

## **Internal Demarketing in the UK Civil Service since the 2007-9 Financial Crisis**

This paper suggests that the UK Civil Service may have intentionally demarketed itself as an employer to its perceived non-core staff as a strategic reaction to the 2007-9 Financial Crisis.

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## **Key Points**

In reacting to the Financial Crisis of 2007-9, the UK Civil Service has sought to redefine its relationship with its employees.

The UK Civil Service appears to have shifted to a model of employer-employee relationship which segments the workforce, markets itself to its perceived core employees, and demarkets itself to its perceived non-core employees.

The findings challenge the previously held assumption that internal demarketing constitutes accidental, manager-level, bungled, but well-intentioned, attempts at internal marketing.

## **Introduction**

This paper broadens Vasconcelos' (2008) conceptualisation of internal demarketing (ID) - which he understood as an unintended and damaging form of internal marketing (IM) resulting from mismanagement – by scrutinising its prevalence during Great Britain's post-financial crisis years of austerity, when the government sought to reshape public sector employment relations and remove privileges perceived by government to be enjoyed by public sector workers, doing so by promoting arguments around the necessity of fiscal pressure (Bach, 2016). To do this, ID is reconstructed by reviewing

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<sup>1</sup> J.E.L. Classification Codes J21, J23, J45, J53, M54

key IM literature, by analysing demarketing categories to assess their applicability to IM, and by considering insights harvested from a broad range of public sector participants. The results suggest that ID may have been undertaken *with organisational intent* within the UK Civil Service during the period following the 2007-9 financial crisis, when it suffered reductions in Human Resources budgets for initiatives such as staff training but strove to stretch budgets further to achieve strategic organisational reform (Jewson *et al.*, 2015). Results also suggest that IM may motivate certain workforce segments whilst simultaneously alienating others who may experience unavoidable barriers to participation. As such, the phenomenon of selective internal demarketing is proposed within a taxonomized conceptualisation of ID, broadening theoretical understanding both of IM and ID. Whilst the research makes no claims for generalisability, the resulting insights challenge Vasconcelos' (2008) assumption of organisational incompetence and lack of intent.

IM encompasses those marketing actions which an organisation directs at its employees, rather than its commercial customers – its internal, rather than external, market (Berry, 1984). It may be understood as an organisational philosophy or managerial mindset, an umbrella term for a collection of employee-facing strategies, or it may be applied to specific campaigns. The core beneficiaries of IM are employees, the organisation, and external customers. Public relations firm Weber Shandwick found that one of the top five issues of companies that customers often discuss about is their treatment of employees (Yohn, 2018). As such, practitioners are increasingly of the opinion that more engaged, productive and valued employees are likely to have more positive

influence on their interaction with the customers (Forbes, 2016)<sup>2</sup>. Closely allied with, and dependent upon, internal communications and employee engagement, IM encourages staff to engage with the organisation and each other, imbuing them in the values of the organisation, and facilitating innovation by breaking down barriers to interaction (e.g. - Rafiq and Ahmed, 1993; Ballantyne, 1997; Varey and Lewis, 1999; Ballantyne, 2000). This empowers workers, creates transparency, democratises the workplace and nurtures organisational identification. As such, staff are likely to become more highly motivated, and therefore firms become more enabled to retain and recruit talent (Berry, 1984; Gounaris, 2006).

By treating employees as ‘internal customers’, effective IM practitioners model behaviours which they would wish employees to adopt towards external customers, engendering customer-orientedness and a market focus amongst staff (Berry, 1984; Ballantyne, 1997). This should produce more effective boundary-spanning encounters (i.e. – between employees and customers), better customer service, and improved customer satisfaction. The anticipated commercial benefits are centred around increased customer brand loyalty (Grönroos, 1981; Day, 2012). A reduction in customer churn rates, and an improvement in customer retention reduces external marketing costs, enabling effective financial and strategic planning by growing a more predictable customer base (Reichheld and Denny, 1990). It increases the frequency and value of repeat purchases, making customers more likely to trade up and accessorise. In short, effective IM produces fulfilled productive employees and satisfied, profitable customers.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jacobmorgan/2016/04/13/why-treating-your-employees-well-also-helps-your-customers/#4162d90971cc>

Whilst seemingly counterintuitive, the use of marketing strategies and tactics to reduce demand for a product, service or brand - demarketing - is widespread and effective. Alcohol, tobacco, sugar-rich products, carbon-depleting flights and heavily polluting cars are often subject to high taxation aimed at discouraging the consumption of products or services which may harm the consumer or others, and at offsetting the financial costs which such deleterious consumption may bring about. Although pricing is a basic element of the marketing mix, considering taxation as a form of marketing or demarketing may seem questionable given its prime role in funding state activities. However, advertisements, packaging and other media have carried conspicuous images and messages encouraging smoking cessation and responsible alcohol consumption, for example. This is clearly demarketing or counter-marketing, counteracting habit and social pressures to smoke, to reduce demand intentionally.

Certain organisations and industries may wish to moderate the effects of fluctuations in market demand. For example, a bank may find it unattractive to sell mortgage products to individual home buyers at a time when demand in that market segment is strong – perhaps because the bank wishes to invest its cash reserves in more lucrative short-term business. Rather than demarketing itself completely, alienating potential customers and undermining its competitive position, it may seek to smooth out the peaks and troughs of market demand, encouraging customers to purchase product at a time more advantageous to the organisation - a blend of marketing and demarketing.

Demarketing can sometimes occur unintentionally. In the early 1960s, the Wills cigarette company launched a television advert featuring a lone, overcoated smoker pausing reflectively on a deserted, rain-soaked corner at night to light a cigarette. Whilst the intention was seemingly to encourage male smokers to associate themselves with

the sophisticated intrigue of film noir leading men, the voice-over – “You’re never alone with a Strand” – inadvertently suggested that Strand smokers were loners relying on purchased items for companionship. In this case, the product was a commercial failure, especially amongst men, and was quickly discontinued. Conversely, an organisation may intentionally convey the impression of trying to reduce demand whilst deliberately stimulating it. This ‘treat them mean, keep them keen’ approach, though rather niche and often indiscernible, is used most often by aspirational brands selling high value products or services.

Although IM has enjoyed continued theoretical development since 1969, almost all research has adopted an organisational perspective, focusing on the intended strategies at board level and their commercial benefits to the organisation (e.g. – Berry and Parasuraman, 1991; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1993). Due to this, employees’ individual experiences, and the impact upon them of IM actions, have been overlooked. For example, many sources have interrogated how IM breaks down institutional silos and fosters interdepartmental communication and collaboration between staff, considering the benefits which the organisation may enjoy as a result, such as opportunities for innovation (e.g. – Christopher *et al.*, 1991; Kelemen, 2000). However, little consideration has been given to the benefits brought to staff or the challenges which they must overcome. This is potentially problematic. If employees are to be considered customers – an IM concept which sharply divides those who agree (e.g. – Berry, 1981; Ballantyne, 2003) and disagree (e.g. - Lings, 2000; Mudie, 2003) – it would appear necessary to gauge the efficacy of a customer-facing approach by eliciting feedback from those customers. Moreover, a purely top-down perspective seems incongruous with the democratising, inclusive intentions of IM. Therefore, this research adopts a

multi-stakeholder perspective through semi-structured interviews of managers and staff at various hierarchical levels and in different locations.

IM has enjoyed a half century of theoretical development, transferring traditional marketing concepts from organisations' external to internal environments. The debate on demarketing has helped to define its characteristics, split it into categories, and explore how organisations may use it to influence different external customer groups. However, the possibility of ID – demarketing targeted by an organisation at its own employees – was not considered until Vasconcelos' (2008) article, which conceptualises the phenomenon as botched but well-meaning IM without considering the possibility of intent. This research casts aside such a presupposition, entertaining the possibility that not just unintentional demarketing, but also ostensible marketing and selective demarketing, may also be transferable and extant within organisations' employee-facing strategies. To do so, it focuses on an employer which has effectuated cultural change through robust and sustained employee-facing strategies, whilst closing regional offices, reducing headcount and changing the makeup of its workforce – the UK Civil Service since 2010.

### **The research context: the UK Civil Service since the 2007-9 Financial Crisis, and a possible 'smoking gun'**

Following the UK's 2007-9 financial crisis, potential output fell by 3.8 percent to 7.5 percent, triggering austerity and fiscal constraints which squeezes public sector budgets and headcounts and – as this figure closely matches the further 3.9 percent to 8.7 percent reduction forecast for the UK post-Brexit (Crafts, 2019), an analysis of the

impact of austerity on public sector strategic change post-2008 is likely to provide an understanding into the potential post-Brexit landscape. Around 1.3 percent of the UK workforce are civil servants. The 2010-15 Conservative-Liberal Coalition government stated intent to reduce government costs by a third (Haddon, 2012), and by late 2015 there were the fewest civil servants since 1945 (Freeguard *et al.*, 2015), followed by further cuts (Stanley, 2016). Reform of public management within developed economies has occurred with and without the trigger of financial crises, although post-crisis austerity and fiscal pressure – for example, in New Zealand during 1984-90 – has been a key influence on public sector strategic change (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2017), with most 2010-2015 cutbacks being ‘across-the-board’ rather than prioritised and targeted (Randma-Liiv and Kickert, 2017). The recent cross-party consensus has been that the Civil Service should be nimble and commercially accountable (Richards *et al.*, 2008). The government promised to tackle ‘complacency’ (Page *et al.*, 2012), streamlining the government-public interface. From 2010-2015, the civil service headcount reduced by a fifth, and ministers proposed to rank civil servants individually on performance within their departments, saying the bottom 10 percent should be supported to improvement and then, if unsuccessful, dismissed (Bowie, 2015). It was proposed that 300,000 civil service apprentices be appointed by 2020, ostensibly reflecting the UK demographic. Whilst the Cabinet Office denied that existing roles would be cut to achieve this, another Cabinet Office report seemed to contradict this, explaining that future redundancy packages should be made less generous partly to “reduce current staff numbers...to create space to allow for the recruitment of apprentices” (Cabinet Office, 2016). By encouraging staff to apply for voluntary severance prior to the introduction of less generous packages, employee demand to



continue working at the Civil Service would thus be reduced – seemingly intentional ID.

The Civil Service sought changes to behaviour and culture (Page *et al.*, 2012), and the deployment of staff and resources interdepartmentally (HM Government, 2013) – both congruent with IM. Cabinet ministers wanted “departments to come together” (Public Administration Select Committee, 2013) to reduce the “unproductive frictional costs [which] arise as one silo rubs up against another” (Institute for Government, 2013). However, whilst they criticised the existing culture as sluggish, process-driven, change-resistant, bureaucratic and hierarchical (HM Government, 2012), they believed change achievable predominantly through underlining expectations of staff, commenting that “you don’t change the culture by trying to change the culture” (Francis Maude, Public Administration Select Committee, 2013) – contradicting IM. By introducing a redundancy payment ‘cap and floor’, policy seemed designed to counteract privilege. However, this incentivised lower-paid staff, and disincentivised higher-paid ones, to accept redundancy offers – selectively de/marketing Civil Service careers to its employees. By 2015, the average age of civil servants was higher than in 2010 and the workforce more concentrated amongst the senior grades. The proportion of female employees grew, but largely due to overrepresentation within lower grades and underrepresentation at higher ones (ONS, 2015). Moreover, ethnic diversity failed to catch up with nationwide proportions. London headcount grew at the expense of the regions (*ibid.*). Indeed, the Sheffield office of the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills – the department tasked with championing Chancellor Osborne’s “Northern Powerhouse” – was subsequently earmarked for relocation to London in a decision labelled by Jillian Thomas, President of Sheffield’s Chamber of Commerce, as

“symbolically contradictory” (SCCI, 2016). These outcomes invite scrutiny of civil service IM initiatives within this period against accepted IM principles.

### **Review of Key Internal Marketing Concepts**

IM is a collection of non-coercive strategies targeting traditional marketing approaches at an organisation’s employees, benefiting both organisation and staff (Kotler and Levy, 1969). As employees, audiences are captive to such monopolised advances, (Christopher *et al.*, 1991), but IM is nonetheless conceptualised similarly to outward-facing marketing, especially in its stimulation of demand. By facilitating relational networks, streamlining internal processes, and increasing interactivity, the workplace becomes a mutually supportive, fulfilling environment (Varey, 1995; Voima, 2001; Lings, 2004) where individuals commit to each other’s success. Much IM literature focuses upon its streamlining of these processes, and resulting employee satisfaction, by examining its integrative role and commercial potential (Varey and Lewis, 1999; Ballantyne, 2000). By dismantling silos, organisations benefit from self-actualised, empowered workforces (Reardon and Enis, 1990; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1993; Ballantyne, 1997; Varey and Lewis, 1999; Ballantyne, 2000), informed by frequent, constructive and effective internal communications (Varey, 1995; Hogg *et al.*, 1998; Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000; Kale, 2012) in which interpersonal interactions transcend departmental, hierarchical barriers (Kelemen, 2000; Hume and Hume, 2014). Colleagues are encouraged to treat each other as internal customers, and the organisation as an internal market (Awwad and Agti, 2011), thereby instilling practices best suited to deliver external customer value (George, 1990; Awwad and Agti, 2011; Day, 2012).

Much IM literature contends that organisations may orient staff towards external customer needs by affording employees similar levels of marketized respect (Grönroos, 1981; George, 1990; Ballantyne, 1997; Awwag and Agti, 2011; Day, 2012). Certain articles conceptualise IM as an ethos, rather than a process to facilitate that ethos – a pervasive, non-hierarchical mind-set or philosophy influencing all staff at all times (e.g. – Gummesson, 1991). The focus on interactivity is not only intended to improve relationships and communications, but to facilitate internal market exchange and knowledge transmission, nurturing organisational competencies and good practice (Ballantyne, 2000; Ahmed and Rafiq, 2003; Gounaris, 2006; Lindner and Wald, 2011). Therefore, from a commercial or cultural perspective, IM may be employed as an agent for organisational change by improving staff performance (Reardon and Enis, 1990; Christopher *et al.*, 1991; Rafiq and Ahmed, 1993; Varey, 1995; Varey and Lewis, 1999; Winston and Cahill, 2012). IM may regulate cultural standards (Gummesson, 1987; Piercy and Morgan, 1991; Kelemen and Pappasolomou-Doukakis, 2004), and 21<sup>st</sup> century scholars have focused mainly on its facilitation of workplace interactivity and relational networks (Varey, 1995; Voima, 2001; Lings, 2004). Berry's (1984) conceptualisation of IM encouraged staff and organisations to consider jobs as internal products to be marketed to staff by their employers. Indeed, IM may facilitate staff recruitment, retention and satisfaction (Glassman and McAfee, 1992; Quester and Kelly, 1999; Gounaris, 2006), enabling Human Resources strategy (Collins and Payne, 1991; Hales, 1994) – although most research championing IM's effect upon staff satisfaction has sought increasingly commercial justifications (Glassman and McAfee, 1992; Quester and Kelly, 1999; Gounaris, 2006).

**[insert table 1 here]**

Extant studies of IM assume that organisations have positive intentions towards non-delinquent employees. However, in recent years many organisations have made redundancies, suggesting that IM may be partially counterproductive, as they may wish to reduce their attractiveness to some staff. The trend is found elsewhere in the world, as IBM employees have initiated a class action against the company for age discrimination in response to IBM's strategy to lay off over 40 employees (Yohn, 2018). Moreover, a reduction in demand for an employer amongst specific staff may save the organisation money by discontinuing certain roles quickly and avoiding expensive severance negotiations. However, there has been no attempt to establish whether ID – unintended or otherwise – carries similarly sizeable levels of deleterious efficacy for organisations or individuals. It is therefore apposite to question the assumption that IM is undertaken for universally beneficial aims, and to scrutinise Ahmed and Rafiq's (2002) seminal but questionable assertion that IM is separated from Human Resources by its non-coercive ethos – which appears dismissive of HRM's benefits and the possibility of IM/ID and HRM policies being implemented in tandem. It also seemingly overlooks the recent proliferation of demarketing which has occurred in an external stakeholder-facing context (e.g. – of unprofitable credit card customers, urban car usage or smoking) and may be transferable to IM. This prompts an analysis of demarketing concepts.

### **Demarketing, and its potential applicability to Internal Marketing theory**

Demarketing occurs when marketing strategies, tactics, techniques and tools reduce, rather than increase, demand (Bradley and Blythe, 2014) for products, services (Mark and Brennan, 1995), organisations, brands, places (Medway *et al.*, 2010) or behaviours

(Wright and Egan, 2000). After Kotler and Levy's (1969) seminal categorisation, its development has been sporadic and, despite the rise of green demarketing for environmental sustainability (Sodhi, 2011; Armstrong Soule and Reich, 2016), it remains a niche theoretical area. Its main application is by social marketers compensating a lack of price-driven rationing mechanism (Lowe *et al.*, 2016) when running campaigns to encourage responsible drinking (Burton *et al.*, 2013), or to reduce plastic pollution (Eagle *et al.*, 2016), cigarette smoking (White and Thomas, 2015; Chauhan and Setia, 2016), visitor demand in environmentally sensitive areas (Armstrong and Kern, 2011), and even unprofitable Higher Education programmes (Gbadamosi and Madichie, 2014).

Bradley and Blythe's (2014) recategorization of demarketing is adopted here: (i) unintentional demarketing, the accidental consequence of mishandled attempts to increase demand (Kirchner, 2014; Madichie, 2014), underpinning Vasconcelos' (2008; 2011) explanation of ID; (ii) general demarketing, the purposeful attempt to reduce demand (Skinner, 2014); (iii) counter-marketing, which counteracts pressure to buy 'vice' products such as tobacco (Boddy, 2014); (iv) synchronomarketing, which deliberately markets and demarkets the same products or services to address fluctuations in supply and demand (Martinez-Ruiz, 2014). The final two categories of demarketing – (v) ostensible marketing; and (vi) selective demarketing – are particularly relevant to this research.

Ostensible marketing is less transparent, conveying the impression of attempting to increase demand whilst deliberately attempting to reduce it (Croft, 2014; McKechnie, 2014), therefore constituting demarketing. Its opposite, ostensible demarketing - when organisations seek to create the impression of demarketing whilst deliberately and

opaquely seeking to increase demand (Kotler and Levy, 1969) - requires organisational intent, and may encourage customer aspiration towards the brand. Ostensible marketing, however, may be cynical, perhaps malevolent, and against customer interests. Notably, there appear few barriers to its use against workforces.

The final category - selective demarketing – seeks to reduce demand only amongst predetermined market segments, whilst protecting demand amongst others (Kotler and Levy, 1969; Farquhar, 2014; Tan, 2014; Bradley and Blythe, 2014). Arguably, segmentation, through selecting desired audiences, implicitly deselects others (e.g. - clothing brands discouraging larger customers). However, selective demarketing actively identifies a target population and makes it unwelcome. In this way, deselection is deliberate rather than by default, and often recognised by the target. It would perhaps be kinder for organisations to use ‘ostensible selective marketing’ – not hitherto proposed in demarketing literature - to obscure their intentions and afford the target dignity. Again, there appears no insurmountable barrier to the use of selective demarketing, or ‘ostensible selective marketing’, within the workforce.

### **Internal Demarketing, the missing perspectives, and proposal of a taxonomy**

Internal demarketing (ID) was conceptualised by Vasconcelos (2008) as a range of unintentional and/or unsuitable organisational or managerial strategies, behaviours and actions, accidentally delivering damaging outcomes - reduced organisational identity, negative employee perceptions of work and colleagues, and lower staff morale. Moreover, such outcomes may undermine productivity, individually and organisationally, producing less market-oriented, customer-centric staff. Symptoms

include employee dissatisfaction, distrust and low commitment, contrasting sharply with intended IM outcomes.

Vasconcelos' (2008) practitioner-focused paper proposed seven antecedents of ID amongst managers – people devaluing, quality of working life unconcern, lack of vision, weak leadership, psychological contract violation, patchy or non-existent communication, and the contagion of distrust. 'Weak leadership' and 'inconsistent vision' are perhaps non-specific supra-categories encapsulating others. The categorisation provides practitioners genuine diagnostic value. Being attributed to unconsciously poor management, it constitutes a type of 'unintentional demarketing' (Kirchner, 2014; Madichie, 2014). He implied that ID always undermines organisational performance. However, by failing to consider the possibility of planned, strategic ID - perhaps covert and/or beneficial to the organisation - it is hitherto uncategorised by levels of intentionality. Therefore, this paper taxonomizes ID.

As Vasconcelos' (2008) ID concept assumes a lack of organisational intent, it owes less to traditional customer-oriented marketing strategies and theories than its parent IM concept, which recognises an organisational desire to benefit from external stakeholder marketing expertise by reapplying those competencies when approaching internal stakeholders (i.e. – the 'internal market' of employees). However, even the much more developed IM debate has curiously neglected to consider the potential relevance of 'segmentation, targeting and positioning' – rudimentary and interconnected marketing concepts (e.g. – Kotler, 1999) observed by almost all organisations commercially – when employees are being approached. Segmentation is the identification and selection of the most suitable, valued or profitable customers and prospects, targeting is the shaping of strategies towards specific segments rather than having a less impactful 'off-

the-peg' approach, and positioning is the way in which organisations add value to their propositions to differentiate themselves from rivals to adopt a sustainable and competitive stance within the marketplace. There appears little reason why an organisation may not adopt segmentation, targeting and positioning within its Internal Marketing strategy. Furthermore, it appears possible that, by having differentiated approaches to separate staff segments, varying degrees of marketing and demarketing may occur within those approaches – perhaps even suggesting variability along a bipolar construct.

Vasconcelos' (2008) concept of ID appears founded on a notion of IM which was at the time prevalent in studies of power within supply chain theories - of 'a rising tide which lifts all boats equally' (Crook and Combs, 2007) - and therefore the damage caused by ID is considered across the entire workforce rather than segments of it. In this respect, the concept may have benefited from an examination of critical HRM theories about workplace segmentation, and, in particular, Atkinson's (1984) 'Flexible Firm' model. This model identifies three groups of workers arranged by levels of strategic importance or value to the organisation: the primary or core group comprises knowledge workers, managers and technicians, who bring specific skills which differentiate the organisation within the marketplace. Accordingly, they are valued by the organisation, partially insulated from labour market fluctuations, well remunerated, secure, committed, strategically integral, and able to build a career. Staff in the secondary group (or 'first peripheral group'), whilst important, are less critical, and their skills are more readily replaceable. Therefore, they are less secure, more vulnerable to the vagaries of the labour market (i.e. – being made redundant and re-hired during economic peaks and troughs), and usually have jobs rather than careers. Workers in the tertiary group (or



‘second peripheral group’) are usually outsourced and subcontracted, casual, on zero-hours or short-term contracts, enjoy little job security or employment benefits. Whilst this final group often comprises unskilled or semi-skilled support staff, there are also highly skilled and remunerated consultants in this category, who may fully accept their externality to the organisation without any feelings of alienation.

Atkinson’s (1984) model has been critiqued and updated in the intervening years to reflect changes in employment practice such as the casualisation and automation of jobs, the growth in outsourcing, the liberalisation of labour laws and weakening of trades unions, and the rise of the ‘gig economy’. However, as a lens through which to examine the ID concept, it remains sufficiently relevant at a conceptual level. Critically, it prompts two important questions:

Q1) *“As organisations value some groups of staff more than others, do they target different staff segments with different forms of IM?”* and

Q2) *“As organisations sometimes find some groups of staff superfluous, may they purposefully target those segments with ID?”*

As ID has previously been treated as a homogenous construct, it is apposite to analyse the different forms which it may take. Based upon the aforementioned understanding of Atkinson’s (1984) model and of segmentation, targeting and positioning, it is proposed that the following forms may exist:

**[insert table 2 here]**

This paper proposes that some, but not necessarily all, ID may reflect Vasconcelos’ (2008) concept that it is unintentional, damaging, untargeted, and born of managerial

incompetence. However, it also proposes that ostensible internal marketing may occur if an organisation undertakes IM which creates the impression of being constructive, but is deliberately and covertly destructive to some or all employees. Moreover, as selective internal marketing and selective internal demarketing, it proposes that an organisation may segment its internal market and deliberately target IM at favoured segments and/or ID at unfavoured segments.

To explore the viability of the above proposed concepts, and to appreciate how they may play out in practice, a study of the experiences of UK Civil Service employees was carried out, specifically because an earlier round of data collection on IM had unexpectedly found repeated participant suggestions of intentional ID. Whilst proving organisational intent is extremely problematic and beyond the scope of this paper, the following section explores the context behind the participants' emerging comments, thereby adopting a 'pragmatic' research approach (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007).

## **Methodology**

### ***Research strategy***

The research strategy entailed conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with internal stakeholders at various hierarchical levels within the civil service. An interpretivist approach was selected to complement the overwhelmingly positivistic extant studies into IM, and to explore the nuanced ways in which employees experience IM and ID, how and why they believe it occurs, and the effects which it has upon their emotions, identities and everyday existences. Data triangulation was undertaken to ensure reliability and validity of the data analysis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This was

undertaken by utilising two separate interview techniques, and through the use of post-analysis member checking (*ibid.*).

### ***Sampling***

The population to be studied is all UK civil servants, regardless of hierarchical level, region, or other characteristic such as race, gender, age, educational level or length of service. The criteria for selection were that participants must have reported experiencing organisational actions which, according to their descriptions, appear to represent IM or ID. Purposive sampling was used, with the author leveraging upon personal contacts and friends of friends. An initial purposive sample of 12 civil servants were interviewed about their recent experiences of IM. When ID emerged repeatedly as an unanticipated theme, a snowball sample of 28 civil servants (introduced by the initial 12 seed participants) were interviewed with a focus on both IM and ID. Their departments had been restructured and rationalised. Some participants accepted severance packages, and some were subjected to performance management processes for supposed failure against subjective criteria, and categorised as 'needing development'. All had experienced IM, ID or both during periods of pay and recruitment freezes, decreased pension entitlements, reduced government investment, regional office closures and relocations, worsening staff morale and widespread retrenchment. Two thirds were male, and their average length of service was 23 years. Data saturation was adjudged to have occurred when each subsequent interview was yielding no more than one or two minutes of new insights for every 30 minutes of conversation. In accordance with Guest *et al* (2006), a predetermined quantity of interviews is unnecessary in qualitative research, which seeks

deep insights rather than generalisability or the establishment of correlation or causation between two or more variants.

### ***Interview protocol***

As the interview content was likely to be critical of the civil service and its managerial strategies, informal interviews were undertaken off-site and outside office hours. Several interviews were conducted whilst walking in public spaces such as car parks near to places of work. These walking interviews (e.g. – Moles, 2008; Evans and Jones, 2011) were not only employed for reasons of convenience, but also helped participants to relax by placing them in a neutral environment in which researcher-participant power dynamics were less likely to be perceptible, and by freeing them from the austerity of an interview room and face-to-face contact with an interviewer (e.g. – Anderson, 2004; Hein *et al.*, 2008). Participants were given considerable freedom within the semi-structured phenomenological interviews (Kvale, 1994) to express opinions and abstract emotions (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Each interview was recorded digitally, and a research journal was maintained to record any reflections, observations, in-situ analyses or comments which would not have been captured by audio recording.

### ***Data analysis***

Transcripts were analysed manually and subjected to Voice-Centred Relational Method analysis (VCRM) (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998), uncovering the plot, actors, events and imagery upon which the texts were structured. This also displayed participant self-

representations, experiences and first person narratives (Ahrens and Khalifa, 2013), interrelationships between actors in the IM/ID process, and contextualised cultural frameworks (Corlett, 2012). VCRM pursues researcher reflexivity (Nicholson, 1990), recognises researcher-participant positionality (Griffiths, 1995), and blurs researcher-participant boundaries (Troyna and Carrington, 1989), improving understanding of the participant and researcher (Greenbank, 2003), and enabling participant(s) emancipation (Barnes, 2003), or at least catharsis (Pillow, 2003). All such outcomes are desirable in research such as this, which explored the experiences and emotions of participants who may have been exploited or treated badly, who may feel victimised or alienated, and who are underrepresented within the extant literature.

Subsequent peer debriefing and member checking ensured validity, credibility and ‘rigour’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Cooper *et al.*, 1998), and mitigated against misrepresentation of the findings or of the participant voice (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In this way, imbalances of power were addressed through the triangulation process (Barnes, 2003). Emergent themes were scrutinised for congruence with concepts within the extant IM literature and in Vasconcelos’ (2008) seminal ID article. Certain themes from extant literature did not appear at all in the transcripts, which produced numerous salient themes hitherto unmentioned in existing published accounts.

**[insert table 3 here]**

### **Findings and interpretations**

All participants had experienced elements of IM during their careers, and most considered that these had intensified recently. They were not provided definitions of

IM, so that their opinions would not be influenced by the suppositions of the researcher or of extant theories. Most understood IM as a loose cluster of strategies and tactics which form a 'charm offensive' – a phrase used by eight of the 40 participants. A majority considered that IM is driven down through the hierarchy of an organisation from director level, and all found that the personalities and motivation levels of managers are critical to the success of IM. In other words, they believed IM to be a top-down and almost certainly formalised organisational approach, rather than instigated at multi-hierarchical levels or owned by a diverse range of stakeholders. The presence of power imbalances is implicit within this belief. Moreover, the dependency of successful IM upon individual managers' personalities and motivations appears to reinforce Vasconcelos' (2008) critique that managerial deficiencies – such as 'quality of working life unconcern' – can undermine the efficacy of IM. However, they stopped short of stating that it could produce ID.

### ***Unintentional Internal Demarketing***

A small number of participants described ID occurring through an inconsistency of message emanating from 'the top', noting that the value messages of 'work smarter', 'work together', and 'commit to other people's success' are placed within the paradoxical context of an individual performance environment. In essence, they described being pitched into competition with each other almost commercially with what they consider the 'old-fashioned values of co-operation and teamwork', thereby causing confusion and, perhaps, a cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) which undermines the credibility of IM. One middle-ranking officer commented that, "they want us to commit to each other's success, but then, when it comes to our annual

appraisals, we're in direct competition with our workmates. So there's this contradiction – we have to support our colleagues, and we want to, but by doing this we can push them above us in the league table and leave ourselves in the relegation places”. The simultaneous encouragement of conflictingly collectivistic and individualistic working practices may be considered ‘unintentional demarketing’ (Kotler and Levy, 1969; Bradley and Blythe, 2014) caused by ‘blurred vision’ (Vasconcelos, 2011), although ‘lack of information’ and a ‘spread of distrust’ appear as consequences rather than antecedents. It appears that the organisation intends positive effects and aims to treat all staff equally in this respect, but gains negative outcomes through a lack of awareness.

Other participants described a greater level of organisational disregard for region-based staff, highlighting the cascading of emails from head office inviting staff to events in London at impossibly short notice. There is a widespread perception of an organisational lauding of values which are clearly unattainable for certain staff segments due to personal circumstances. One SEO explained that the Civil Service encourages staff to move jobs, and to move locations, every six months or each year, to gain experience of different aspects of the organisation, but *“if you're some time-served officer with twenty years' experience, a mortgage, family and friends, you don't want to be uprooting every year or so. You've got ties”*. In this instance, the organisation is failing to value the continuity and mastery of a job which comes from experience. Therefore, the organisation is failing to recognise insurmountable personal barriers to participation in such initiatives, or is choosing to ignore them. The same SEO mentioned that, for those who do not wish to relocate frequently, moving between offices, *“there becomes this accusation that if you don't do it, you're somehow unambitious and you don't wanna get on”*, thereby stigmatising an employee segment

by negative implication, and alienating a group through disadvantage and isolation (e.g. – Kalekin-Fishman, 1996). However, only if this amounts to deliberate segmentation may it be considered selective internal marketing or selective internal demarketing. In the absence of insights to suggest this, it is likely that senior managers are – through over-enthusiasm, impatience, over-simplistic thinking or lack of awareness – failing to recognise staff diversity, and therefore producing unintentional internal demarketing. Paradoxically, it stems from a lack of segmentation in this instance.

### ***Ostensible Internal Marketing***

One participant discussed the perceived disingenuousness of his organisation's IM, commenting that staff are promised increased job satisfaction and benefits in lieu of cost-of-living pay increases. He surmised that spin [his term] was being employed – an opportunist recontextualising of truths (e.g. – Roberts, 2005). Giving an example, he noted the organisation's tendency to repackage benefits without adding anything, but communicating them as if they are incremental benefits: ***“They’re saying they’re now offering five days’ training. Well, we’ve always had that, but they reoffer, repackage it as five days’ training...just by selling it in a different way. It’s marketing it in a way that makes everyone think it’s new”***. Here, ‘marketing’, ‘selling’ and ‘repackage’ are used without prompting (apart from the possibility of being influenced by the term ‘internal marketing’ in the participant information form) to imply deceit and commercialism, suggesting the approach is deliberate, predetermined, organisational and strategic, rather than tacit, accidental, individual or ad hoc. The organisation's leaders, or at least their HR department, must know that the new training is the same as the existing training, but are choosing to imply through an IM message that it is



improved or new. This level of awareness, planning and disingenuousness, suggests ‘ostensible internal marketing’, in which the organisation appears to increase staff demand whilst actually trying to decrease it. Certainly, he believes that the organisation is obscuring its true intentions towards employees, which suggests not just ID, but a form of it which goes beyond Vasconcelos’ (2008) concept.

Some staff designated during appraisals as ‘needing development’ described senior managers’ reassurances as ‘spin’, with one clerical officer venturing that they inhabit a “*parallel universe*” and believe that affected staff “*aren’t going to feel all that bothered because all they need is more development*”. His comment that managers underestimate employees’ unhappiness may be conjecture but illustrates staff perceptions of superiors arising from poor IM. He also describes alienation increasing through workplace fragmentation – particularly the geographical dispersion of colleagues. The alienating effect of distance, borne of an organisational desire to expose staff to broader experiences, may be unintentional internal demarketing - botched IM - or ‘ostensible internal marketing’. It is worsened through insensitivity towards regional workers. Therefore, IM may negatively affect those unable to embrace its initiatives due to personal circumstances, and it may not just be refuseniks who get left behind and stigmatised. An unscrupulous organisation could exploit this phenomenon purposefully.

### ***Selective Internal Marketing***

The segmented and targeted nature of IM came out in roughly half the interviews. One noteworthy example was a description of ‘soundbites’ which ‘unwittingly’ appeal to ‘their own type’. A participant explained that upwardly mobile staff on fast-track development programmes or accelerated learning programmes would identify with IM

messages focused on self-actualisation, empowerment, and working unencumbered by less talented staff members in a 'leaner, fitter, stronger, faster' and more competitive organisation. He believed that such messages would not appeal to less mobile, regional and lower-ranked staff members, and indeed may even result in them feeling threatened or alienated: *"They're unwittingly appealing to the people who have come from the same backgrounds as themselves – Russell Group degrees, accelerated promotion scheme, ruthless go-getters who all expect to be in charge of a thousand staff before they're out of short pants"*. His use of the word 'unwittingly' suggests a perception of unintentional segmentation, undertaken here by psychographic characteristics, but the close congruence of the message to one specific employee segment suggest an intent to segment. If fast trackers are more competitive and ruthless in their work ethos, as implied, this may be exploited by an organisation which sends messages appealing to their comparatively higher desire for self-actualisation and lower desire for stability, and their increased willingness to defer remunerative gains to achieve long-term career success. Moreover, the participant here appears to perceive himself as belonging within the less valued and critical 'secondary group' of Atkinson's (1984) Flexible Firm model, and the fast trackers within the core, 'primary group'. Mixing his metaphors, he explains *"we're just the shop floor workers, and we just do the monkey-grinding jobs, so I guess what do our aspirations matter to the people in charge of these messages? We're not 'the chosen ones' "*. It is understandable and – within HRM literature – well documented that the organisation would treat members of the two groups differently. However, this is the first instance of a research participant observing the difference, and explaining the resulting alienation and begrudging, in the context of IM. His observations fit the proposed characteristics of selective internal marketing but not

selective internal demarketing, as there is no suggestion that the ‘unfavoured’ employees were deliberately alienated by the organisation.

Participants began to describe destructive IM – or ID - through references to spin, disingenuous IM and workplace alienation, and they attributed such phenomena to the organisation or those directing the organisation (e.g. – politicians), rather than the managers tasked with implementing IM. Whilst IM concerns both workplace inclusivity and ‘job products’, several participants commented that they felt excluded or, at best, peripheral, working in a satellite office at regional level, because they perceived that IM was targeted disproportionately at London-based staff. Here the criticism is aimed not at managers, but at those dictating direction. Moreover, it suggests that the workforce is receiving or perceiving IM in a segmented manner (although it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the organisation has segmented its staff by location). This could well constitute selective internal marketing, in which favoured employee segments are targeted with favourable campaigns.

### ***Selective Internal Demarketing***

Whilst members of a social group may bond through shared negative perceptions of a rival group (Sherif *et al.*, 1961), region-based employees appeared to feel genuinely disadvantaged compared to London-based counterparts through centralisation, and trusted with only the less critical or glamorous jobs. *“If you want to do jobs which aren’t just routine, or stuff which isn’t just running around after other people who get all the plaudits”*, explained one region-based officer, *“then you have to go to London – simple as. And that’s not an option for lots of us.”* Empowerment and fairness are central to IM, but here opportunities for one workforce segment are disproportionately

limited, forcing workers to seek compensatory benefits outside the IM strategy. A number of region-based Senior Executive Officers (SEOs) – those line managers in charge of a small group of staff, and earning around £40k per annum – felt that their focus on pay had increased in recent years, as they perceived reduced opportunities for promotion. One explained that, *“a few years ago, I would have forsaken a few grand a year in order to do something worthwhile – something which would help my career in the long run or bring me job satisfaction. But there isn’t anything like that now to take your focus away from the pay, and that’s being whittled down all the time.”* The lack of career progression means those workers may be unlikely to pursue those desirable organisational values which would need to be evidenced by promotion candidates and which IM intends to instil. Indeed, one SEO, scornfully mocking the government’s and Civil service’s austerity mantra of “we’re all in this together” (i.e. – “the wealthy are also making sacrifices for the cause”), explained that smaller regional offices felt disproportionately affected by cuts, denuded of essential layers of personnel, struggling to recruit quality employees, and therefore becoming less diverse and sustainable. It is unclear whether the organisation is purposefully reducing demand for jobs from a targeted workforce segment, but the changes driving the reduction in demand are planned and intended, and there is clearly segmentation underpinning the initiative.

When discussing their organisation’s personal development plan, many participants explained how the bottom ranked 25 percent of staff after annual appraisal are referred to as ‘people needing development’. Previously, this had been the bottom ten percent. One region-based SEO explained felt that *“it’s just arbitrary. Every organisation’s got to have 25 percent of its workforce in the bottom 25 percent of its workforce. Not everyone can be top. What if everyone’s performing really well, or maybe only two or*

*three percent are problematic? Why beat up the bottom quarter? It's ridiculously unfair.*” Therefore, staff who had been in the middle category now found themselves in the bottom band. Moreover, affected staff, although told to think of themselves as ‘needing more development than other people’ rather than ‘poor performers’, were not subsequently offered that development, and therefore left in limbo. This suggests that unfavoured staff are targeted for detrimental treatment or deliberate neglect, and that the policy is built upon the organisation’s knowledge, rather than ignorance, of employees’ characteristics.

Staff reported feeling alienated and angry at this initiative for several reasons: feeling publicly stigmatised when identified in the bottom quartile; the non-appearance of much-vaunted development training causes suspicion that their negative identification is not for developmental purposes but for discipline; and the unfairness of an arbitrary ranking system in which a quarter of the workforce will, by default, be classified as ‘needing development’ regardless of their strengths. Several participants described how, when finding themselves in the bottom 25 percent, they felt as though they were looking upwards at everybody else, as though they were letting the side down and inferior – certainly not a cognitive outcome sought by IM. This planned targeting of negative outcomes at an unfavoured employee segment suggests selective internal demarketing.

To illustrate the extent to which participants perceived the categories of ID proposed within the taxonomy in table 2, the quotations most indicative of each have been collated below.

**[insert table 4 here]**

## **Discussion**

The concept of ID (Vasconcelos, 2011) is niche. However, participants described phenomena constituting ID, helping to develop Vasconcelos' (2011) theory, especially when considered within the broader demarketing debate (e.g. – Bradley and Blythe, 2014). ID presents itself repeatedly, despite participants only being asked to discuss IM. They complain that many IM initiatives are inappropriate, divisive, demoralising, insensitive and unrealistic. ID may be accidental, or the result of the organisation and management not caring about or understanding workforce segments, as per Vasconcelos (2008). Participants sense it results from institutionalised attitudes within a privileged elite which cannot empathise with all staff. The wider organisational context – especially of the shifting emphasis towards fast-track managers – makes deliberate, selective ID more likely. Whilst IM may transmit positive messages, doing so inappropriately may be perceived as 'spin'. Moreover, if messages are not seen as sincere, they may be more damaging than no messages, producing staff resentment.

The research illustrates that IM initiatives may bring negative results for employees and/or organisations. If IM is undertaken genuinely, safeguards such as internal audits comprising IM metrics can ensure that inappropriate IM strategies are detected and their effects mitigated. Designing audits and metrics, especially for IM 'pinch points' of potential dissatisfaction, would be a worthwhile focus for further research. To prevent ill-conceived or contradictory IM, decision making employee representation may be built into initiatives. The findings also challenge the theoretical preconception that IM is inherently positive, and that any IM is better than no IM. Moreover, ID categories and their characteristics are examined. Several new concepts are thus proposed by hybridising Vasconcelos' (2011) emerging concept of ID with other sub-theories: (i)

‘unintentional internal demarketing’; (ii) ‘ostensible internal marketing’; (iii) ‘selective internal marketing’; and (iv) ‘selective internal demarketing’. Throughout the interviews, the question of organisational intent was never far beneath the surface of participants’ comments. This suggests that ID may be visualised as per the following diagram, in which the organisational intent to segment the internal market (i.e. – employees), and to alienate employees, are the key variables.

**[insert figure 1 here]**

The Civil Service may engage in ‘ostensible internal marketing’. A proposed new concept, this is based upon ostensible marketing (Croft, 2014; McKechnie, 2014) where organisations give the impression of trying to increase demand whilst seeking to reduce it – in this case amongst staff. Just as selective demarketing (Farquhar, 2014; Tan, 2014) deliberately reduces demand within a specific segment, ‘selective internal demarketing’ – another proposed category – deliberately reduces demand within specific workforce segments. Organisations may pursue this approach if one workforce segment is less desirable, lowering retention of unwanted employees – possibly to avoid redundancy payments or prolonged performance management processes. This is largely unsubstantiated but, considering the context, possible. It constitutes a cynical, covert approach, difficult to identify. Organisations may undertake ‘selective internal marketing’, identifying favoured workforce segments for positive campaigns. However, the excluded may (if aware) feel undervalued and marginalised, so the approach could also be considered by default to constitute ‘selective internal demarketing’ simultaneously. In this respect, unintentional demarketing (Bradley and Blythe, 2014; Kirchner, 2014; Madichie, 2014) occurring within organisations as ‘unintentional internal demarketing’ and including the accidentally deleterious side effects of

‘selective internal marketing’, may be more damaging in some respects than deliberate ‘selective internal demarketing’, as the organisation and its managers misunderstand its effects and overlook staff alienation.

It may be possible for organisations to combine two approaches (e.g. - targeting ‘ostensible internal marketing’ at one segment which is intended to perceive the initiative incorrectly as well-intentioned would constitute ‘selective ostensible internal marketing’). All forms of ID would seem to undermine at least some employees, their perceptions of the organisation, and their satisfaction, so should not be used.

## **Conclusions**

This paper makes a specific theoretical contribution to IM literature by re-examining the previously undeveloped concept of ID within the contemporary landscape of employer-employee relations. Rather than automatically assuming ID may only result from well-intentioned but botched attempts at IM driven by the deficiencies of individual managers, it approaches the topic openly and uncovers insights which suggest otherwise. Whilst establishing intent and causality are beyond the scope of this paper, the negative experiences described by numerous participants, when contextualised within publicly available government statements and statistics appertaining to Civil Service policy, strongly suggest that ID may be deliberate, strategic, organisational and sustained. Furthermore, the data suggest that there are several categories of ID, each with their individual characteristics but with some overlap. By providing the first taxonomy of ID, these aspects are brought into clear relief.

The implications of the findings are far-reaching for a range of stakeholders. Employees, unions and employment lawyers should note the different types of ID,



consider their possible antecedents, and plan strategies for dealing with incidences of ID. Ethical employers may also benefit from a reflexive reading of this paper, endeavouring to avoid the deleterious approaches to employer-employee relations described herein. Finally, this broadening of the ID concept should encourage academic theorists to adopt a less utopian understanding of IM and one which accommodates the changes in employment practices which have evolved since IM's introduction around half a century ago.

This paper is slightly limited insofar as it focuses on one specific sector and employer within one country, using data which was collected in a relatively short cross-section of time. It does not seek to ascertain correlation, and it would be difficult to prove intent. For these reasons, future research could adopt a more positivistic stance to interrogate the relationships between certain organisational conditions, managerial actions and employee perceptions and affect. It could collect data longitudinally to ascertain the extent to which ID changes as the organisation's needs and strategies evolve, and do so from several organisations in different sectors and locations, to provide more generalizable findings. However, for any research such as this, the smoking gun of intent provided by context is likely to be far more attainable than any signed confession of guilt.

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## Internal Demarketing in the UK Civil Service since the 2007-9 Financial Crisis

### Tables and Figures:

Table 1: Summary of the main strands of extant IM literature.

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Key sources</u>
Using marketing advantages internally	Christopher, Payne and Ballantyne (1991)
Improving staff performance	Berry and Parasuraman (1991)
Relational networks / interaction	Varey (1995); Voima (2001); Lings (2004)
Staff recruitment, retention and satisfaction	Berry (1984); Gounaris (2006)
Instilling in staff a customer orientation	Grönroos (1981); George (1990); Day (2012)
Conduit for HRM strategy	Hales (1994)
'Staff are internal customers' / 'jobs are internal products'	Berry (1984); Ballantyne (1997)
Motivating staff towards organisational goals	Rafiq and Ahmed (1993)
Internal transfer of knowledge	Gounaris (2006)
Internal communications	Varey (1995); Kale (2012)
Agent for organisational change	Reardon and Enis (1990); Varey and Lewis (1999)
Dismantling organisational silos	Christopher <i>et al</i> (1991); Kelemen (2000)
Management of organisational culture	Gummesson (1987); Piercy and Morgan (1991)

Table 2: A proposed taxonomy of Internal Demarketing.

<b><u>Internal Demarketing</u></b>	<b><u>Characteristics</u></b>
Unintentional Internal Demarketing	<p>Result of organisation's inabilities or lack of knowledge;</p> <p>Organisation does not seek to segment employees.</p> <p>Organisation intends positive effects.</p> <p>Employees experience negative effects.</p>
Ostensible Internal Marketing	<p>Requires knowledge of employees and detailed planning / implementation.</p> <p>Organisation may or may not segment employees.</p> <p>Organisation intends negative effects.</p> <p>Employees experience negative effects.</p>
Selective Internal Marketing	<p>Requires knowledge of employees and detailed planning / implementation.</p> <p>Organisation segments employees.</p> <p>Organisation intends positive effects for targeted employees, and neutral but not negative effects for untargeted employees.</p> <p>Targeted employees experience positive effects.</p> <p>Untargeted employees experience neutral or negative effects.</p>
Selective Internal Demarketing	<p>Intended.</p> <p>Requires knowledge of employees and detailed planning / implementation.</p> <p>Organisation segments employees.</p> <p>Organisation intends negative effects for targeted employees, and neutral or positive effects for untargeted employees.</p> <p>Targeted employees experience negative effects.</p> <p>Untargeted employees experience neutral or positive effects.</p>



Table 3: Methodological tools used and their purposes

<b><u>Methodological tool</u></b>	<b><u>Details</u></b>
Semi-structured interviews  (e.g. – King and Horrocks, 2010; Creswell, 2014)	Twenty-five participants, duration 17 to 119 minutes, audio recorded.  Open ended questioning technique.
Walking interviews  (e.g. – Moles, 2008; Evans and Jones, 2011)	Fifteen participants, duration 13 to 40 minutes, audio recorded.  Open ended questioning technique.
Voice-Centred Relational Method analysis  (Mauthner and Doucet, 1998)	Four readings of each transcript to analyse  i) the ‘plot’ - actors and actions, objects and subjects, events, language, time and imagery  ii) the voice of ‘I’ - personal pronouns, perceived positionality relative to others, experiences and self-concepts (Ahrens and Khalifa, 2013), self-representations and narratives  iii) relationships – with individuals, groups, networks and society. Including colleagues, their organisations, friends and family members  iv) wider contexts - belief systems, religions, societal mores, laws, expectations, social units and cultures – which may restrict and inhibit and/or enable and liberate
Peer Debriefing  (Lincoln and Guba, 1985)	Discussion with researcher colleagues regarding analysis of certain transcripts which were difficult, contradictory, ambiguous or contentious, to ascertain if their data analyses were consistent with those of the author.  This contributes to the ‘truth value’ of the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.301)

<p>Member Checking</p> <p>(Lincoln and Guba, 1985)</p>	<p>Eighteen participants.</p> <p>Discussion with the participant regarding analysis of transcripts, to gauge consistency between their analyses of the phenomenon/situation and those of the author.</p> <p>By obtaining respondents' 'consensual validation' (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber, 1998), misrepresentation of participants is avoided, and the transferability of findings from one participant to another is established (LoBiondo-Wood and Haber, 2006).</p>
<p>Research journal</p> <p>(e.g. – Flick, 2009; Silverman, 2013)</p>	<p>To record impromptu reflections, observations, in-situ analyses or comments.</p>

Table 4: Participant comments mapped against proposed categories of ID.

<b><u>Internal Demarketing</u></b>	<b><u>Example quotations</u></b>
Unintentional Internal Demarketing	<p>i) “They come out with these happy-clappy soundbites which <i>unwittingly</i> [emphasis added here] appeal to their own type”</p> <p>ii) “I feel a bit sorry for some of the managers, who genuinely seem to be trying to do their best but just don’t have the real-world experience of people like us to understand how to do it”</p> <p>iii) “They’ve made as real mess of it. Trying to get us competing against each other like a commercial company, but also trying to keep all the collegiality and mutual support between colleagues – that’s just ill thought-through”</p>
Ostensible Internal Marketing	<p>i) “They spin the benefits, but most of the time those benefits have always been there. Like saying that now they’re gonna guarantee us five training days. Well, they always gave us five training days, so it’s just spin”</p> <p>ii) “We get these bullshit updates from the perm sec every week or two on the intranet site, telling us about what he’s been doing at the weekend – all mundane stuff to make him look like a man of the people. ‘I’m ok, you’re ok.’ Stuff about going to Sainsbury’s and mowing the lawn. It’s probably written for him by some intern.</p>
Selective Internal Marketing	<p>i) “A lot of the messages seem to be deliberately aimed at these young fast-trackers. You know? New graduates in smart suits who expect to be perm sec [permanent secretary – the national head of a Civil Service department] within 18 months”</p> <p>ii) “Encouraging all this staff mobility within regions, and then assuming that people who do not switch region every few months are unambitious – that just stinks. They can’t operate without the</p>

	<p>ground troops, and they know we can't just up sticks and move like the young graduates"</p> <p>iii) "Lots of these initiatives realistically only apply if you're in London. The best jobs get placed there, the heaviest investment in staff, all the main perks and opportunities"</p>
Selective Internal Demarketing	i) "I feel like they're trying to champion everything which I'm obviously not. I feel like they don't want people like me in the organisation – old dinosaurs who have been doing this for 25 years and who are on a decent pension"

*Figure 1: Segmentation-Alienation Intent within Internal Demarketing*

