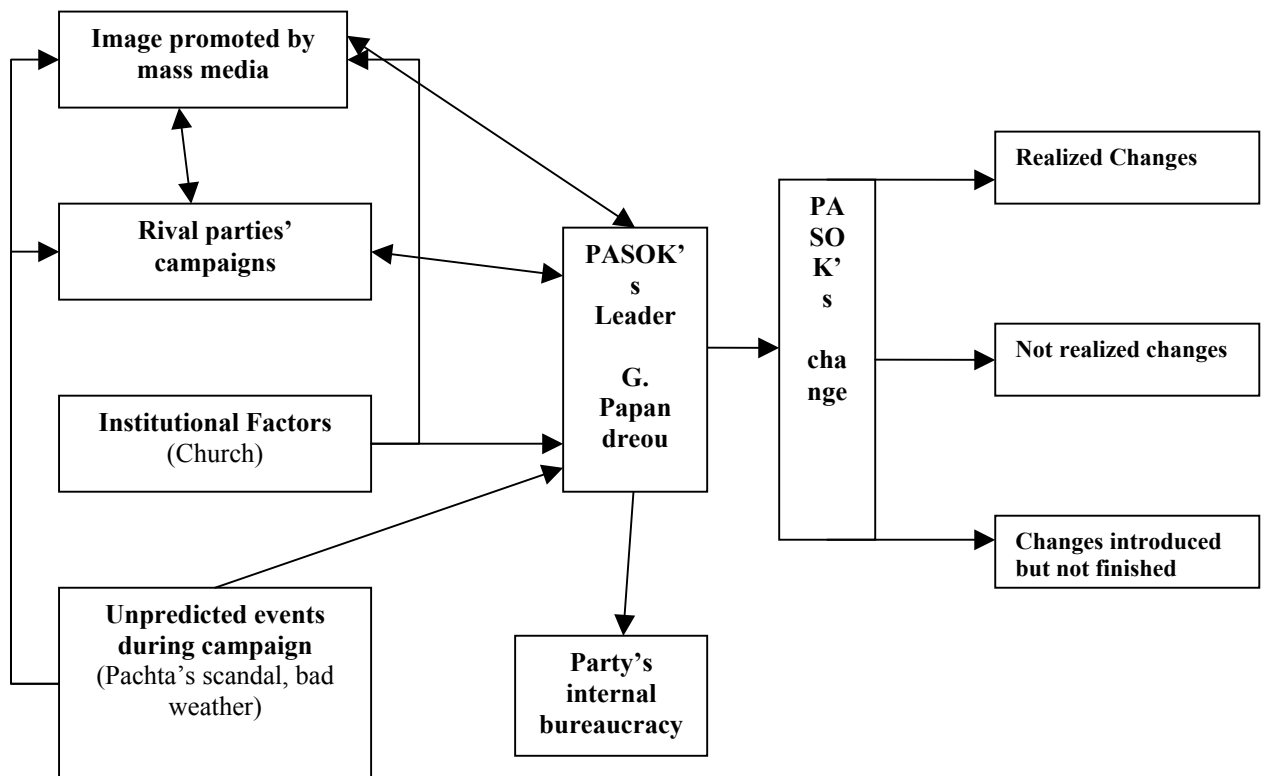


Fig.5 Party change process in the frame of the election campaign: external stimuli and implicated actors

We therefore validate that the two goals opted by the socialist leader, the electoral victory and the party's transformation, provoke reciprocity effects and continuous interaction. This relation is bilateral; but since our concern is focused in the change process by the means of the campaign, we can affirm that apart the acceleration of the process in the cases of the open election and the enlargement, this fact being due to the limited campaign time, for the rest of the effects the campaign has undermined the change's operation. For this conclusion we also have to take into account the fact that the change during the campaign undergoes effects of distortion

because of the accentuated role of media, which function as zoom lens, emphasizing every change during the same period.

Indeed, G.Papandreou’s decision to correlate the party’s change with the electoral goal has created four ideal types of voters:

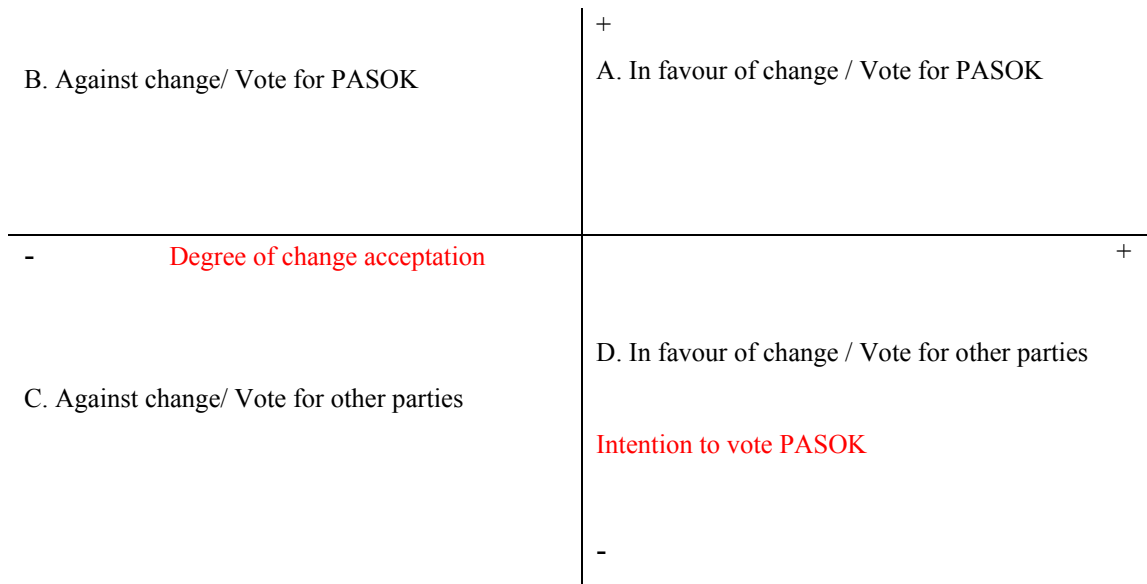


Fig.6 4 ideal-types of voters and their relation with the socialist change

Relating the change with the campaign, the leader fixed two goals at the same time: as far as the electoral dimension is concerned, the movement of voters from the area D to the area A, and acting among members or voters of the party, the production of a flow of citizens from B to A. In reality and according to opinion polls and election results, opposite results were formed, voters moving from A to D and from B to C.

We can so assert that combining these two goals of major importance to a party’s life was a risky decision. All hopes, for victory or for change, derived and were founded on the dynamics of the leader’s personality, being very popular and having a natural contact with the public. This kind of risk couldn’t however take into account the leader’s decay or mistakes during the campaign, such as the debate, that would automatically cancel all the “consolidated convictions” regarding his capacity of governing or leading. Thus, the dynamics of each objective have fatally undermined the evolution of the other’s, whereas the one’s reinforcement by the other’s means has scarcely occurred.

## **The road to the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress**

The electoral defeat of the socialist party on the 7<sup>th</sup> march 2004 was interpreted as a strong message concerning the need of deep change in the socialist camp. The reasons explaining the defeat were mainly concentrated in the long lasting stay of PASOK in power, the tiredness of the electorate face to the persons of the executive, as well as a consolidated conviction of socialist corruption.

As the theoretical frame provided by Harmel and Janda (1994) indicates, the electoral defeat of a party that is a vote maximizing organization is an external shock that is highly probable to produce change in the party. In addition, the electoral campaign being used as a stimulus for party change, it has provoked serious engagements to the new leadership, accentuated by the electoral defeat. The performance of the new leader is highly related with the persistence to the process of change.

However, one could affirm that however PASOK's change line is ascending since the day of the defeat, George Papandreou is clearly orientated to the internal change; the argument being that a party wishing to change everything has firstly to begin by its own transformation. Thus, one can observe that the leader no longer promotes the idea of change in the policy making, nor emphasizes in the opposition role of the party. Most forces focus to the internal change.

The socialists' voting list for the elections for the European Parliament, held in Greece on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2005, only three months after the national elections, confirm the persistence in the concept of change. The voting list, presented by the leader, follows the principle of renovation, the European ideal and the equal representation of all the peripheries, social classes and the collective functioning of the team. The renovation percentage reaches 100%, having for the first time as a leading figure a woman, aged 30 years old. Coming from the syndicates, her leading position symbolizes the priority given to the active participation of women and young people. Twelve out of twenty-four candidates are women and five of them are proposed in the first ten positions. The medium of the candidates' age rises to thirty-nine years old and only two out of twenty-four personalities have performed in the party's mechanisms or have mandated in parliamentary representation. One could affirm that the absence of candidates related with the ex-President's milieu constitutes a sign of rupture with all

signs of the past, while at the same time two close colleagues of G. Papandreou are included in the list. According to the new leader, the choice of the list is following the willing of the Greek society, as well as the principle of associative democracy, which became the arsenal of the new philosophy of the party since the electoral period. For this reason, an on-line consultation of members and friends of the party was realized before the European elections, as to express their willing and ideas and to reinforce democracy in the party's affairs.

Yet the leader's choices concerning the persons proposed, failed to convince the electorate, as the party was defeated for a second time in three months period, even if it managed to increase its support compared to the 1999 European elections. Such a result is nevertheless attended or in other terms the most probable: empirical research of Greek elections has shown that when European elections follow or take place very closely to the legislative elections, the electorate has the tendency of reproducing and confirming the choice made in National elections. Despite that fact, the luck of appeal of the innovating voting list expressed by the voters shows two things at the same time: firstly, that it is too early for the socialists to prove that they will change or that they are on the way of changing; secondly, the electorate is not seduced by new persons who are not known for their political propositions, their beliefs, or that are not recognizable in general terms for their political past. Evidence from opinion surveys before the European elections converges in these arguments. In other terms, change for the sake of change, without political frame and general orientation is not what citizens waited from PASOK.

The period beginning after the European elections and finishing by the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress on March 2005 is a phase of intense work for the socialist camp, as to prepare the new Statute of the party. Dialogue is opened to anyone wishing to participate through the pages of the site constructed especially for the congress preparation. All documents, opinions and ideas are welcomed to be presented. The preparation of the new open party's organization is put forth by the National Council of Reconstruction, which is an open instrument, structured in the Coordination Council, the Secretary of this Council, working groups and sub- working groups.

The importance given by the party to the operation is clear by the campaign organized through media as to motivate people to assist in the election of representatives for the Congress. Three radio spots and a poster were diffused through media as to inform for the dialogue on the way to the congress through the site

“democracy.pasok.gr”. Citizens’ massive participation in the elections validate the interest for the party’s change process, demonstrates their perception about PASOK’s need of political change, as well as the need of people to participate in politics and feel closer to political parties. However, the new members and friends participating did not produce new movements of ideas, but were integrated in the existing correlations. Despite the fact that the conceptualization of the operation was quite radical and ambitious, opting for an open dialogue, with original ideas brought by new powers coming from other progressive political families and the civil society, radical propositions were put aside and the discussion got a formal or academic character. The few new ideas were welcomed, but political debate was limited between the same persons and groups. Nonetheless it was an important step needed after two electoral defeats as to reactivate the party’s forces, to heal the moral of the socialist camp and to release tensions.

### **Changes voted by the new Statute: the prevalence of organizational change**

The changes established by the Statute voted during the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress mark the willing of creation of an open party to society and of increase of participation and interest for socialist affairs. As the exhaustive enumeration of internal changes cannot be satisfied in the time limits of this presentation, we will keep to mentioning the most radical changes, as well as the evolution of those introduced since the campaign period.

According to the new statute voted during the Congress on the 3<sup>rd</sup> march 2005:

- The logo and the name of the party remain the same, following the dynamic expressed by the public opinion and by socialist cadres and militants since the electoral campaign.
- The principle of associative democracy is formally adopted in the very beginning of the document. The party states the establishment of an open relationship with the citizens and the society and opts, among other things, for the development of the “participative” democracy. It announces the radical decentralization of the state, as well as the development of the periphery following the frame of progressive and participative governance.
- Furthermore, it affirms being the movement that defends everybody’s equal participation in politics, civilization, communication, in a society of cohesion

and security, in possibilities and chances of development and progress, in employment, in an open economy of fair, qualitative and innovative access, in the education of an open society of knowledge and information that recognizes as the basic source of capital the human being.

- PASOK incites the support and fortification of initiatives undertaken by the civil society, as well as any form of voluntarism in social life. It looks after the cooperation with any movement or organization that shares the same goals and values.
- In the chapter concerning the principles of democratic function it promotes the citizens' substantial participation by the development of direct and indirect democratic institutions.
- Internal democracy is consolidated by the fully development and circulation of opposed opinions, tendencies or movements of ideas, without however their organization being structured, disciplined or represented separately.
- Member's representation in Congresses, Conferences and other collective processes of the party is correlated to the number of each organization's members. Peripheries' representation is fully supported and reassured to the major possible extent.
- The friends and the members of the party are registered in different files, the second ones having a more active participation than the first. They all participate in the Local Organizations, they can organize and vote in the local, territorial and national referendums organized by the party and they can have a role in the PASOK's political, educational, cultural, scientific organizations that function in the level of the prefecture or the periphery, as well as in Initiative Commissions activated for special issues. The Initiative Commissions can be organized by the party in the local level, but the party can as well participate in other autonomous movements and initiatives.
- Networks of citizens' initiatives can be activated for political, social, scientific, educational, professional issues or syndicalism's affairs, as well as for the promotion of solidarity towards sensible categories of citizens.
- The party's organization towards friends and members is outlined by the principle of associative democracy, decentralization and of decision making processes being as closest as possible to them.

- The local organizations deliberate with the local society, institutions and non governmental organizations as to determine and configure politics and initiatives of the party. Local organizations arrange open assemblies at least once a year and can organize as well referendums having a local interest or an internal character.
- An important role is attributed to possibilities provided via internet, as well as to technology means, as to strengthen communication, participation, organization, consultation, decision making and transparency.
- The direct election of the President by friends and members of the party is confirmed by the new Statute.
- What is more interesting though and constitutes an important evolution towards the rise of citizens' participation is the institutionalization of primaries for the indication of deputy candidates, as well as candidates for the local administration. As far as the new deputy candidates are concerned, the election is held among members and friends of the party. As for the indication of Prefects and Mayors, all citizens of the periphery concerned have the right to vote. All the process and the evaluation of the results are guaranteed by a Commission of Voting Processes, which is voted by the National Council.

Though our concern is focused in internal change of the party, one cannot neglect that during the Congress, the participants were divided in two groups, the one working for the Statute and the other for the political Platform and positions. At the same time, a third level of discussions with multiple subjects took place by representatives of non governmental organizations. Three final documents were so voted: the Statute, the Political Declaration and the Political Positions. In the end the Congress voted for the representatives of the National Council.

In general terms the socialist congress succeeded in the field of initialization of organizational change, as well as to the renovation of personalities since 50% of the voted members to the National Council of the party were elected for the first time. Voting lists existed, but the limited percentage of 10% of using a preference cross impeded the severe reproduction of existing correlations. All old groups were represented and all persons related personally to the President were also elected, even though the President did not show any special preference. Women's representation

was pre-determined to 40% and for the first time in PASOK's affairs were elected three immigrants. Personalities that were ex-members of other parties and had integrated PASOK in the past were also elected.

We have to observe that most of concern and attention was given to the organizational change. Political documents and propositions were quite general and did not produce controversies. All documents were voted in unanimity, not expressing a creative compromise, but rather postponing concrete answers to critical dilemmas of the socialist left to the future. For the accomplishment of the organizational transformation to be made there are several steps that have to be taken after the Congress, such as the realization of 850 originator Municipal Assemblies and the election of their representatives. For this reason the party has again operated a media campaign calling for participation via radio, newspapers and internet. Further procedures will follow in the level of Prefectures and Peripheries.

Thus, one can affirm that the Congress did not finally culminate the process of renovation and change, but constituted the necessary step as to begin institutionally what was announced and initiated in symbolic terms since the campaign. In structural and organizational terms, it advanced by the accomplishment of all decisions for the formation of the new party, whereas in all other domains it delegated the leader to realize changes. Consequently, not only the leader is not contested, but his role is empowered by consensual support in order to succeed in the operation of change. Less than a matter of personality cult, the institution of the President during this phase of transition marks the equilibrium between the existing correlations of forces and incarnates the political desire of change and participation.

### **Concluding remarks: some research hypothesis**

As the process of internal change is still evolving, it is early for one to make conclusions about the nature of the new organization model, as well as for the efficiency of such a structure regarding the target of associative democracy and the establishment of an open and direct relation of citizens and the party. It is equally precipitated to configure the new relations produced in the party, or the appeal of this model to its members and friends, since the major changes introduced, such as the primaries or the referendums haven't yet been deployed or tested empirically.

What one can however develop for the study of the party change is a number of hypotheses orientating the research. In the first place, we can assume that the

electoral losses of the Greek socialist party reinforce the leader's strategy concerning the change process, not only because of the commitments created, but as to confute and face eventual contestation to his posture from the inner party milieu. Thus, he uses party change as to consolidate his leadership through internal change. All forces of the party being concentrated to the preparation of the new statute and the physiognomy of the new party, the leader manages to ward off internal opposition and to redistribute power in the party by giving certain roles to everybody in the process of change.

Furthermore, the question created is what kind of relations this organizational model produces between the leader and the traditional elites of the party, in the long run; the old factions existing. G.Papandreou's political profile was gradually built, carrying however the symbolic and historic value of his family name. His successful mandate since he was given the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and especially the progress marked on the field of Greek-Turkish relations were immediately attributed to his personality. And last but not least, one could not ignore the fact that G.Papandreou had a personal political route in the party that was a way ahead of any internal controversy or factionalism. Despite the fact that many voices in the party argued that his choice in the Presidency was a matter of "pay-off" from K.Simitis to G.Papandreou, as the last one supported his candidature on the 1996 party congress, going on the contrary to his father's preferences, one cannot neglect the very high scores of popularity that Papandreou concentrates in all opinion surveys since 2002. He seemed to be the most appreciated deputy of the socialist camp and disposed the highest scores of popularity among Greek politicians at the moment that Simitis inaugurated his plan of resignation and vote for the new President on January 2004. Besides and according to the surveys, he wasn't personally charged of the governmental responsibilities and inadequacies; on the contrary, he even concentrated the highest scores among the most underprivileged socio-professional segments of the population. He never had a group of personal influence and rejected such mechanisms, as he considered that they trap the party in introversion and lack of internal democracy. As a president, he practices a leadership of incarnate synthesis or superior to cleavages. He embodies the spirit of peace making, maintaining equal distances and good relations with all the tendencies in the party. For this reason, he supports pluralism, expression of all propositions, participation, a political game well defined by rules and transparency in internal electoral processes and open relations

between the party and society. This type of leadership drafts its strength from the direct election of the President by the citizens, friends and members of the party. The 1.000.000 of persons that approved the candidature of G.Papandreou provides him with an incontestable power, as to begin the process of party change and to overcome the criticism of electoral loss, counterbalancing the insecurity of not having a group of faithful cadres protecting and assuring a personal mechanism.

However, the pragmatism of a party's leadership requires support, especially in an operation of radical innovations introduced, which need cohesion and loyalty in order to bring successful results. We will forward the hypothesis that the result of this concrete party change in the internal level is that old correlations of internal relations are reformed in a way that gives the advantage to the President to reshuffle the cards, in other words, to redistribute power and roles in the party. Thus, the leader not only increases his power, but also creates gradually a new leading group that in the short term period of reconstruction of the party has a role of management, but in the long run can form a new pole of power in internal affairs. The critical parameter in this hypothesis will be the ideology of the new leading group. Will it respect results of political reconstruction, local referendums and decision making by the new organizations that will be created in all the party's levels or will it try to influence in certain political orientations? It is a question that may configure the identity of the new party.

It is quite clear at the same time that the President expresses a sort of perseverance for the organizational renaissance of the party and leaves aside the opposition role and discussion concerning political issues of everyday juncture. Such a choice is part of the leader's strategy in order to stabilize his leadership, without exposing himself to any political cost or criticism, in spite of the fact that he receives every day pressure by media, public opinion and socialist cadres. The concept being that organizational change is a privileged field for the leader to accomplish the transformation- as adaptation of the Statute's procedure needed is quite a technical issue- he opts to finish this phase of change as to further strengthen and consolidate his power. As soon as this goal is achieved, he can deplore his political argumentation, eliminating thus inner party contestation and opposition to his opinions.

Consequently, the main hypothesis that will orientate our research in the evolution of PASOK's internal change concentrate on the role of the leadership in the

operation. The central idea is that the persistence of G.Papandreou in the organizational transformation derives and results at the same time by the need of consolidating his power in the party, due to the lack of personal influence in the party's affairs, as well as to the cost of counting two electoral defeats during his mandate.

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