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The importance of respect as a discursive resource in making identity claims:

insights from the experiences of becoming a circus director

Sandra Corlett *

Newcastle Business School
Northumbria University
City Campus East,
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE1 2SW
England
sandra.corlett@northumbria.ac.uk
Tel: (44)191 227 4920

Ron Beadle

Newcastle Business School
Northumbria University
City Campus East,
Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE1 2SW
England
ron.beadle@northumbria.ac.uk

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* corresponding author

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The importance of respect as a discursive resource for making identity claims: insights from the experiences of becoming a circus director

Abstract

Though often invoked in the leadership and identity literatures, respect has been poorly articulated. This paper conceptualizes respect as a discursive resource for making identity claims and provides empirical illustration from circus directors' accounts of becoming managers.

Identity claims draw on particular discursive resources and enact recurrent social practices in "specific local historical circumstances" that cohere with "the local moral order". To claim and to offer respect based on recognition, appraisal, identification, status and other discourses is to participate in such an order, and to make identity claims which are understood as positioning self and others.

We provide "transparently observable" illustrations of respect as a discursive resource for forming, maintaining, strengthening, repairing or revising identity claims. An extreme case purposive sample of circus directors provides an organizational site in which identity dynamics are "highly visible". Within the local moral order of travelling circuses respect is both desired from and conferred upon those whose artistic merit is recognized in both single acts and whole shows. We show that the distinction between appraisal and status as respect discourses evident in the wide social order breaks down in the case of circus. We theorize from this to the importance of respect as a discursive resource in identity claims and to its dependence upon particular accounts of merit.

Key words

Respect, identity claims, discursive resources, local moral order

Introduction

This paper responds to the conference call's focus on the metaphor of 'terra', by exploring the established (*terra firma*) notion of respect through discourse analysis of data from a novel empirical site (*terra incognita*), the highly marginal and under-researched community of British and Irish circus proprietors, known in circus parlance as circus directors.

Grover (2013: 27) argues that organizational scholars have "invoked the concept of respect and relegated it as a common sense, under-specified construct". This paper addresses his call for researchers to "clearly articulate what kind of respectful treatment they are studying ... and consider their mutual impact" (2013: 42). We conceptualise respect as a discursive resource operating in "specific local historical circumstances" (Parker, 2000: 87) on which individuals may draw in making identity claims which enhance self-worth and self-esteem.

Identity claims are rendered intelligible within the "ever-shifting patterns of mutual and contestable rights and obligations of speaking and acting" (Harré and van Langenhove, 1999: 1) which comprise the "local moral order" (Harré, 1998: 58) and "within which ... [actors] have to negotiate a viable position for themselves" (Burr, 2003: 135, see also Hosking, 2011). This requires us to find "grounds for positioning acts" which are "germane to the ascription, refusal, assumptions, and so on, of positions" (Harré et al., 2009: 28-9). Whilst "'strong' cultural contexts may set distinctive limits on individual discretion in constructing identity" (Ybema et al., 2009: 311), claims provide opportunities for crafting and reconfiguring selves through active agency (Kondo, 1990; Ybema et al., 2009) whilst also highlighting tensions in our allegiances to particular self-other identifications and/or obligations (McInnes and Corlett, 2012). Meanings of national and organizational culture can "never be disentangled" (Kondo, 1990: 300) from identity claim processes, enacted in contexts both moral and cultural:

'A culture is, in part, a moral system. It not only defines values (ideas about what is good and bad, right and wrong) for those who subscribe to it ... it also helps people construct their identities ... The culture of our society provides resources for the individual to create an answer to the question of who they are ... We all work on our identities all the time: making meaning through a dialogue with the culture ..., its norms, values and symbols.'

(Watson, 1994: 21)

To illustrate how claims to respect operate within such contexts we examine the highly marginal and under-researched community of the travelling circus:

The circus, and the circus artist, like the marginals that Foucault discusses, are positioned, literally and figuratively, on the periphery, placed beyond the immediate comprehension of the 'normal' person on the street, in this sense invisible to, or outside the bounds of, the normal. (Little, 1995: 18)

An extreme case purposive sample (Saunders 2012) of the owner-managers of British and Irish circuses, 'circus directors' in the local parlance, provides evidence of "highly visible" (Thornborrow and Brown 2009: 362) identity dynamics and of the advantages that investigating a marginal community can generate (Rosenau 1992: 136).

During the analysis of our research data, a potentially interesting feature of "the local moral landscape" (Harré et al., 2009: 9) was the circus directors' use of respect as a discursive resource for making identity claims. Effective respect claims in particular local moral communities have two pre-requisites. First the agent needs to appeal to shared standards of positive valuation and second they need to show how they have met those standards. Without shared standards there is nothing to which appeal can be made. Such agreement is apparent in the findings presented in this paper.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, we draw on leadership research to provide a conceptual framework for understanding how actors invoke respect as a discursive resource for identity claims. Next, we discuss some of the characteristics of managing privately owned circuses to introduce the research context. Following description of the research design, we provide illustrative examples of respect as a discursive resource in making identity claims. In the Discussion section of the paper, we theorize beyond the case study to consider the importance of respect as a discursive resource in making identity claims in other organizational contexts.

Respect and identity claims

We use DeLellis' (2000) characterisation of respect for persons (recognition, appraisal and identification respect), for social roles, for regulations and laws, customs and folkways, for symbols and objects and for social institutions. We draw abductively on conceptualizations of interpersonal respect in the identity literature (see table 1) to illustrate how the concept has been employed.

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Insert Table 1

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Recognition Respect

Recognition respect is non-performative, accorded to all people as a “moral duty” (Darwall, 1977, cited by Grover, 2013: 34) by virtue of being human; it is expressed in the notion of inviolable human rights, accorded independently of any status, categorization or presumption of merit. It is independent of taste, liking, admiration, fear and association. This is respect at an existential level – to be claimed in virtue of our presence and offered in virtue of yours. To deny it is to deny visibility and voice and successive liberation struggles have claimed for those so denied that to deny it to any is to potentially deny it to any other. Hence, to disrespect anyone is to undermine this duty, to pay our last respects is to uphold it.

In the organizational context, recognition respect is demonstrated in the quality of interpersonal treatment (Cunliffe and Eriksen 2011) and is invoked by, for instance, organizational justice researchers who speak of treating people with ‘dignity and respect’ (such as Bolton, 2007; Sayer, 2007) or by listening actively to and cooperating with others as morally equal parties (DeLellis and Sauer, 2004: 1433).

Appraisal Respect

Appraisal respect (Clarke, 2011; Grover, 2013) is based on a “positive appraisal of a person [because of] his [sic] character-related features” and his/her accomplishment of some activity that represents human excellence (Darwall, 1977, cited by Grover, 2013: 34). In the organizational context, appraisal respect may take the form of acknowledging work performance through positive feedback (Grover, 2013). Collinson (2003: 531) argues that “dignity and respect are no longer an automatic birthright”, undermined by insecurities for those in low status manual jobs (Collinson, 2003; Sayer, 2007), by bullying (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008), powerlessness (Gabriel (2000), fluctuating

work (Alvesson, 2001), ascriptions of dirty work (see Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999, Grandy, 2008) and under-performance (Knights and Clarke, 2013; Gabriel, 2010).

Identification respect

Identification respect involves respect for others who are perceived as displaying one's own values. This aligns with Clarke's (2011) discussion of identification respect within the transformational leadership literature and Gabriel's (2000) discussion of role-modelling.

Respect for status, station and role

DeLellis (2000) suggests that respect for status, station and role be considered independently of respect for persons because, as 'objects' of respect, they are deemed respectable by virtue of social identity alone. For example Thornborrow and Brown (2009: 364) analysed how men in the British Parachute Regiment positioned paratroopers as "the best soldiers in the British Army" and drew on the Regiment's "special powers, prestige and privileges" in making identity claims.

Respect for mores, laws and regulations, and respect for folkways, customs and expectations

Two further 'objects' of respect (DeLellis, 2000) require obedience in acknowledgment rather evaluation. Respect for law or regulation is manifest in non-violation; similarly folkways and customs can be obeyed without agreement or positive evaluation (DeLellis, 2000). Related to this is respect for expectations that others may have of us, for instance to behave in certain ways, and we must choose whether to conform to their expectation (DeLellis, 2000). For instance, Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003) analyse how role expectations from others in the organization shape and, indeed, regulate their case study manager's identity claims.

Respect for symbols and objects

DeLellis (2000) describes how respect for symbols (such as flags, badges, buildings, uniforms, anthems and so on) stimulates feelings related to the values they represent. Symbolic interactionist and critical management studies identity research explores how symbols and symbolic images, representations and events (Beech, 2008) are ascribed social and personal meanings through language (Schlenker, 1980), and are drawn upon in making identity claims and in both positive and

negative ascriptions by others. For instance, Dick (2005: 1366) discusses the symbolic significance of dirt as “contravention of the ordered relations of which any society is composed” and exemplifies this in the example of how ‘gypsies’ or ‘travellers’ can be designated as ‘dirt’ (Dick, 2005: 1367)

Respect for social institution

DeLellis (2000) describes respect for social institutions, such as marriage, rites of passage, education, and socialization. The social identity theory literature and critical management studies literature on identity regulation (see Alvesson and Willmott, 2002; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009), in particular, has researched employees’ socialization into and identification with organizations. For instance, Alvesson (2001: 879) discusses how an employee may attach a strong personal value to being a member of a prestigious organization, and “the more distinctive, well-known and respected the organization, the more likely employees are to define themselves as belonging to it (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994)”.

Given that the identity literature acknowledges how different types of respect operate as discursive resources for making identity claims, it is surprising that limited identity-related research has focused conceptual attention on respect, *per se*. Therefore, we respond to Grover’s (2013: 42) call to researchers to “clearly articulate what kind of respectful treatment they are studying ... and consider their mutual impact”, in our case in making identity claims. Like Grover (2013), we believe that respect is socially constructed and, therefore, “organizational researchers need to examine respect contextually and from the perspective of the target” (p.33). We interpret ‘target’ as both the range of phenomena (“objects”, DeLellis, 2000) which are respected by people and may be drawn upon as discursive resources in constructing self (and organizational) identities, as well as the ‘subjects’ experiencing what it means to be respected. We now give further details about the context of this study and of the research subjects.

Research context

The subjects of this study are all professional performing artists, from a range of professional backgrounds (such as clown, and wild animal trainer/performer), who have been owner-managers of travelling circuses for at least 15 years. Beadle and Kőnyő (2006) describe the major structural features of travelling circuses as private ownership; the contracting of the director’s family and

pairs/groups of others (commonly families) in offering a programme of acts for a season (normally running from February to October) and performer contracts for service rather than employment.

The scope of managerial responsibility for a circus director goes well beyond that of the conventional understanding of management. The circus director manages both the show and the community of artists (family and non-family members) who work and live together in the travelling circus. In the context of increasing interest amongst organization scholars in the undermining of the work-life distinction in conditions of 'permanent liminality' (Johnson and Sørensen 2014), the circus provides a mode of work organization in which this boundary has been porous for centuries: "It is a mode of survival which is a mode of existence" (Carmeli 1987: 77).

There are no empirical studies on professionals becoming managers in a circus context and this is only the second academic paper to report on circus directors (Beadle, 2013 being the first). To answer the potential objection that little is to be learned from such a marginal case we maintain that such cases may highlight phenomena which are difficult to detect in more familiar settings and thereby enable recognition of so far unacknowledged presuppositions. In this case, the emphasis placed on the need for respect in the work and community leadership roles of circus directors may encourage researchers to investigate how respect functions in identity claims elsewhere.

A relational social constructionist epistemology (Watson and Harris, 1999; Fletcher, 2006; Cunliffe, 2008; Corlett, 2009; Hosking, 2011), suggests that becoming a manager is an ever-emergent process (Kondo, 1990; Watson, 1994; Watson and Harris, 1999; Bryans and Mavin, 2003; Parker, 2004) which "continues long after" the individual is given a managerial title (Watson and Harris, 1999, p.vii) and in which people are "constantly *becoming*, crafting themselves in particular, located situations for particular ends" (Kondo, 1990, p.257).

Research design

Using an extreme case purposive sample (Saunders 2012) the research project explored the self-understanding of owner-managers of British and Irish travelling circuses (Beadle, 2013). An analysis of the annual Directory of British and Irish Circuses published in *King Pole*, the journal of the Circus Friends Association, reveals an industry which has reached steady state after decades of decline. In each year from 2005 to 2013 there were no more than 40 and no fewer than 35 circuses on the

roads of Britain and Ireland. 15 circuses have toured for more than a decade and semi-structured interviews were conducted by the second author (who is from a traditional circus family) with six Directors from this group who had toured their own circuses for over 15 years. The semi-structured interviews were informed by life-story interviewing (Atkinson, 1998), but were more focused, covering topics of becoming circus directors, subsequent learning, management practices and reasons for continuing. The digitally recorded interviews, of between 45 and 90 minutes' duration, were transcribed and confirmed for accuracy by the participants. As each of the participants is a well-known public figure within the industry, proper names within the transcripts and details of the participant's former professional act(s) have been removed to maintain anonymity.

For the purposes of this paper, transcripts were interpreted by the first author using a discourse analytic approach (Boje et al., 2004). The data transcripts were read and re-read and themes were noted as they began to emerge within and across the interview transcripts. A prominent theme which emerged from the data analysis, and which led us to return abductively (Cunliffe and Erikson, 2011) to review related literature, was respect. The aim of the data analysis is to contribute theoretically by examining the importance of respect to processes of identity. This research has focused on the circus directors' perceptions of respect, as they interpret their own and others' behaviour and judgements in relation to different types of respect. "How others' behavior is interpreted, however, is subject to social and perceptual biases" (Grover, 2013: 44) and, as an outsider to the circus cultural context, the first author found it difficult to appreciate fully the significance, for making identity claims, of the different types of respect. The second author was able to give insights into this. We also provided drafts of the paper to members of his family, who are current/former circus performers and owners, in order to determine whether our interpretations "speak to" them about, or "resonate" with, their experience (Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 753).

Having provided earlier a conceptual framework of different types of respect as discursive resources for identity, and illustrating these from the extant identity literature, we support our argument of the importance of respect in making identity claims by illustrating how circus directors drew on each type of respect in their accounts of becoming manager. For analytical clarity, we present the data illustrations under separate headings. It is evident from these extracts, however,

that different types of respect are drawn upon discursively in an interrelated and mutually reinforcing manner.

Recognition respect

The position of manager, as expressed by contemporary observers, carries the moral duty of according recognition respect to others (Grover, 2013; Cunliffe and Eriksen, 2011). Unprompted, circus directors highlighted their granting of such respect to 'people on the show'. For instance, circus director (hereafter CD) 2's starting point of 'I deal with people as human beings if you like, I treat them as I'd want to be treated myself' appears unconditional (Sayer, 2007) and is similar to CD 4's position 'you start off with working from a point of respect'. Such a discursive move establishes their conformity to a managerial norm; but its articulation also confirms the possibility of its transgression and hence implies the credit that should accrue to those who acknowledge it. Granting respect supports the wider claim to managerial identity. This may be particularly warranted when reciprocity cannot be assumed. Two directors indicated that it may be contested; CD 3 states that 'the unfortunate thing I have learned is not to trust anybody' and, similarly, CD 1 learnt from his early experiences of becoming manager that 'you had to ... watch the artists or be wary of them and not take everything at face value'.

These different starting points do not impact on recognition respect but do impact on their management style. CD 3 acknowledges that his management techniques 'are not conventional, I don't suffer fools gladly' and, similarly, CD 1 realises he has a reputation for 'stamping my authority on proceedings' and 'be[ing] strong' with the artists, even though he also claims 'I want to be decent to them and treat them fairly and in a decent ... what I call a decent manner'.

The data illustrates how the circus directors draw on recognition respect in accounting for the quality of their managerial and relational style of treating others (Bolton, 2007; Sayer, 2007; Cunliffe and Eriksen, 2011). They also draw on it, as a discursive resource, for constructing a self-identity as a manager who aspires to live a moral life (DeLellis, 2000; Watson, 2003).

Appraisal respect

Appraisal respect, warranted by features of character and performance, relies on shared evaluative standards. Such standards are evident in this extract from CD 4:

'I know that a lot of continental circus directors will come and book acts after I've had them because particularly young acts they know I will take three minutes of rubbish out of it and costume it and light it you know there are other circuses in Britain that artists like to work on because it's fun XXX [name of circus] is a classic example but after a while people get if you're an artist you want your act to be seen in the best possible light and that's never going to happen to you in XXX [repeats name of circus] where the lights are going to be rubbish and the sound is going to be slim hammering out nasty old tape'

In claiming credit for enhancing acts in the view of continental circus directors CD 4 exploits the generally accepted understanding that first the artistic standards of circuses on the European mainland are higher than those in Britain and Ireland (Stroud 2000:111) and second that judgments about the quality of circuses is a function of their exemplification of standards of technical and artistic prowess. It is these shared understandings that enable CD 4 to report respect from an authoritative source - 'continental circus directors' - in respect of a valued outcome 'you want your act to be seen in the best possible light'.

CD 3 's claims to appraisal respect reflect his own performance rather than that of the circus as a whole, and are consistent with his claim to be 'really an animal man still learning the circus'. His performance prowess is located in the skilful development of acts that are particularly suited to an English audience. As a presenter of wild animals who is acutely conscious of the discourse of animal cruelty that threatens the legitimacy of the circus he has tried to:

'do the cats for an English audience. It's very sort of quiet and and nice and I get as close as I can and I pat them and all this is really dangerous because you're terribly close but that's what the public like and I come out of the cage and as I'm walking round the show amazingly every day people wanted to shake your hand and say how much they've enjoyed that'

For CD 1, appraisal respect is necessitated by the continuing anxiety about potential exploitation by the artists on the show.

'I think that people have to respect you and I think be a little bit afraid of ... you as well ... and because I am on my own and I don't have like a family around me to back me up then I think it's even more important that people are ... afraid of me really'

CD 1 demonstrates use of appraisal respect for strong leadership as a discursive resource for making his managerial identity claims. In stating 'that people have to respect you and I think be a little bit afraid of ... you as well', CD 1 associates appraisal respect with generating fear, at least to some extent. Although he is aware of other ways of managing others he seems self-assured about the way he has chosen ('it's the way that I've done it'). CD 1's combination of recognition respect, exemplified in his repeated distinction between being 'decent' and being 'nice' has facilitated his identity claims, a point he emphasizes in remembering the following comment:

Comment [A1]: Extracts referred to are no longer in the main extract/data illustration

'It was quite touching actually ... he said that he had worked for several circuses but that I was the most decent person he had worked for'.

CD 1's approach seems to be in stark contrast to CD 5 who:

'would give the people the option like treat them with respect like they're artists, they're performers ... I mean they are very professional people you know'

CD 5 implies that the artists/performers deserve appraisal respect because of their professional status (Davies, 2002), a feature which accords with the appraisal respect reported by CD 6:

I always remember [when I] was at Battersea, XXX [names a leading European Circus Director] who was like the cream of the cream and he come out to me and he said this is the best [names type of] act in the world and I thought that's like getting an Oscar from a man like that you know ... sometimes I go in a place and they say 'oh look it's the [names type of act] man' ... that's what they've got in their minds and it's very nice when you're getting on a bit (CD 6)

As social identity theory research suggests, CD 6 derives positive feelings of self-worth and self-esteem from being recognised and respected for his circus act. The accolade from the European CD, seemed particularly important to CD 6: 'I always remember ... like getting an Oscar from a man like that' and CD 6's use of the comparator, combined with the idiom 'cream of the cream', conveys the appreciation of being respected in this way. Arrighi's review of the first history of the modern circus in the British Isles (by Frost, 1875) observes that "star performers were prevalent in the circus genre and fundamental to its processes" (Arrighi, 2012: 175). For CD 6 this remains significant. The appraisal respect given by the public and his recall ('I always remember') of the accolade

accorded to him as 'the best act in the world' by a leading European CD is particularly important in maintaining his self-identity in his advancing years, when performing to those high standards may no longer be possible.

In addition to being positively appraised and attaining fame for one's professional act, the circus directors discussed how they were respected especially by other circus artists and directors for the high quality of their circuses:

when you get other circus people ... you hear that they're talking about you and they're saying like 'that's the show', like 'this is the show to see' or 'that's the show we should, people should be looking to get to that level' ... we've been there too ... we've looked at other shows and thought that we would love to be there and now we hear ... people say that about us you know and ... amongst the public and amongst our peers as well ... we have a lot of respect you know ... that's great satisfaction for someone who's been born into the business (CD 5)

In setting the standard that others 'should be looking to get to', CD 5 has achieved recognition, from the circus audience and professional peers, for artistry in putting together a high quality show. In making the claim that 'we've looked at other shows and thought like that we would love to be there and now we hear like people ... people say that about us', he demonstrates an aspirant identity in being "earnestly desirous of being a particular kind of person and of self-consciously and consistently pursuing this objective" (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009: 370).

Identification respect

Identification respect is based on giving respect to others and gaining respect from others by displaying shared values. Circus directors earn the respect of the artists through their knowledge and understanding of circus performers' practices and values. CD 1 exemplifies this in his suggestion that:

when I started my own circus ... I was able to work with, to present the animals ... it gave me a bit of respect from the other artists because they could see that I wasn't simply a manager because it would be very easy for artists to say 'Well what does he know? He's never been in the ring ... I didn't set out to work with wild animals to impress the artists but it did because it made them realise that 'oh well he's looking at it from our point of view as well' and even now I can always say to people 'Look I have appeared in the ring, I do know what it's like to be an artist' ... so that's a big advantage (CD 1)

CD 1 implies that the artists will have confidence in his ability to be fair, in looking at 'it' – the circus and performing – from the viewpoint of the artists 'as well' as his own, as circus director. This illustrates the interplay between identification and recognition respect. As Parker (2000: 204) explains, occupational/professional identities may be deployed to make claims for "saying 'we understand and they do not'" and thereby maintaining the local moral order of rights, obligations and status (Harré, 1998; Burr, 2003). The pairing of statements 'it would be very easy for artists to say' and 'even now I can always say' suggests that CD 1 can (and still has to) draw on his former professional identity to 'defend' himself, as manager, against possible attack from others ('Well what does he know?') and to restore the local moral order. By being able 'always [to] say' he knows and understands 'what it's like to be an artist', his knowledge and experience help him gain identification respect and also give him an advantage in managing others.

Respect for status, station and role

Parker (2011: 565) notes that circuses are "sites of complex formal and informal hierarchies" and Loring (2007: 2) explains how large American circuses had "clearly defined social lines" between circus owners, performers, and labourers. Such an organization context might suggest that individuals are given respect for their status and role or on grounds of birthright. Indeed, Offen (2010: 474) describes how the 'circus girl', Alessandra, in her study is "a *true* circus child: not only did she grow up in the circus, of parents who grew up in the circus, but she bears the blood and names of the most famous circus families in France and Italy" (emphasis added). This supports the "special powers, prestige and privileges" (Thornborrow and Brown, 2009: 364) accorded because of status and role.

CD 5 explains how he would respect the status and role of artists, and draws on this type of respect in positioning himself as the circus director 'managing' the artists, in the way in which he speaks to an artist if he notices that a part of an act is missing during the performance

I would know exactly why he [an artist] hasn't done that you know he doesn't have to tell you ... I wouldn't even dream of going to them and saying afterwards 'Look don't take something out without my permission first' you know but again that's just me ... I mean I know of certain ... plenty of others that would ... have to enforce their thing and say like 'Just you make sure you know your position you know who I am' but that's just not the way that we do it (CD 5)

Using the expression 'I wouldn't even dream of' conveys the wrongness or inappropriateness, in the local-historical and local-cultural context (Harré, 1998; Hosking, 2011) of the circus, of 'enforcing' his position, as the circus director, over the artist. He distinguishes his own approach ('but again that's just me') by making comparisons with 'plenty of others', that is circus directors, who feel the need to assert their position (such as CD 1 as discussed above under appraisal respect) and distancing himself from such practices ('but that's just not the way that we do it'). Unlike CD 1, CD 5 was born and bred into the circus. This might relate to the different ways in which they show respect for the status of the artists. For CD 5 his status as the circus director is implied on grounds of birth-right and reinforced by the presence of his father who supports him in managing the circus ('that's just not the way that we do it'). Therefore, he does not need to claim explicitly his status as circus director and can accede to the local moral order that accords superior status to artists. In contrast, CD 1 does not have 'a family around me to back me up' and, therefore, as previously discussed, we propose that his 'stamp[ing] my authority on proceedings' is an illustration of drawing on respect for status, station and role in asserting his managerial identity claim. We consider local-historical and local-cultural aspects (Harré, 1998; Hosking, 2011) of the "local moral landscape" (Harré et al., 2009: 9) in further detail in the next section.

Respect for mores, law, and regulation and respect for folkways, custom and expectation

The circus literature discusses "specified rules and regulations" (Parker, 2011: 565), for instance for behaviour and alcohol consumption, in the large US circuses and "house rules" (Beadle, 2013: 685), developed and enforced by circus directors. The house rules apply to the community as a whole, both within and beyond the circus ring, relating to matters such as where to site vehicles around the show, and the hanging out of washing (Beadle and Kőnyó, 2006). The directors' right to enforce house rules is accepted within circuses (Beadle, 2013), as Offen (2010: 482) observed at a late night party in one of the performer's caravans: '[w]hen concern for the late hour has them turn off the stereo'. The circus directors' accounts featured respect for, rules, for instance relating to privacy:

they know that if they come to my wagon they don't step inside, they know that, that's sort of from day one, the other thing is some people call me by me name but that's usually me son-in-law or whatever but the others always refer to me as Boss or Mr XXX [Director's first name] whichever they prefer ... the boys that I have they're not party goers ... so we don't

tend to have all night parties (laughs) ... but I do ask them to respect other people coz you're living in a close community like if they put loud music on I would just say to them you know have your music but just remember if I can hear it everybody else can hear it you know (CD 2)

This private-self space might assume a greater significance for circus directors, because they are 'living in a close community' with the people that work for them and, therefore, there is a potential blurring of the 'boundaries' of private self, including as family member, and the public self, as circus director and 'boss'. Likewise, other than family members artists 'always' refer to CD 2 (in his presence) as Boss or Mr XXX, denoting respect for status, station and role.

For CD 6 respect for rules is associated with respect for his forebears: 'we've got lots of rules and regulations [that have] been handed down from me father' with a specific example (discussed by Beadle, 2013) being the 'no washing' rule. It is interesting to note that both CD 2 and CD 6 are members of well-established circus families (6th and 10th generation respectively) and both having longstanding rules and regulations which are 'always' respected. We suggest that these extracts illustrate not only respect for rules, regulations, folkways and customs but also respect for circus as a social institution. Before we illustrate and discuss this type of respect we discuss respect for symbols and objects and, particularly, how the circus directors drew symbolically on the circus name.

Respect for symbols and objects

Respect for symbols and objects stimulate feelings related to the values they represent (DeLellis, 2000). Circuses rely on a "respected name" (Loring, 2007: 9) and Beadle (2013: 687) describes the especial significance of the circus name for directors who have inherited their role: "circuses were named after the family and reputational goods were valued for redounding on the family as a whole. They represented a family tradition" and "[f]or circus people there are no relationships more important than ties to family" (Stroud, 2000: xiii). This sense of respect for the circus name as a symbol of the family and tradition is illustrated in the following data extract in which CD 5, a born and bred circus person, discusses the personal satisfaction he gains from 'using our own name'.

and the biggest thing about it is ... that we've got to that standard using our own name ... we've just kept our own name and our own standards ... the biggest personal satisfaction is that we've got where we have without any assistance and using our own name ... and we

haven't been frightened to put our name up ... you know... in lights ... that's the biggest satisfaction (CD 5)

CD 5 expresses his pride not only in using his own name but also in not being 'frightened to put our name up ... in lights'. This phrase can be interpreted both literally and more figuratively. Literally, the phrase refers to the display of the circus's name. Figuratively, 'to put one's name up in lights' acknowledges the fame of CD 5's circus name and the symbolic respect which it represents. For CD 5, as 'someone who's been born into the business', there is satisfaction not only for the standard achieved but, as importantly, for the respect accorded to the circus/family name. CD 2's circus also carries his name:

'it's important to me because we've kept our name clean all these years and people know us by our name they know exactly who we are and I think people er respect the fact that you use your name and you're not changing if you change your name it seems to imply that you're doing something wrong that you that you're hiding something you know what I mean'-

One's name is a 'significant identity detail' (Gabriel, 2000: 224), in defining 'who we are'. CD 6 explains how he has 'spent all my life building the name up' and is proud of the currency associated with it.

I think I'm the only one, there's only one other in the country that use the same name and most of them they're not their own names they just take a name out of a hat but I said well I've been all my life building a name up ... I spent all my life building the name up ... I haven't spent all my life building the name up to turn away by changing it overnight (CD 6)

CD 6 is proud of the fact that he has maintained the same name and stresses the importance of one's own name rather than a randomly selected one. The repetition (three times) of 'all my life' indicates the amount of time spent in building up the circus name. . The currency of the name for business reputation and commercial interests is echoed by CD 6 ('I haven't spent all my life building the name up to turn away by changing it overnight'). However, because of the association of the circus with the circus director and with his self-identity, it is not just a case of 'tak[ing] a name out of a hat' (CD 6). Indeed, CD 6 distances himself from other circuses ('most of them they're not their own names') and stresses his uniqueness ('I'm the only one, there's only one other in the country that use the same name'). The uniqueness and longevity of the circus name and the meanings associated with it, as a source of respect, extend beyond the circus directors themselves to others

in society and, therefore, we now discuss how the circus name become a symbol of respect for (their) circus as social institution.

Respect for social institution

Respect for social institutions engenders respect in recognition of their importance to the relevant social groups (DeLellis, 2000). In the previous section, we discussed the significance of the circus name as a symbol of both the value of circus as a social institution but also of its association with the social institution of family as reflected in CD 5's account:

'when people like talk about ... talk about our family name ... and what it means to them ... or what it's meant to their families in generations like from them you know ... you get a great deal of ... satisfaction out of... the respect that people has ... you know for ... our family and that' (CD 5)

The circus name is something to be respected by others, not only because of the standards of the show associated with it, but also because of its symbolism as a social institution to 'people' [the circus audience] who talk about it, and have done 'in generations'. If the name has such significance for non-circus members, we can imagine its significance to those who own it and the strong person value of being a member of a prestigious organization (Alvesson, 2001) is reflected in the sense of personal satisfaction CD 5 conveys in this and the earlier extract.

Discussion

According to Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas (2008:11) "How we understand ourselves is shaped by larger cultural and historical formations, which supply much of our identity vocabularies, norms, pressures and solutions, yet which do so in indirect and subtle ways." In this section we make a number of suggestions about the relationship between these cultural and historical formations (particularly in Britain and Ireland) and the use of respect as a discursive resource for circus directors' identity work.

For both 'jossers' and 'born and bred', respect plays an important role in the discursive repertoire of circus directors' identity claims. Similar empirical research in other family business or wider entrepreneurial contexts would be needed to investigate the extent to which this features more

Comment [h2]: Pose a series of questions relating to the findings, literature and explain what is happening and why (i.e. in the style of Angus Robson's thesis)

widely but, in the case of the circus, we would argue that two features of the social position of circus contribute to this emphasis. First circus has operated on the margins of legitimacy since its inception (Kwint 2002): its acrobats persuade human bodies to move, contort and risk death (Tait 2005); its presentation of animals requires the collection, management and disposal of faeces; its achievements are ephemeral and momentary; and its people both exaggerate and provoke a discourse of separateness (Carmeli 1987). From the development of mime in French circuses to avoid prosecution for presenting illegal theatre in the 18th and 19th centuries (Wall 2013) to circus directors' assumption of aristocratic names in Britain during the 19th and 20th centuries (Croft-Cook 1941) and contemporary struggles over animal circuses (Bouissac 2012), the circus has used a variety of strategies, of voice, of visibility, of silence and of escape in its struggle for social respectability.

Second circus performance, especially clowning, embodies the undermining of hierarchy and authority:

“Like the typical hat of the medieval fool, their mask and disguise make their transgressive behavior immune to prosecution and retaliation because their appearance positions them outside the social grid.” (Bouissac 2013, 144)

In a local cultural order which exemplifies such transgression, the achievement of respect requires more and other than social status. Thus, use of respect as a discursive resource only works if it is grounded in the local moral order.

As we have seen, Circus Directors draw on culturally specific and historically legitimated signifiers of respect through which to claim or maintain their identities. Those ‘born and bred’ into the circus community access resources unavailable to new entrants. Stroud (2000) discusses language specific to circus and its significance for one’s identity. For instance, ‘jossers’ is a circus word for outsider and, according to Beadle (2003: 61), ‘even an adulthood working within circus does not remove the label’ of being a ‘jossers’. Stroud (2000:10), herself an outsider, confirms this: ‘the boundary between the jossers and the legitimate – that is, born and bred circus person – is permanent. You can’t step over that divide and claim the place that blood would have granted’. Of the six Directors interviewed, two were born and bred circus people and four were ‘jossers’, although one of these married into a long-established (6th generation) circus family. The significance of this boundary may account in part for the type of respect claimed. Within the

travelling circus, inheritors of respected family names enjoy status respect before any evaluation of their personal merits has been made.

Historically, “the reputations of the leading nineteenth-century circus companies were inextricably linked to the public profiles of the men who operated them” (Arrighi, 2012: 180), with individuals such as George Sanger in England and PT Barnum in the United States becoming celebrities and eminent public profiles (Arrighi, 2012). CDs 5 and 6 are both born and bred circus directors and, as illustrated by the extracts and discussion, draw on appraisal and status respect which serve as grounds for positioning themselves, within their local-historical and local-cultural contexts (Harré, 1998; Hosking, 2011). For ‘jossers’ identification and appraisal respect, earned through performance (such as CD 1’s presentation of a wild animal act), are potential substitutes for the status respect that accrue to the ‘born and bred’.

As Grover (2013) highlights, not all senders of respectful messages are treated equally. The research reported here suggests one local answer to the “relative weights applied to respect messages based on status, relational distance, or instrumental importance” (Grover 2013: 45) of the respect giver; it is those who share the habitus of the circus whose respect is sought most assiduously.

The distinction between appraisal respect and status respect, so evident in the respect discourse of bourgeois society and organization, breaks down in the marginal community of the travelling circus. It is not that social status is not evident, aspired to and protected but rather that this status depends upon appraisals of artistic and technical ability through which appraisal, identification and status mutually signify. Thus, in his struggle for respectability with circus artists, CD 1’s statement that ‘I can always say to people ‘Look I have appeared in the ring, I do know what it’s like to be an artist’ is a simultaneous claim to appraisal, identification and status respect. In this discourse both standards and lineage have been defined and patterned over generations (Wall; 2013); to symbolise merit through naming is to claim both inheritance of and allegiance to shared standards of performance.

The effectiveness of claims to illustrious lineage depend upon a cosmology in which ancestral inheritance is assumed to provide a *terra firma* for contemporary ability so that CD 2’s lack of

appropriate ancestry is compensated by his wife's family which 'goes back generations and generations of circus and fairground'. This has the fortunate consequence that their children, who provide most of the content of the show, can claim to be 'seventh generation'. Claims for status respect are often vested in the language of temporality so that CD 6 has invested 'all my life' in building up the circus name. He repeats 'all my life' three times and contrasts it with 'I haven't spent all my life building the name up to turn away by changing it overnight' in order to achieve a short-term financial gain ('a lot of them make a lot of money like that'). Similarly, rules gain legitimacy through longevity having been 'handed down from me father' (CD 6), implemented 'from day one' (CD 2). Other examples abound.

Conclusion

As only the second academic paper to report on circus directors, this research has the potential to contribute, from its novel organizational context (*terra incognita*), insights into the potential importance of respect for processes of identity construction in other organizational contexts. The use of an extreme case purposive sample in which respectability is both dependent on locally accepted standards of evaluation and in which respect provides a significant discursive resource in identity claims enables us to see its potential importance in our understanding of the identity work of managers in general.

Like the 'jossers' whose struggle to establish respectability is critical to the effectiveness of their identity claims, managers are in a constant state of 'becoming' as they struggle to understand, forge, maintain, repair and restore perilous managerial identities (McInnes and Corlett, 2012). An obvious limitation of this work, shared with all other work reporting highly marginal communities, is that of its resonance with other contexts. Nevertheless, we hope that this paper will encourage other researchers to explore the use of respect in identity claims in a range of contexts. This would not only enable appreciation of the diverse strategies and evaluative standards within which respect is claimed but would also enable engagement with the relationship between context and both the efficacy and durability of respect as such a resource.

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Table 1 Types of respect with examples from the identity literature

Developed from DeLellis (2000)¹, Grover (2013)², Clarke (2011)³, Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011)⁴

Types of respect	Objects of Respect¹	Examples in the Identity Literature
Recognition respect^{2, 3}	<p>Respect for Humans</p> <p>1) Respect for self</p> <p>Recognition of the fundamental value of oneself as a human being¹</p> <p>Recognition of oneself as a person who aspires to live a moral and worthwhile life¹</p>	<p>Denial of recognition respect for self e.g. bullying (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008), claiming self worth as a dirty worker (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999) and individual powerlessness giving rise to victim identity constructions (Gabriel, 2000)</p>
	<p>2) Respect for others</p> <p>Recognition of others as people born with the basic right to respect as a human being¹</p>	<p>Dignity and respect no longer an automatic birthright (Collinson, 2003)</p> <p>Social stigma associated with dirty work enacted through reduced respect (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999)</p>
Appraisal respect^{2, 3}	<p>3) Respect for other(s) based on abilities, qualities and accomplishments</p>	<p>Professionals may be accorded respect by virtue of their possession of knowledge and expertise (Davies, 2002)</p>
	<p>4) Respect for oneself as a person who has self-worth</p> <p>Respect for self based on abilities, qualities and accomplishments.</p>	<p>Self-esteem is “tied intimately to an individual’s self-representation – to one’s opinion and respect for oneself” (Brown and Jones, 2000).</p> <p>Implications of negative self-appraisal respect relating to role e.g. academics (Gabriel, 2010; Knights and Clarke, 2013), dirty workers (Grandy, 2008)</p>
Identification respect³	<p>5) Respect for other(s) who display one’s own values</p>	<p>Gabriel (2000) discusses how a leader may be respected because a follower identifies with her, say, as a role model of a successful woman.</p>

Types of respect	Objects of Respect ¹	Examples in the Identity Literature
	Respect for Civilization ¹ 6) Respect for status, station and role ¹	Thornborrow and Brown (2009: 364) analysed how men in the British Parachute Regiment positioned paratroopers as “the best soldiers in the British Army” and drew on the Regiment’s “special powers, prestige and privileges” in making identity claims.
	7) Respect for mores, law, and regulation ¹ 8) Respect for folkways, custom and expectation ¹	Japanese women’s gendered work identities are created in part at the levels of national law and cultural ideologies through linking women to the home Kondo (1990)
	9) Respect for symbols and objects ¹	Symbols are used to construct an elite organizational and professional identity (Alvesson and Robertson, 2006; Thornborrow and Brown, 2009)
	10) Respect for social institution ¹	Employees’ socialization into, identification with and regulation by organizations, e.g. using social identity theory and critical management studies perspectives (“the more distinctive, well-known and respected the organization, the more likely employees are to define themselves as belonging to it” (Alvesson, 2001: 879)