Organizational Identity Construction Inside and Out: An application of the 'identities in networks' approach

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ABSTRACT

A recent development in our understanding of organizational identity has been the emergence of the 'identities in networks' approach, a synthesis of the inside-out view of firm control in identity construction and the outside-in view of identity being influenced by external network forces (Huemer, Håkansson & Prenkert 2009). By focusing on the interplay between actor and network-level influences of identity processes, we gain a new appreciation for identity as it relates to strategy and sensemaking in network contexts. This research contributes to the emerging perspective by exploring identity construction and more specifically, managers' identity work, as it relates to the network in which the actors engage. The research case study focuses on the organizational identities of Indigenous-owned firms contracting in the Australian mining industry by analysing the discourses of managers both inside and outside the firm as well as corporate artefacts. This study builds on previous work by examining the identities of multiple actors interacting in the same network environment, thereby capturing the ways in which the network influences their identities as well as the ways in which actors strategize through identity work. Finally, the cross-cultural nature of the case provides an additional layer of complexity to the analysis of identity by incorporating both Indigenous and corporate identities and exploring the interaction in a Western-dominant B-to-B environment.

Keywords: 'identities in networks' 'ethnic identity' 'identity work'

INTRODUCTION

Organisational identity represents a powerful metaphor through which the essence of firms can be understood. Identity construction takes place through dynamic interactions between a wide array of stakeholders at multiple levels, both internal and external to the firm (Huemer, Becerra & Lunnan 2004). This complex process between interconnected actors incorporates a variety of phenomena of interest from a network perspective such as strategy, sensemaking and influencing behaviours. Approaching identity construction from a network perspective allows for greater insight into how managers engage in strategic identity work and how firm identity is shaped by their environment.

One aspect worthy of further attention is the tension between internal and external forces involved in identity construction processes. The 'identities in networks' perspective emphasises the importance of the interplay between actor's internal features and its successful control and the features of other actors and their successful influence (Huemer, Håkansson & Prenkert 2009). As with most behaviors in networks, the potential for identity work is restricted by the available discourses and the negotiation of meaning with others (Ellis, Rod, Beal & Lindsay 2012). Furthermore identity can be considered to be determined by a firm's position within the network and therefore identity work must take into account the broader network structures and processes (Gadde & Håkansson 2001). While the identities in networks approach provides a useful lens through which to interpret many business to business marketing concepts, there are currently few examples of how this theory is manifested in practice.

The investigation into the influences of actor-network interplay on organisational identity become further complicated when taking into account companies simultaneously participate in multiple networks. This not only challenges managers' abilities to construct appropriate organisational identities for the diverse operational environments, but also challenges researchers' abilities to comprehend the various network dynamics. Moreover identity is very much dependent on perspective and therefore our understandings of organisational identity varies between managers but also time and situational context. This indicates the importance of looking beneath the abstract organisational-level to the managers engaging in organisational identity work while simultaneously constructing their own individual identities (Scott & Lane 2000).

This research seeks to explore the interactions between these manager-organisation and organisation-network processes in identity construction. In particular we seek to develop a theoretical framework through which these multi-level dynamics can be better understood. In expanding on the existing literature, we focus on the development of Indigenous business identities in particular, which adds an ethnic identity layer to organisations. We contribute to this emerging perspective by providing an empirical case study of identity construction as it relates to newly established small businesses in a cross-cultural environment. This paper seeks to address the question of: *how does the interplay between internal and external processes influence organisational identity construction?*

CONCEPTUALISING ORGANISATIOAL IDENTITY

The following section presents the relevant concepts which form the theoretical framework of this research. In adopting an 'identities in networks' perspective, we seek to explore the network influences on organisational identity as well as the effects of identity work activities. Given the strategic focus we also incorporate concepts relating to managing multiple

identities in networks. Finally we introduce concepts specifically relevant to the Indigenous business context.

Organisational identity refers to the collectively held frame through which an organisation's members make sense of their world and share some understanding of 'who we are' (Albert & Whetten 1985; Weick 1995). While referring to the collective-level, organisational identity has self-referential meaning for the individuals contributing to its development (Albert & Whetten 1985). Albert and Whetten's (1985) definition of organisational identity focuses upon the characteristics which a firm's members consider central, enduring and distinctive. Since this seminal definition, the enduring or stable nature of identity has been challenged by proceeding perspectives recognising the fluid or dynamic aspects of identity (Gioia, Schulz & Corley 2000). Such arguments have profound implications for strategic management as they suggest identity change is possible and can be considered a key managerial decision (Pratt and Foreman 2000).

The *'identities in networks'* perspective recognises the control an actor has in developing their own identity (Huemer 2013). Managerial agency is countered however, by the features of other actors and their successful influence (Huemer, Håkansson & Prenkert 2009). This perspective therefore incorporates and synthesises divergent streams of identity research: the inside-out approach of identities as internal and manageable, e.g. Pratt and Foreman (2000); and the outside-in approach of identities as external and unmanageable e.g. Gadde and Håkansson (2001).

External Influence from the Network

Of relevance to the strategic perspective of identity is the concept of network identity. Network identity refers to the distinct identity that a firm obtains by its relationships to other actors (Huemer 2004 p.254). Organisational identity captures the perceived attractiveness or repulsiveness of a firm as an exchange partner (Anderson, Håkansson & Johanson 1994). Identity is an important concept impacting upon the principles that guide a firm's behaviour as well as the way the organisation interprets the behaviour of others (Gadde & Håkansson 2001). The process of construction is influenced by the actor's network position, their connections and their desired position and connections (Clarke, Brown & Hailey 2009).

Identity serves as a way through which actors communicate their orientations to other firms in the network, as well as the competencies and resources that may allow it to perform a particular role (Anderson, Håkansson & Johanson 1994). Alternatively, identity can also be considered to develop through the communication of values to internal and external stakeholders (Aust 2004). This draws attention to the importance of external source of influence in identity construction. Organisational identity is not constructed within an internal vacuum but rather via processes of interaction with outsiders, be they clients, competitors, regulators etc. (Gioia, Schulz and Corley 2000).

Organisational identity is considered to differ from yet be closely linked to the concept of organisational image, which reflects external views of the organisation (Gioia, Schulz & Corley 2000; Scott & Lane 2000). Actors project an image and make identity claims in a strategic way so as to influence the perceptions of others (Whetten & Mackey 2002). From a network perspective this may involve efforts to realise intended or construed images, which represent the desired attributes they hope to be associated with (Brown, Decin, Pratt & Whetten 2006). Actors seek to maintain alignment between their identity claims, externally perceived images and their acquired reputation (Whetten & Mackey 2002).

Identity Work as a Form of Internal Control

The process through which managers develop or manage organisational identity is known as identity work (Scott and Lane 2000). This is an ongoing process through which actors continuously 'engage in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening or revising the constructions that are productive of a sense of coherence and distinctiveness' (Sveningsson & Alvesson 2003 p. 1165). Identity work comprises the 'processes, activities and events through which organisational identity becomes specified in the minds of organisational managers and stakeholders' (Scott & Lane 2000 p. 45).

Identity work is not performed by abstract organisational actors but by associated managers and stakeholders, simultaneously constructing their individual identities (Scott &Lane 2000). Organisational identity is therefore inextricably linked to self-identity and the individuals' attempts to socially construct their own position or identity (Ellis & Ybema 2012). In the case of SMEs as in this instance, the identity of the owner or founder has great influence over that of their company and is often a source of its distinctiveness (Abimbola & Vallaster 2007; He & Balmer 2013). In fact, personal identity work processes are considered to be extremely relevant within an organisational context, especially when they include distinct discourses that are not perceived to conform with the dominant organisational discourses (e.g. ethnicity, religion, gender) (Essers & Benschop 2007).

Multiple Identity Perspectives

Snehota (2011) suggests that actors have multiple identities because they are involved in multiple relationships and multiple interactions at one time. Given the importance of perspective in understanding identity, it is possible for different conceptualisations of the central, distinctive and enduring elements of an organisation to exist (Huemer et al 2004; Pratt & Foreman 2000). Identities intersect with one another and these interactions continuously change over time and are never complete (Essers & Benschop 2009; Weaver 2001). These multiple identities do not necessarily exist in competition with one another, nor do they necessarily need to be consciously recognised or universally held by the organisation's members or external stakeholders (Pratt & Foreman 2000). Moreover identities can be presented at different times or to different partners, or alternatively these identities may feature in the same time and place (Sillince & Brown 2009; Huemer 2013).

Of particular interest to our research questions are the ways in which multiple identity interpretations interact within a network setting, especially in the face of competing stakeholder expectations or conflicting identities. Foreman & Whetten (2002) refer to the concept of 'hybrid-identity organisations' that simultaneously have two or more identities which are not normally considered to be complementary. 'Church universities' or 'family business' are suggested as applicable examples, whereby normative systems like a church or family are combined with utilitarian systems like a university or business (Forman &Whetten 2006). Such a combination is considered to present greater challenges and critical decisions in dealing with identity crises and performing identity work (Whetten 2006). Identities can be fragmented and antagonistic however individuals are able to balance seemingly incoherent yet relatively stable narratives (Clark, Brown & Hailey 2009). Through managing these intersecting identities individuals gain agency in their identity construction (Essers & Benschop 2009). From an organisational strategy perspective, effective identity work is critical to managing conflicting elements within a firm's identity, however strategic decisions must also negotiate uncontrollable external forces (Foreman & Whetten 2002).

Relevance to Indigenous Business Identity

The previous conceptualisations of organisational identity have been selected based on their relevance to Indigenous business identity. Exploring organisational identity within an ethnic minority context adds complexity to identity research, given inherent intercultural and historical tensions with the majority group but also perceived tensions relating to a corporate context more specifically (Merino & Tileaga 2011). Redpath and Neilsen (1997) and Hindle and Moroz (2009) have considered whether at both the philosophical and practical levels, the concept of *indigenous* contradicts the concepts of entrepreneurship or modern capitalism. These contradictions are considered to lie between preserving Indigenous traditions and entrepreneurial innovation, as well as between a collective sharing orientation and an individualist profit orientation (Hindle & Moroz 2009).

Contrasting positions such as Morris and Schindehutee (2005 pp 472) suggest that while culture is important, it is not 'a precedent to entrepreneurship and is instead a complex and dynamically interacting factor'. Similarly Foley (2006) and Hindle and Landsdowne (2005) agree that 'indigenous entrepreneurship' is not necessarily a contradiction and indigenous identity is not lessened by commercial success. Identity construction processes are of particular interest in these examples as Foley (2006) makes note of the flexibility and adaptation of Indigenous values, especially within a modern urban environment. Klyver and Foley (2012) suggest that the integration of minority cultural identity with that of the mainstream culture can be a difficult process for Indigenous Australian entrepreneurs, requiring major personal and organisational decisions around social norms and values.

The focus on Indigenous business identity within a post-colonial Western dominant setting raises issues around hegemonic power and self-determination in cultural identity construction (Nagel 1994). Within this social climate Indigenous people are often positioned as having to trade-off their culture to effectively engage with the dominant non-Indigenous society and succeed in business (Ogbor 2000; O'Brien, Phillips & Patsiorkovsky 2005). Notions of self-determination are often informed by colonial practices which consider a need to embrace non-Indigenous lifestyles and that such progress is inevitable (Banerjee & Tedmanson 2010). This highlights the importance of external influences on organisational identity in this setting.

METHODOLOGY

The research seeks to explore the processes involved in constructing Indigenous business identities. In line with the theoretical approach, it is necessary to capture the dynamics within organisations and the various external influences in the firm's network. A case study design was chosen to focus on Indigenous businesses operating within a specific industry (or network) setting - the Western Australian mining industry. This context offers unique insights given Indigenous contracting is a rapidly emerging industry movement; however there are numerous underlying tensions arising from Indigenous people being recognised as critical stakeholders in the mining process. Additionally, the case focuses on for-profit businesses in a predominately urban setting which has been considered to be underrepresented in previous Indigenous business research (Foley 2006).

A combination of in-depth semi-structured interviews and relevant secondary data from corporate documentation and websites was used to develop the case study. Fourteen interviews were conducted with owners or senior managers from ten separate Indigenous companies. As the firms were considered small (no more than 20 employees) these

representatives were perceived to have the greater influence on organisational identity (Abimbola & Vallaster 2007). The criteria used for inclusion in the research was based on self-identification as an Indigenous company, private ownership and for-profit commercial involvement in the mining industry. Although not a formal criteria, all companies included had over 50% Indigenous ownership. The business activities performed included – labour hire, recruitment, cultural awareness training, business consulting, I.T, engineering and construction services. To include external perspectives a snowballing technique was used to identify other organisations interacting with the focal Indigenous firms. Additional interviews were conducted with representatives from four major mining companies, two non-Indigenous contracting firms, three government agencies and one non-government agency supporting Indigenous business development. A list of respondents and their associated organisations is included in Appendix Item One.

Data analysis consisted of a combination of thematic and discourse analysis methods. Thematic analysis focused on the identification of codes and themes throughout interview transcripts and other textual data (Guest, MacQueen & Namey 2011). Codes were categorised according to themes relating to identity concepts identified in the literature (Creswell 2012). The discourse analysis element meanwhile looked beyond the surface of the data and sought to interpret the underlying sense-making motives and tensions in the managers' dialogues. This study followed the 'interpretive repertoire' approach to discourse analysis outlined by Ellis and Hopkinson (2010) to explore the strategic use of language by managers. These repertoires represent the recurrently used systems of terms strategically used to explain, justify and excuse etc. which can be identified in re-occurring words, metaphors, figures of speech and grammar (Potter & Wetherell 1987).

CASE BACKGROUND

In recent years, the Australian mining industry has begun to recognise the significance of Indigenous stakeholders and the importance of meeting their expectations as forming a central element in a mining company's '*license to operate*' (Esteves & Barclay 2011). One aspect of this movement has been the development of Indigenous-specific contracting policies to encourage greater commercial engagement and support the development of Indigenous-owned firms (O'Faircheallaigh 2010). These policies have attracted many Indigenous firms to the industry, while also encouraging Indigenous entrepreneurs to establish businesses in order to engage in these projects. More broadly, this movement has grown nationally, leading the establishment of a national Indigenous minority supplier council (Supply Nation, previously AIMSC) as well as public and private investment in similar Indigenous business support schemes.

Despite the increase in interest and investment, there is little consensus as to what actually constitutes an Indigenous company. Foley (2013) refers to the ongoing debate surrounding the definition of Indigenous business, which stems from the numerous interpretations being applied by various bodies around the country. Determining the legitimacy of Indigenous businesses becomes particularly important to prevent non-Indigenous businesses from attaining commercial advantage through fraudulently claiming an Indigenous identity (Foley 2013). To date much of the debate has centred on the issue of the owner equity share, with a variety of percentages from 51% to 25% being applied in different context. Beyond this point, the debate also incorporates many other aspects used to characterise Indigenous business such as the number of Indigenous employees, recognition from the Indigenous community, type of product offered and even the Indigenousness of corporate values.

FINDINGS

At first inspection it was evident that all of the participating companies actively promoted themselves as Indigenous, with this forming a central and prominent aspect of organisational identities. Companies were described in manager narratives and corporate communications as '*Aboriginal* consulting companies' or '*Indigenous* labour hire firms', thereby emphasising the Indigenous identity prior to other descriptors such as the service offered or the industry they participated in. In some examples, company names included the terms 'Indigenous' or 'Aboriginal', while some other names were derived from culturally significant terms associated with the traditional lands of the respective owners. Corporate websites often featured culturally significant artwork or landscapes as well as background information outlining individual connections to Indigenous culture.

Companies were active in promoting that they are 'Indigenous owned and managed' and in some cases even specified 100%, echoing the earlier referenced debate around the significance of ownership equity as a classifier. This point was used by many managers to affirm the legitimacy of their company's Indigenous identity and also juxtapose against others perceived to be less indigenous due to either partial Indigenous ownership or few Indigenous people in upper management positions. Another common way companies sought to claim an Indigenous identity was through formal membership with Indigenous business representative bodies, in particular Supply Nation. Formal affiliation was primarily valued for its use in verifying their Indigenous identity to potential business counterparts, with some managers seeing little benefit beyond the title.

Links Between Individual and Organisational Identity

In discussing their businesses, all owners and managers simultaneously interwove their personal cultural backgrounds. Given that many businesses interacted with other Indigenous people in recruitment or community consultancy, owners' described their companies operational success as being based on their inherent abilities to relate to and be accepted by the Indigenous communities they are contracted to engage with. In describing these interactions, managers frequently shifted between referring to personal and organisational connections. In many examples personal links to specific Traditional Owner (TO) groups were applied to the company itself. While companies were independently owned, personal connections facilitated contracting, particularly within this context where TO groups are key stakeholders for mining companies in securing access to land for exploration and mine development.

"There is that relationship that comes in you know. We got our foot in the door because one of the directors is married to a traditional owner" [Participant D.L.]

In another example a land use agreement between a mining company and a TO group mandated that TO businesses are granted priority access to contracts on a particular project. As one partner was a recognised traditional owner, their identity is overlayed to that of the company as a 'Traditional Owner business', despite the manager not previously describing the company as such.

"As part of that [land use] agreement, there is a clause that states that if you are a traditional owner business you actually get priority as long as you meet capacity and there is 5 million dollars a year allocated that has to go to a traditional owner business." [Participant P.J.]

Several anecdotes from non-Indigenous managers referred to Indigenous business owners who transformed their company's image into Indigenous to qualify for Indigenous contracting opportunities in the mining industry. Indigenous business identity was perceived to be a competitive strategy which an owner could construct where advantageous.

The Role of Indigenous Values in Organisational Identity

An aspect of identity construction which emerged was the way in which organisational motivations, strategies and goals reflected what was considered to be Indigenous cultural values. One such theme was the orientation towards collectivist ideals such as maximising benefit for the Indigenous community or particular kinship ties. Organisational motivations and priorities emphasised the creation of employment and training opportunities for Indigenous people. This can be interpreted from one manager who described the negotiation of a potential commercial partnership. The manager prioritises the share of labour over a more passive profit sharing arrangement, given the potential for increased employment opportunities for Indigenous workers.

"if we go into a partnership it will be a 50/50 split and I am not talking about profits, we are not interested in the profit share, I am talking about 50/50 of the manpower on the ground at any one time" [Participant P.J.]

Positive outcomes for the broader community were commonly used to define success. This orientation was not expressed in terms of strategic or altruistic drivers, but rather considered part of the company's core purpose. Many managers saw the desire to help the community as an Indigenous value inherent in their own organisation. As one manager describes his support for another Indigenous company was the 'right thing' to do.

"There is no incentive, no economic incentive there, other than to do the right thing to assist […] so I said 'yeah ok, have it at cost' in fact we are probably out of pocket because of uniforms, inductions, training and that is not a problem" [Participant P.D.]

An additional insight from an Indigenous entrepreneurship perspective is the way in which the pursuit of these Indigenous business ideals is often positioned as compromising or forgoing capitalist ideals common in business. The previous quotation highlights the costs the company incurred in supporting another Indigenous business as well as the lack of economic incentives for this action. This trade-off notion was common throughout manager discourses. Numerous examples were provided of manager's turning down contracts or partnerships which don't fit within their value system or do not advance their community objectives.

Organisational values were often used by others to define Indigenous business. Within many anecdotes the indigenousness of companies targeting profit outcomes above community benefit was brought into question. This was also applied to individuals entering into passive arrangements with non-indigenous partners so as to give the appearance of an Indigenous company. These businesses were considered to be motivated by personal gain and contributed little to the community.

"I kind of liken it to flying the Aboriginal flag with no substance underneath, there is really no benefits both financial or otherwise that have flowed back to the community" [Participant Y.G.]

The 'community over profit' stereotype of Indigenous companies was expressed by different managers within the network. Many perceived this orientation positively and considered it a

contributing factor to them engaging with and supporting these businesses. Of particular relevance within the mining industry was the stakeholder engagement role Indigenous companies offered in supporting and providing links to the wider Indigenous community. As one manager describes, his experiences have shown Indigenous companies have an inherent desire to achieve positive social outcomes.

"I think they just tend to do it. More because it is who they are and where they come from. We don't have any trouble encouraging our Aboriginal businesses to employ or develop or put back socially into a community, it is just what they do" [Participant H.B.]

From an alternative perspective, the discourses also suggest that non-Indigenous companies place expectations on Indigenous partners to fulfil these stereotypes given their strategic CSR value. Despite some managers suggesting Indigenous companies perform this role without being required to, there were simultaneously numerous examples of the informal pressures encouraging these behaviours. Respondents acknowledge that Indigenous companies 'tick a box' for non-Indigenous partners and fulfil their Indigenous engagement requirements. As relationships are laden with additional expectations to broker links with the broader Indigenous community, more self-beneficial business motivations which don't support these outcomes were positioned as opportunistic and not in the spirit of the relationship.

"[they] seemed to have the same values that we have, the same desire to grow a business for local people, to give them jobs, to give them preference, to give them training, so to basically put back into the community. You need that otherwise it just wouldn't work. If their agenda was just for us to get rich, I'm not interested in just helping the individual get rich." [Participant N.T.]

Distance from an Indigenous Identity

While managers acknowledged certain advantages of being considered Indigenous and actively constructed an Indigenous company identity, in some instances they would actually distance the company from this identity. This form of identity work was often a response to situations in which Indigenous identities were perceived to conflict with other aspects of their identity. Managers drew on repertoires of distance which allowed them to move focus away from their Indigenous identity and highlight features considered more appropriate for the context at hand. Managers spoke of a need to not be seen as reliant on being Indigenous for their success and drew attention to their firm's commercial capabilities and the competencies of employees, which highlighted their competitiveness more generally. This discursive shift offered an alternative view of the company, rather than being considered solely an Indigenous business. One manager described his wariness of being 'pigeon holed' as an Aboriginal business, which limited the company's scope and failed to capture other qualities.

"Particularly when it is time to ante up and leave, we will sell it. We don't want it to necessarily be pigeon holed into an Aboriginal business." [Participant P.D.]

The polarity of organisational identities being perceived in relation to Indigenous aspects or the goods or services offered was a common theme throughout manager discourses. The construction of identity in one way or another was often considered a strategic choice available to managers. Indigenous identities were not fixed and could be distanced in situations where it would be perceived to have negative effects or where it was necessary to emphasise competitiveness against 'mainstream' non-indigenous businesses. Two different managers used the metaphor that Indigenous identity was a 'card' which could be played

when necessary. This view alludes to the strategic nature of identity work and the dynamic flexibility of organisational identity in response to different situations.

"I think in some instances we will be going in as an Indigenous business and competing on the basis of being an Indigenous business and in other instances we will go in as an I.T business and competing on the basis of being an I.T business" [Participant H.C.]

This theme of distance reflected certain tensions in Indigenous contracting processes within the network. While mining companies had strategic objectives to increase Indigenous contracting, simultaneous emphasis was placed on being viewed to award contracts on merit and ensuring contractors had the capacity to perform the work. Strategic behaviour perceived to leverage Indigenous identity was positioned as opportunistic, while companies perceived to compete on the basis of their performance standards were championed. One mining company contracting manager described how her role involved evaluating whether applicants were legitimate Indigenous businesses and whether they were capable to perform the work.

"We have to be diligent that we are not going to have them just come in and say they are Aboriginal [...] they need to prove they are capable as well. If they are not, then we can't give them the work because they haven't got the capability to perform this work" [Participant M.C.]

DISCUSSION

Our analysis of organisational identity illustrates the different ways in which Indigenous business identities are constructed. A commonality across companies was the centrality of ethnicity in organisational identity throughout manager discourse and corporate interface. As expected, these processes vary between companies, indicating the importance of personal identities, manager identity work and network influences (Foley 2006). Within this context Indigenous business identity was shown to have distinct value which managers sought to leverage through strategic identity work.

The case highlights interaction between individual and organisational levels of identity construction which is perhaps more evident given the ethnic and small business context (Abimbola & Vallaster 2007; Essers & Benschop 2007). Personal backgrounds were also sources of group affiliation which embedded companies to certain TO groups, the broader Indigenous community and supported recognition from Indigenous representative bodies (Hindle & Moroz 2009). This supports Foley's (2013) argument that a firm's relationship to the Indigenous community should be considered in qualifying their Indigenous status.

Beneath these more overt forms of organisational identity construction, the case explored the ways Indigenous cultural values manifest in organisational behaviour. These processes added substance to an Indigenous business identity by demonstrating it does not only look Indigenous but acts Indigenous. Of particular relevance was the emphasis on collectivist orientations supporting beneficial outcomes to the broader Indigenous community over more individualistic profit orientations that were not perceived to be traditionally 'indigenous'. This is consistent with the understanding that identity guides firm behaviour (Gadde & Håkansson 2001).

Through including external perspectives, the case draws attention to the influence of other actors in identity construction. The expectations placed on Indigenous companies from network partners constrained identity work and influenced the behaviours through which Indigenous companies demonstrated their attractiveness in the network (Anderson,

Håkansson & Johanson 1994; Gadde & Håkansson 2001; Ellis et al 2012). The case also illustrates how managers approached tensions in the majority non-Indigenous network by engaging discourses of distance from Indigenous identities and allowing emphasis to be placed on other elements of organisational identity. This reflected actors' abilities to respond to conflicting stakeholder demands through identity work, as well as demonstrating the dynamic and flexible nature of identity (Foreman & Whetten 2002; Sillince & Brown 2009; Huemer 2013). From a hybrid identity perspective, Indigenous business identities presented certain incompatibilities, however through identity work these identities were perceived to be constantly evolving rather than enduring (Hindle 2005; Gioia, Schulz & Corley 2000; Whetten 2006).

Future research seeks to expand on this work by elaborating on the nuances between the various layers of organisational identity construction. This will include added detail pertaining to the interplay between forces of internal control and external influence that characterise the identities in networks perspective. Additional analysis will illustrate the ways in which the mining industry shapes Indigenous business identity but also the ways in which Indigenous managers actively engage with these pressures to simultaneously influence the network to their benefit. Finally we hope to expand upon the discussion of ethnic identity and the interrelated processes of individual and organisational identity construction, incorporating the relevant concept of boundary drawing (Essers & Benschop 2009; Huemer 2013).

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APPENDIX

Appendix Item One: List of Organisations and Respondents

Code	Organisation	Respondent(s)/Position
A	Mining Company	M.B, Indigenous Affairs Manager
B	Mining Company	H.B, Contracts Manager
C	EPCM Company	M.G, Contracts Manager Y,G, Indigenous Engagement Manager
D	EPCM Company	N.T, Contracts Manager
E	Mining Company	N.H, Contracts Manager
F	Mining Company	M.C, Contracts Manager
G	Indigenous Engineering and Labour Hire Company	D.L, Manager
H	Indigenous Labour Hire Company	M.V, Manager
I	Indigenous Heritage Services and Labour Hire Company	J.K, Director S.P, Director
J	Indigenous Labour Hire Company	S.P, Director
K	Indigenous Recruitment and Labour Hire Company	P.J, Owner
L	Indigenous Recruitment and Community Consultancy Company	M.J, Owner
M	Indigenous Community Consultancy and Cultural Education Company	C.K, Owner S.C, Assistant Manager
N	Indigenous Construction and Labour Hire Company	P.D, Owner V.N, Owner
O	Indigenous I.T Services Company	H.C, Director
P	Indigenous Consultancy Company	A.W, Owner
Q	Government Indigenous Business Support Agency.	C.Y, Manager
R	Government Indigenous Business Support Agency.	H.N, Manager
S	Not-for-profit Indigenous Business Support Agency	E,J, Assistant Manager W.F, Field Manager
T	Indigenous Business Support Agency	P.C, Manager