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ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY AND PLACE: A DISCURSIVE EXPLORATION OF HEGEMONY AND RESISTANCE

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses how three distinct cohorts of workers in a recently merged UK-based college of Further Education understood their group and their organization's identities. We focus in particular, but not exclusively on how the groups' shared understandings of 'place' informed their identity accounts. Identities are theorised as being constituted within discursive regimes, and place treated as a discursive resource on which individuals and groups may draw in their attempts to author versions of their selves. In our case, understandings of place were also a resource on which some people drew in nostalgic reminiscence, and others used to fantasise about their preferred futures for the college. Framed by our intention to identify plurivocal native interpretations of place and identity in ways that promote the reading of polysemy back into case research, the contribution this paper makes is threefold. First, it adds to efforts to theorize organizations and identities as unstable social constructions constituted through acts of languaging. Second, it illustrates how different groups of local actors with distinct histories and value preferences may draw on their place of work in order to author contrasting versions of their organization's identity. Finally, our paper analyses the attempts made by senior managers and groups of other staff to

define their organization in particular ways, as hegemonic 'moves' in an ongoing struggle for control over the organization as a discursive space.

INTRODUCTION

'Every institution captures something of the time and interest of its members and provides something of a world for them; in brief, every institution has encompassing tendencies' (Goffman, 1961, p.15).

How do different groups of participants draw on 'place' as a discursive resource in their efforts to author accounts of their organization's identity, and how are these constructions implicated in inter-textual networks of competing hegemonic claims? In this paper these issues are addressed through an analysis of employees' descriptions of their work place at Alpha College[1], a UK-based Further Education (FE) institution. Consonant with the 'linguistic turn' in organization studies, we regard 'organization' as constituted through language, and focus on how employees constructed the text of the organization through their descriptions of it. In particular, we highlight their attribution of meaning to the college as a place, and how place featured in acts of nostalgia and fantasy. We argue that local actors constructed their organization through ongoing linguistic acts of labelling and description, which were implicated in the scapegoating of 'place', and in the constitution of the organization as a locale for hegemony and resistance.

In specific terms, we analyse three distinct cohorts' conceptions of their group and organizational identities and investigate some of the ways in which their accounts of place figured in contests over the college's identity. The organization had recently been created by the merger of two previously independent FE institutions, and identity questions such as 'what is important about this organization?' and 'what is the future for us?' were salient for most people. Our emphasis on place as a discursive resource for individuals and groups embroiled in reciprocal but asymmetric relations of power provides, we contend, a valuable way forward for us in our attempts to

theorise the dialogical nature of collective identities (Humphreys and Brown, 2002). That is, it permits an investigation into how groups of people interpret their work environments and co-opt these readings into accounts of what is central, distinctive and enduring about their organization (Albert and Whetten, 1985). Our arguments are predicated on a brief review of the literatures on the 'turn' to language (Chia, 1996; Westwood and Linstead, 2001), collective identity (Whetten and Godfrey, 1998), and place (Gieryn, 2000; Yanow, 1998). Our principal argument is that understandings of place were a discursive resource on which groups drew in their efforts to author versions of their organization's identities, and that these accounts both constituted acts of nostalgia, fantasy and scapegoating, and were moves in an ongoing struggle for control over the college as a discursive space (Clegg, 1989; Gramsci, 1971).

IDENTITY, PLACE, HEGEMONY AND RESISTANCE

Organizations are socially constructed through acts of languaging which create 'situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relations between people and groups of people' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p.258). Rather than independent entities, organizations are appropriately regarded as texts, constituted in discourse, and analysable as locales in which emerge 'complexes of social meanings' (Kress, 1995, p.122). Organizations as texts consist of unstable, shifting networks of signifiers from which meanings emerge, are deferred and dispersed (Westwood, 1987). Importantly, language not only affects what we see, but the logic we use to structure our thought (Gergen and Thatchenkery, 1996). That is, language is a medium that both makes possible and which limits understanding (Gadamer, 1975). Language, then, is best 'understood as a representational technology that actively organizes, constructs and sustains social reality', and one task of research is to analyse

how communities' discursive practices 'come to form the instinctively shared calibration points for defining local reality' (Chia and King, 2001, p.312).

Contrary to dominant functionalist perspectives (e.g., Ashforth & Mael, 1996; Brickson, 2000), we regard organizational identities not as generally static and objectively existing entities, but as extremely fluid discursive constructions constantly being made and re-made in the Web sites, videos, conversations, reports, memos, and letters exchanged between insiders and between insiders and outsiders (Coupland and Brown, 2004). Individual and collective identities are linguistic accomplishments constituted within discursive regimes that 'provide social actors with important symbolic resources for identity negotiation' (Read and Bartkowski, 2000, p.398). The discourses subjectively available to participants offer epistemological spaces to individuals and to groups who are thus enabled to reflexively author versions of themselves in their efforts to render their working lives intelligible (Bruner, 1990; Polkinghorne, 1991). The discourses associated with the professional identities of educators, public sector professionals and strategic leadership were all important in our case (du Gay, 1996). The identity narratives people construct represent their efforts to come to terms with 'the reconstructed past, the perceived present, and anticipated future' (McAdams, 1996, p.307) in ways which provide a sense of unity and ameliorate the 'contradictions and multiplicities of modernity' (Frosh, 1991, p.5). Yet, such assemblages are essentially contingent and fragile, no more than temporary marshalling yards of power/knowledge that endeavour 'to endure in a congenitally failing battle with a bewildering array of multifarious potential allies and assailants' (Lilley, 1995, p.79; cf. Foucault, 1980).

One important but frequently overlooked symbolic/discursive resource which individuals and groups may make use of in their attempts to author, defend, contest and promote preferred versions of their identities, is 'place'. A number of theorists have noted that physical settings are 'not ascribed great significance in conventional organizational theory' (Berg and Kreiner, 1990, p.24), that spatiality has been largely 'neglected' (Yannow, 1998, p. 216), and place treated as an epiphenomenon rather than integral to processes of organizing and meaning formation (Rosen, Orlikowski and Schmahmann, 1990). The research which has been conducted has, however, led to a sophisticated understanding of how space is filled 'with meanings and presences' (Kornberger and Clegg, 2004, p.1096) and saturated with symbolic possibilities (Grafton-Small, 1985; Olins, 1989) that both provoke cognitive and sensuous responses (Gagliardi, 1990, p.13) and which participants may be able to 'read' in their efforts to reduce their behavioural uncertainty and resolve confusions (Bolman and Deal, 1984). Other theorists have observed that the design of buildings sustains difference and hierarchy by excluding and segregating categories of people (Bourdieu, 1990), and that social control derives in part from the calculative division of space (Foucault, 1979) and especially its 'farming… through the use of lines, columns, and measured wall intervals' (Rosen, Orlikowski and Schmahmann, 1990, p.76).

In this paper we focus both on the meanings that people invested in their place of work and how their understandings of place influenced the accounts they gave of their group and organizational identities. Such identities are forged from multiple discursive regimes that intersect in organizations which 'are not discursively monolithic, but pluralistic and polyphonic' (Ford, 1999, p.485). Organizations are

politicised arenas in which 'contestations over the signifying process' (Westwood and Linstead, 2001, p.5) mark them as 'sites of struggle where different groups compete to shape… social reality… in ways that serve their own interests' (Mumby and Clair, 1997, p.182). Each set of discursive practices is also an act of power/knowledge that self-privileges and legitimates while simultaneously marginalising and banishing alternatives (Foucault, 1980). Over time some meanings may become seemingly taken-for-granted, reified, and thus definitively authoritative totalizations. Yet in most instances there is a continuing struggle for 'closure', such that even power relations that appear to be fixed are really the outcome of ongoing discursive struggles over the meaning of objects of knowledge, identities and relationships (Clegg, 1989; Mumby and Stohl, 1991). In short, as organizational texts are inevitably fractured, contested and multi-layered, hegemony is never total and control never complete (Rhodes, 2000). Hegemony is a key concept for us, and our use of it derives from Gramsci (1971) to refer to a form of cleverly masked, taken-for-granted domination (Baack and Prasch, 1997, p.134) that results in the 'mobilization and reproduction of the active consent of dominated groups' (Clegg, 1989, p.160).

A substantial literature suggests that discursive practices associated with senior managers, and those in positions of influence outside organizations such as government officials, exert pervasive controls over other participants, colonizing them from the inside to create 'engineered selves' (Kunda, 1992), 'designer selves' (Casey, 1995) or 'enterprise selves' (du Gay, 1996). One version of this argument is that normative or psychological controls operating through emotional dependence and identification combined with panoptic controls residing in language, and in the spatial and temporal arrangements which work on the human body, result in a form of

organizational totalitarianism (Schwartz, 1990; Willmott, 1993). Most theorists, however, recognise that while subjectivity is 'a product of disciplinary mechanisms, techniques of surveillance and power/knowledge strategies' (Knights and Willmott, 1989, p.554), participants in organizations can mostly draw on a wide range of discursive resources in authoring themselves, and that ambivalence rather than subjugation is the more likely result of attempts at identity-imposition (Oglensky, 1995, p.1042). Indeed, there exist a number of empirical studies of the oppositional strategies by which people create physical, emotional and symbolic space for themselves (Collinson, 1994) including, for example, rumour-mongering and whistle blowing (Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994), the use of irony (Trethewey, 1997), scepticism (Fleming and Sewell, 2002), and cynicism (Fleming and Spicer, 2003).

In this paper we analyse how different groups of employees drew on their understandings of the college as a place of work in order to develop, promote and defend distinctive accounts of their, and their organization's, identity. We focus in particular on some of the consonant and contrasting ways in which senior managers and two distinct cohorts of staff interpreted the main college site, known as 'Westchester Road', and how these understandings were instrumental in disputes over the organization's future. Our discursive approach is a direct challenge to positivistic conceptions of identity that tend to reify organizations, ignore issues of spatiality, and fail to acknowledge that organizations are power effects.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Conducted from an interpretive perspective, or 'inquiry from the inside' (Evered and Louis, 1981; Geertz, 1973), the initial primary objective of the study was to produce

an ethnographic account of the working lives of those employed at Alpha College[2]. Our principal data sources were 75 formal semi-structured interviews conducted between January 2002 and January 2003, a larger number of informal interviews, observations made at staff and management meetings, and a range of documentation including student prospectuses, government inspection reports, Internet pages, committee minutes, letters, memoranda and newspaper reports referring to the college. All grades and types of staff within the college were interviewed including senior and middle managers, lecturers, administrators, clerical and technical support workers. No one refused to be interviewed and all our interviewees agreed to be recorded on tape. The average length of each interview was 63 minutes. Each interview was fully transcribed to yield around 10 000 words of transcript data, making a total interview data set of approximately 750 000 words. We were able to check emergent themes with 8 key informants or 'conversational partners' (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p. 11), who were formally interviewed twice and engaged in regular informal conversation throughout the 12 month data collection period.

The initial semi-structured interview schedule was designed to create 'conversations with purpose' (Burgess, 1984, p. 102), from broad questions such as: what is it like to work here? What image do you think the college projects to the outside world? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the college? During early interviews it became apparent that the physical working conditions of college staff were highly significant factors in their professional lives. Interviewees made frequent references to 'place', talking ambivalently about the college buildings as symbolic of their affectionate longing for times past, and a reason for their present predicament and uncertain future. Specific use of terms like 'God's corridor' (Quality Manager) to describe the

senior management office area symptomised for us the emergent salience of 'place' in the data set. As the field research progressed our interviews became increasingly focused on place. Some of the new questions that we introduced into our interview schedule included: how would you describe your working environment? How have your working conditions changed during your employment here? How does your physical environment affect your attitude to, and feelings about, the college? So rich was the data we obtained that we devoted the final 12 interviews entirely to issues of identity and place.

In analysing our data we were particularly interested in language as 'perhaps the primary medium of social control and power' (Fairclough, 1989, p.3) and how discoursal practices contributed to the reproduction 'of existing social and power relations' (Fairclough, 1995, p.77). We were also concerned to 'identify the salient grounded categories of meaning held by participants in the setting' (Marshall and Rossman, 1995, p.114) in order to produce a contextually detailed and polyphonic account incorporating meanings given by local actors 'to their actions, other people's actions, [and] social situations' (Blaikie, 2000, p.115). In line with our view of ethnography as 'a type of knowledge' that accepts and exposes 'the mechanics of its own production' (Rhodes, 2001, p.32), drafts of our paper were submitted for comment to a range of Alpha personnel, including three senior managers and six other staff. The dialogical interaction generated by their observations, created, for us, the 'hermeneutic circle in which people in conversation…mutually transform each other's ideas through continuing interaction' (Humphreys, Brown and Hatch, 2003, p. 22). By writing this section and thus permitting 'the audience to see [at least some of] the puppet's strings as they watch the puppet show' (Watson, 1994, p. 78) we have

attempted to create a text that is both plausible and authoritative (Van Maanen, 1988). The case that follows should be regarded as an evolutionary product of the reflexive processes (McAdams, 1996; Ricoeur, 1991) of improvisational bricoleurs, (Levi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17) seeking to construct identity stories both of the Other and, of course, ourselves.

EMPLACING IDENTITY AT ALPHA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

In 2001 there were some 480 UK FE colleges receiving nearly £8 billion in Government funding (http://www.lscdata.gov.uk/data/summarystatistics.html). Since 1993 these institutions have been 'incorporated' (self-governing), and, increasingly, in competition with each other for students, funds and staff. With 'incorporation' came changes in the central funding mechanisms which have led 40% of the colleges within the sector to experience financial difficulties (Baty, 2000). Alpha College, a medium-sized, general-purpose Further Education institution located in the North West of England, had fared worse than any of its direct competitors. Over the decade 1991-2001 it had been led by five different principals, subject to three critical Government inspections, experienced five phases of voluntary and compulsory redundancies, and suffered the effects of the sector's longest ever strike of academic staff. In November 1999, an acting principal had been imposed on the college by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC)[3] in order to deal with a mounting financial crisis. The new head had arranged for two existing institutions, Beta College and Gamma College to merge, leading to the creation of Alpha College in its current form. In January 2001, a new principal took over the institution and created a ten-member Senior Management Team (SMT) with broad strategic and operational responsibilities. A small cadre of individuals called 'Programme Managers', who had both teaching and administrative

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duties, reported direct to the SMT. Most college employees were either lecturers, whose main function was to teach up to twenty seven hours per week, or support staff in the form of technicians, clerical workers and administrators.

College staff identified themselves as belonging to one of three groups, SMT, ex-Beta or ex-Gamma. Members of these groups not only shared views regarding their group's collective characteristics, but had their own distinctive understanding of the college as a whole. SMT members said that, while recently formed, they were administratively and technically competent, sensitive and responsive to both internal and external stakeholders, and making progress in their efforts to transform Alpha into a modern and successful college. They subscribed to a utilitarian-economic view of Alpha as engaged in the business of education ('…the college is a business' (Faculty Director)), and said that this required them to improve information, financial and control systems, hire specialist consultants, and convince Government-sponsored inspection teams that the college could be made to succeed. Ex-Beta staff said that they were long-serving and long-suffering at the hands of successive teams of incompetent and short-termist senior managers who had wasted resources, engendered feelings of insecurity, and, latterly, managed a flawed merger strategy with Gamma staff whom they described in disparaging terms as 'cushion-stuffers and egg-painters' (Information Technology Lecturer). Ex-Gamma staff expressed a sense of loss following the merger which had resulted in them being subsumed into Alpha, subject to Beta's bureaucratic procedures, and led by a remote and disinterested SMT: ('we were very much an unwilling bride in a shotgun wedding' (Lecturer, Computing)). Both ex-Beta and ex-Gamma staff expressed commitment to a view of the college as fundamentally concerned with teaching and learning (rather than targets and budgets),

and argued that resources should be diverted to employ more teachers rather than business consultants.

Alpha operated from its original 1930s building, 'Westchester Road', where most ex-Beta staff were based, and in over 130 small and widely distributed community education venues, in which the majority of ex-Gamma staff worked. The Westchester Road site had been the main location of technical and further education in Alphaville for the last fifty years. It had been officially opened on 10th May 1952 after substantial refurbishment to deal with 'dilapidations consequent on the occupation of part of the College by the RAF during the war' (Alphaville News December 28th 1946, p. 54). More recently, the construction of a road bypass, and the demolition of terraced housing, had marginalised the Westchester Road building, reducing passing traffic, both vehicular and pedestrian. The community of homes that used to surround the main college had been replaced by warehouses, gardening superstores and a supermarket. While all of our respondents agreed that the Westchester Road site was a far from ideal facility, they used their understandings of it to author quite different versions of their organization's identity. A summary overview of how each group discursively constructed their place of work is provided in Table 1 and analysed in the next three major sections.

[Table 1 about here please]

Place and Hegemony: the Senior Management Team

In the SMT's normative-economic account of the college's identity, buildings featured as a resource to be exploited in the quest for 'success'. Members of the SMT

were adamant that the college buildings needed to be managed effectively, and that this meant, for example, closing down peripheral sites. They said that Westchester Road was 'a difficult building to manage' (Vice Principal) with profound implications both for the operational and strategic decisions they were able to make, and how the college was perceived. In particular, they expressed concerns regarding their ability to attract and adequately accommodate different types of students (able bodied/disabled, young/mature, White/Asian) studying courses as diverse as hairdressing, computing and carpentry. They recognised that the site was dilapidated, and blamed the Local Authority, which used to administer it, for having failed to invest in its upkeep prior to incorporation. The SMT also argued that the building, which had been designed in the 1930s, was expensive to maintain and inflexible while they were short of funds and having constantly to adjust to the changing demands of actual and potential students. Perhaps most importantly, the site was a source of concern because it obscured the 'progress' they were making in the form of staff reorganization and 'improved' bureaucratic procedures:

> If you look at the college as being an octopus and one of the limbs [is] not performing I'd lop it off because of the problems that can be incurred in trying to continue running an inefficient area. (Director of Construction).

> It's utilised only eighteen percent of the time, you can see the size of this room, its just crazy…the teaching spaces are utilised so little. And if you add in the non-teaching spaces it's frightening. We can't adapt the college, it's just too expensive. (Vice Principal, Resources).

> If we had money we would have said, right we're going to put half a million pounds into painting and decorating and carpet because it would have made people feel better that something is being done about the college… What they see is a building, a decaying building…. We have no spare money. No money is no money, we really do not have any money. (Principal).

The SMT defined the site as a practical problem that required managing, but did not deny that the site itself was problematic, and the Principal herself characterised the

Westchester Road building as 'dour at the extreme, a big old fashioned monolith'. However, their construction of the site as 'difficult' did not prevent most SMT members from locating their offices on it, though in the only recently refurbished corridor. This corridor was important because it reinforced the hierarchical divide between the SMT and other staff, provided an area where visitors could more easily be persuaded that the college was a well managed entity, and, for many people, defined the Westchester Road building as the 'centre' of the College's operations. Interestingly, the SMT's concerns that the site was an operational constraint and that it obfuscated progress prompted little action because they considered buildings problems to be irremediable (given available funds). They instead focused their attention on other, more (supposedly) tractable, problems. This was, though, arguably self-defeating because, as they recognised, the site disadvantaged them in their efforts to compete for resources and the best students and staff, and rendered latent what they considered evidence for positive change. It also permitted other groups of staff to draw on their understandings of 'place' in their attempts to contest the SMT's conception of the college as an efficiently and effectively managed business.

Place and Resistance: ex-Alpha and ex-Gamma staff

Ex-Beta and ex-Gamma staff said that they were appalled at the SMT's definition of the college as a business and its conception of the Westchester Road site as a unit of resource to be managed. They instead subscribed to a view of the college as an educational institution focally concerned with pedagogy, and emphasised the importance (and joys) of teaching and learning:

> It's teaching that gives me the real buzz - I still love it'. (Key Skill Lecturer).

> There are some very good teachers here, a lot of us doing or trying to do good things with the kids. (Business Studies Lecturer).

I stay because I like the teaching. (Programme Manager, teacher Education).

Staff claimed that not only were they largely unsupported by the SMT in their 'efforts to provide a good educational environment for our students' (Lecturer, Key Skills), but also that the Westchester Road site itself was an unattractive and unpleasant place in which to teach and learn. Some of the epithets applied to it were 'intimidating' (Lecturer, Health Studies), 'grim' (Lecturer, English), a 'black hole' (Lecturer, Psychology) and 'very very dated' (Lecturer, Hairdressing). A lecturer in Information Technology suggested that it was a:

> …horrible, horrible, horrible building … a prime example of fascist architecture from the 1930's, totally inappropriate and depressing.

A lecturer in Graphics said:

> It's a depressing building, it's like going back 20 years, 30 years, you know, FE at its finest in 1973, and it was probably depressing then, so it's like nothing's changed, it's a sort of deadening depressing place.

Other staff likened it to 'a very old prison' (Curriculum Leader, Hairdressing), and an 'institution, an old mental hospital' (Lecturer, Hairdressing). These perceptions were thought by staff to be shared by students:

> One of the exercises I do with students is to write about their senses…. They said it was like being in a prison because the windows were all so high and all that; the floors were dirty and the chairs were rickety and the desks are old. (Lecturer, Basic Skills).

In describing their locale in these uncompromisingly negative terms employees accomplished, albeit possibly unwittingly, two different, though intimately related, things. First, they constituted their place of work in ways which emphasised its carceral properties (Foucault, 1979). As Chia and King (2001, p.312) among others have argued '…the act of languaging is the act of organizationally constructing and bringing forth a particular ordered and coherent version of the world to the necessary exclusion of other possible worlds'. In this instance, staff understood the Westchester

Road site as a mundane place of work, somewhere to be endured rather than enjoyed, depressing, uninviting and uninspiring. The labels they used to describe the building cast it as a locus for anonymity, detachment, withdrawal, parochialism, disconnection, seclusion and illness, rather than, for example, community. Indeed, by likening the Westchester Road site to a prison and a mental institution it seemed to assume for them some of the associations of actual prisons and psychiatric hospitals which can denude peoples' sense of self, leading to symptoms of de-individuation and dis-culturation (Goffman, 1961; Sommer, 1974; Zimbardo et. al., 1973):

> My heart's not in it as much as it used to be, but I think this building's the major stumbling block on all different sorts of levels, I think it makes people act like they do…. aesthetically it needs just a complete and absolute overhaul. (Lecturer, Travel and Tourism).

Second, ex-Beta and ex-Gamma staff constituted the college *qua* a place in ways which resisted their senior managers understanding of it as an efficiently and effectively managed business. Again, much of their place-oriented resistance stemmed from their characterization of the college as an asylum/prison. The carceral images that these terms evoked for people not only stood in a metaphorical relationship to the college, implicating a pervasive way of thinking about it (Morgan, 1986, p.12), but also prompted a range of metonymic connections (Miller, 1971, p.14) between the college and prisons/asylums. In this context, it is interesting to note that analyses of actual prisons illustrate that inmates rarely if ever do exactly what they are told (Bettsworth, 1989; Smith, 1989). Indeed, research suggests that prisoners often seek to 'subvert formal rules and procedures, forge their own hierarchies and create systems of social stratification' (Sewell, 2001, p.179; cf. Little, 1990). In our case, employees used their understandings of the college to combat the hegemonic impositions of the SMT by emphasising its fundamentally *irrational* properties, the

extremely poor *physical conditions* in which they worked, and the *fear and danger* they associated with the Westchester Road site.

Irrationality. The staff used their understanding of place to contest the SMT's view that the college was a rational, bureaucratic entity with a coherent long-term strategy. They spoke of the senior managers as being constantly engaged in 'knee-jerk' activity (Lecturer, Electrical Installation) leading to 'internal chaos' (Lecturer's Union Representative) as manifested in constant structural alterations to the college. The staff questioned the wisdom of sacking all the cleaners with the result that 'the place is filthy' (Programme Manager, Business Studies), and expressed frustration that while visitations from 'important' external stakeholders led to short-term quick-fix responses, the SMT had failed to recognise the contribution of 'good surroundings' to morale (Lecturer, Office Studies). The short-termism of the SMT was, they maintained, clearly symbolised in the sell-off and lease-back deal they had struck with a property company on the college's only large out-of-town (Westwich) site[4]:

> During inspection we had people running round making sure things were clean, fresh posters going up on the wall… Most of them are now hanging off the wall. (Quality Administrator).

> They had lecture theatres upstairs, then they hammer away and turn them into discrete teaching rooms. But then a couple of years later they decide that they have to have big open plan rooms, open learning rooms… So then they knock the walls out. So this is constantly going on, we're in a permanent revolution. (Lecturer, English).

> I mean it's like selling off the Westwich Site… Purely done as a quick fix to get the budget sorted. (Lecturer, Catering).

Physical Conditions. Most staff maintained that the Westchester Road site, with its 'black ceilings to disguise the dirt' (Lecturer, Business Studies), 'dark corridors' (Lecturer, English), and 'toilets smelling for days' (Lecturer, Basic Skills) provided

physical evidence that the SMT were failing. There was a general perception both that their working conditions were an index of the SMT's competence, and that the poor physical state of the buildings acted as a lens which distorted the SMT's communications:

It's almost as if the building, the conditions, the situation at Westchester Road is filtering what is said by the Senior Management Team to the staff. It's a kind of filter that says, 'oh yes, you're saying that but what we're perceiving is a different thing'. (Community Centre Co-ordinator).

The staffroom is a mess. It's not safe, not clean, overrun with mice, the sink smells, there's plaster falling off the wall, the windows are leaking, there's no storage space, nowhere to sit in comfort for your lunch, nowhere to really go and relax, you are always at your work station… It's no wonder so many people are off work with stress. (Lecturer, Hairdressing).

Fear and Danger. The staff constructed the college as a dangerous place in which to work, and the failure of the SMT to create a safe and secure workplace constituted another aspect of their critique of the senior managers. The fears that they expressed were linked to a variety of different sources, especially the use of the college car park for drug dealing and prostitution[5], and the presence of ethnically distinct groups of young male students who were described by one faculty member as 'thugs with a reputation for violence' (Lecturer, Computing). Other members of staff made it clear that they did not believe that the SMT took seriously issues of health and safety, and remarked on the number of ex-faculty they knew who were on long-term sick leave:

It [the college] is surrounded by prostitutes… and one of my colleagues is often accosted on his way to the car. (Lecturer ESOL[6]).

We take them [students] without any formal qualifications …. they are setting the fire alarms off, they are setting fire to paper on notice boards, running riot through the college, filling toilets up with toilet paper and setting fire to them, breaking things. (Student Records Administrator).

The number of people who go off sick and never return to work, it's like death without funerals. (Lecturer, ESOL).

Consequences: Place, Nostalgia and Fantasy

While employees' use of place as a discursive resource to contest the hegemony of the SMT was, at least in part, effective, it was also intensely problematic for them. Their constitution of the college as a chaotic, depressing, fear-filled place contradicted both the SMT's preferred construction of it as a business that was steadily improving, and their own aspirations for it to be an effective institution of further education. One aspect of this dilemma was that for ex-Beta staff the Westchester Road site was a continuing symbol of endemic failure:

> We have a reputation for failure, it's a failed college, failed kids… (Lecturer, Art & Design).

While for ex-Gamma staff the site was a symbol of their having been taken over and marginalised within the newly constituted Alpha College:

> [We were] …forced to attach our buoyant little lifeboat to the Titanic after the collision with the iceberg (Programme Manager).

> '… we've had our centre of operations taken away' (Community Centre Manager).

Another important point was that while both cohorts described themselves as motivated teachers committed to their students, for them the Westchester Road building was closely associated with the SMT, where the four most powerful members had their offices. What is more, they said, senior staff were reluctant to visit other parts of the college, leading those working at other sites to feel marginalised and alienated:

> That's their [Senior Managers] survival floor. They're embattled with the rest of the college and that's their survival floor. That's their enclave, shall we say? (English Lecturer).

> 'I've noticed, it's very, very difficult to get them [Senior Managers] out of the building. You say, "look, come and see what goes on at a Community Centre" and they say … "it's a long way, I haven't got time"… You know, they're clingy, almost like someone who is agoraphobic, afraid to go out. (Manager, Community Centre).

This not only made it hard for staff to identify with their place of work, but encouraged some to take refuge in *nostalgia*, and others to engage in *fantasies* about knocking down the Westchester Road building, and about the advantages of a 'centre-less', multi-site college rooted in the local community.

Nostalgia. Peoples' understandings of the buildings were a resource that a significant minority of our participants used to engage in nostalgic reminiscence, nostalgia being understood to refer to 'a species of remembrance' (Kaplan, 1987, p. 469) associated with 'bittersweet' memories (Kleiner, 1970, p. 11) and a 'warm feeling of yearning and longing' for a particular time (Gabriel, 1993, p. 121). For example, there was a cadre of long serving-staff based at Westchester Road who could remember the college before incorporation, and who associated that time with more pleasant experiences than they now enjoyed:

> …some of the older staff who can remember what it was like when they first moved in, talk very fondly about "in the old days". (Principal).

> In the summer we used to go and sunbathe on the roof in our bikinis. We used to have picnics on the roof …. we used to take our music up and dance. (Technician, Beauty Therapy).

> They've taken all the brass fittings off, they've gone and modernised things but you can't replace lovely oak clocks with plastic ones with batteries in and think they are going to look better because they are not. So sometimes changing things isn't always for the best. (Lecturer, Hairdressing).

Complementarily, those who had transferred from community education sites to Westchester Road had evidently experienced a 'loss of place' that had had 'devastating implications' for their 'collective identity' (Gieryn, 2000, p. 482), which they coped with by focusing on their recent past:

> I was based at R. Street and that was absolutely delightful. The surroundings were just beautiful. It's a leafy campus, there's the May blossom as you look out of the staffroom window upstairs. There were squirrels and rabbits and birds and green

grass. It was just wonderful. It was such a culture shock really to move here…the whole atmosphere of the building we felt when we came over here was intimidating, hostile and we didn't like it. (Programme Manager, Business and Office Studies).

Our working environment at C. Street just had a nice feel to it, there was student art work on the walls, fresh flowers on the canteen tables, a smell of coffee brewing…. Here [Westchester Road] it's just dingy, dirty and depressing. (Lecturer, Office Studies).

[Pre-merger] there was a sense of community, a sense of working together, working to the same ends and having a shared vision. (Lecturer, Graphics).

While it is often thought of as an individual-level phenomenon, as Davis (1979, p.49) has argued, 'in its collective manifestations nostalgia also thrives'. The sharing of nostalgic memories was, we suggest, 'a quest for communality', that is, one means by which individuals sought the emotional support of a community (DaSilva and Faught, 1982, p.49-50). For both sets of staff, collectively shared nostalgia provided access to a heritage resource in the form of sets of values and ways of life 'associated with, and articulated through emotions, memories, and imagination' (Bagnall, 1996, p.243). The social memories evoked through nostalgic attachment were integral to the creation of social meanings and group identities for both ex-Beta and ex-Gamma staff. This is an instance of what Zerubavel (1996, p.286) has described as an individual's work group constituting a 'thought community' which instantiates normative rules that determine not just how far back one should remember but 'what we should remember and what we can or must forget'. In short, while ex-Beta and ex-Gamma staff felt a need to believe in the authenticity of the imaginary maps that were stimulated by their nostalgia, these representations were as unidimensional, monophonic and concealing as any other (cf. Brown and Humphreys, 2002).

Rather than a way of directly contesting the hegemony of the SMT, nostalgia was a means of creating an emotional and symbolic space that distanced staff members from

what they considered to be a threatening culture and unpleasant working conditions (Collinson, 1994). For both cohorts, place-centred nostalgia was, arguably, a welcome means of detaching themselves from everyday life, and an emotional lens that helped to defend them from narcissistic injury (Kaplan, 1987). It provided emotional support for people during what they experienced as a period of intense organizational change, and which helped them to maintain a sense of individual and collective continuity. Those ex-Gamma staff that had been moved to the Westchester Road building retained their sense of belonging to their old institution, together with its distinctive aims and philosophy, in part through nostalgic reminiscence. For long-serving ex-Beta staff nostalgia was a means of segregating themselves from circumstances that seemed to them to offer few satisfactions. To these people, the Westchester Road site was a lost opportunity, with a recreational potential and an aesthetic heritage that they now associated with a previous era. Employees' resort to defensive nostalgia constituted a kind of resistance to the hegemonic claims of the SMT which while psychically reassuring, was also self-defeating, as it did not permit them to engage and counter effectively the business-oriented and success-slanted discourses drawn-on by the SMT.

Fantasy. For some staff the buildings were the objects of fantasy, a fantasy being 'a kind of vivid daydream that affords unreal, substitutive satisfactions' (Brown and Starkey, 2000, p.107) which represent an unconscious endeavour to fulfil or gratify difficult or impossible goals and aspirations (Laughlin, 1970). One fantasy that was expressed by ex-Beta staff was for the Westchester Road site to be bulldozed or sold-off:

> …knock the damn thing down and build a new one on the car park and make this a car park. I'm sure it would be a lot cheaper to do that than to renovate it. It's just crumbling. (Lecturer, Beauty Therapy).

> It's a big ugly building, which would be better off knocked down and relocated elsewhere. (Student Services Administrator).

> …the best thing that could happen to the college would be to sell the site and relocate. (Programme Manager, Sport, Leisure and Tourism).

Another fantasy, widely expressed by ex-Gamma staff, was for the Westchester Road site to be downgraded, so that it was no longer the 'centre' of the college, by investing in other sites:

> …what's stopping us just having a lot of different centres spotted about that are just well resourced so you have a little construction centre or a little restaurant in town that becomes catering. (Team Leader, New Media).

> What we really need is a training salon in the middle of town where we would be visible… that way the students would get real experience and the education would really be in the community. (Lecturer, Hairdressing).

> We had a town centre site, three-story building, the learning shop and it was very successful and people popped in and we felt as well as our community site this was really bringing people in… as soon as the merger was on the cards and agreed, that was closed…. We were told that it was closing, we were moving here. (Programme Manager, Basic Skills).

As with place-based nostalgia, these fantasies did not directly contest the hegemony of the SMT. Rather, they were a means for staff to forge a kind of 'symbolic convergence about their common experiences' (Bormann, 1983, p.104), and in particular to highlight their dissatisfaction with their place of work. While the parlous state of the college's finances and lack of external stakeholder support meant that the options staff outlined were fanciful, they were nevertheless important ways in which they maintained self-esteem and reduced their anxiety by increasing feelings of control over possible futures (Brown, 2000; Freud., 1914). Such fantasies humanised their working lives, offering them a form of consolation based on projected and supposedly better alternatives. As Gabriel (1995, p.479) has argued, '…*fantasy can*

offer a third way to the individual, which amounts to neither conformity nor rebellion, but to a symbolic refashioning of official organizational practices in the interest of pleasure, allowing a temporary supremacy of emotion over rationality and of uncontrol over control' [italics in original]. Nostalgia and fantasy were also forms of what Goffman (1961, p.275-6) refers to as secondary adjustments which place a barrier between each individual and the college in an effort not merely to 'express unauthorised distance' but to demonstrate 'some selfhood and personal autonomy beyond the grasp of the organization'.

DISCUSSION

To summarise, our case has illustrated how groups drew on their understandings of place to construct and promote distinctive versions of their, and the organization's, identities, and to engage in nostalgia and fantasy. The groups also shared some important interpretations of place and identity, with all three 'choosing' to scapegoat (i.e. discursively problematize) the Westchester Road site. Our analysis has been informed by suggestions that place symbolically conditions or collectively standardises groups' cognitive and emotional responses, resulting in a shared appreciation of identity issues (Berg and Kreiner, 1990). It has also been shaped by theorists who have argued that all social phenomena are emplaced, that place saturates social life, and that place 'stands in a recursive relation to other social and cultural entities' such that 'places are made through human practices and institutions even as they help to make those practices and institutions' (Gieryn, 2000, p.467; cf. Giddens, 1984). In this discussion, we consider place as a resource for identity construction and the role of such constructions in political contests involving the deployment of meaning.

Our analysis has shown that Alpha, like many large and complex organizations, was constituted by multiple, diverse, and conflicting accounts or narratives of the college's identity (Glynn, 2000; Humphreys and Brown, 2002). These versions were not neutral and disinterested, but political moves designed to advance, protect and maintain each group's perceived interests. One discursive resource on which the groups drew was 'place'. For the SMT, the college *qua* a place featured principally in their account as a unit of resource that, although in many ways problematic, provided a matrix of opportunities and constraints that required effective management. The SMT sought to define the college as a business that had to be managed appropriately (by them) in order to balance the books, attract and retain students, and satisfy Government-sponsored inspection teams. The SMT's descriptions of place 'licensed' their use of a technical business-oriented vocabulary that put a premium on, for example, efficiency, effectiveness, and competitiveness which in turn shaped and informed their decision-making. Different strands of their story variously emphasised the need for cost reduction (in the form of staff redundancies), the more efficient use of resources (resulting in the closure of some small community education sites), increased monitoring and control (as manifested in new information systems), and greater managerial professionalism (hence the commissioning of management consultants). While they recognised that the dilapidated nature of the site unhelpfully disguised the 'progress' they had made, this was in many ways a marginal concern for them because they did not define it as a tractable management problem.

Given their privileged position, and the access to resources, decision-making fora and communication media that this often implies, senior managers are in general particularly able to mould and manipulate discursive resources for their own ends

(Boje, 1995). Yet the SMT were only partially successful in their efforts to persuade other groups to accept their interpretation of recent events, and their definition of the college's identity. One reason for this was that ex-Beta and ex-Gamma cohorts were long-established, and had themselves formulated shared coherent understandings of themselves as groups, and the college as an entity. Both ex-Beta and ex-Gamma staff described the college as an institution with a duty to provide a high quality teaching and learning environment for some of the most disadvantaged communities and students in Alphaville. They not only questioned the appropriateness of the SMT's managerialist language, but their managerial competence. That is, they refused to accept that the college was a business, and ridiculed the SMT's ability to run the college in an efficient and effective manner, citing the rounds of recent restructuring, redundancies and consultancy exercises as evidence for bureaucratic failure. In particular, the ex-Beta and ex-Gamma groups drew on their understanding of place as a discursive resource in order to support their views, and in doing so revealed the extent of the cleft between them. The ex-Beta staff understood the Westchester Road site as a symbol of systematic, endemic, and pervasive failure, especially of the SMT. The ex-Gamma staff said that the closure of community education sites and the policy of making Westchester Road the centre of the college's operations was not just symptomatic of the continuing failure of the SMT to make the college successful, but also a symbol of Gamma having been (disastrously) taken over and subsumed into what had been Beta College.

Two specific factors seem to have militated against the hegemonic success of the SMT. First, while the SMT did not denigrate the importance of teaching and learning, in their descriptions of the college they had not found a felicitous means of combining

the pedagogical concerns of their staff with their own preoccupation with financial targets and systems of management. This apparent lack of sensitivity to issues of great importance to key internal stakeholders, may be construed as evidence of their inability to grasp the importance of constructing a multi-vocal college identity that incorporated disparate agendas and ideals (Eccles et. al., 1992). Second, after two years of SMT-led meetings, initiatives, redundancies and restructurings the college was still officially labelled by the Government as 'failing', budgetary problems were acute, and its external reputation had not improved. Important in this respect were the buildings, and especially the Westchester Road site, which for most staff still metonymically conveyed impressions of, *inter alia*, disappointment, fear and irrationality. That the SMT's account of the college was either ignored or contested by other college staff is evidence for the considerable ability that 'ordinary' employees may often have 'to create their own interpretation of what is going on' in complex organizations (Thatchenkery, 1992, p.231). It is also suggestive of the constraints, historical and contextual, that organizational elites face in seeking to author plausible and satisfying accounts that promote adequately their perceived interests.

This said, it would be incorrect to suggest that the SMT had been wholly ineffective. They had, after all, launched a wide range of administrative and technical initiatives, reduced costs by shedding staff and closing 'marginal' offices, taken steps to manage the merger and important external stakeholders, and prepared forward planning documents. Indeed, the tendency of some staff to engage in nostalgia and fantasy might be interpreted as a gauge of the SMT's success in re-engineering the college and re-centring the discursive practices of other staff in ways that they desired. On this reading, acts of collective nostalgia might be interpreted not so much as a

defensive manoeuvre but as an adaptive means of 'making the present seem less frightening and more assimilable' (Davis, 1979, p.36). Similarly, staff fantasies may be understood not just as the triumph of emotion over rationality but as means of remaining 'in full contact with reality' (Devereux, 1979, p.30).   That is, staff members' symbolic rejection of their place of work simultaneously forced them to engage with it - to recognise and explore its limitations as a site for pedagogy - in order to sharpen their arguments for its dissolution (ex-Beta staff) and mutation (ex-Gamma staff). In short, the evidence for nostalgia and fantasy that we discovered may have constituted efforts by staff not merely to survive or to detach themselves from the college but to adapt (or begin the process of adapting) to the hegemonic impositions of the SMT.

We need also to account for the shared ways in which the SMT and other staff made sense of their work place, most notably all three groups 'decision' to problematise and attribute negative outcomes to the Westchester Road site. Arguably, this constituted a form of 'scapegoating' understood as a form of defensive sense making that unjustifiably focuses attention on some one or some thing who/that is either innocent or, as in this instance, merely one part of a larger and complex set of circumstances (Wynn, 1982). Scapegoating may usefully be conceptualised as one aspect of attributional egotism (Laughlin, 1970), sometimes referred to as attributional asymmetry (Riess et. al., 1981), which refers to the tendency for people to attribute negative outcomes to external factors beyond their control and success to the results of their own actions (Brown and Jones, 1998; Salancik and Meindl, 1984). A psycho-dynamic explanation suggests that scapegoating of the building was an unconscious, emotional reaction that relieved tension by allowing people to project 'unacceptable

impulses' on to it (Eagle and Newton, 1981, p. 183-4; Veltfort and Lee, 1943). On this reading, the groups, unwilling or unable to recognise their role in failing to create a positive learning environment, relieved their intra-psychic conflict by displacing aggressive feelings onto their surroundings. Alternatively, or perhaps complementarily, from a psycho-social viewpoint scapegoating may be conceived as 'the product of emotional and logical oversimplifications' (Bonazzi, 1983, p. 1) that is in part intentional, and which 'facilitate[s] group cohesion and identity by clarifying norms' (Eagle and Newton, 1981, p. 283). The suggestion here is that people may have deliberately sought to scapegoat their built environment in order to variously 'hide', 'distract', 'delay', 'avoid' and 'deny' their responsibility for problems (Bonazzi, 1983; Tumin, 1950). Two outcomes of these acts of scapegoating were to relieve all staff from feelings of guilt (a psycho-dynamic perspective) and to defend themselves against potential accusations of culpability (a psycho-social reading). The SMT members collusion in the scapegoating of the Westchester Road site, we should note, constituted a tacit recognition that Alpha college was still problematic which contradicted their discourse centred on 'success', and contributed to other staff's continuing discursive constructions of the college as failing.

The accounts of the college given by members of the three groups were not merely attempts to define their organization's identity, but to 'enact' versions of themselves, which in turn established 'a field of possibilities and limits' which had profound implications for how they felt able to interact with each other (Silverman, 1987, p.20). In our case, members of the SMT defined themselves with reference to what has been termed the 'grandiose leader' discourse which depicts senior managers as visionary culture-creators, strategists and entrepreneurs (du Gay, 1996). They constructed

themselves as action-oriented, selfless guardians, preoccupied with issues of financial viability and obtaining positive government inspection reports, and responsive to important external constituencies. Fed by a mix of existential worry and self-scepticism, identity work of this kind is an important buffer against a potentially threatening world that when successful offers the solace (in the form of an integrated and coherent identity) that makes working life seem meaningful (Dunne, 1996). In this instance, however, the SMT members' self-conceptions were constantly being challenged by the discursive constructions of their staff, who made it clear that they did not feel inspired, were not committed to the SMT's preferred definition of the college, and that they would not obey dictates unquestioningly. Such articulations were, inevitably, a source of anxiety for the SMT both individually and collectively, threatening as they did to expose them as 'frauds' or 'impostors' (Gabriel, 1997).

The identity work (i.e. the forming, maintaining, repairing and revising of individual and group conceptions) engaged in by other staff was both more ambiguous and more complex (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). Middle and junior ranking staff constituted themselves as either teachers or support staff in the public sector, largely passive, weakly attached to the college but strongly identifying with their subject, students and specialisms, and unconcerned with Government initiatives or the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Interestingly, in their discursive constructions of self, staff chose to draw less on the college as a place, which had many negative associations for them, so much as their understandings of their professional identities. Teaching staff defined themselves as professional educators with a responsibility for improving the lives and career prospects of their students. Administrators and other support staff tended to echo the views of the teachers, though often in their own

unique ways linked to their own area of responsibility or expertise. Perhaps more significantly, both were bound by an interweaving dependence on nostalgia and fantasy. Yet they were also simultaneously divided into ex-Beta and ex-Gamma cohorts by a mixture of spatial locale, recent experience, terms and conditions of work, and most of all the negative stereotypical conceptions they held of each other. Thus are organizations made as polyphonic locales in which individuals are enmeshed in multiple intersecting and partially overlapping conversations which together constitute organized activity.

CONCLUSIONS

While some theorists have argued that organizations need 'at least a preliminary answer to the question "who are we?"' (Albert, Ashforth and Dutton, 2000, p.13), our case shows that in spatially diverse and hierarchically structured organizations this question may be answered quite differently by groups with distinct histories and professional identities. In particular, we have illustrated how different groups can draw on 'place' as a resource in their efforts to develop, promote, and protect their preferred versions of themselves and their organization, and to take comfort in nostalgia, fantasy and scapegoating. Concomitantly, while some scholars have suggested that managing an organization's identity is an important function of leadership (Cheney, 1991, p.9), we have argued that these discursive constructions may sometimes be highly resistant to managerial interventions aimed at, for example, integration, aggregation, compartmentalization or deletion (Pratt and Foreman, 2000). While organizational identities may be adaptively unstable (Gioia, Schultz and Corley, 2000), and thus mutable within the constraints imposed by the availability of

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discursive resources, it is not clear that they are manageable by elites in programmed and predictable ways. Hegemony, like control, is never complete.

Finally, our paper is also an argument for the importance of issues of place and spatiality in organization studies generally. In this respect, our work is limited by the fact that our empirical data refer to a single case study, and by what some may consider the narrow focus on linguistic constructions that is inherent in our discursive theoretical perspective. More, and different kinds of research is required on buildings, and the use of space, which can no longer be treated as an 'epiphenomenon of bureaucratic relations of production', and must instead be analysed 'as an integral aspect of the system of such production' (Rosen, Orlikowski and Schmahmann, 1990, p. 69). What is more, the study of place needs to take into account location, material form and meaningfulness, all of which must be 'bundled' in an approach that is anti-reductionist and which precludes both geographical fetishism and environmental determinism (Gieryn, 2000). Place, like time, saturates social life, and a place-sensitive organization studies literature needs to appreciate the distinctive visual, tactile, olfactory and aural keys which attunement to the iconography of organizations invites.

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Table 1: Discursive Understandings of Place

Discursive Locus	SMT	Ex-Beta Staff	Es-Gamma Staff
Place and Purpose	Place should be a site for business activity (unit of resource)	Place should be a site for teaching and learning	Place should be a site for community involvement, teaching and learning
Place as Problem	Place is an insoluble problem	Place is a prison/asylum	Place is a prison/asylum
Place and Rationality	Place is managed as a rational, bureaucratic entity with long-term objectives	Place has long been poorly managed, irrational, chaotic and dangerous	Place since the merger is poorly managed, irrational, and chaotic
Place and Symbolism	Place renders progress latent	Place is a symbol of failure	Place is a symbol of takeover
Place and Nostalgia	Place is an object of nostalgia for others	Place has deteriorated since incorporation	Place has deteriorated since the merger
Place, Fantasy and the Future	Place will continue to improve	Place should be bulldozed or sold-off	Place should be multi-site and community-based

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ENDNOTES

[1] Alpha College is a pseudonym

[2] The site was selected on the basis that identity issues were likely to be salient for many staff. The college had recently been restructured, had an established history of poor performance, a newly appointed principal, and many long-serving staff knowledgeable about the organization's past and with a stake in its future. It was thus, potentially, a particularly interesting example of an institution with a 'longer term crisis of positioning and identity' (Green and Lucas, 1999, p. 227).

[3] The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) for England was set up as a statutory body in July 1992 under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. Its remit was to ensure that all reasonable needs for further education in England were met, and that the quality of FE in England was assessed. It was replaced in April 2001 by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) that currently funds all post-16 FE provision via 47 Local Learning and Skills Council offices.

[4] The Westwich site was sold to a property developer in the mid 1990s to deal with a funding shortfall of £1 million. The site is now leased by the college.

[5] Car parking was a problem for all staff, especially for part-time lecturers: "Our biggest bugbear is parking….especially if you're part time, I was stuck on the car park yesterday for twenty minutes and I had to go off to pick up the kids. It's just horrendous" (Part Time Lecturer, Hairdressing). The Senior Management Team had their own individually designated car parking spaces.

[6] ESOL is an acronym for English for Speakers of Other Languages