



**Bournemouth
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The impact of political marketing on internal party democracy

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Defining political marketing

- The application of marketing tools to strategic decision making in a political context
- From design of the 'product' or 'offering' through to strategic communication

The Evolution of Marketing

- Product Oriented
- Sales Oriented
- Market Oriented

| Product Oriented | Sales Oriented | Market Oriented |
|---|--|--|
| STAGE 1 Product design | STAGE 1 Product design | STAGE 1 Market Intelligence |
| | STAGE 2 Market Intelligence | STAGE 2 Product design |
| | | STAGE 3 Product Adjustment |
| | | STAGE 4 Implementation |
| STAGE 2 Communication | STAGE 3 Communication | STAGE 5 Communication |
| STAGE 3 Campaign | STAGE 4 Campaign | STAGE 6 Campaign |
| STAGE 4 Election | STAGE 5 Election | STAGE 7 Election |
| STAGE 5 Delivery | STAGE 6 Delivery | STAGE 8 Delivery |

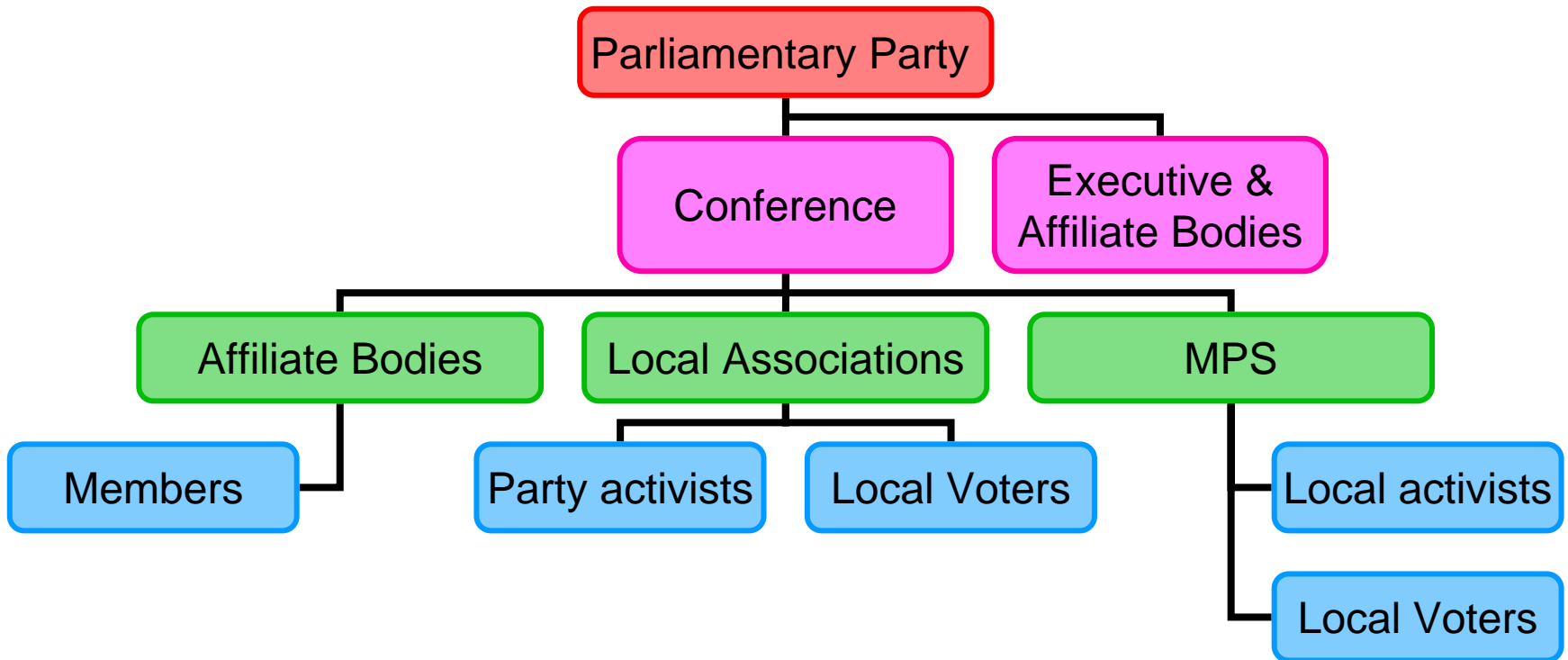
The reality

- Hybrid version of sales and market oriented parties prevail
- Product is designed and adjusted with communication in mind
- Managerialism becomes main ideology
- Campaigning as a purpose in itself

The effects of marketisation

- Centralisation of strategic thinking
- Standardisation of procedure and communication
- Party activists act as advocates and implementers
- Focus on voter groups required to win a contest
- Loyal voters and activists taken for granted

The notion of party democracy



The parliamentary party acts as the implementer of decisions passed by conference taking the advice of executive bodies and affiliates and its members (elected and non-elected) when appropriate and tenable.

The party turned upside down

Strategic Advisors

Parliamentary Party

MPs

Executive bodies

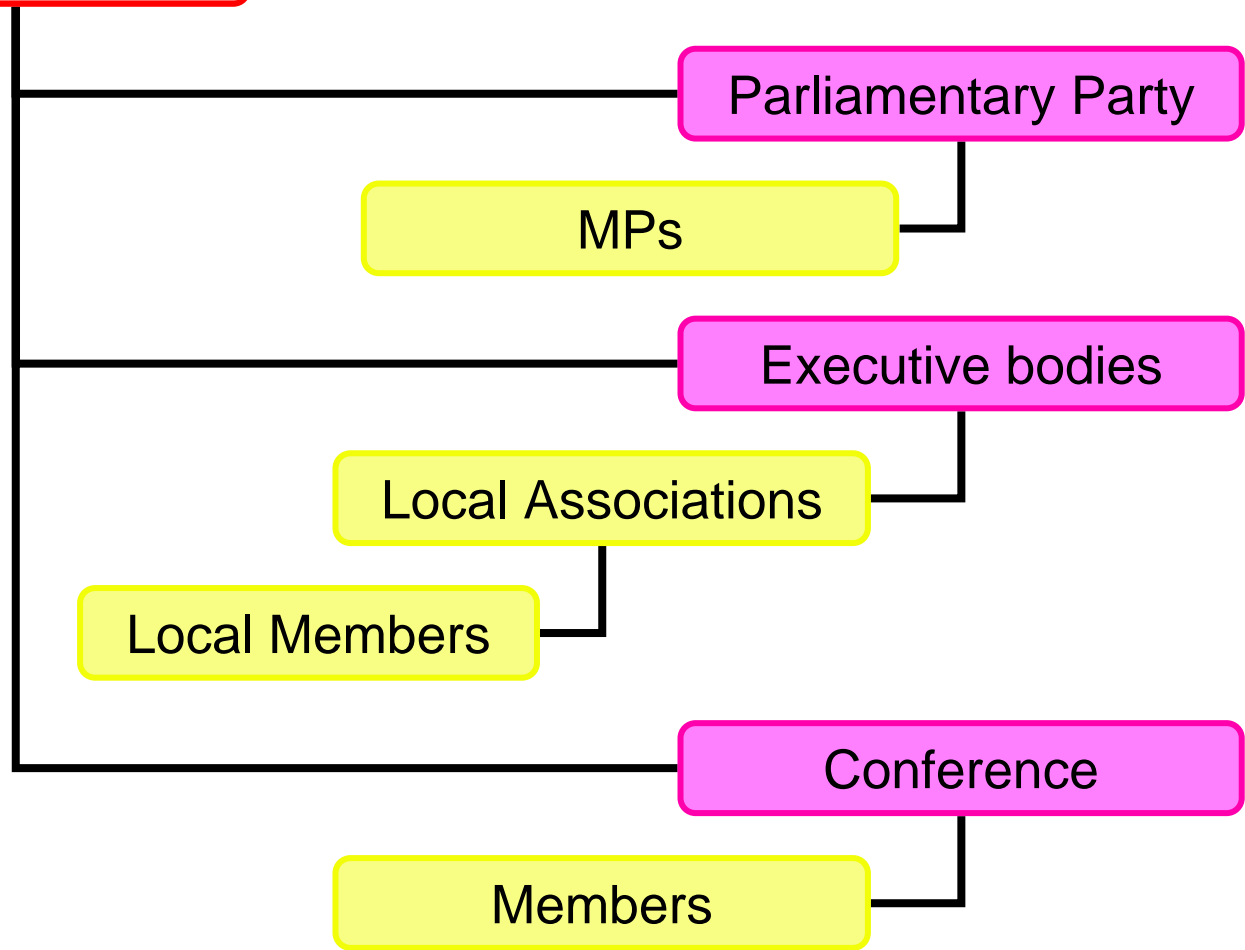
Local Associations

Local Members

Conference

Members

Power moves beyond or outside of the party and strategy is filtered down for implementation; control over ideas and communication is centralised and filtered via the intranet to the tiers of the organisation



A failed strategy

- “I am not a speak your weight machine”
– (2001 Labour candidate)
- “We just simply were not talking about anything the people on the doorsteps cared about”
– (2001 Conservative candidate)

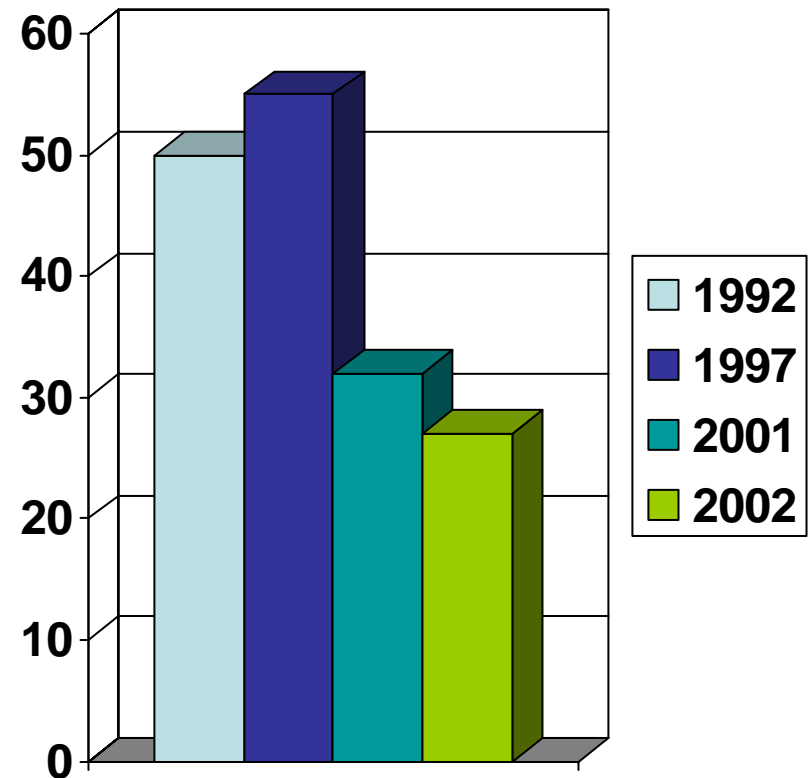
Marketisation = Disenfranchisement?

Party activism down

There are various explanations, however some local activists will happily argue that they are less willing to work for a party that gives them little say over general policy direction or the way that a campaign is run:

What prevails is “what have the buggers ever done for us”

Data from British Election Study



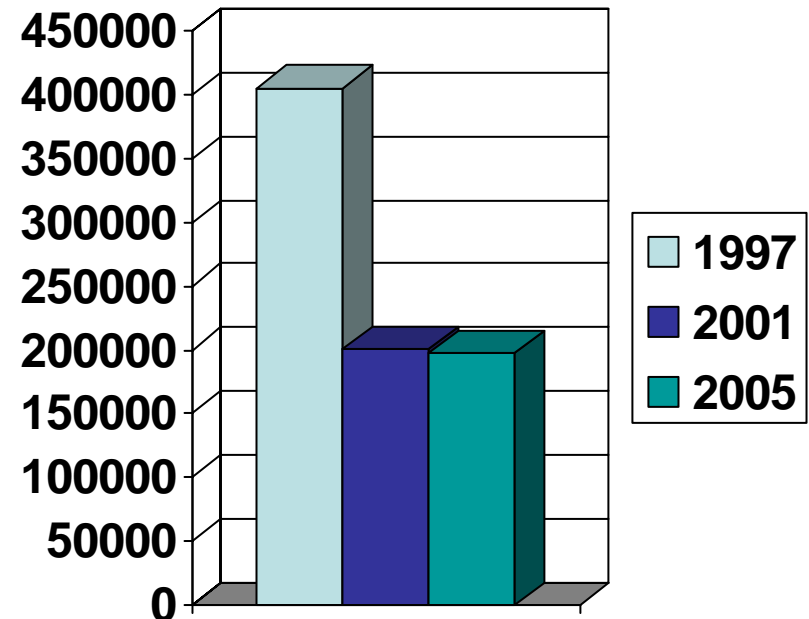
Marketisation = Disenfranchisement?

Membership down

The 1997 Victory, and its run-up brought a peak in membership; this fell away swiftly as a sense of disappointment prevailed.

“May 6th 1997 felt like a new dawn, it was a false one. Nothing changed, in fact everything was just more of the same. After 30 years of disappointment with Labour I gave up; they don’t want members like me anyway”

(Interview 2000)

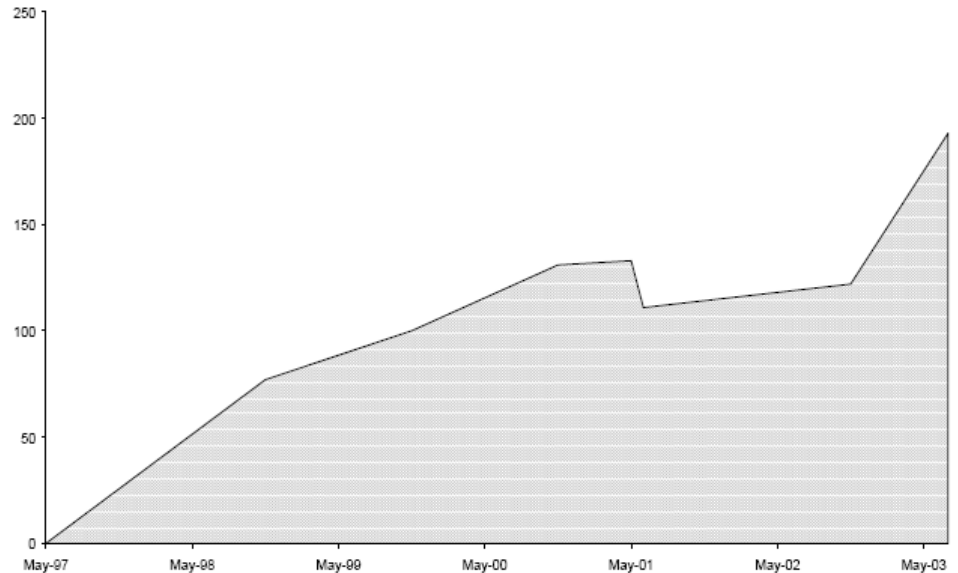


Data from Jon Cruddas MP.

Marketisation = Disenfranchisement?

Rebellions up

“It is not about bringing down the government, we usually back down, it is the only way to say we do not agree; the rest of the time no-one asks us a thing and we are expected to troop through the right door in time to the beat of Tony’s drums. I entered politics to make a change not be a mindless drone” (Labour backbencher, 2002)



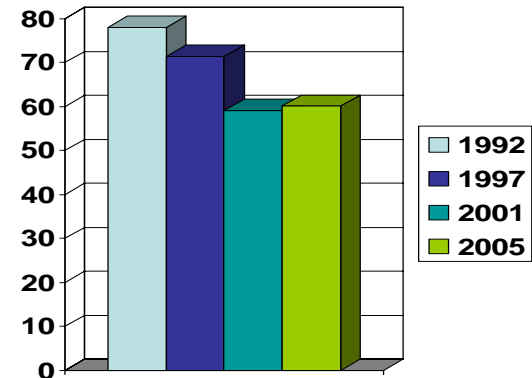
Data from www.revolts.co.uk

Marketisation = Disenfranchisement? Turnout down

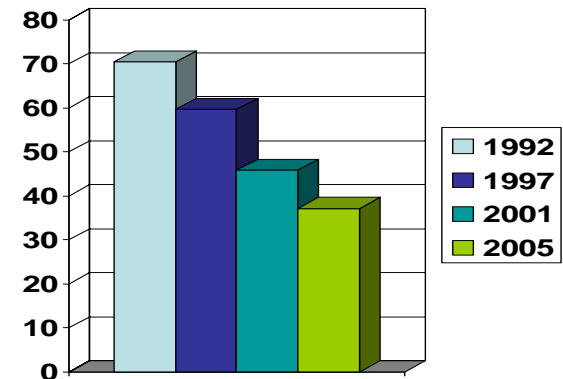
Elections since 1997 have been a foregone conclusion and so perhaps lower interest is natural, but Labour loyalists have a different perspective. “They do not represent me, no party does, so why should I vote, if I do who for? Fundamentally they only want power, I want a government that serves” (Interview 2003)

Is this why fall in turnout is so dramatic in Labour’s heartland constituencies?

Data from HMSO



UK Voting 1992-2005



Barnsley Voting 1992-2005

The Basics of Marketing

“marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably” (CIM, 2001)

Can / Does this apply to politics?

Flaws in marketisation

- Citizens want a government to meet their needs and wants
- But competing needs and wants are hard to reconcile
- Profit = precious votes
- 2% of floating voters live in swing constituencies – they are the target market.

Rethinking political marketing

- Party or Citizen led?
 - What are the democratic implications?
- Can consultation exercises bring the citizen and party together?
- What legitimises a party, membership or vote share?
- Are there greater wants and needs than some basic promises?

Future Scenarios

- Managerialist parties, funded by business, with paid activists
 - Greater disengagement, reduction of choice, low interest and involvement
- Fragmentation of parties into ideological clusters
 - Greater activism, involvement and interest, weak government